GUARDIANS OF NATURE

HEROES IN ACTION TO SAVE THE PLANET

Interreg
Co-funded by the European Union
Italy – Croatia
ACTION

TEACHERS RESOURCES

Preface

The digital educational kit “Guardians of Nature” provides **digital materials** that can be freely downloaded from the page https://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/action/library. This educational tool is created as part of the dissemination activities of the **Interreg Italy-Croatia ACTION project.**

The educational kit is designed with language suitable for primary and middle school students, to raise awareness and introduce them to the themes of biodiversity protection, climate change, and Nature-based solutions, as well as the actions that every European citizen can take to preserve the environmental heritage. The contents of the educational kit have been structured taking into account the current needs of school curricula for achieving **interdisciplinary skills** between Science and Civic Education, combining concepts of a purely scientific nature with those of key European competences, which as a whole represent the necessary skills for the personal fulfilment of each student, also as a future European citizen.

The kit includes a series of **educational supports** divided into a single module for students in the early years of primary school and 3 modules and 3 teaching units for the later years of primary and middle school, which can be integrated in various ways to create a kit suitable for both a few and several meetings. At the link above, in addition to the student manual for use in the classroom, you can download the teacher’s manual and printable sheets for carrying out extracurricular activities.

Comune di Ravenna

RB

ALMA MATER STUDIORUM UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA | DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL, GEOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

ISTITUTO DELTA ECOLOGIA APPLICATA

ENTE DI GESTIONE PER I PARCHI E LA BIODIVERSITA' DELTA DEL PO

VRANSKO JEZERO Park prirode • Nature Park

Parco Naturale Regionale Dune Costiere da Torre Canne a Torre San Leonardo

citation

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ISTITUTO DELTA ECOLOGIA APPLICATA

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Made in June 2025

CONTENTS

This section of the kit provides guidance on planning and dividing content into teaching units. It also offers an overview of the materials, organized by student target groups. This will help the trainer use the materials effectively.

Why not get involved yourself? Connect with other teachers and find schools to collaborate with, educators to share your experiences with, seminars, and much more information on the website: https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/network-other-teachers_en

LESSON PLANNING AND UNITS

Single Module for Early Primary School Years

LEVEL	COMPETENCIES	OBJECTIVES
Up to 9 years old	• Learning to learn. • Understanding the basics of the European Union's formation and its environmental protection efforts. • Knowing good practices for sustainable development and nature-based solutions to combat climate change. • Enhancing digital and multilingual skills. • Fostering social and civic competencies, as well as cultural awareness and expression.	• Extract fundamental technical information from non-technical texts. • Understand why it's necessary to protect natural heritage. • Know good practices for sustainable development and nature-based solutions to combat climate change. • Understand the importance of implementing European projects like ACTION.

- METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES AND TEACHING PATH
- Guided conversation using the digital and printed module of the illustrated story.
- Read and explain some concepts from the educational kit, drawing from sections of the basic level files for deeper understanding, and using the glossary.
- Identify keywords and complete a crossword puzzle with the knowledge gained.
- Consolidate learning through practical experiences and play-based techniques, by reading the story, coloring the printable illustrations, and playing the board game, under the teacher's guidance.

MODULE 1, CHAPTER 1

LEVEL	COMPETENCIES	OBJECTIVES
Ages 9-12	• Understand main information from technical-scientific texts. • Grasp basic scientific concepts: biodiversity, ecosystem, wetlands. • Learn about components of the coastal environment. • Understand the importance of nature conservation and recognize virtuous behaviors to preserve it. • Learn to observe. • Boost digital and multilingual skills	• Extract fundamental information from a technical text to provide exhaustive answers to simple questions. • Be able to recognize behaviors that protect nature. • Reflect on, identify, and connect personal and others' experiences. • Learn to act.
Ages 12+	• Understand main information from technical-scientific texts. • Grasp basic scientific concepts: biodiversity, ecosystem, wetlands. • Learn about components of the coastal environment. • Understand the importance of nature conservation and recognize virtuous behaviors to preserve it. • Learn to observe. • Boost digital and multilingual skills.	• Extract fundamental information from a technical text to provide exhaustive answers to simple questions. • Present content using learned technical-scientific terms. • Be able to recognize sustainable behaviors. • Be able to recognize behaviors that protect nature. • Reflect on, identify, and connect personal and others' experiences. • Learn to act.

METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES AND TEACHING PATH
- Guided conversation using digital Module 1, focusing on Chapter 1.
- Read and explain the texts in the educational kit with a subject teacher.
- Identify keywords and complete simple in-class activities with acquired knowledge.
- Discussion to verify learning through oral presentation of content and learning through play.
- Consolidate learning through links to online multimedia materials and practical experiences, to observe and gather further information.

MODULE 2, CHAPTER 2

LEVEL	COMPETENCIES	OBJECTIVES
Ages 9-12	• Understand the main information in technical-scientific texts. • Grasp the concepts of climate change and global warming. • Start to understand the concepts of adaptation and resilience. • Learn about the fight against climate change and Europe's role in it. • Learn to identify some threats in coastal environments. • Improve digital and multilingual skills.	• Extract essential information from a technical text to answer simple questions thoroughly. • Recognize the environment around us as "our" common good, not "mine." • Think about the future of Planet Earth.
Ages 12+	• Understand the main information in technical-scientific texts. • Grasp the concepts of climate change, global warming, and ecological footprint (causes and effects). • Understand the concepts of adaptation and resilience. • Learn about the fight against climate change and Europe's role in it. • Learn to identify threats in coastal environments. • Improve digital and multilingual skills	• Extract essential information from a technical text to answer given questions thoroughly. • Present content using learned technical-scientific terms. • Understand the basics of interacting with the natural landscape and the surrounding territory. • Recognize the environment around us as "our" common good, not "mine." • Think about the future of Planet Earth.

METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES AND TEACHING PATH

- Guided conversation using digital Module 2, focusing on Chapter 2.
- Read and explain the educational kit texts with a subject teacher.
- Identify keywords and complete simple in-class activities with acquired knowledge.
- Discussion to check learning through oral content presentation and learning through play.
- Consolidate learning through links to online multimedia materials and practical experiences to observe and gather further information.

MODULE 3, CHAPTERS 3 AND 4

LEVEL	COMPETENCIES	OBJECTIVES
Ages 9-12	• Understand the main information in technical-scientific texts. • Know the concepts of Nature-based Solutions and ecosystem services. • Understand the structure of the Adriatic Sea and the ACTION project's pilot areas within it. • Understand the importance of protecting coastal areas. • Learn about Europe and the European Union and the activities it funds and promotes. • Learn to observe. • Boost digital and multilingual skills. • Foster social and civic competencies, along with cultural awareness and expression.	• Extract fundamental technical-scientific information from a text to provide thorough answers to simple questions. • Be able to recognize the Adriatic Sea and the project areas. • Learn to act to be a conscious citizen.
Ages 12+	• Understand the main information in technical texts. • Know the concepts of Nature-based Solutions, ecosystem services, and sustainable development. • Understand the structure of the Adriatic Sea and the ACTION project's pilot areas within it. • Understand the importance of protecting areas with naturalistic and cultural impact. • Learn about Europe and the European Union and the activities it funds and promotes. • Learn to observe. • Boost digital and multilingual skills. • Foster social and civic competencies, along with cultural awareness and expression.	• Extract fundamental technical information from a text to provide thorough answers to simple questions. • Present content using learned technical-scientific terms. • Be able to recognize the Adriatic Sea and the project areas. • Learn to act to be a conscious citizen. • Be able to conduct specific research independently using major search engines.

METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES AND TEACHING PATH

- Guided conversation using digital Module 3, focusing on Chapters 3 and 4.
- Read and explain the educational kit texts with a subject teacher.
- Identify keywords and complete simple in-class activities with the knowledge acquired.
- Discussion to verify learning through oral content presentation and learning through play.
- Consolidate learning through links to online multimedia materials and practical experiences, to observe and gather further information.

MATERIALS OVERVIEW

This kit is designed with different difficulty levels, allowing you to adapt the material for both short and more extensive teaching paths. The materials are modular for “mixed” target groups, depending on the class’s level.

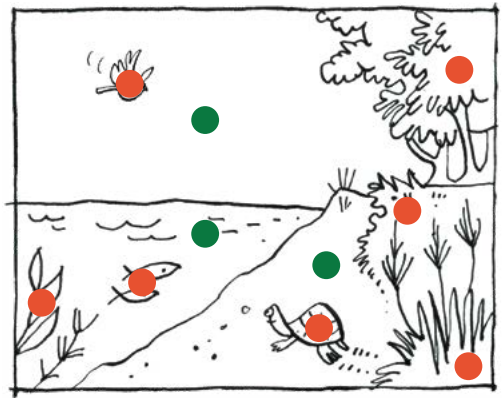
- For students **up to 9 years old**, we’ve created a **SIMPLIFIED SINGLE MODULE**, consisting of:
  - ILLUSTRATED STORY in digital and printed format;
  - TEACHER’S MANUAL in digital format, applicable across various levels, with a printable CROSSWORD for assessment, COLORING SHEETS, and a GLOSSARY;
  - BOARD GAME with printable INSTRUCTIONS and CHARACTER SHEETS.

- The **BASIC LEVEL** is designed for students **from 9 to 12** years and includes:
  - EDUCATIONAL MANUAL in digital and printed format;
  - TEACHER’S MANUAL in digital format, applicable across various levels, with a printable CROSSWORD for assessment, COLORING SHEETS, and a GLOSSARY;
  - BOARD GAME with printable INSTRUCTIONS and CHARACTER SHEETS.

- The **ADVANCED LEVEL** is designed for **students aged 12 and above**, and includes:
  - EDUCATIONAL MANUAL in digital and printed format;
  - TEACHER’S MANUAL in digital-only format, applicable across various levels, with a printable GLOSSARY and WORKSHEETS;
  - BOARD GAME with printable INSTRUCTIONS and CHARACTER SHEETS.

SOLUTIONS FOR STUDENT EXERCISES - *BASIC LEVEL*

BOX "IN ACTION" pg. 3



- Biotic components
- Abiotic components

BOX "IN ACTION" pg. 4

1. FROG
2. MUSSELS
3. KENTISH PLOVER
4. STURGEON
5. FOX
6. DRAGONFLY
7. EEL

BOX "IN ACTION" pg. 9

- Wind speed;
- Rainfall: increase or decrease;
- Number of meadows or gardens in cities;
- Gases present in the air;
- Number of particularly hot days;

BOX "IN ACTION" pg. 13

1. The climate has always changed in Earth's history, so it's not a serious problem now
3. But if it's so cold in winter, how can we talk about global warming?

