

D2.5.1 Implementation of educational/professional excursions

- Sakarun Bay
- Middle Brenta
- Western coast of Istria

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D2.5.1 Implementation of educational/professional excursions

D2.5.1 was carried out under '**Activity 2.5**: educational and training tour in the project's protected and Natura 2000 pilot areas', with the aim of:

- **Education:** participants gain knowledge and skills in environmental conservation and sustainable development.
- **Networking:** opportunity to connect with like-minded professionals and experts.
- **Inspiration:** encouraging participants to become advocates for environmental protection.
- **Collaboration:** promoting future projects on conservation and sustainability.



D2.5.1 Implementation of educational/professional excursions

3 field trips were organized:

- **Sakarun Bay** | 12-14th May 2025, organized by SUNCE and Natura Jadera
- **Middle Brenta** | 4-5th June 2025, organized by Etifor | Valuing Nature and ETRA
- **Istrian Coast** | 11-12th June 2025, organized by Natura Histrica



Sakarun Bay, Croatia

Organizational aspects:

- Organizing partner: SUNCE and Natura Jadera
- Date of the visit: May 12-14, 2025
- Participating partners: UNITS, IPTPO, NATURA HISTRICA, ARPAV, SUNCE, ETRA, ETIFOR, IŽ, Natura Jadera
- Total participants: 29

AGENDA

Day / Time	12. 05. 2025.
Location	
Location – travel point – Zadar – Dugi otok	10:00 -11:15
Meeting with locals	11:30 – 13:45
Lunch	13:45 – 15:00
Free time (check in accomodation)	15:00 – 16:00
Visit Telašćica Nature Park and Visitor Center “Garpaščak”	16:00 – 19:30
Free time	20:00...

AGENDA MEETING with LOCALS	12. 5. 2025.
Opening speech - SUNCE	11:45 – 11:55
Municipality of Sali	11:55 – 12:00
Utility company Mulic d.o.o.	12:00 – 12:15
PI Nature Park “Telašćica”	12:15 – 12:25
PI Natura Jadera	12:25 – 12:35
IPTPO	12:35 – 12:45
Istra County	12:45 - 12:55
Natura Histrica	12:55 – 13:05
UNIST	13:05 – 13:15
Etra spa	13:15-13:25
ETIFOR	13:25 – 13:35
ARPAV	13:35 – 13:45

Day / Time	13. 05. 2025.
Location	
Meeting point – minibus (check out accomodation)	09:30 -10:30
Visit Sakarun Bay	10:30 – 11:30
Meeting with children (High school Gračac) – Clean Up Action / (including lunch)	11:30 – 15:00
End of Visit – (Bus and Leaving Dugi otok by tourist boat)	15:00 – 16:15
Free time (Zadar)	16:30

Sakarun Bay, Croatia: data collection with drones

Activity: data collection with drones performed by The University of Trieste (UNITS) - May 11, 2025

UNITS used a drone to take aerial photos of Sakarun Bay and beach. By comparing these images with satellite photos, they will be able to draw final conclusions about the types of waste present.

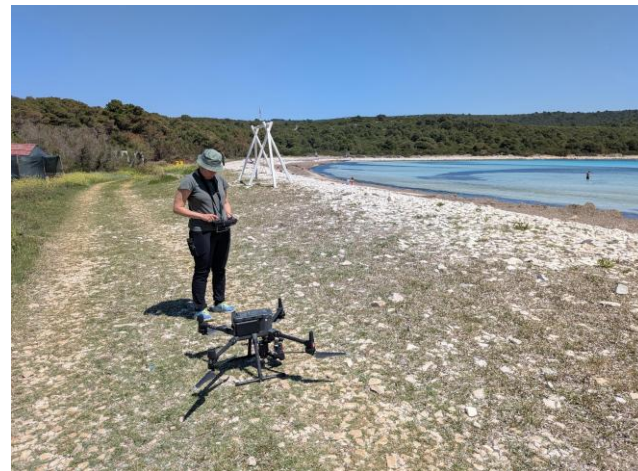
During the visit, Sunce supported the University team by providing logistical assistance.



Sakarun Bay, Croatia: data collection with drones

Results:

- Obtained hyperspectral drone images to study the waste composition through high resolution images;
- The images has been used to produce the spectral signature of different waste materials (mainly plastics) and to test a classification model.



