

# Integrated Waste Management and Marine Litter Prevention in the Western Balkans (MLP)

## Background

The pollution of inland water bodies and the Adriatic Sea has become a serious regional challenge for the countries of the Western Balkans and for EU countries bordering the Adriatic Sea. Increasing amounts of waste in rivers threaten economic activities such as tourism and fishing and endanger the health and livelihood of people throughout the region. Up to 90% of the marine litter in the Adriatic Sea are plastics.

Tackling these challenges through a regional approach offers unique opportunities. Introducing circular economy in the Western Balkan countries can reduce and prevent marine litter significantly.

The Integrated Waste Management and Marine Litter Prevention Programme in the Western Balkans (MLP), funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, supports four countries to help reduce plastic discharge into the Adriatic Sea: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro by facilitating regional exchange, knowledge sharing and cross-border cooperation.

## Our Approach

The MLP Programme brings public and private partners as well as civil society from the four countries together and advises them on how to reduce the leakage of plastic waste into the Adriatic Sea. It initiates regular and systematic exchange of experiences on regional, national and local levels and continues the successful approaches tested before.

The Programme offers advisory and training on structural, regulatory and financing aspects of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). EPR is a strategic policy approach to ensure that producers and manufacturers take responsibility for the full lifecycle of their products. This requires setting up sound legal frameworks, organizations and processes.

Public and private stakeholders are consulted to develop joint concepts for Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs), and how to improve decision processes and effective legislation for EPR regarding plastics and packaging.

Thus, the MLP Programme helps public and private partners join hands to reduce marine litter. It also supports them to improve their data base on plastic waste and leakages as well as to leverage the economic potential for plastic prevention and recycling.

Project name:	Integrated Waste Management & Marine Litter Prevention in the Western Balkans
Commissioned by:	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro
Lead executing agency:	AL: Ministry of Tourism and Environment BiH: Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina KS: Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure MNE: Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism
Duration:	01.06.2022 – 31.05.2025

## What is the MLP Programme all about?

The MLP Programme supports its partners to improve the implementation of coordinated strategies and approaches to reduce marine litter. To this end, the programme promotes coordination processes between governmental and nongovernmental actors at regional, national and local level. All four partner countries committed themselves to the EU's Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. They signed the Sofia Declaration, which extends the European Green Deal to the Western Balkan. The Programme also contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals 11, 12, 13 and 14.

Building on the success of a previous Programme, the main areas of intervention are:

- ✓ Establishment of a regional exchange for the joint prevention of plastic waste discharge into the Adriatic Sea.
- ✓ Strengthening the capacities of national actors to implement legislation to reduce plastic waste in every country and facilitating exchange on successful measures.
- ✓ Supporting processes based on the concepts of circular economy and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).
- ✓ Advisory on application of the Waste Flow Diagram (WFD) method to improve the database on plastic leakages, also in line with international obligations.
- ✓ Awareness raising, e.g. through the concept of the “Low Plastic Zone” and social media activities.

## The benefits

Representatives of governments, civil society, academia and private sector benefit from increased regional cooperation, knowledge exchange and informed decisions based on data.

The population in the four partner countries benefits from reduced environmental and health risks and from improved services regarding collection of plastic waste. At the same time, they become aware of their own responsibility in preventing and reducing plastic waste.

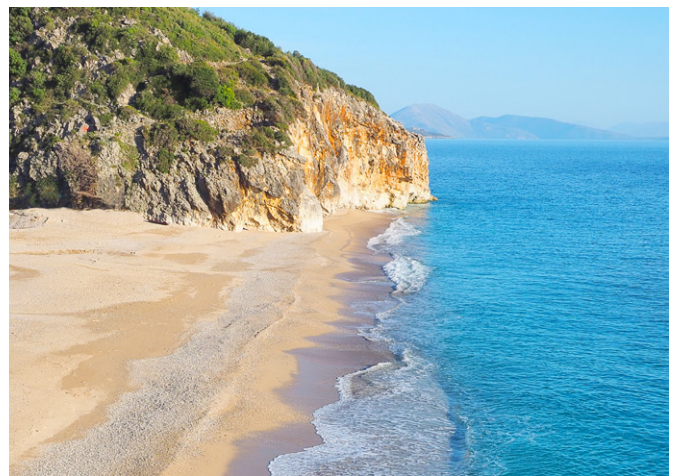
Municipalities can benefit from separate collection of packaging waste through the introduction of EPR and improved cleanliness of beaches and coastal waters. In addition, the economic actors benefit also from the economic potential of new innovative circular economy business models in the plastic waste sector.



## Expected results

The expected results from the implementation of the MLP Programme are, among other:

- ✓ The four partner countries determine their progress in reducing plastic waste leakage based on the application of the Waste Flow Diagram (WFD) tool.
- ✓ Decision and policy makers of the four partner countries adopt a joint declaration to reduce the input of plastic waste discharge into the Adriatic Sea by 10%.
- ✓ Startups and Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) implement first steps of their business models based on plastic waste reduction or recycling strategies.
- ✓ Public and private partners jointly develop a concept (structure, funding and monitoring) to implement EPR regarding plastics and packaging.
- ✓ Contracts on the roles and responsibilities of the collection of packaging waste are signed between municipalities and a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO).
- ✓ National agencies of the partner countries and private sector have jointly developed action plans to ban and phaseout single-use plastic items.
- ✓ The expansion of the Low Plastic Zone Initiative (LPZ) increases awareness and selfcommitment to reduce the amount of single-use plastic items, especially in hotels, cafes and restaurants.
- ✓ A social media campaign inspires consumers to reduce the use of single-use plastic items.



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