BOX "IN ACTION" pg. 17

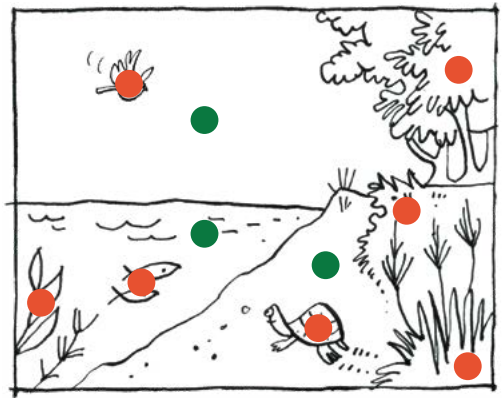
- Poor water quality;
- Low biodiversity;
- Coastal erosion;
- Pollution.

BOX "IN ACTION" pg. 29

The Interreg Italy-Croatia **ACTION** project promotes joint actions to address ongoing **climate** change. The project is inspired by Nature-based **solutions** to develop a shared action plan. The project's pilot areas are 4 (2 in Italy and 2 in Croatia), namely the Po **Delta**, the Neretva **Delta**, the Coastal **Dunes** Regional Natural Park from Torre Canne to Torre S. Leonardo, and Lake **Vrana** Nature Park.

SOLUTIONS FOR STUDENT EXERCISES - *ADVANCED LEVEL*

BOX "IN ACTION" pg. 3



- Biotic components
- Abiotic components

BOX "IN ACTION" pg. 4

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BOX "IN ACTION" pg. 9

CLIMATE CHANGE is caused by the increase in Earth's temperature (**GLOBAL WARMING**), which results from the addition of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere beyond those naturally present. **GLOBAL WARMING** describes the current increase in Earth's temperature. It is just one of the characteristics of **CLIMATE CHANGE**. **CLIMATE CHANGE**, includes the many effects of **GLOBAL WARMING** on Earth's climate system.

BOX "IN ACTION" pg. 13

1-C, 2-B, 3-A

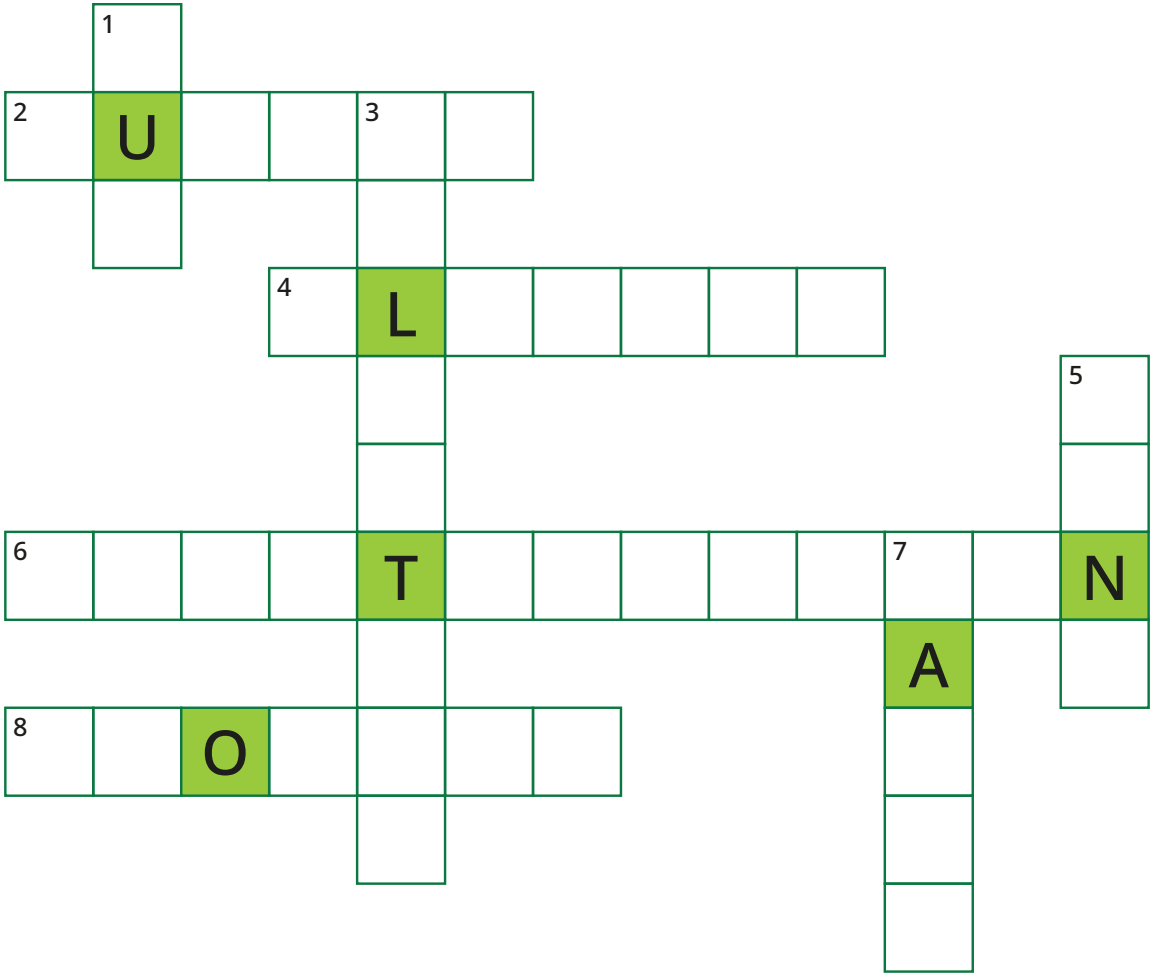
BOX "IN ACTION" pg. 17

- Poor water quality;
- Decrease in biodiversity;
- Saltwater intrusion;
- Extreme events;
- Coastal erosion;
- Pollution.

