

BEYOND
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ISLANDS

POLICY BRIEF

**COP22 of the
Barcelona Convention
and marine litter:
Contribution from
BeMed-Islands**

December 2021

COMMITTED TO
MEDITERRANEAN ISLANDS

This **policy brief** depicts the main new elements in the Barcelona Convention, and how they are already being addressed by the BeMed-Islands community, including through concrete islands examples.

This can inspire **Contracting parties** in taking further actions at national level. Likewise, the **Community** calls for support and commitment in **uptaking, upscaling and further supporting** this work. In this sense, national frameworks shall advance in the prevention of plastic leakage, following the waste management hierarchy.

Marine Litter: What's new in the Barcelona Convention

The COP22 of the Barcelona Convention (7-10 December 2021, Antalya, Turkey) is a milestone in the Mediterranean efforts to tackle marine litter, and particularly plastic waste.

Eight years have passed since the adoption of the first ever **Regional Plan for Marine Litter Management (RPML)**. Despite progress made over the last years, latest developments on the topic called for an **update of the plan**, to be adopted by COP22.

In addition, the Barcelona Convention system has produced **Guidelines to tackle single-use plastic products in the Mediterranean region**, which will support countries in fulfilling their commitments in respect to the updated RPML.

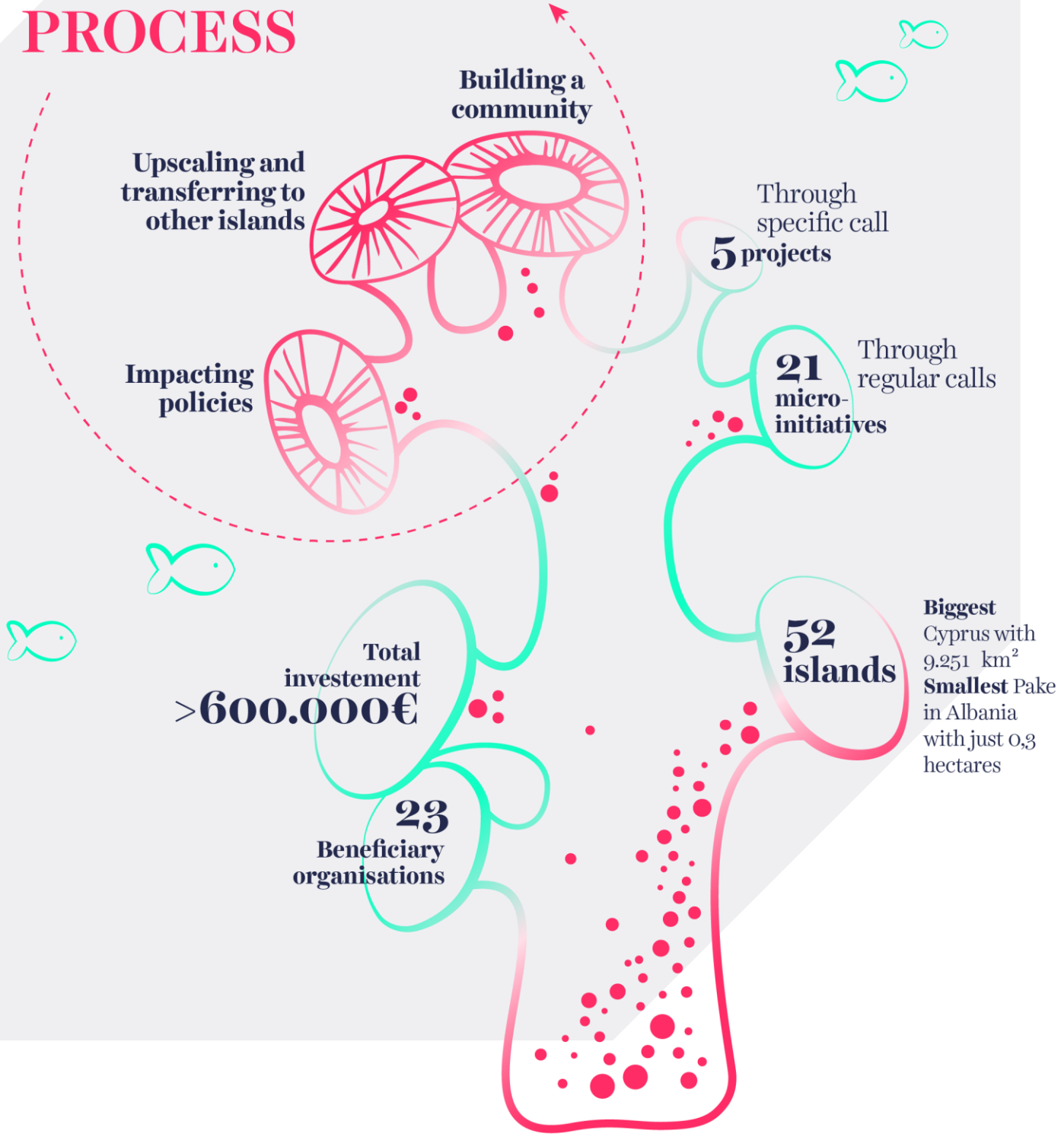
COP22 is also the occasion to adopt the **Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region**, the so-called **Post-2020 SAPBIO**. The plan acknowledges marine litter as a major pressure and includes mitigation actions.

