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<tr><td>Call</td><td>Interreg Europe, Third call for projects</td></tr>
<tr><td>Proposal title</td><td>CSI-MARINE - Circular Solutions for Innovative Marine Litter Management</td></tr>
<tr><td>Deadline</td><td>June 7, 2024</td></tr>
<tr><td>Budget</td><td>• Up to 2 mil. €
• 80% of 70% co-financing
• No advance payments, reimbursement only.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Duration</td><td>48 months</td></tr>
<tr><td>Partners</td><td>Eligible entities:
• Public authorities,
• Public law bodies (bodies governed by public law),
• Private non-profit bodies (cannot be Lead partners).

Each ‘region’ involved in a project has to identify the main policy instrument it aims to improve through cooperation. The involvement of the policy responsible authority as partner is compulsory for at least 50% of the policy instruments addressed in a project application. For the remaining policy instruments (if any), these authorities must be involved as an ‘associated policy authority’.

Geographical coverage:
• Ideal size: 5-8 partners.
• Participation of partners from Switzerland and candidate countries is strongly encouraged.
• 4 out of the 5 areas below must be represented with at least one partner:
<table>
<tr><th>Geographical areas</th><th>Countries covered</th></tr>
<tr><td>North</td><td>Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden</td></tr>
<tr><td>East</td><td>Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia</td></tr>
<tr><td>South</td><td>Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain</td></tr>
<tr><td>West</td><td>Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland</td></tr>
<tr><td>Candidate countries</td><td>Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine</td></tr>
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<tr><td>Needs analysis</td><td>1. Background and Contextual Needs:
Marine pollution, particularly from plastics and other non-biodegradable materials, poses a severe threat to marine ecosystems, biodiversity, and human health. Coastal areas in Europe face escalating challenges due to litter accumulation, which affects tourism, fisheries, and marine life. The varying capacity of regional and local authorities to manage marine pollution exacerbates these challenges, pointing to a clear need for improved and innovative policy instruments.
2. Technological Gaps:
Current technologies deployed for pollution detection and management are often siloed and not optimized for interregional application. There is a significant gap in the integration of advanced technologies like AI, drones, and IoT for comprehensive monitoring and management. Regions vary in their technological readiness and capacity to implement advanced solutions, necessitating a pilot project that can address these disparities and offer scalable solutions.</td></tr>
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	3. Policy and Regulatory Needs: While numerous regions have established policies aimed at reducing marine litter, there is often a disconnect between policy formulation and implementation. In some cases, existing policies are outdated and not sufficiently robust to address new types of pollutants such as microplastics and chemical contaminants. There is a pressing need for policies that are dynamic, adaptable, and based on proven success in diverse regional settings. **4. Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing:** There is a consistent demand for capacity building in the areas of pollution management and technological application. Many regions lack the expertise to deploy and leverage new technologies effectively. Furthermore, there is a deficit in sharing knowledge and good practices across regions, which if addressed, could enhance the overall efficacy of pollution management strategies. **5. Environmental and Socio-Economic Impact:** The adverse effects of marine litter are manifold, impacting not just marine life but also the socio-economic conditions of coastal communities. Economic activities such as tourism and fishing are particularly vulnerable. An effective response to marine litter must therefore not only focus on environmental outcomes but also consider the socio-economic resilience of these communities. **6. Integration and Scalability:** Solutions developed must be adaptable to different geographic, economic, and social contexts. This requires a framework for integrating technological solutions into existing policy instruments that can be scaled across various regions with differing capacities and needs. **7. Evaluation and Adaptation Needs:** There is a lack of robust mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of existing pollution management strategies comprehensively. New methodologies need to incorporate mechanisms for continuous evaluation and feedback, which will allow for their adaptation over time to meet emerging challenges. The needs analysis underscores the urgency for a project that not only leverages innovative technologies for effective marine litter management but also fosters substantial interregional collaboration to harmonize efforts. The project aims to fill the identified gaps in technology, policy, capacity, and socio-economic strategies, making a substantial contribution to regional and EU-wide environmental goals.
Project objectives	The primary objective of this project is to significantly enhance the capacity of regional policy-makers and relevant stakeholders to effectively detect, manage, and reduce marine litter through the adoption and integration of innovative technological solutions and proven methodologies. By fostering interregional cooperation, this project aims to develop and implement scalable, sustainable practices and policies that can be tailored to the specific environmental and logistical needs of coastal regions across Europe. This will not only mitigate the impact of marine pollution but also contribute to the preservation of marine biodiversity and the enhancement of ecological resilience in participating regions. The project falls under *Policy objective 2. Greener Europe, Specific objective (vii) Protection and preservation of nature and biodiversity, green infrastructures, pollution reduction.*