BOX "IN ACTION" pg. 29

The Interreg Italy-Croatia **ACTION** project promotes joint actions to address ongoing **climate change**. The project is inspired by **Nature-based** solutions to develop a shared action plan. The project's pilot areas are 4 (two in Italy and two in Croatia): the **Po Delta**, the **Neretva** Delta, the **Coastal Dunes** Regional Natural Park from Torre Canne to Torre S. Leonardo, and **Vrana** Lake Natural Park.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE - *SINGLE MODULE*



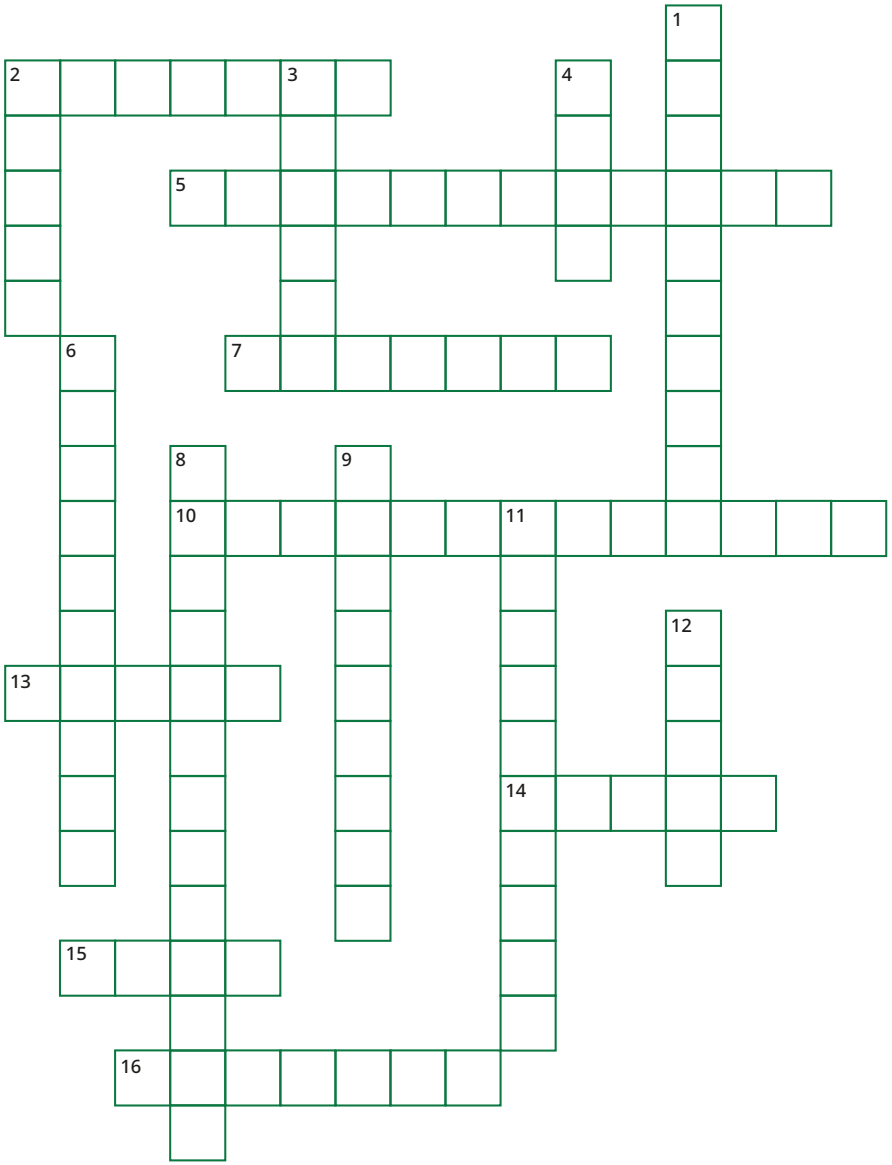
DOWN

1 It's in the sky and gives light
3 Dirt that harms the environment
5 Moving air that produces energy
7 Our planet

ACROSS

2 The continent where we live
4 How the weather changes in a place
6 Sea between Europe and Africa
8 Study of nature and animals

CROSSWORD PUZZLE - *BASIC LEVEL*



DOWN

2 Study of interactions between organisms and the environment

5 Variety of life forms present on Earth

7 Average weather pattern in a given area

10 Alliance of states of the Old Continent

13 Final stretch of a river

14 Species introduced by humans into an environment different from its original one

15 A type of renewable energy

16 Natural environment that allows the development of a specific species

ACROSS

1 Process in which every individual of a species disappears

2 Our planet

3 That concerns the whole world

4 The act of separate waste collection

6 Effect that causes the rise in temperatures

8 Vegetation typical of a mild climate and rich in biodiversity: ..... scrub

9 Main cause of climate change

11 Ability to adapt to new conditions

12 They can be sweet, salty or brin

WORKSHEET

1. **What is an ecosystem?**
   A) A group of animals living in the same zoo
   B) A group of people cultivating a vegetable garden
   C) The set of living and non-living things (environment) that interact with each other

