

This is 8th WASTEREDUCE Newsletter

Dear Readers,
Welcome to the 8th edition of our WASTEREDUCE Newsletter!

As the summer season peaks, so does the steady stream of tourists to popular destinations like Italy and Croatia. While tourism plays a vital role in driving economic growth, the seasonal surge also places considerable pressure on waste management systems, leading to increased litter, overstretched infrastructure, and heightened strain on local resources. These challenges underscore the urgent need for sustainable, coordinated solutions. In this edition, we focus on the critical link between **Sustainable Tourism and Waste Management**, exploring how various actors and regions are responding to the pressures of mass tourism with innovative, practical solutions.

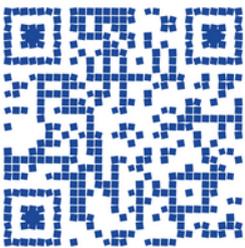
Plastic pollution, one of the most pressing environmental threats in tourism hotspots, receives special attention in this issue. We're pleased to share **actionable guidelines** developed through our **Plastic Pollution Solutions** scheme, offering the tourism and hospitality sectors a toolkit of behavioral strategies, policy frameworks, and hands-on interventions to significantly reduce plastic waste.

You'll also find highlights from recent project milestones and our regular "Region in Focus" feature, which takes you to **Croatia's Istria** and **Zadar Counties** to explore local best practices in action.

Thank you for staying connected with us – we hope this issue informs, engages, and inspires you.

Warm regards,
The WASTEREDUCE Team

- Partnership
IT - 4
HR - 4
- 01/02/2024
31/07/2026
- Total budget
1.657.742,23
EUR



WASTEREDUCE

is an EU funded project in collaboration with eight partners. Together, we will tackle waste management challenges in protected and Natura 2000 areas across Italy and Croatia. Our goal is to enhance waste prevention, reduce environmental impacts, and improve cooperation among stakeholders.



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Embracing Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism is more than just a trend, it is a guiding philosophy and practical approach that aims to reduce tourism's negative impacts on the environment and local communities while maximizing its long-term benefits. It focuses on ensuring that travel contributes positively to both current and future generations.

Embracing Sustainable Tourism: A Path to Preservation

What is Sustainable Tourism?



At its core, sustainable tourism is built on four key principles:

- **Minimizing environmental impact:** Reducing pollution, conserving natural resources, and protecting biodiversity.
- **Respecting local cultures:** Preserving cultural heritage, supporting local economies, and meaningfully involving communities in tourism planning and development.
- **Ensuring economic viability:** Creating long-term economic value for host communities through stable employment and income opportunities.
- **Enhancing visitor experience:** Providing authentic, responsible travel experiences that promote cultural appreciation and environmental awareness.

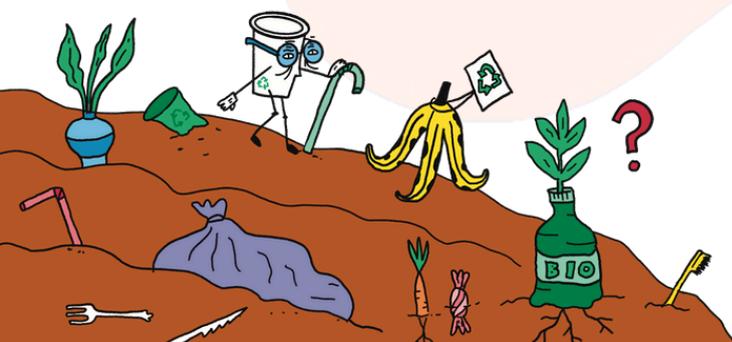


The Unseen Burden: Tourism's Waste Problem

While tourism brings significant economic benefits, it also presents considerable challenges, especially concerning waste generation. The wave of visitors, particularly in popular destinations and protected areas, often leads to:

- **Increased municipal solid waste:** More packaging, single-use plastics, food waste, and general refuse.
- **Littering and illegal dumping:** A major concern in natural landscapes, harming wildlife and ecosystems.
- **Pressure on local waste infrastructure:** Many tourist destinations, particularly smaller or seasonal communities, lack the capacity to manage the sharp rise in waste during peak periods.
- **Food waste:** Hotels, restaurants, and tourist accommodations often generate substantial amounts of food waste.
- **High water and energy consumption:** While not directly waste, excessive consumption contributes to a larger environmental footprint, often linked to waste generation from related activities.
- **Plastic pollution:** Single-use plastic bottles, bags, and containers are commonly used in the tourism industry and pose a serious threat to both marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

These challenges are amplified in sensitive ecosystems like protected and Natura 2000 areas, where the delicate balance of nature can be easily disrupted by unsustainable practices.





EU Regulations for a Greener Future

EU regulations are paving the way for a circular economy and greener tourism by turning policy into practical action.



Guiding Principles: EU Regulations for a Greener Future

The European Union recognizes the importance of sustainable tourism and robust waste management, implementing a range of policies and directives to address these issues. These regulations provide a framework for Member States to develop and enforce their own national laws, aiming for a more circular economy and a responsible tourism sector. Key EU legislative areas include:

- **Waste Framework Directive (Directive 2008/98/EC, revised by Directive 2018/851/EU):** This foundational directive establishes the core principles of EU waste policy, including the waste hierarchy: prevention, reuse, recycling, recovery, and disposal. It obligates Member States to implement measures that prioritize waste prevention and promote high-quality recycling.
- **Single-Use Plastics Directive (Directive (EU) 2019/904):** Targeting plastic pollution from commonly littered items, this directive bans specific single-use plastic products, such as plates, cutlery, straws, and cotton bud sticks, where sustainable alternatives are available. It also sets reduction targets for other items, significantly impacting the tourism sector's waste footprint.
- **Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (Directive 94/62/EC, as revised):** Designed to harmonize packaging waste management across the EU, this directive sets recycling and recovery targets and promotes packaging design that minimizes environmental impact.
- **Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP):** Though not a standalone directive, the CEAP outlines the EU's strategic vision for transitioning to a circular economy. It supports the development of sustainable product standards, innovative business models, and digital tools—all of which are directly applicable to reducing waste in tourism and hospitality.
- **European Green Deal:** As the EU's overarching strategy to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, the Green Deal includes wide-ranging initiatives that support sustainable mobility, energy efficiency, and circular resource use. These efforts collectively strengthen the framework for sustainable tourism and environmental stewardship.
- **Ecodesign Directive (Directive 2009/125/EC):** While originally focused on energy-related products, this directive promotes product design that enhances durability, reparability, and recyclability—helping to reduce waste throughout supply chains that serve the tourism industry.

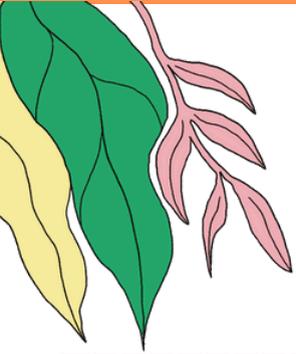
Together, these regulations represent a coordinated effort to move away from a linear “take-make-dispose” model and toward a regenerative, circular economy. For the tourism sector, this means adopting more sustainable operational practices, reducing environmental impact, and contributing to a greener, more resilient future.





Leading by Example - Local Solutions

Italy and Croatia are turning coastal tourism into a model for sustainability, showing how local action can drive meaningful environmental change.



Leading by Example: Local Solutions from Italy and Croatia

With their **iconic coastlines**, **rich cultural heritage**, and **biodiversity-rich landscapes**, **Italy and Croatia** are pioneering **local solutions** that advance both **sustainable tourism** and **effective waste management**. Their initiatives demonstrate how regional action can support broader environmental goals while preserving the unique character of popular destinations.

