



Developing a network of Reverse Vending Machines at Cabo de Gata-Níjar Natural Park

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Where is Cabo de Gata?

- Cabo de Gata-Níjar Natural Par, Biosphere Reserve & Geopark is located at the very southeastern point of the Iberian Peninsula, in Spain.
- The semi-arid conditions and the volcanic landscape and very well preserved underwater ecosystems has made the area a very popular place during the summer season in the whole country
- It is a very unique and important area in Spain, home of a important population of steppe birds, very well preserved posidonia meadows, and the best preserved outcrops of Submarine volcanism of the western Mediterranean area.
- This situation implies a big challenge with waste management and a problem with marine litter

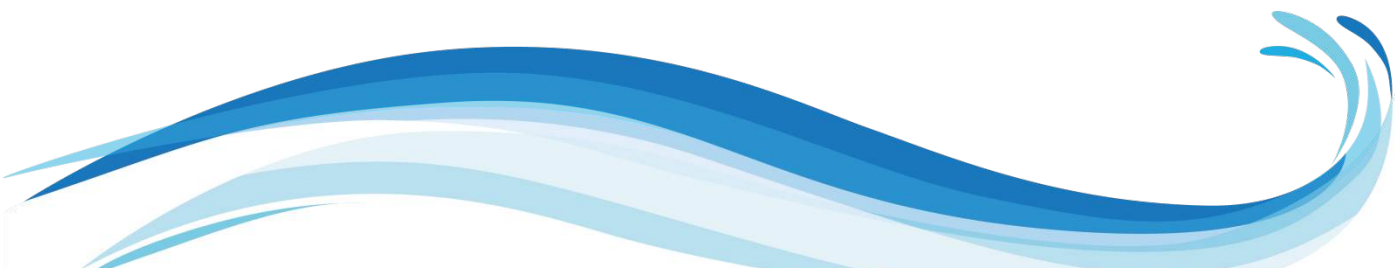


Facing the problem

Due to the high numbers of visitors every year, and specially during the summer season, a huge amount of litter is abandoned in beaches, coves and the countryside, which generates a big problem. **Most of the litter left on the beaches are beverages bottles and tin cans.**

Redirecting people to places where they can leave the bottles was our priority, so we thought that Reverse Vending machines, with a small prize as an incentive, could be a useful tool.

Obviously this is not a total solution, but maybe, it could help in some places that are very crowded during the summer.



Our pilot action

We wanted to:

Involve the three municipalities that configures the MPA: Almería, Níjar y Carboneras

Make something useful and attractive not only for the visitors but the local residents

Through the prizes, incentivate people to carry with them the litter and leave it on the machines

And finally, to make some noise about the Marine Litter Issue at the MPA!!!!



Our Masterplan

First step: find the Reverse Vending Machine, it was very very difficult

Second step: get the Natural Park Small Bussines Association involved

Third step: Select the places and meet with all the stake holders

Happy ending: all working and people recycling



All seemed easy for us, but it was definitely not that easy.



The comeback to reality Masterplan

Preliminary study to have a real picture of the problem at the MPA

Search for the RVMs, decide not to buy or rent a new one

Found some RVMs from another project that could be updated and used

Launch a tender for the update of these RVMs

Launch another tender for the external consultant

Lots of videocalls with the entrepreneurs, to explain and reach an agreement

More videocalls to explain everything to the municipalities

The RVM are finally sent to Cabo de Gata and we establish one in Carboneras castle, one at the Amoladeras Visitors Center and one in the Touristic information point at San José

Final Report on results- still to be made, the RVMs are working!!!



And finally...



CONSIGUE DESCUENTOS DEVOLVIENDO TUS ENVASES

Puntos de entrega de envases

Castillo de San Andrés, Carboneras
Oficina de Información turística, San José
Centro de Visitantes, Las Amoladeras

Parque Natural Cabo de Gata-Níjar

Escanea el código QR para saber más y localiza los comercios donde canjear tus tickets

En el marco del proyecto:
interreg Project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund
ELASTIC BUSTERS MPA

Implementado por:
Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production
Agencia de Residuos de Catalunya
Junta de Andalucía
Parque Natural Cabo de Gata-Níjar

Colaboran:
ASEMIPARMA
ALMERÍA CALIJA
Ayuntamiento de Níjar

Wunderreko

El Parque Cabo de Gata-Níjar (Almería) de entrega envases que darán descuentos



El presidente de Asemparna, Francisco García, la delegada de Desarrollo Sostenible, Raquel Espín, y la concejal del Ayuntamiento de Almería, Margarita Cobos, en el punto de reciclaje instalado en Las Amoladeras. - JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA ALMERÍA, 27 Ago. (EUROPA PRESS) -

El Parque Natural Cabo de Gata-Níjar (Almería) ha iniciado una prueba piloto que se llevará a cabo hasta finales de septiembre a través de tres máquinas destinadas a la recuperación de envases de bebidas que, a cambio, entregarán a los visitantes tickets de descuentos canjeables en los diferentes establecimientos de la zona adherido al proyecto.