2. **Can you give an example of a transitional water environment?**
   A) The desert
   B) The lagoon
   C) The ocean

3. **What good practices can be adopted to protect nature?**
   A) Reduce waste, recycle, save energy
   B) Use single-use plastic and consume a lot of water
   C) Cut down trees to promote agriculture

4. **Do you remember the difference between weather and climate?**
   A) Weather refers to space and climate refers to the time of day
   B) Weather changes every day, climate is the average over a period
   C) Weather and climate are the same thing

5. **What is the greenhouse effect?**
   A) Heat retained in the atmosphere
   B) Rapid plant growth
   C) Production of artificial snow

6. **What does the ecological footprint measure?**
   A) The length of human steps
   B) How many shoes are used in a year
   C) The impact of human activities on the planet

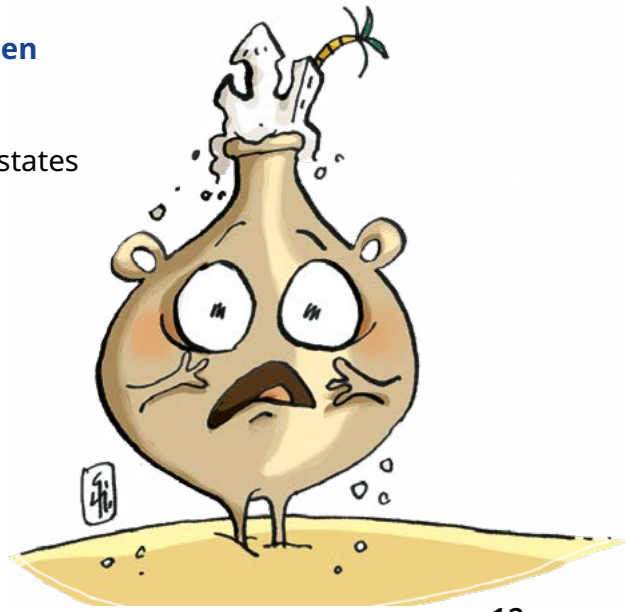
7. **Do you remember what the Paris Agreement is?**
   A) A treaty between European football teams
   B) An international agreement to reduce climate change
   C) An agreement between companies for food production

8. **Why are coastal environments more at risk?**
   A) Because there are too many fish
   B) Because they are exposed to rising oceans
   C) Because it rains less and less

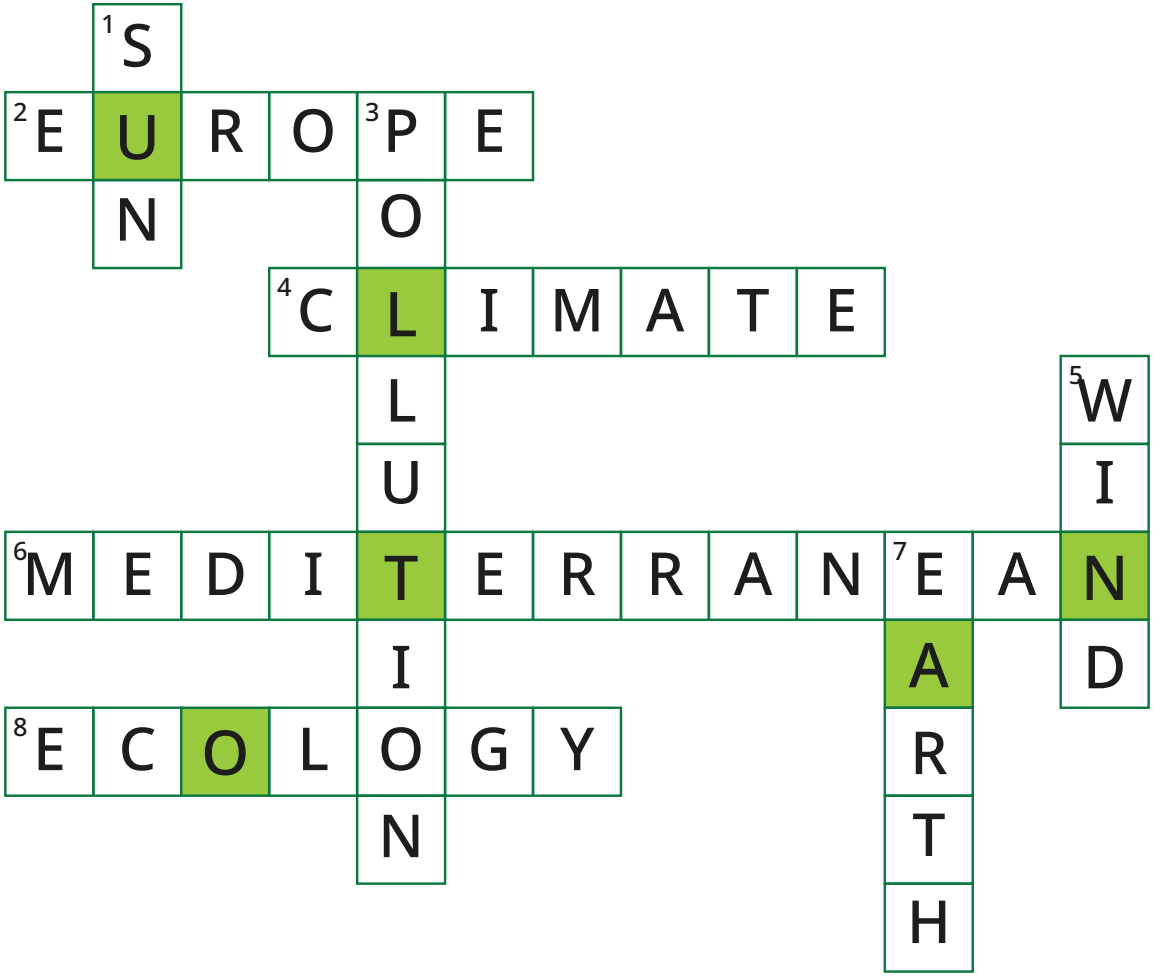
9. **Do you remember what Nature-based solutions are?**
   A) IT solutions based on trees
   B) Strategies inspired by nature
   C) Technologies to reduce excess vegetation