Italy: Advancing Responsible Tourism

- **Plastic-Free Coastal Initiatives:** Numerous Italian municipalities—particularly in regions like Puglia and Sardinia—have launched plastic-free campaigns. These efforts ban single-use plastics in public spaces, promote reusable alternatives, and encourage tap water consumption over bottled water. Hotels and restaurants are often incentivized to reduce plastic packaging and minimize food waste.
- **Eco-Labels and Environmental Certifications:** Italy supports several eco-labeling schemes, including the EU Ecolabel and national certifications like Legambiente Turismo. These labels certify that tourism businesses meet high standards in waste reduction, resource efficiency, and sustainable sourcing, helping consumers make informed, responsible choices.
- **Recycling and Waste-to-Energy Programs:** Regions are investing in advanced waste management systems, including door-to-door waste separation, recycling facilities, and waste-to-energy plants. Coastal towns and islands have significantly increased recycling rates, even during peak tourist seasons, while reducing pressure on landfills.

Croatia: Protecting the Adriatic's Natural Heritage

- **Plastic Smart Cities and Islands:** Croatian coastal towns and islands, especially those within protected areas, are joining the Plastic Smart Cities initiative, a global movement to reduce plastic pollution. These programs include public awareness campaigns, refill stations for water bottles, and incentives for reusable packaging among local businesses.
- **Blue Flag Beaches and Marinas:** Croatia has earned international recognition for its Blue Flag-certified beaches and marinas. To receive this eco-label, sites must meet rigorous standards in waste management, environmental education, water quality, and safety—promoting clean, well-managed coastal tourism.
- **Sustainable Island Development:** Islands like Krk are leading the way with smart island initiatives that integrate renewable energy, efficient waste systems, and the promotion of local, eco-friendly products. These comprehensive approaches offer scalable models for other tourism-dependent islands across the Mediterranean.

These examples demonstrate that through concerted efforts from local authorities, businesses, and visitors, it is possible to mitigate the environmental impact of tourism and ensure that our beautiful protected areas remain pristine for generations to come.





Plastic Pollution Solutions

Tackling plastic pollution in protected areas demands more than infrastructure. It requires a mindset shift toward sustainable materials and waste practices.

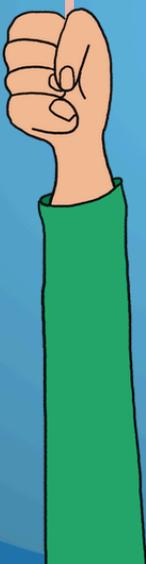
Tackling Plastic Pollution in Protected Areas: From Awareness to Action

Building on the behavioral insights presented in our previous Newsletters, it becomes evident that **addressing plastic pollution in protected areas requires not only infrastructure and education, but also a fundamental shift in how we think about materials and waste.**

Plastic remains one of the most pervasive and persistent threats to natural ecosystems, particularly in tourism-intensive regions. Within the WASTEREDUCE project, special attention has been given to identifying actionable strategies for reducing plastic waste, grounded in both policy frameworks and practical guidance for the tourism and hospitality sectors.

Here we provide clear recommendations for minimizing plastic use and improving sustainability practices, supported by the **Plastic Pollution Solutions scheme.**

BY TAKING THESE PRECAUTIONS,
HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES
CAN MAKE MORE RESPONSIBLE CHOICES
AND CONTRIBUTE TO GENUINE
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY!



Plastic Pollution SOLUTIONS

Consumables



X SOURCES OF POLLUTION:



X Single-use plastic, “paper” and bioplastic cups



X Single-use plastic, bioplastic and paper straws



X Single-use plastic or bioplastic cutlery



X Single-use plastic or “paper” plates



X Single-use plastic, styrofoam or “paper” food containers



X Single-use plastic drink bottles
Plastic sachets and food wraps



X Plastic sachets and food wraps



X Single-use wet wipes and synthetic napkins



X Soap and shampoo in single-use plastic packaging



X Single-use plastic and bioplastic bags



X Single-use plastic party poppers and balloons

✓ SOLUTIONS



✓ Reusable glass, ceramic, wood, bioplastic and stainless steel cups



✓ Reusable metal straws with a brush



✓ Reusable metal, wooden or bioplastic cutlery



✓ Reusable ceramic, glass, metal, wood or bioplastic plates



✓ Reusable ceramic, glass, metal, wood or bioplastic food containers



✓ Reusable/refundable glass, metal or bioplastic bottles



✓ Reusable honey, sugar and biscuit containers



✓ Reusable cloth napkins or single-use paper napkins



✓ Reusable soap and shampoo dispenser



✓ Reusable cloth bags or old reused cardboard boxes



✓ Reusable party items and toys, rice, wheat or other natural material as poppers