La acción se desarrolla en el marco del proyecto europeo Plastic Busters MPA, según

Almería Provincia Almería El Ejido Adra Almazora Levante Roquetas de Mar

Una iniciativa piloto cambiará envases de bebidas por descuentos Cabo de Gata

Se instalarán máquinas en las que depositar los residuos en distintos puntos del parque natural en Almería capital, Níjar y Carboneras



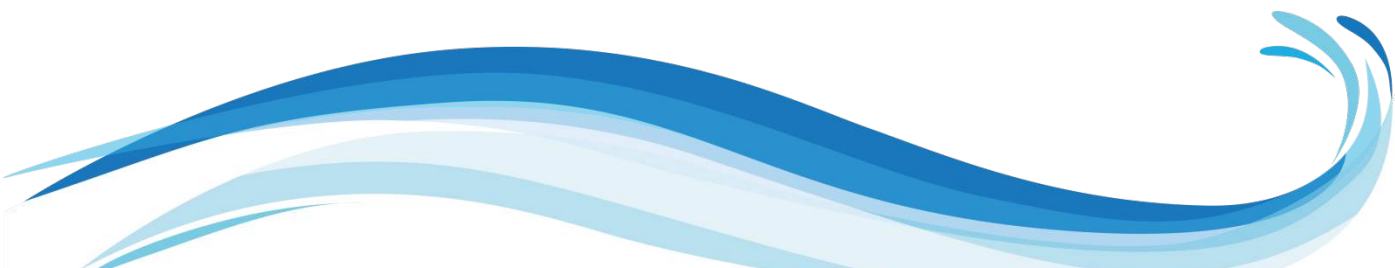
The Results so far

Number of beverage containers collected and recycled: **6400 beverage containers (around 111 kg)**

Number of businesses involved: **12 businesses**

Number of reverse-vending-machine-related vouchers used: **94 vouchers used (most people are accumulating them by now)**

Number of individuals reached: **19 people, the ones who used the vouchers. But, in general terms, hundreds of them have used the 3 machines.**



Main difficulties

Find the RVMs was a huge challenge!!!!

Choose the perfect location for the RVMs **because they have special needs**

Reaching an **agreement with the small businesses**, they all want to participate but not in the same way. The role of Asemparna was crucial.

The **maintenance and insurance** issue, also the role of **Wondereko & ENT** was very very important for the development of the pilot.

Most of the problems appeared before the RVMs arrived to the MPA, once here, all has been more or less under control and people are happy!!!



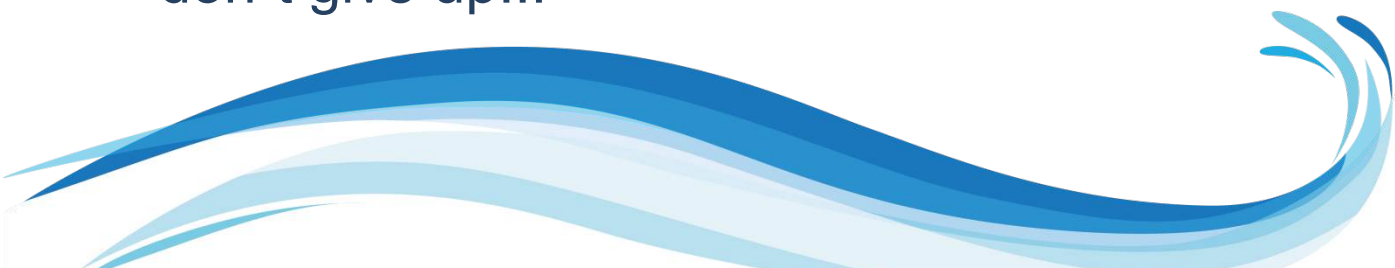
Lessons Learned

In Spain, it's right now very difficult to establish this kind of actions, the market for RVMs is small and is very expensive to buy or rent one. There more or less only a enterprise to buy or rent.

The problem with the litter and the management of this kind of waste was also tricky, we sorted it somehow.

The involvement of the local administrations, local stakeholders and a proper way to "sell" the action is also very important.

Once you solved all these things, people are very happy, and all turns easier so don't give up!!!



And... What's next?

- We are thinking how to keep the RVMs
- The reception from the locals and visitors was amazing, so we are on the good direction
- Many of the small bussineses are learning a very good lesson about trying new circular economy strategies.
- It's a win/win situation for everyone: MPA, bussineses, municipalities.. The circular economy is in fashion!!
- A bigger network would be desirable, but maybe things are changing in Spain and seems like the government wants to change the status quo





Thank you

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