

Free-LitterAT – Advancing towards litter-free Atlantic coastal communities by preventing and reducing macro and micro litter

Summary

Free LitterAT will achieve litter-free coastal communities by combining knowledge, tools and technology with pilot actions with multi-stakeholder engagement. It tackles marine litter, a transnational challenge demanding an integral approach involving prevention, monitoring and removal, when feasible, of the already accumulated marine litter.

The overall objective is to protect biodiversity by implementing innovative approaches to prevent and reduce marine litter, with special emphasis on ALDFG and microplastics.

Free LitterAT will contribute to reducing inputs, locating sources and hotspots, enhancing monitoring capabilities and raising awareness.

Main outputs include guidance, tools and joint solutions for waste management, marine litter monitoring, modelling, clean-up and removal, as well as action plans transferred to the competent authorities and maritime stakeholders.

The project will build on previous results and alliances, developing new solutions to be implemented through pilot actions.

Main activities:

- A1:** Analysis of relevant aspects for SUP and PRF implementation and current practices for waste management in ports.
- A2:** Management/Recycling of End-of-Life Fishing Gears.
- A3:** Management of Waste Incidentally Fished.
- A4:** Socioeconomic analysis.

Figure 1. Main objectives of the project.



Figure 1. Kick-off meeting, January 2024.

The work packages of the project are as follows:

Work package 1. Prevention by improving waste management and recycling

WP1 aims to improve waste management and recycling in Atlantic ports and coastal cities with a specific focus on fisheries-related waste, as it accounts for a significant proportion of marine litter.

The activities in this work package will address End-of-Life Fishing Gears (EOLFG), Waste Incidentally Fished (WIF) and Abandoned, Lost or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG). Moreover, a socio-economic study will explore how to encourage the reduction of marine litter and recycling of marine plastics by investigating the intentions of having “environmentally responsible” behaviour and the economic consequences of marine litter on the Atlantic coast.

Work package 2. Assessing and Monitoring micro and macro litter contamination

WP2 aims to develop and optimise current tools and methods for monitoring macro and micro litter and to enhance processing and analysis solutions that can facilitate and generate harmonised data that can be integrated into actionable outputs.

Work package 3. Modelling approaches from micro and macro litter: from modelling outputs to sources and hotspots

The objective of WP3 is to improve our understanding of the location of accumulation areas of ALDFG, macro and microplastics and their sources, supporting the environmental agencies in charge of marine litter management with powerful modelling tools.

Work package 4. Reducing marine litter and associated risks

Project Reference

EAPA_0009/2022

Leading Institution

Centro Tecnológico del Mar, Fundación CETMAR (Spain)

Partners

INTECMAR – Instituto Tecnológico para o Control do Medio Mariño de Galicia (Spain), USC – University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain), ARDITI – Agência Regional para o Desenvolvimento da Investigação, Tecnologia e Inovação (Portugal), Direção Regional do Ambiente e Ação Climática (Portugal), CEDRE – Centre de documentation, de recherche et d'expérimentations sur les pollutions accidentelles des eaux (France), UBS – Université Bretagne Sud (France), Lusófona University (Portugal), Marine Institute (Ireland), CSIC-IEO – Agencia Estatal Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Español de Oceanografía (Spain), Ifremer – Institut Français de Recherche pour l'Exploitation de la Mer (France), An Taisce – The National Trust for Ireland (Ireland), CIIMAR – Centro Interdisciplinar de Investigação Marinha e Ambiental (Portugal), DGRM – Direção Geral de Recursos Naturais, Segurança e Serviços Marítimos (Portugal), AEBAM – Asociación Española de Basuras Marinas (Spain), Ministerio para la Transición Ecológica y el Reto Demográfico (Spain), Conférence des Régions Périphériques Maritimes d'Europe (France), APLM – Associação Portuguesa do Lixo Marinho (Portugal), Kommunernes International Miljøorganisation (United Kingdom), Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Ireland), Asociación Vertidos Cero (Spain), Ministère de la Transition écologique et solidaire (France), OSPAR Commission (United Kingdom)

CERIS Principal Investigator

Hilda de Pablo
hilda.pablo@ulusofona.pt



The objective of Work Package 4 is to contribute to reducing marine litter by developing and demonstrating procedures, systems and manuals that can be efficiently applied by those in charge of clean-up interventions to remove different types of marine litter in different environments.

As specific targets, ALDFG, marine litter that can be retrieved by fishermen through Fishing for Litter schemes, hotspots (including those in remote areas) and massive arrival of litter and microplastics will be tackled.

CERIS Research Team

Vitor Antunes, Nuno Peres

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EU Interreg Atlantic Area

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2023-2026

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3 765 474.20€

CERIS

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Project website<https://freelitterat.eu/>