



**Joint measures to preserve natural ecosystems  
from marine litter in Mediterranean Marine  
Protected Areas**

**METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH FOR THE ACT4LITTER PILOT ACTION  
'ACTION PLAN FOR MARINE LITTER IN MEDITERRANEAN MPAs'**

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**A Quick Guide  
FOR MPA MANAGERS**

*Prepared by MIO-ECSDE*

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## FOREWORD

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Are you an **MPA manager**? Are you concerned with **marine litter** in your MPA? Then you might be interested in implementing the ACT4LITTER pilot action that aims to support your efforts towards tackling marine litter via the development of an **action plan for marine litter management** in your MPA. This document is a quick guide that will lead you through a step-by-step process for elaborating your own marine litter action plan. ACT4LITTER will assist you along the way by providing a **decision-making tool** tailor-made to address the needs of your MPA, while also providing the necessary **technical support** for the implementation of the different phases of the pilot action.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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The Mediterranean Sea is one of the most affected basins by marine litter, worldwide. Marine litter represents a pervasive and persistent problem that knows no boundaries. It has a negative impact on vital economic sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, navigation, energy and tourism, while it may endanger human health and safety. Marine litter threatens species and habitats, with impacts varying from entanglement and ingestion, to bio-accumulation and bio-magnification of toxics released from litter items, facilitation of introduction of invasive species, damages to benthic habitats, etc. It has been acknowledged as a major threat in many Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) hampering the achievement of their conservation goals and MPA managers lack the tools and knowledge to effectively address the issue at their level and prevent the problem from getting worse.

## 2. ACT4LITTER IN A NUTSHELL

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ACT4LITTER aims to facilitate efforts for tackling marine litter in Mediterranean MPAs through the development of effective and targeted measures.

The main lines of actions of the ACT4LITTER project include:

- Identification of potential measures to address marine litter issues in Mediterranean MPAs in particular those that promote prevention upstream;
- Feasibility assessment of the identified measures to be implemented in MPAs through the development of an appropriate decision-making tool.
- Development of 10 MPA-specific action plans for preventing and mitigating marine litter through a participatory approach;
- Elaboration of a joint governance plan for improving marine litter management in Mediterranean MPAs through the integration of relevant lessons learnt.

ACT4LITTER is expected to strengthen networking of MPAs in defining a common framework of measures to combat marine litter; improve the management of Mediterranean MPAs through the definition of MPA-specific action plans; enhance the implementation of the relevant policy frameworks.

ACT4LITTER is an 18-month-long project funded by Interreg Mediterranean and implemented by the Catalan Waste Agency – Regional Activity Center for Sustainable Consumption and Production (Lead Partner), the Sant’ Anna School of Advanced Studies, MedPAN – Network of Marine Protected Area Managers in the Mediterranean and the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development.

## 3. THE ACT4LITTER ‘DECISION-MAKING TOOL’

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At the heart of ACT4LITTER lies the development of a marine litter decision-making tool, tailor-made to address the needs and specificities of Mediterranean MPAs. The development of the decision making tool will be based on the assessment of marine litter measures taking into consideration environmental and socio-economic aspects, while integrating the ecosystem services perspective, to the extent possible. To facilitate the decision making process, an algorithm will be developed in order to match the MPA-specific context and characteristics with the collected marine litter measures and generate a set of priority measures to facilitate the efforts of MPA managers towards preventing and mitigating marine litter effectively. The ACT4LITTER decision-making tool will be developed through the involvement of the MPA managers and other key stakeholders. Once the tool is developed, it will be piloted in at least 10 Mediterranean MPAs resulting in MPA-specific marine litter action plans.

#### 4. IDENTIFYING THE PILOT MPAs

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ACT4LITTER offers a unique opportunity to MPAs concerned with marine litter, to pilot the tailored-made decision-making tool and take action towards addressing the marine litter problems they encounter. ACT4LITTER not only will provide them with the tool itself but will also assist them along the way by providing the necessary technical support for the implementation of the different phases of the pilot action.

All ACT4LITTER associated partners, most of which are MPAs are invited to express their interest in implementing the pilot action entitled 'Action Plan for Marine Litter in Mediterranean MPAs'. Interested parties should submit their expression of interest **by Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2017**, by not later than 17:00 (CET). The interested MPAs will be informed within a few days of the passing of the submission deadline, whether they will be selected. The selected MPAs will be invited to sign a 'Memorandum of Understanding' that will set the conditions for the smooth implementation of the pilot action.

#### 5. KEY STEPS TO IMPLEMENT THE PILOT ACTIONS

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The pilot action 'Action Plan for Marine Litter in Mediterranean MPAs' follows a five-phase process (described by *Scoullos et al., 2015\**) as presented below. Within each phase a set of specific actions need to be undertaken. These are clearly presented under section 6.

The completion of the first four phases (Phase 1-4) will be achieved within the scope of the ACT4LITTER project, while the actual implementation of the action plan (Phase 5) will be dealt with through a follow-up project (ACT4LITTER#2 or PlasticBusters MPAs).

**Phase 1 – Establishment:** The overall aim of the establishment phase is to define/make known the intention for drafting the plan and identify the convening body responsible for the overall coordination of the planning. All parties that should be involved should be identified and a core group/team with the mandate to prepare and implement the plan should be established. At this early stage, effort should be directed to identify the stakeholders and design the stakeholders' engagement process.