10. **Which of the following is an ecosystem service?**
    A) Bee pollination
    B) Wi-Fi in parks
    C) Road construction

11. **What is the difference between Europe and the EU?**
    A) Europe is a continent, the EU is an organization of states
    B) The EU is a state, Europe is a continent
    C) No difference



CROSSWORD PUZZLE SOLUTIONS - *SINGLE MODULE*



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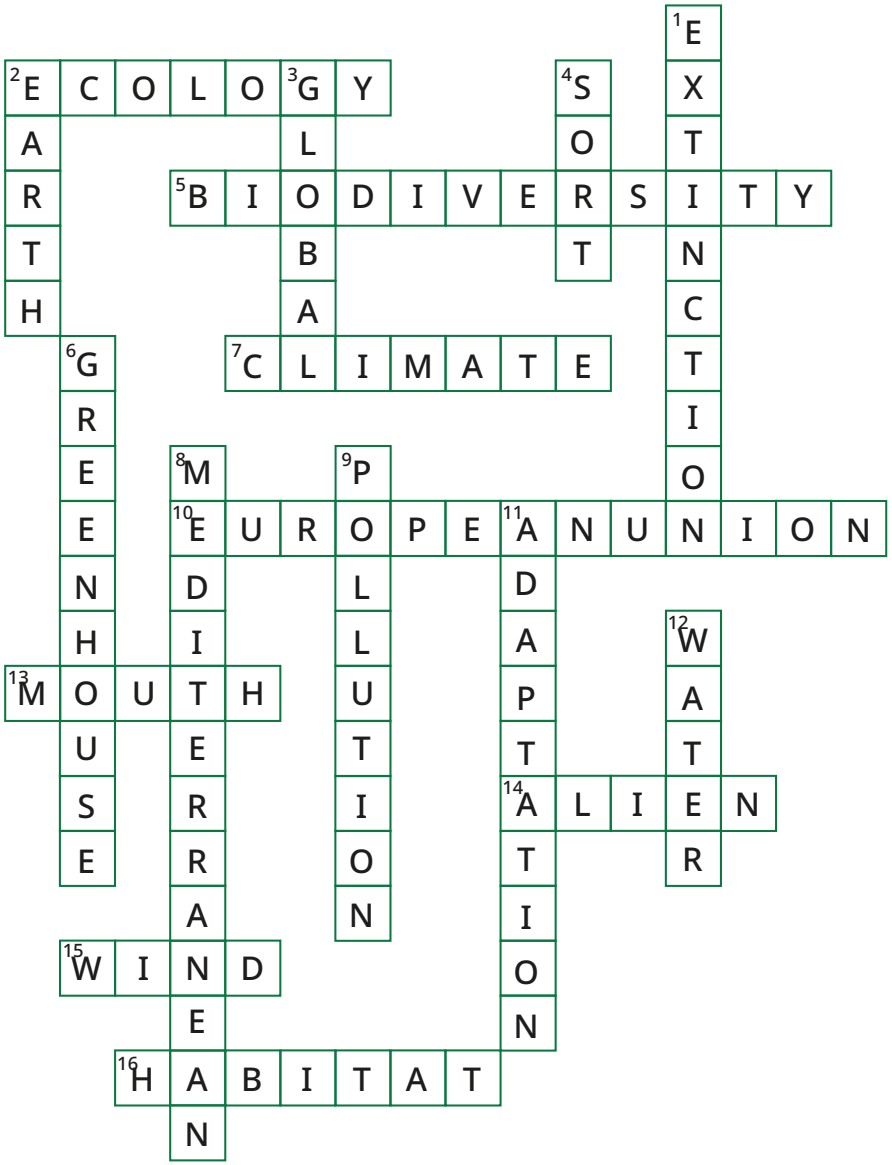
CROSSWORD PUZZLE SOLUTIONS - *BASIC LEVEL*



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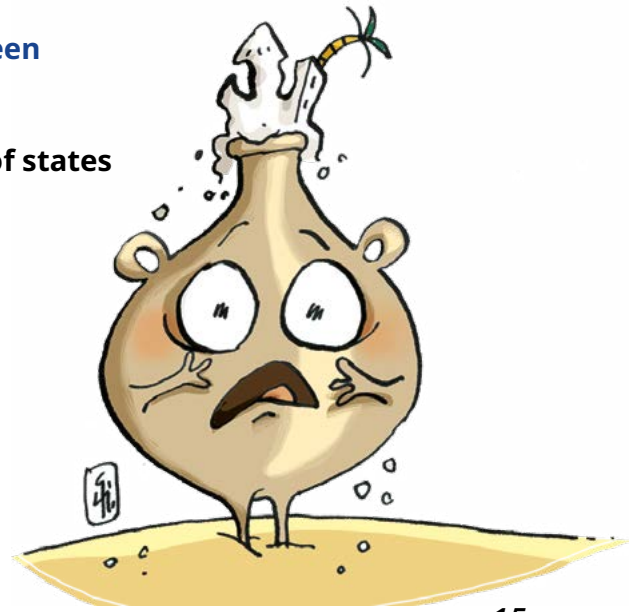

GLOSSARY - *BASIC LEVEL*

ADAPTATION
The ability to change in response to a new condition.