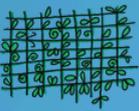
Plastic Pollution SOLUTIONS Furnishing, Structural and Decorative Materials



✗ SOURCES OF POLLUTION:



✗ Plastic furniture (chairs and tables) exposed to the elements



✗ Plastic leaf fence and plastic fence tarps



✗ Plastic Tiki parasol



✗ Artificial plants



✗ Plastic turf, carpet or grass used as flooring



✗ Plastic turf, carpet or grass used as flooring

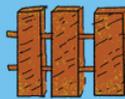


✗ Rubber playgrounds
Synthetic geotextile

✓ SOLUTIONS



✓ Furniture made of natural materials (wood, bamboo, metal, stone, glass, rope, textile)



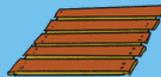
✓ Fences made of natural materials or plants



✓ Umbrellas with natural palm leaves or other natural materials



✓ Natural plants



✓ Natural floor boards and floors made of natural materials (wood, stone)



✓ Natural wood-chip playgrounds



✓ Natural fibre geotextile

**READ MORE
IN OUR NEW
BROSHURE**

Plastic Pollution SOLUTIONS Equipment and Waste Management



✗ SOURCES OF POLLUTION:



✗ Synthetic dish sponges and microfiber cloths



✗ Plastic cutting boards



✗ Public rubbish bins without a lid



✗ Only one general waste bin

✓ SOLUTIONS



✓ Dish sponges and cloths made of cellulose, loofah, metal or other natural material



✓ Wooden, glass or stone cutting boards



✓ Public rubbish bins with a lid and a pedal



✓ Recycling bins for separated recyclable waste

Products with this logo should be avoided.

If it is not possible to avoid them, they should be disposed of in a general waste bin, as they are not recyclable.



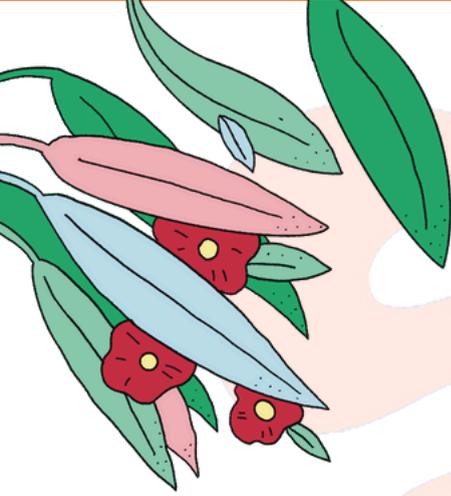
SINGLE-USE PLASTICS
DIRECTIVE

COMPLY WITH
THE SINGLE-USE
PLASTICS (SUP)
DIRECTIVE



Region(s) in Focus: Field Trips to Istria and Dalmatia

As part of cross-border efforts to protect the Adriatic, project partners visited key pilot sites in Dalmatia and Istria, engaging in hands-on environmental activities and knowledge sharing. From clean-up actions and marine litter monitoring in Sakarun Bay to educational excursions in Lim Bay and the Mirna River estuary, these field trips strengthened collaboration and deepened understanding of regional conservation challenges.



Region(s) in Focus:

Joint Croatian-Italian effort at Sakarun aims for a cleaner Adriatic



In mid-May, project partners from Croatia and Italy gathered in Sakarun Bay on Dugi otok for a two-day WASTEREDUCE meeting organized by project partner Sunce. Over May 12–13, the group conducted seabed and beach clean-ups and discussed strategies to tackle marine litter at this pilot site as well as a range of other project activities.