**Phase 2 – Analysis and Scenarios:** The aim of the analysis phase is to establish the foundation on which the preparation of the plan and its implementation will be based. Any available information on the marine litter issue (amount, types, sources and impacts) should be collected, including information on pre-existing relevant plans. The marine litter specific context together with the MPA-specific context will be introduced into the ACT4LITTER decision-making tool in order to generate a proposed scenario (set of measures) for the prevention and mitigation of marine litter. In parallel, within this stage the engagement of stakeholders will be initiated.

**Phase 3 – Setting the Vision:** The aim of this stage is to achieve the engagement and consensus building with the stakeholders and the wider community on the action plan based on the findings from the Establishment and Analysis & Scenarios phases. Within this stage stakeholders will be engaged in the identification of the key problems and issues for the plan to deal with and will set the course for the eventual 'shape' of the plan and its implementation by reviewing the proposed scenario (from Phase 2).

**Phase 4 – Designing the Future:** The aim of this stage is the actual drafting and finalization of the marine litter action plan which will contribute in shaping the future of the MPA. The action plan should indicatively include: the goals and objectives of the plan, a preamble explaining the scope and process followed for its production and approval, the context derived from the analysis, the governance structure, the institutional framework for implementation, the priority marine litter measures agreed upon by the different stakeholders along with a roadmap for their implementation. Within this stage stakeholders will be engaged in the finalization and final adoption of the action plan.

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\* *Scoullos, M. (ed), 2015. An Integrative Methodological Framework (IMF) for coastal, river basin and aquifer management. UNEP/MAP-PAP/RAC, GWP-Med and UNESCO-IHP. MedPartnership, Split, Croatia.*

**Phase 5 – Realizing the Vision:** The aim of this final phase is to operationalise the adopted marine litter action plan and provide for its constant improvement. Within this stage the necessary actions will be undertaken for the operationalization of the action plan, including getting access to funds and monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the action plan.

## 6. ACTION PLAN FOR THE PILOT ACTIONS

Table 6.1 presents the set of specific actions that need to be undertaken in order to develop the marine litter action plan. In addition, the table identifies the technical support that ACT4LITTER (A4L) will provide for the implementation of the different phases of the pilot action.

**Table 6.1.** Step-by-step process for elaborating the marine litter action plans.

TASKS	OUTPUTS	DEADLINE
<b>SELECTING THE MPAs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A4L informs the MPAs selected to implement the pilot action.</li> <li>✓ MoUs are signed between MIO-ECSDE (A4L Task Leader) and the pilot MPAs.</li> <li>✓ Each MPA appoints an appropriate person to coordinate the implementation of the pilot action activities.</li> </ul>	30/10/2017
<b>PHASE 1 – Establishment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Each MPA sets up a team tasked to implement the pilot action activities.</li> <li>✓ Each MPA team develops a list of stakeholders, with the support of the A4L team, if needed.</li> <li>✓ Each MPA team designs a stakeholders' engagement process, with the support of the A4L team, if needed.</li> </ul>	30/11/2017
<b>PHASE 2 – Analysis and Scenarios</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Each MPA team collects marine litter related information, with the support of the A4L team, if needed.</li> <li>✓ Each MPA team gathers information related to the MPA-specific context, with the support of the A4L team, if needed.</li> <li>✓ The A4L team provides to the MPA team a form to record all marine litter and MPA related information.</li> <li>✓ The A4L team introduces the marine litter and MPA-specific information into the A4L decision-making tool.</li> <li>✓ The A4L decision-making tool generates potential MPA-specific marine litter measures (scenario).</li> <li>✓ The MPA team communicates the pilot action to the stakeholders and engages them in the process, with the support of the A4L team, if needed.</li> </ul>	28/02/2017
<b>PHASE 3 – Setting the Vision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The MPA team engages with the stakeholders on the marine litter issue and the proposed measures, with the support of the A4L team, if needed. Consensus on the priority measures to feed into the first draft of the marine litter action plan is achieved.</li> </ul>	30/04/2018
<b>PHASE 4 – Designing the Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The A4L team provides a draft template for the marine litter action plan.</li> <li>✓ The MPA team drafts the marine litter action plan, with the support of the A4L team, if needed.</li> <li>✓ The MPA team engages stakeholders in the validation of the action plan and its final adoption, with the support of the A4L team, if needed.</li> </ul>	30/06/2018

## 7. RESOURCES

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MPAs will participate in the ACT4LITTER pilot actions on a voluntary basis. The ACT4LITTER associated partners cannot receive any financial resources by the project based on the Interreg Med programme rules. However, ACT4LITTER offers a unique opportunity to MPAs towards addressing the marine litter problems they encounter. ACT4LITTER will provide them with a decision-making tool and will also assist them to develop a marine litter action plan. ACT4LITTER will provide the necessary technical support for the implementation of the different phases of the pilot action (as shown on table 6.1), such as support MPA managers to: collect available marine litter information (phase 2), design a stakeholders' engagement process and engage stakeholders (phase 3), draft the action plan (phase 4). In addition, the project will cover the participation expenses of the associated partners in the Associated Partners Group meetings and in the ACT4LITTER conferences, where MPA managers will have the opportunity to share experiences and lessons learned and ensure the delivery of well-targeted, effective, and applicable solutions to tackle marine litter in MPAs.

### ANY QUESTIONS?

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**MIO-ECSDE will be leading the pilot action 'Action Plan for Marine Litter in Mediterranean MPAs'.** MIO-ECSDE has a long-standing experience on marine litter issues and public participation processes and will assist you along the way and provide the necessary technical support for the implementation of the different phases of the pilot action. Should you have any question or concerns, please feel free to contact Thomais Vlachogianni, MIO-ECSDE Programme Officer/ACT4LITTER Task Leader

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## Joint measures to preserve natural ecosystems from marine litter in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas

