



Mediterranean Information Office

for Environment, Culture & Sustainable Development

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DeFishGear Working Group Meeting on Marine Litter

'Defining a monitoring and assessment strategy for marine litter in the Adriatic Sea'

12 May 2014, Central building of University of Athens

Concept Note

Marine litter -any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of or abandoned in the marine and coastal environment- poses a major threat to wildlife and ecosystems, as well as, to humans and their livelihoods. Marine litter is a complex and multi-faceted issue with environmental, economic, safety, health and cultural implications. Marine litter knows no boundaries and represents a pervasive and persistent problem that expands beyond borders away from the source of origin. Sound shared scientific knowledge is key to combating marine litter through appropriate marine and coastal zone planning, as well as waste management.

Even though an effort to assess the status of marine litter (abundance, types and distribution) at regional level was carried out by UNEP/MAP and collaborating NGOs in 2008, marine litter related information in the Mediterranean, including the Adriatic Sea, remains inconsistent, fragmented and limited in terms of time and space. Similarly, most national MSFD marine litter initial assessment reports submitted by the Mediterranean EU Member States recognize that there is lack of scientific data with regards to marine litter in the region.

The DeFishGear project undertakes concrete actions to assess marine litter in the Adriatic Sea and address the data gaps that hamper the efforts of policy makers and stakeholders in undertaking effective measures to tackle marine litter in the region, thus contributing directly to the implementation of the key legislative pillars on marine litter, the EU MSFD and the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean (adopted in Istanbul, December 2013).

The proposed DeFishGear monitoring and assessment strategy for marine litter in the Adriatic Sea builds upon the recommendations outlined in the "Guidance Document on Monitoring of Marine Litter in European Seas", developed in 2013 by the EU MSFD Technical Sub-Group on Marine Litter. Furthermore, the proposed strategy elements are fully compatible and in line with the draft Monitoring Guidance Document on Ecological Objective 10: Marine Litter, prepared by UNEP/MAP MEDPOL in April 2014.

The aim of the DeFishGear Working Group Meeting on Marine Litter is to address the main elements for defining a monitoring and assessment strategy for marine litter in the Adriatic Sea. This strategy will be deployed within the framework of the DeFishGear project activities aiming to provide a comprehensive, coherent and transparent characterization and analysis of the marine litter problem in the Adriatic, while paving the way for the adoption of a coordinated and harmonized approach in terms of marine litter monitoring. Ultimately, the DeFishGear project will provide a strategic input to regional efforts in successfully achieving good environmental status in the Mediterranean Sea.



DeFishGear



Derelict Fishing Gear management system in the Adriatic Region
www.defishgear.net

*The project is co-funded by the European Union,
Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance*

Under the auspices of:

Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Greece
Greek Presidency of the European Union



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The meeting will provide a platform for IPA beneficiary countries (EU Member States and Pre-Accession Countries: Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Slovenia), the European Commission, international organizations, including the Regional Sea Convention(s) (Barcelona Convention, OSPAR Convention), Non-Governmental Organizations and other stakeholders to express their views on the proposed elements of the monitoring and assessment strategy, to discuss good practices and to exchange their experiences on marine litter monitoring. Ultimately, the meeting will contribute to the establishment of a Regional Network of Experts on marine litter in the Adriatic MacroRegion.

The meeting will address the following marine litter monitoring and assessment elements:

- **General Marine Litter Monitoring Approach, addressing key aspects related to the MSFD and the ECAP requirements**
 - Aim & objectives of monitoring
 - Quality assessment & control approach
 - Site selection strategy
 - Data handling & reporting
- **Monitoring of beach litter, floating litter, benthic litter, litter in biota and microplastics**
 - Survey design (selection of survey sites, number of sites, etc.)
 - Sampling methodology/protocol
 - Sample processing methodology
 - Data analysis
 - Key considerations

Questions to be discussed at the meeting:

- Do all participants agree with the various elements of the proposed monitoring and assessment strategy for marine litter in the Adriatic Sea? Are there any additional considerations that should be taken into account?
- Considering the added value of additional data to feed into the DeFishGear Marine Litter Assessment, could you suggest/recommend opportunities within other marine litter monitoring programmes/initiatives that could somehow run in synergy with the DeFishGear surveys?
- Within the framework of the DefishGear project, a GIS database will be developed to make available and share the data acquired during the monitoring surveys with all stakeholders, including the general public. Are there any key considerations that should be taken into account regarding the type, format, processing of that data? Which would be the most suitable organization to inherit the GIS database after the end of the lifespan of the DeFishGear project?



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