

**Plastic Busters MPAs Final Conference  
Athens, 12-13 April 2022**



# DEVELOPING A NETWORK OF REVERSE VENDING MACHINES AT CABO DE GATA-NÍJAR NATURAL PARK

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# Cabo de Gata? Where is it?

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 oceanica* 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**



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# Facing the problem

Due to the high numbers of visitors every year, and specially during the summer season, a huge amount litter it's abandoned in beaches every week, 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 were they can left the bottles was our priority, so we though that Reverse Vending machines, with a small prize as incentive , could be a useful tool.

Obviously this is not a total solution, but maybe, it could help in some places that are very crowdly 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, encourage people to carry with them the litter and leave it on the machines

And finally, to make some noise about the Marine Little Issue at the MPA!!!! Plastic Busters MPAs and SCP-RAC came to rescue!



# Our Masterplan

- First step: find the Reverse Vending Machine, it was very very difficult
- 
- Second step: get the Natural Park Small Business 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

SCP-RAC 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 and 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

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



# And Finally...



## El Parque Cabo de Gata-Níjar (Almería) a 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 Almanzora Levante Roquetas

## 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

**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

Prueba piloto para prevenir las basuras marinas generadas por envases de bebidas

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 / APLUSTOURISM

Implementado por: PLASTIC BUSTERS MPAs

Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production

Agencia de Residuos de Catalunya

Parque Natural Cabo de Gata-Níjar

Junta de Andalucía

ALMERÍA

Ayuntamiento de Níjar

ASTEPARNA

wondereko

ALMERÍA

AYUNTAMIENTO DE NÍJAR

EUROPEAN UNION

PLASTIC BUSTERS MPAs



Interreg Mediterranean

EUROPEAN UNION

PLASTIC BUSTERS MPAs

# The final results

**FIGURE 8-3.** Performance indicators of the pilot action.

Performance indicator	End of September	Middle of October	End of October
Number of beverage containers collected	6400	7600	8400
Number of businesses involved	12	12	12
Number of vouchers used	94	178	184
Number of individuals making use of the vouchers	19	91	96

**From *The Plastic Busters MPAs showcases on how to prevent and mitigate marine litter in Mediterranean MPAs Synthesis Report (2022)***



# 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. The role of **SCP-RAC** team was also crucial, without them would have been impossible for us to set this 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!!!



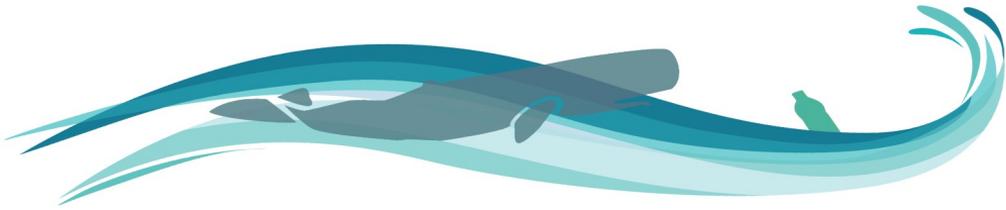
# Lessons learned

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. Offering a higher reward would improve the performancec of the system.

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

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

Once you solved all these things, people are very happy, and all turns easier so don't give up!!! And finally... never trust the wind.



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**Thank you!**

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