



WES-BCA
Water and Environment Support -
Biodiversity and Climate Action
in the Neighbourhood South region



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WES-BCA INFO BULLETIN

REGIONAL ACTIVITY “CONTRIBUTION TO THE MEDITERRANEAN MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAMS FOR MARINE LITTER PREVENTION AND MITIGATION”

September 2026

Overview

As part of the “Water and Environment Support-Biodiversity and Climate Action (WES-BCA) project in the Neighbourhood South region”, a Regional Activity “Contribution to the Mediterranean monitoring and reporting programs for marine litter prevention and mitigation” (C1_REG-4) was prepared and delivered by the WES-BCA experts.

On the 3rd of February 2026, a Regional Webinar was held, involving designated participants representing different stakeholders from the WES-BCA eight (8) Partner Countries (PCs).

Rationale

The Mediterranean Sea faces escalating pressure from marine litter pollution, which threatens not only coastal landscapes and deep-sea ecosystems but also key economic sectors such as tourism and fisheries. Plastics, particularly single-use items, are the dominant contributor, leading to entanglement, ingestion, bioaccumulation of toxins, and damage to benthic habitats, ultimately impacting human livelihoods and food security.

Despite important advances in recent years including the establishment of monitoring programmes under the UNEP/MAP and the EU, challenges, such as insufficient data on litter amounts, types, sources and impacts, gaps in methodological guidance and quality assurance and weak coordination among stakeholders, continue to hinder comprehensive marine litter assessments.

This Regional Webinar activity was therefore designed to directly respond to those needs by providing an accessible platform for Partner Countries to clarify questions, address challenges, and share practical case studies.

Objectives

 The main objective of the activity was to provide support to PCs in order to strengthen the implementation of marine litter monitoring and reporting programmes and to contribute to more effective mitigation and reporting measures, in line with the Regional Marine Litter Management Plan under the Barcelona Convention.

- To promote the wide uptake and implementation of the marine litter monitoring methodologies (for all marine matrixes) and
- To enhance the decision-making and policy development by providing an Assessment Report.

Methodology and Implementation

In order to design and implement the activity that was completed with a Regional Webinar, the following tasks were carried out:

- The regional activity was structured through a series of interconnected phases designed to ensure a comprehensive and coherent approach to marine litter monitoring and reporting in the Mediterranean.

It was initiated with a **Kick-off Meeting in November 2025**, which set the objectives, scope, and implementation framework of the activity.

This was followed by the preparation of a **background document** and **concept note**, supported by a **background assessment** aimed at identifying key challenges, gaps, and priorities in marine litter

monitoring and reporting across partner countries. This phase also included the collection of feedback through **questionnaires**, which contributed to shaping the content and structure of the webinar. The pre-webinar questionnaires were sent to participants one week before the event, to allow them to identify the level of their knowledge and knowledge gaps about the mediterranean monitoring and reporting programs for marine litter prevention and mitigation.

- A regional webinar was organised on the **3rd of February 2026**. It structured into several thematic sessions covering policy frameworks, regional and national experiences, best practices, and data management and reporting approaches. These sessions facilitated knowledge exchange, stakeholder engagement, and discussions on technical and institutional aspects of marine litter monitoring.
- Finally, the activity culminates in the preparation of the **Assessment Report on marine litter monitoring and reporting**, which compiles the outcomes of the webinar, the results of the background assessment, and insights gathered from participants and experts. The report aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of current practices and to formulate key recommendations to support improved monitoring systems and informed decision-making in the Mediterranean region.

Results

- ✓ The Regional Webinar brought together a diverse group of stakeholders from PCs, including representatives from governmental institutions, regional organisations, academia, civil society, and the private sector.
- ✓ Overall, the Webinar achieved its main objectives by promoting the implementation of Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) marine litter monitoring protocols and facilitating the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and best practices across the region. The high level of participation and engagement throughout the sessions reflected the relevance of the topic and the strong interest of stakeholders in improving monitoring and reporting systems.
- ✓ The different sessions provided a comprehensive overview of current policy frameworks, regional initiatives, and practical case studies. Participants particularly benefited from the presentations on national experiences and regional projects, which highlighted concrete approaches and challenges in marine litter monitoring. The discussions also emphasized the importance of data harmonization, quality assurance, and the integration of monitoring results into decision-making processes.
- ✓ The Webinar further contributed to strengthening regional cooperation and fostering dialogue among key actors, encouraging cross-country collaboration and mutual learning. It also helped identify existing gaps/challenges, such as the need for more standardized monitoring methodologies, enhanced technical capacities, and improved coordination among stakeholders. It was noted that, in several cases, the collected data does not meet Data Standards (DSs) and thus highlighting the need to promote integration into IMAP across the region.
- ✓ **In conclusion, the Webinar represents an important step towards improving marine litter monitoring and reporting in the Mediterranean region. It provided a valuable platform for knowledge exchange and contributed to supporting informed decision-making and policy development.**



Useful Link

https://www.wes-bca.eu/activity/c1_reg-4-contribution-to-the-mediterranean-monitoring-and-reporting-programs-for-marine-litter-prevention-and-mitigation-online/



WES-BCA Project

The EU funded “Water and Environment Support-Biodiversity and Climate Action (WES-BCA) project in the Neighbourhood South region” is the continuation of the WES project and aims to improve the protection of the environment, the restoration of biodiversity and the management of scarce water resources, while enhancing the resilience to climate change in the Mediterranean region, strengthening the formulation and enforcement of the relevant policies of the PCs and the two regional political frameworks, namely the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Barcelona Convention.

For any further information on WES-BCA project, please visit: www.wes-bca.eu

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