



UNIVERSITÀ DI SIENA 1240

## **Mediterranea collaborates with the University of Siena and the Sustainable Development Solution Network (SDSN) on the Plastic Busters project.**

**The floating marine litter – 70 to 80% of which is made of plastic** – represents a serious threat to the environment of the Mediterranean Sea. Yet its presence has poorly been studied so far.

It is paramount to pay greater attention to the release of plastic and micro-plastic waste into the sea. Studies are needed to determine its interaction with marine organisms, its impact on the fishing sector and ultimately on human health. The garbage distribution and its evolution over time needs to be understood, both in its floating and sinking forms. Potential accumulating areas are to be identified.

**The negative impact of plastic on marine organisms poses a danger to the entire ecosystem of the Mediterranean.** It is therefore paramount to find proper solutions and act to mitigate the problem.

The Plastic Busters project is an initiative by the **Sustainable Development Solutions Network** which aims to detect and monitor the presence and effects of marine litter in the Mediterranean Sea, with the goal of identifying and implementing solutions geared toward the prevention and mitigation of the threat.

The Plastic Busters initiative will take place in the Mediterranean Sea and will have 3 years duration. It will examine the **main hot-spots and ports** of the Mediterranean countries. It will involve researchers belonging to different research institutions and strive to involve all possible stakeholders.

A selected list of sentinel organisms (marine invertebrates, fish, sea turtles, cetaceans) will be monitored, in different areas of the Mediterranean Sea, to **determine the type and the origin of the plastic debris and their impact on the local fauna.**

The samples obtained during the expedition will be subjected to a series of tests and monitoring activities, in order to create the **maps on the presence and the biological effects of "marine litter"**, taking into account both the possible impact on the fishing industry and the possible consequences on human health.

**Mediterranea** will be available to the **Plastic Buster** researchers both to **take samples** in strategic Mediterranean hot-spots and to promote actions that can **raise public awareness** on the subject.

During the three years of the project, **the results of the expedition and the activities aimed at raising awareness will be shared among the involved institutions.** The obtained data will be handed over to the competent authorities in order to **identify the areas to be further monitored and protected** and to **define concrete actions to mitigate the consequences.**

One of the main goals of the project is to create a **Mediterranean Network** to support the implementation of regulations and norms aimed at reducing the release of plastic waste into the sea.

The Plastic Busters project is being developed by MED Solution Network, University of Siena, in collaboration with *IFREMER (FR)*, *MedPol*, *UNE*, *ISPRA (IT)*, *CNR (IT)*, *Tethys Research Institute (IT)*, *Progetto Mediterranea (IT)*, *Fispmid (IT)*, *CSIC (ES)*; *Blue World (CR)*; *University of Exeter (UK)*; *University of Sousse (Tunisia)*

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