

WELCOME



WatEr LandsCape sustainability thrOugh reuse of Marine littEr

Mediterranean beaches are subjected to natural and anthropogenic pressures. In the last years, natural resource exploitation, urbanization, industrial growth, and intensive tourist frequentation severely degraded cross-border coastal dune ecosystems. Beaches are sinks for marine litter (ML), which impacts on the environment as the 10th Descriptor of Good Environmental Status of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive of the EU. ML is a serious threat to biotic communities, ecosystems and biodiversity. Moreover, coastal erosion (CE) and ML lead to the deterioration of beach quality, decreasing the attractiveness of coastal areas for tourism, and to socio-economic impacts. To stop erosion, walls are often built in front of the beaches, with a negative impact on environmental quality and attractiveness, while clean-up activities are carried out with mechanical equipment that further contribute to CE. These hard approaches were not supported by in-depth knowledge of possible consequences and without a legal and institutional framework for an Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). The WELCOME project aims at developing a soft method based on an art-driven reuse of wood ML to make anti-erosion coastal systems in a sustainable, circular economy based approach. WELCOME engages 3 competent research institutions, namely the National Interuniversity Consortium for Marine Sciences (CONISMA), the University of Tirana (FGJM), and the University of Montenegro (UNIME) together with 3 experienced public authorities, i.e. the Municipality of Lecce (ML), National Coastline Agency (NCA), and the Public Enterprise for Coastal Zone Management of Montenegro (JPMDCG), to perform: i) research on ML (including modelling) and ML removal from selected Italian, Albanian and Montenegrin beaches, ii) dune restoration, according to a standardized methodology, iii) drafting of a ML plan in the frame of ICZM. The involvement of the major stakeholders, including local public administrations, owners of bathing establishments, fishery cooperatives, diving centres, marinas managers, voluntary groups and environmental organizations, will be a key aspect of the cross-border policy-making aim and increase of public awareness on ML and CE.



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