The visit began with a meeting in the town of Sali, where project partners connected with local stakeholders in a friendly yet productive atmosphere. Partners presented their institutions and shared how their work contributes to the common goal: **reducing waste in protected and Natura 2000 areas**. Local representatives – Leonarda Lukin from the Municipality of Sali, Josipa Grbin from the municipal company Mulić d.o.o., and Vesna Petešić from the **Public Institution Nature Park Telašćica** – offered valuable insights into the real-world challenges they face in managing waste on the island. It was an important connection – a dialogue that fosters understanding and lays the groundwork for sustainable solutions.



Did you know that marine litter can be seen from space?

We also had the chance to hear some fascinating insights from our experts who are applying **advanced technologies within the WASTEREDUCE project**. Researchers from the **University of Trieste** are currently exploring innovative methods for detecting marine litter using drones and satellite imagery. At the same time, Italy's **ETRA SpA** is working on setting up cameras at tourist hotspots along the Brenta River to help discourage beach littering and promote more responsible visitor behavior.

Region(s) in Focus:

Sakarun as a pilot site for tackling waste

The following day was dedicated to a field visit to Sakarun Bay. There, partners met with staff from the associated partner **Public Institution Natura Jadera** to discuss the issue of marine litter, which is especially visible in this environment. Meetings like this are incredibly valuable. They give us the opportunity to deepen our understanding of local contexts and improve the overall quality of project implementation.

For example, we talked about some of the actions carried out by our project partner **Sunce**. As part of the **Plastic-Free Croatian Islands** project, Sunce, in collaboration with protected area managers, is implementing initiatives to reduce the use of single-use plastics by concessionaires operating in protected areas. The goal is for concessionaires to use reusable solutions instead of single-use plastics (cups, plates, etc.).

This effort includes environmental regulations for boat tours and a renewed focus on preserving Posidonia seagrass, an essential natural shield against beach erosion and habitat loss.



Sakarun, renowned for its turquoise waters and natural beauty, has recently seen lower quantities of debris—especially following stormy periods.

And of course – actions spoke louder than words. In a wonderful display of teamwork and commitment, the project partners joined forces with students from Gračac High School for a **beach cleanup**. In just a few hours, they collected impressive amounts of waste.



You can read the whole story [here](#)





Region(s) in Focus:

Educational Excursion to Istria's Natura 2000 Sites



On **June 11th and 12th**, our partner **Natura Histrica** organized an inspiring and dynamic educational excursion to pilot sites in **Istria**, Croatia, concluded with valuable partner networking.

Participants first visited the **Kontija Science and Education Centre**, where they learned about the management of the Kontija Special Forest Vegetation Reserve. The visit also included a walk through the forest to a fascinating archaeological site and a scenic viewpoint offering a breathtaking panorama of **Lim Bay**—our next destination.



The following day, the group explored the mouth of the **Mirna River**, another ecologically important **Natura 2000 site**. Discussions focused on the challenges of coastal waste, the presence of invasive species like the blue crab, and the critical importance of this area for migratory birds. One of the highlights was a presentation on the European roller—a stunning bird species that has been nesting for years in birdhouses installed along the Mirna River by **Natura Histrica**.

Such visits not only provide a deeper understanding of the pilot sites, but also offer an excellent opportunity for partners to exchange ideas and observations.





News and Announcements

Workshops, conferences, meetings, events, public engagement... all of these are part of a project's life cycle.

But we want it to be more than that – a seed for new ideas, a shift in mindset that continues even after the project ends. For us. For better future.

News

WASTEREDUCE Workshop: On 21 July, ETRA, ARPAV, and ETIFOR organized a workshop to present the Wastereduce project strategy and gather feedback from strategic stakeholders, including municipalities and associations active in the Natura 2000 area of the Brenta River. The event included a press conference to illustrate the project and formalize agreements with the local municipalities.



Educational efforts: As part of our efforts to protect the sea and reduce plastic pollution, **Sunce produced and distributed reusable cups to businesses in Sakarun Bay in collaboration with our associated partner Natura Jadera.** By encouraging the use of sustainable alternatives, this initiative helps minimize single-use plastics in tourism and promotes more responsible behavior toward safe marine environment. By implementing this ecological practice we aim to educate not only business owners but also visitors of this Natura 2000 area.