Work packages and activities	**Semester 1 (Core Phase)** Description of Planned Exchange of Experience Activities: 1. **Kick-off Meeting** (2 days, location TBD): A two-day event that will bring together all project partners will include presentations by each partner on their regional context, key challenges related to marine litter, and relevant policy instruments. Collaborative sessions to refine project methodology, deliverables, and monitoring framework. Site visit to local initiative demonstrating innovative stakeholder engagement approach for marine litter prevention. Workshop to co-design a template for good practice documentation. 2. **Online Thematic Workshop on Innovative Technologies for Marine Pollution Detection (1 day):** The workshop will focus on presenting current technologies and methodologies used in the early detection of marine pollution. This will include case studies from outside the partnership to bring in fresh perspectives. 3. **Study Visit to an Advanced Marine Research Facility** (3 days, location TBD): This visit aims to provide practical insights into the use of emerging technologies in real-world settings. Partners will observe operational protocols and discuss the integration of these technologies into regional policies. 4. **Interregional Peer Review Session in** (2 days, location TBD): A two-day session where partners will present their current policies and practices related to marine pollution management. This peer review will identify gaps and opportunities for learning and improvement. Plenary discussion to identify common challenges and success factors. 3 good practices identified on stakeholder coordination, impact monitoring, and innovative collection techniques. N° of interregional policy learning events organised: 4 N° of good practices identified: 3 **Semester 2 (Core Phase)** Description of Planned Exchange of Experience Activities: 5. **Study visit** (3 days, location TBD): Visits to 3 coastal locations piloting different technologies: drone-based monitoring, AI-enabled microplastic detection, and autonomous underwater vehicles. Demonstrations and technical briefings by technology providers and users. Roundtable with relevant policymakers on enabling policy frameworks and financing mechanisms Working session among partners to reflect on learnings and applicability to their regions. 6. **Online thematic workshop on predictive modelling of marine litter** (1 day): Expert presentations on latest techniques, data requirements, and interpretation of model outputs. Interactive discussion on benefits and limitations of modelling for policy and planning decisions. Breakout groups to exchange on partners' experiences with applying predictive models and identify good practices. 4 good practices identified related to data collection, model development, visualization of outputs, and application to policy. 7. **Technical Workshop on Green Logistics and Multi-Modal Transport Systems** (2 days, location TBD): Focus on the best practices in the transport and recycling of marine litter. The workshop will include sessions on route optimization and environmentally friendly logistics solutions. 8. **Interregional workshop** (2 days, location TBD): Each partner presents a case study on barriers to inter-agency collaboration and how they were overcome. Panel discussion with representatives from different sectors (e.g. waste management,

fisheries, tourism) on strategies for alignment. Co-creation session to develop a collaboration toolkit for marine litter policies and programmes.

N° of interregional policy learning events organised: 4
N° of good practices identified: 8

Semester 3 (Core Phase)

9. **Study visit** (3 days, location TBD): Visits to facilities combining road, rail and water transport of marine litter. Meetings with policymakers and managers to discuss regulatory, logistical and economic aspects. Workshop to assess the replicability and benefits of multi-modal solutions for the partners' regions. Identification of good practices on optimizing multi-modal flows, siting of facilities, and stakeholder agreements.
10. **Online Training on Recycling, Upcycling and Sustainable Reuse of Plastics from Marine Litter (1 day):** These sessions aim to transfer knowledge and skills related to innovative recycling technologies and sustainable practices in plastic reuse. Keynote speech on latest developments in marine plastic recycling and upcycling. Virtual site tour of state-of-the-art plastic processing facilities. Presentations by partners on promising initiatives in their regions. Facilitated discussion on policy actions to stimulate market for upcycled marine plastic products. Identification of good practices related to sorting technology, material traceability, and green public procurement.
11. **Interregional Workshop on Best Practices and Lessons Learned** (2 days, location TBD): A two-day workshop aimed at consolidating all the good practices identified during the project. This workshop will facilitate the development of comprehensive guidelines on implementing these practices within the different regional contexts represented in the project.

N° of interregional policy learning events organised: 3
N° of good practices identified: 12

Semester 4 (Core Phase)

12. **Stakeholder Consolidation Meeting i** (2 days, location TBD): Gather all regional stakeholders to review the project findings and discuss the draft action plans for policy improvement. This meeting is essential for ensuring the alignment and commitment of all parties involved.
13. **Online seminar on scaling up good practices (1 day):** This seminar will address strategies for scaling successful practices to a broader regional or national level, including funding mechanisms, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and public communication.
14. **Interregional Workshop on Policy Integration** (2 days, location TBD): A two-day workshop dedicated to integrating the insights and successful practices from the project into regional development policies. This will include practical sessions on policy writing and amendment processes.
15. **Staff exchange programme** (1 week per exchange, 4 exchanges in total): Staff members from partner organizations will spend a week at another partner's location to: Gain hands-on experience with successful practices and initiatives. Foster deeper understanding and relationships between partner organizations. Facilitate direct transfer of knowledge and skills.