BIODIVERSITY
The quantity of different life forms living on Earth.

CLIMATE CHANGE
It is the change that occurs to our Earth's climate, capable of lasting for a long time. It can be caused by natural causes (like the movement of the Sun or volcanic eruptions) and human-made causes (like pollution from factories, the cutting down of trees, or some types of agriculture that overexploit nature, consuming it).

DIRECTIVE
EU law, which to be implemented is transformed into national law by each EU Member State.

COASTAL DUNES
Natural mounds of sand that are found along the coasts, shaped by the wind and the sea.

ECOSYSTEM
The set of living beings (living or biotic component) and the environment (non-living or abiotic component) in which they live: for example a garden, a beach, a forest, a river.

URBAN HEAT ISLAND EFFECT
Increase in temperature that occurs when moving from rural areas (like the countryside or the forest) to the city center. Cities are hotter than the areas around them because asphalt, concrete, and other materials absorb and retain heat, while vegetation is scarce.

GREENHOUSE EFFECT
Natural phenomenon that maintains the Earth's average temperature perfect for living, thanks to the presence in the air of greenhouse gases, which behave like the glass panes of a greenhouse.

EXTINCTION
Process that occurs when a species disappears completely and there are no more living individuals of that species. A species is at risk of extinction when few animals or plants of that type remain and their number continues to decrease.

HABITAT
From the Latin "to inhabit", this refers to that place, on dry land or in water, where a particular group of animals or plants finds everything it needs to live, such as a certain temperature or a particular type of soil.

MEDITERRANEAN SCRUB
Ecosystem rich in different plants and animals, which manages to live even with heat and little rain, typical of Mediterranean coasts. Some examples of plants you find here are myrtle, rosemary, and olive.

MONITORING
Activity undertaken by technicians and scientists that allows information to be collected. It allows observation (such as how many animals there are or how they are doing) following precise "rules", for a certain period of time.

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS
That is, solutions based on nature, actions that, inspired by nature, produce environmental, social, and economic benefits.

RESILIENCE
Indicates the ability to overcome difficulties created by an extreme event, returning to the state of equilibrium prior to the negative event.

SPECIES
Category that includes all living beings with similar characteristics that, by reproducing, create similar and fertile offspring, meaning able to reproduce. Our species' name is Homo sapiens sapiens.

Native species: typical species naturally present in a given geographical area, where it originated.

Non-native or alien species: species not native to a given geographical area, introduced (intentionally or accidentally) by humans.

GLOSSARY - *BASIC LEVEL*

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES
The set of benefits that nature provides to humankind. They can be classified into 3 categories: provisioning or supply services (e.g. food and timber), regulation and conservation services (e.g. waste recycling and water purification) and cultural services (e.g. outdoor sports).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
A way of consumption and production respectful of resources: we satisfy our needs today, also thinking about those who will come after us. It is a way to reconcile ecology, economy, and life in society, considering the limits of our Planet.

EUROPEAN UNION
Organization for collaboration between States, called Member States, that share common values and objectives.

WETLANDS
Environments with still (stagnant) or moving (flowing) water, with a depth of up to 6 meters. Areas with wet soil, where plants grow, which are called aquatic. These areas can always be present (they are called permanent) or exist only at certain times of the year (temporary), depending, for example, on abundant rainfall.

GLOSSARY - *ADVANCED LEVEL*

ADAPTATION
The capacity to change following a new condition.

BIODIVERSITY
Or biological diversity, it is the variety of all forms of life present on Earth.

SALTWATER INTRUSION
Or marine intrusion, it is the slow movement of saltwater from the sea towards the inland. It can be dangerous because it alters soil values and contaminates aquifers, important freshwater reserves, which thus become brackish.

DIRECTIVE
EU law, which to be implemented locally is transformed into national law by each Member State.

COASTAL DUNES
Natural sand formations that are found along the coasts, shaped by the wind and the sea.

ECOLOGY
Branch of science that deals with the study of interactions and their effects between organisms and the surrounding environment, at all levels of organization: from that of microorganism to that of ecosystem.

URBAN HEAT ISLAND EFFECT
Increase in temperature that occurs when moving from rural areas to the city center. Cities are hotter than the surrounding countryside because materials like asphalt and concrete absorb and retain heat.

GREENHOUSE EFFECT
Natural phenomenon that maintains the Earth's average temperature comfortable and ideal for life, thanks to the presence of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, including the famous carbon dioxide.

NATURAL AND ANTHROPIC ELEMENTS
Natural elements are those elements of the landscape that have not been modified by humans. Some examples are the sea, mountains, hills, woods, swamps, meadows. Anthropic elements or human elements are the elements of the landscape built or modified by humans. Some examples are houses, roads, dams, walls and fences, factories, bridges, cable cars, ports, etc.