Sakarun Bay, Croatia: local community as a key stakeholder

Activity: Meeting with local stakeholders - May 12, 2025

A total of **25 representatives from partner and other organizations met in Sali** (Sakarun Bay – Dugi otok) along with local stakeholders.

Local stakeholders were represented by:

- Leonarda Lukin from the Municipality of Sali
- Josipa Grbin i Ivo Juranov from Utility company Mulić d.o.o.
- Vesna Petešić, Nikolina Bakavić and Milena Ramov from Public Institution Telašćica Nature Park.



Sakarun Bay, Croatia: local community as a key stakeholder

- **Brief description of the activity:** Locals and partners had the chance to meet through presentations, a shared lunch, and a farm visit. These activities helped locals learn about the project and its goals, while partners gained insight into the community's needs, preferences, and concerns about waste and marine pollution.
- **Results:** After the group meeting, locals and partners visited a family-run agricultural holding, where they explored sustainable, land-based production methods with minimal use of industrial products, and learned about the application of circular economy principles in family farming. The visit also encouraged knowledge sharing between participants, and visitors had the opportunity to purchase goat's products.



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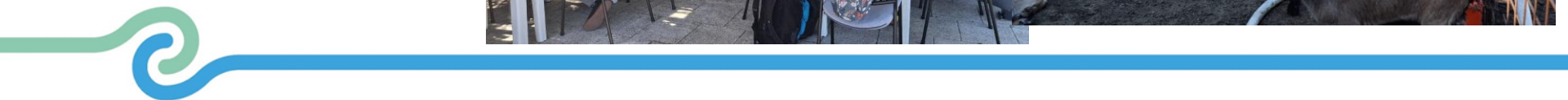


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Sakarun Bay, Croatia: May, 12 2025



Sakarun Bay, Croatia: Clean up activity

Activity: Clean Up Action in Sakarun Bay - May 13, 2025

A total of 46 participants took part in the Clean-Up Action in Sakarun Bay and the neighboring bay. Among them were 19 project partners, the main nature guardian, three additional guardians from the public institution Natura Jadera (which manages the Sakarun Bay pilot area), three teachers and 17 students from Gračac High School, as well as local business owners, including three bar owners and others operating facilities along the Sakarun beach.

Brief description: Partners and students collected mostly plastic litter, as expected. Locals from Sakarun Bay were responsible for waste transportation and logistics around maintenance and communication with the public institution Natura Jadera.



Sakarun Bay, Croatia: Clean up activities

- **Results:** A large amount of marine litter was collected during the Clean-Up Action. Following the activity, an on-site meeting was held on the beach between representatives of the public institution Natura Jadera and Wastereduce project partners. This informal exchange provided an opportunity to share experiences, compare waste management practices, and discuss the specific challenges of protecting coastal areas like Sakarun Bay.
- All partners recognized the importance of *Posidonia oceanica*. They learned that this seagrass plays a vital role in coastal protection by preventing beach erosion and providing a habitat for numerous marine species. Removing *Posidonia* can have serious long-term ecological consequences, highlighting the need for its preservation.



Sakarun Bay, Croatia: Clean up activities



Middle Brenta, Italy

Organizational aspects:

- Organizing partner: ETIFOR
| Valuing Nature in
collaboration with ETRA
- Date of the visit: June 4-5,
2025
- Participating partners:
UNITS, IPTPO, ARPAV,
SUNCE, ETRA, IŽ
- Total participants: 18 people

Agenda:

Day 1: Wednesday, June 4	
Time	Activity
9.15 – 9.30	Meeting with partners in Bassano del Grappa at Piazza Libertà, close to Statua di San Bassiano da Lodi
9.30 – 10.30	Meeting with operators of the electric waste collection vehicle in Bassano del Grappa
10.30 – 12.30	Visit to the waste management center in Bassano del Grappa
12.30 – 14.30	Lunch – Antica Trattoria Da Doro
14.30 – 15.30	Visit to the water plant in Oliero
15.30 – 17.30	Visit to the Oliero caves
17.30 – 18.00	Return to Bassano del Grappa and free time