N° of interregional policy learning events organised: 4
N° of good practices identified: 14

Semester 5 (Core Phase)

16. **Project Conference** (2 days, location TBD): This event will serve as a platform to present the progress of the project to a broader audience, including external stakeholders from academia, industry, and other related projects under the Interreg Europe programme. The conference will include breakout sessions focusing on each of the project's thematic areas and discuss advancements and preliminary impacts.
17. **Stakeholder Implementation Workshop** (1 day, local/regional): This workshop will involve regional stakeholders who are critical to the implementation of the developed policies. The session will focus on training these stakeholders to effectively apply the new policies and practices.
18. **Online peer review of action plans** (1 day): Presentation of each region's draft action plan. Written peer feedback provided by other partners, focusing on relevance, feasibility and expected impact. Bilateral discussions between partners to clarify feedback and suggest improvements. Agreed timeline for integrating feedback and finalizing action plans.

N° of interregional policy learning events organised: 3
N° of good practices identified: 16

Semester 6 (Core Phase)

19. **Final Peer Review and Project Synthesis** (2 days, location TBD): A comprehensive review session where each region will present their achievements and learnings from the project. This will be a critical session to synthesize the knowledge gained and prepare for the follow-up phase.
20. **Action Plan Finalization Workshop in** (3 days, location TBD): Dedicated sessions to finalize the action plans based on the project's outcomes. Each region will work on tailoring these plans to their specific needs and capacities to ensure effective implementation.
21. **Online Dissemination and Outreach Seminar** (1 day): This seminar will focus on disseminating the project's results to a wider audience, including potential new regions that could benefit from the project's findings. It will also serve as a preliminary step towards ensuring the project's legacy.
22. **Closure Event** (1 day, location TBD): Marking the end of the core phase, this event will celebrate the achievements of the project and formally present the final outcomes to the Interreg Europe programme authorities and other key stakeholders.

N° of interregional policy learning events organised: 4
N° of good practices identified: 16

Semester 7 (Follow-up Phase)

23. **Data Collection and Impact Assessment Initiation Meeting (1 day, location TBD):** Meeting with a purpose of initiating a systematic collection of data across all partner regions to evaluate the environmental and policy impacts of the implemented actions. This will involve setting up measurement indicators agreed upon during the core phase and utilizing tools developed for ongoing data tracking.
24. **Implementation Monitoring Workshops in each Partner Region (1 day):** These workshops are designed to monitor the initial implementation of the action plans in

	each partner region. They will involve regional policy makers and stakeholders to assess the adoption of the new policies and practices. Each workshop will generate feedback that will be used to fine-tune ongoing implementation efforts. 25. **Virtual Coordination Meetings (1 day each):** Two online meetings will be held to ensure coordination among the partner regions, allowing for the sharing of initial successes and challenges in policy implementation. These meetings will facilitate quick adjustments and provide peer support. N° of monitoring activities organised: 3 **Semester 8 (Follow-up Phase)** 26. **Regional Stakeholder Feedback Sessions (1 day each):** Organize feedback sessions with local stakeholders in each partner region to gather qualitative feedback on the policy changes and their effects on local communities and ecosystems. This feedback is crucial for understanding the social and economic impacts of the policies, and refinement of action plans. 27. **Second Round of Implementation Monitoring Workshops (1 day):** A second series of workshops will be held to track the progress since the first monitoring workshops. These will assess the effectiveness of any adjustments made and plan for further actions if necessary. 28. **Legacy Development Session (1 day, online):** Online meeting of project partners to develop a long-term legacy plan for the project. Focus on creating sustainable structures that will continue the project's initiatives beyond EU funding. 29. **Final Evaluation and Reporting Meeting (2 days, location TBD):** Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the entire project, focusing on the long-term impacts of the policy improvements. This evaluation will be compiled into a final report, which will be submitted to the Interreg Europe programme authorities. The report will include recommendations for future initiatives and strategies for sustaining the project's outcomes. 30. **Dissemination and Closure Conference (2 days, location TBD):** Host a conference to disseminate the results and learnings of the project to a broader European audience. The event will highlight successful strategies, showcase refined policies, and discuss the project's legacy. These events will target a broad audience, including other regions not involved in the project, to spread the knowledge gained and encourage the adoption of successful practices elsewhere. N° of monitoring activities organised: 5

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