EXTINCTION
Process that occurs when no individuals belonging to the same species are alive anymore. A species is said to be at risk of extinction when it is found in few places and the number of living specimens is decreasing.

HABITAT
Natural environment where physical characteristics and environmental conditions are present that allow a certain group of organisms to live. An example is a swamp.

ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT
Indicator that shows how much planet surface is used to produce the resources we consume and to absorb the carbon dioxide we generate.

MEDITERRANEAN SCRUB
Ecosystem particularly rich in biodiversity, which resists periods of drought, typical of regions with a Mediterranean climate, with hot, dry summers and mild, humid winters.

MONITORING
Process of systematic collection of qualitative and quantitative data (like numbers and descriptions), carried out following a standard procedure defined by specific "rules," over a given period of time.

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS
That is, solutions based on nature, actions that, inspired by nature, produce environmental, social, and economic benefits.

RESILIENCE
Indicates the ability to overcome difficulties created by an extreme event, returning to the state of equilibrium prior to the negative event.

GLOSSARY - *ADVANCED LEVEL*

SPECIES
Category that includes all individuals with similar characteristics that, by reproducing, generate similar and fertile offspring, meaning able to reproduce in turn.

Native species: species naturally present in a given geographical area, where it originated.

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The set of benefits that nature provides to humankind. They can be classified into 3 categories: provisioning or supply services (e.g. food and timber), regulation and conservation services (e.g. waste recycling and water purification) and cultural services (e.g. outdoor sports).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
It is a way of consumption and production respectful of resources: we satisfy our current needs, but we also think about those who will come after us. It is a way to reconcile ecology, economy, and life in society, considering the limits of our Planet.

EUROPEAN UNION
Organization for collaboration between States, called Member States, that share common values and objectives.

WETLANDS
Complex natural environments characterized by the permanent or seasonal presence of water, creating an ideal habitat for numerous species of plants, animals, and microorganisms. Some examples are swamps and lagoons.

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Leaflet

Flame

Interreg Co-funded by the European Union
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ACTION

Sand

Wind of Chaos

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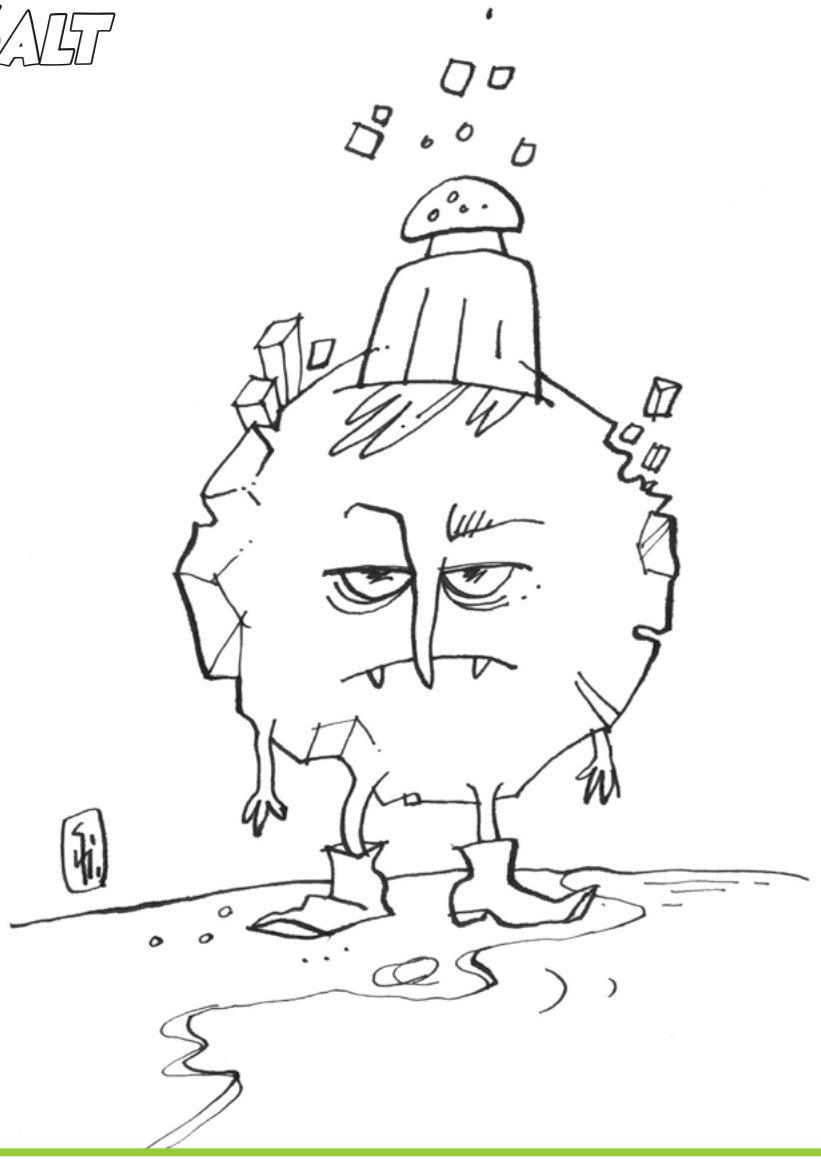
Wave

Salt



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ACTION

GUARDIANS OF NATURE

HEROES IN ACTION TO SAVE THE PLANET

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