PI Natura Histrica, in collaboration with **CPA Pula Diving Centre**, recently carried out **two successful seabed clean-up actions**. The first took place on **July 6** in **Mirna river mouth**, followed by another on **July 13** in **Raša river mouth**, with **both efforts** removing large amounts of marine waste. Additionally, progress has been made in developing a **marine environment monitoring method** using satellite image analysis, with a detailed report expected soon.



Media promotion: **Sunce** promoted Wastereduce project in three radio shows: **Otočne minute** and **Zeleni mikrofon** on radio Antena Zadar and **Zeleni val** on Novi radio Zadar.

Announcements

Further seabed clean-up activities are planned after the tourist season, targeting the Mirna and Raša river mouths. These upcoming initiatives will be organized by **PI Natura Histrica**. As part of the ongoing environmental awareness campaign, one more **plogging race** is also scheduled.



We look forward to the **third partners' meeting**, which will be held in **October** in **Split, Croatia**.

And finally,
we have an announcement:

**FROM AWARENESS
TO ACTION:
TACKLING WASTE
IN PROTECTED AND
NATURA 2000 SITES**

**EXCITING
NEWS!**

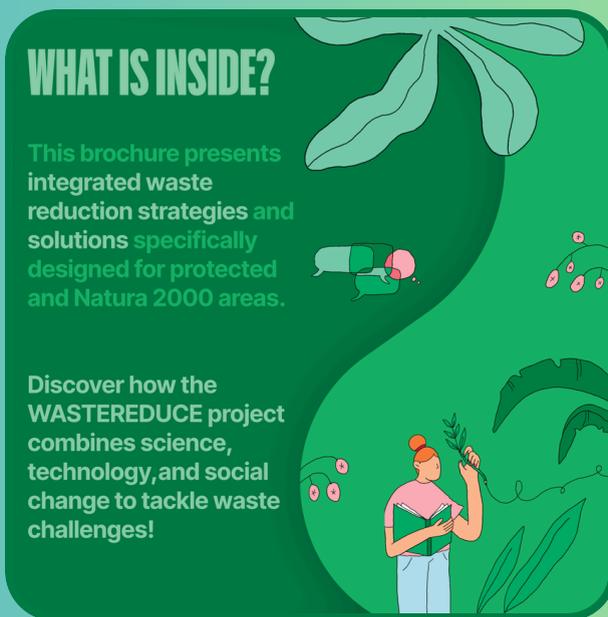
**Our New
BROCHURE
is Here!**



WHAT IS INSIDE?

This brochure presents integrated waste reduction strategies and solutions specifically designed for protected and Natura 2000 areas.

Discover how the WASTEREDUCE project combines science, technology, and social change to tackle waste challenges!



We hope you enjoy reading
as much as we enjoyed
creating.



DOWNLOAD



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WASTEREDUCE

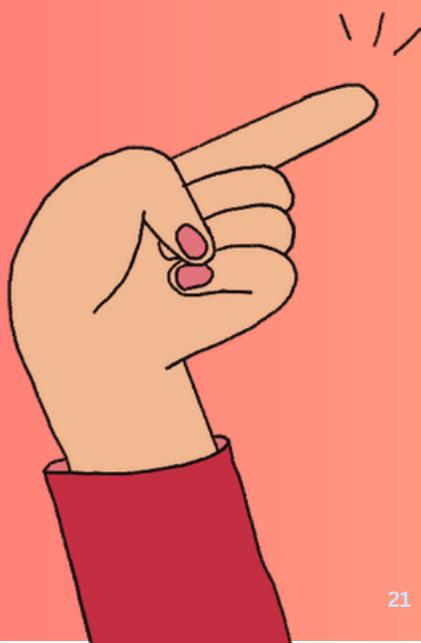
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The author of the illustrations used in this Newsletter is Marina Uljančić