Day 2: Thursday, June 5	
Time	Activity
9.00 – 9.15	Meeting with partners in Bassano del Grappa here
9:45 – 11:00	Guided tour of the Forest Infiltration Area of Bosco Limite
11:10 – 12:30	Drone flight in the pilot area + cleaning action along the Brenta river
13:00 – 14:00/14.30	Lunch – Osteria Scaldaferro
14:30/15:00	Back in Bassano del Grappa and farewell

Middle Brenta, Italy: main activities



Activity: Meeting with operators of the electric waste collection vehicle in Bassano del Grappa

Brief description: Project partners were introduced to the electric vehicle used for waste collection along the Natura 2000 area of the Brenta River. As part of the LIFE Brenta 2030 project, the vehicle was launched by ETRA as an environmental surveillance, monitoring, and waste collection service along the Middle Brenta river corridor. Using an electric vehicle, operators patrol the riverside and key recreational areas within the Natura 2000 site, identifying critical situations, addressing issues, and collecting any abandoned waste. Fifteen municipalities along the Brenta River collaborated to identify key areas, which are periodically monitored by environmental operators.



Middle Brenta, Italy: main activities

Activity: **Visit to the waste management center in Bassano del Grappa**

Brief description: The facility comprises a large plant dedicated to the treatment of organic waste, a pre-treatment facility for dry waste, and an intermunicipal center for the temporary storage of recyclable, special, and hazardous waste. After an introductory briefing on the processing of organic waste, the managing director of the facility guided us through the premises, explaining each phase of the process in detail. From the arrival of the trucks to the handling of organic waste, we learned about the various stages involved, including sorting, anaerobic digestion, and the production of both biogas and compost.





Middle Brenta, Italy: main activities

Activity: **Visit to the water supply plant and caves in Oliero**

Brief description: Moving towards the Oliero River – tributary of the Brenta – partners visited the [Oliero water supply plant](#), which was built in 1971 and completed in 1975. Today, with a single step of over 1000 m in height difference, the plant pumps the water from Oliero to the Col d'Astiago collection reservoir. In June 2018 the old reservoir was replaced by a new larger one and the plant was connected to the Grappa adductor with the aim of integrating, optimising and guaranteeing the water service.

After that, the partners ventured into the Oliero Caves to discover the natural treasures of the area





Middle Brenta, Italy: main activities

Activity: **Guided tour of the forest infiltration area of Bosco Limite**

Brief description: Project partners had the chance to take a walk and visit the multifunctional forest of [Bosco Limite](#). Just a few steps from the Brenta River, on a farm that had been used for corn cultivation for 20 years, there is now a thriving forest that produces clean water. Thanks to 1.5 km of channels, the forest infiltrates around one million cubic meters of water annually, improving both the quantity and quality of the area's water resources. The 2,300 plants in Bosco Limite have transformed the land from a single-species cornfield to a diverse forest with over 15 different tree and shrub species, restoring the typical forest ecosystem of the Po Valley. Covering 25,000 square meters, the area has become home to more than 20 bird species. The forest also produces renewable energy and high-quality timber for sustainable construction.

Middle Brenta, Italy: main activities

Activity: **Drone flight in the pilot area and cleaning action along the Brenta river**

Brief description: The two-day visit in the Medio Brenta area ended near the Camazzole lake, right along the Brenta River within the project's observation zone. Here, partners were involved in activities to clean the area and, thanks to the expertise of the University of Trieste and ARPAV teams, drone surveys were carried out to gather data from above.



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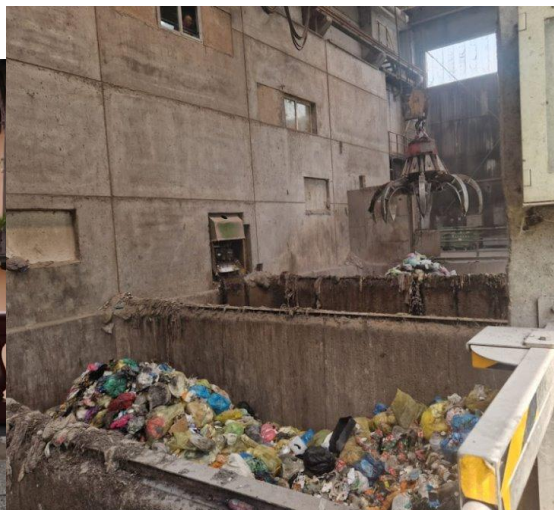


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Visit to Middle Brenta Area, June 4-5



Istrian Coast, Croatia

Organizational aspects:

- Organizing partner: Natura Histrica
- Date of the visit: 11-12th June 2025
- Participating partners: UNITS, IPTPO, ARPAV, SUNCE, ETRA, ETIFOR, IŽ
- Total participants: 25

Agenda

Tuesday, June 11 – Kontija & Limski zaljev

9:15 - 9:45 Arrival to the monastery by own cars and organised transport to the Science Education Centre (ZEC) Kontija

9:45 - 9:55 Greetings from Lead Partner IPTPO

9:55 - 10:05 Greetings from PI NH

10:05 - 10:30 Presentation about the Science Education Centre by Tea Štifanić

10:30 - 11:00 Coffee break

11:00 – 13:00 Tour of the Special reserve of forest vegetation Kontija

13:00 - 14:00 Lunch break

14:00 -14:15 Transport back to the monastery

14:15 - 14:45 **Travel to Limski zaljev** with own cars

14:45 - 17:00 Guided tour & boat ride along Limski zaljev

17:00 Free time

Wednesday, June 12 – Ušće Mirne

10:30 - 11:00 Arrival to Ušće Mirne (30-minute drive if arriving from Poreč)

11:00 - 12:30 Guided tour along with birdwatching

12:30 - 13:00 Visit to European roller breeding boxes.

13:00 - 13:45 Drive along the river to the restaurant.

13:45 - 15:00 Lunch break

15:00 Free time and farewells

Istrian Coast, Croatia: main activities

Activity: Visit to Limski zaljev (NH)

Brief description:

On June 11, 2025, PI Natura Histrica organized an educational tour of the pilot area Limski Zaljev for project partners. The program began with a meeting at the Science Education Centre (ZEC) in Kontija, where participants received an overview of ZEC's mission and management practices. Before visiting the pilot area, the group toured the Special Reserve of Forest Vegetation Kontija, a protected natural area managed by PI Natura Histrica, during which the partners were given an insight into the importance of conservation of woodland areas, as well as introduction to important native plant species. The tour continued with a boat ride through Limski Zaljev, during which Sandro Dujmović delivered an educational presentation on the significance and management of the area.



Activity: Visit to Limski zaljev (NH)



Istrian Coast, Croatia: main activities

Activity: Visit to Ušće Mirne (NH)

Brief description:

On June 12, 2025 PI Natura Histrica organised an educational tour of the pilot area Ušće Mirne for project partners. This pilot area is known for its value as a stopover site for migrating birds, notably, breeding populations of the European roller were successfully settled in this area through the installation of nesting boxes.

The tour focused on ornithological features and current ecological challenges, particularly the invasive blue crab, which poses a serious threat to the marine ecosystem.



Activity: Visit to Ušće Mirne (NH)**Brief description:**

Partners had the opportunity to experience birdwatching using the binoculars and scopes provided by PI Natura Histrica.

During the tour we stopped at one of the sites with European roller nesting boxes, where we held an educational presentation on the species itself and importance of conservation efforts such as the one undertaken in the pilot area.



Key insights and final remarks

- **Sakarun Bay** – As a result, it can be stated that there is an increased interconnection and a better understanding of the situation on Dugi Otok, along with concrete suggestions for addressing waste management issues. Thanks to these field visits, project partners gain a clearer insight into local challenges and needs. It is essential that we meet on site and exchange experiences directly.
- **Western Istrian Coast** - The educational tours to Ušće Mirne and Limski Zaljev provided valuable insight into the ecological, educational, and conservation-focused initiatives in these areas. They offered a better understanding of waste management challenges in protected natural zones in Istria. Both visits fostered productive dialogue among project partners, laying the foundation for future collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Key insights and final remarks

- **Middle Brenta** – On one hand, the visit to the area provided a clear understanding of the waste management process: observing the electric vehicle and the waste treatment plant offered a tangible example of the various stages involved, highlighting the importance of logistics and technological innovation in waste collection and treatment. On the other hand, exploring the Medio Brenta area - through key stops such as the Oliero power plant, the caves, Bosco Limite, and Camazzole - offered a holistic perspective on the multifunctionality of the territory. These places showcased the environmental, cultural, and social value that the Brenta River and its ecosystem represent for the local community.



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