Beyond Plastic Med initiatives in islands: concrete contribution to marine litter abatement

Since the establishment of Beyond Plastic Med (BeMed), **26 initiatives**, forming the **BeMed-Islands Community**, have been supported in Mediterranean islands. The important impacts of waste and mass tourism make these bounded territories excellent pilot sites to experiment actions to tackle marine litter. A **capitalisation process** is being conducted to maximize the project impacts, including on regional policies such as the Barcelona Convention.



CAPITALISATION PROCESS



Synergies between the Barcelona Convention and the BeMed-Islands Community

Barcelona Convention	BeMed-Islands Community	
<p>Elements of the upgraded Regional Plan on Marine Litter</p>	<p>Approach and actions</p>	<p>Flagship actions in islands</p>
<p>Phase out single use plastic items (SUPs), reduce packaging</p>	<p>The community advocates for reduction in the first place, and many of the projects pursue this objective, including in relation to bags, cutlery, cups, etc. In addition, many projects work closely with public authorities to draft legislation and action plans to address SUPs</p>	<p>For Plastic Free Croatian Islands: Public events without single-use plastics (adopted by local authorities)</p>
<p>Targets for plastic recycling and other waste items</p>	<p>The organisations support public authorities in defining action plans, including the improvement of collection and recycling. Some projects include field actions to enhance plastic sorted collection at source, as first step to enhance recycling. In addition, several projects deal with low-tech solutions to recycle collected plastic litter, coupled with awareness raising.</p>	<p>SOS Mediterranean: for a plastic-free sea (Balearic Islands, Spain): work with authorities to prepare the waste legislation in Balearic islands</p>
<p>Voluntary agreements with industry and private sector; Standards for product labelling to provide consumers with clear and reliable information on sustainable choices</p>	<p>Collaborative work with business sectors such as cruise ships, accommodation and food services to phase out superfluous single-use plastic products or switch to responsible alternatives.</p>	<p>Re-Shape Plastic Skopelos (Greece): Small recycling workspace to manufacture products for the local market</p>
<p>Sustainable models providing solutions to reduce single-use plastic products consumption</p>	<p>Design of alternatives based on local by-products, promoting local economy and sound solutions. Promotion through matchmaking events.</p>	<p>Cruise Ships against plastic pollution in the Med (Cyprus): A Good Practice Guide, coupled with characterisation of SUPs and alternatives research</p>
		<p>Plastic Free Balearics (Spain): Extension of the certification system for tourism businesses and reduction strategies for improvement</p>
		<p>Zero-plastic pilot project on the Îles d'Or archipelago and replication in the Mediterranean Sea (France): Design, production and testing of alternatives made out of giant reed.</p>

Regional guidelines: a tool to foster collaboration and harmonised approach

The Regional Plan on Marine Litter provides for the elaboration of **guidelines** to support the implementation of measures. Hence, the UNEP/MAP systems produced four sets of guidelines that were adopted by COP21, namely: **Adopt-a-Beach; Phase-out of Single Use Plastic Bags; Provision of Reception Facilities in Ports and the Delivery of Ship-Generated Wastes; Application of Charges at Reasonable Costs for the Use of Port Reception Facilities**. In addition, SCP/RAC developed the **Guidelines to tackle single-use plastic products in the Mediterranean region in 2021**.

Likewise, the BeMed-Islands Community elaborates guides in line with the RPML and hence facilitates its implementation. The UNEP/MAP guidelines have been shared with the Community as well in order to promote further use in the Contracting parties.

Barcelona Convention	BeMed-Islands Community	
Elements of the upgraded Regional Plan on Marine Litter	Approach and actions	Flagship actions in islands
Integration of the informal sector into regulated waste collection and recycling schemes	Collaboration with waste management stakeholders, including the informal sector, to improve collection and recycling. This also includes advocacy to better integrate informal sector.	PlastiStop (Tunisia): In Djerba, the collected plastic waste is delivered to informal collectors for recycling. The project advocates for better organisation and inclusion of stakeholders.
Measures on microplastics monitoring and reduction	Assessment of the impact of microplastics present on beaches and on sea turtles.	Combating plastic pollution and raising public awareness in Northern Cyprus : understand the effects of the concentration of microplastics on sand temperature and incubation of turtle eggs.
Accumulations hotspots, removal actions	Recovery at sea and recycling of fishing nets to raise awareness among sector stakeholders of the impacts of this pollution on the marine environment.	Project Xibka (Malta): Every month, around 250 kg of fishing gear is collected, which is reused (local craftsmen) or recycled (exported to reprocess as textile)
Include in the SPAMIs measures to combat marine litter	Numerous Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) are located in islands, and hence the community makes a remarkable contribution in this element. Many organisations are working with public authorities on action plans and legislation, as well as field, concrete actions	Together for zero plastic in Albanian Islands (including SPAMI Karaburun-Sazan): Albanian Islands Strategy and Action Plan, to be adopted by local authorities
Marine litter monitoring programmes	Many projects conduct clean up actions (beach, floating and seabed). Data collected is shared with authorities which contribute to monitoring programmes.	Mission CorSeaCare (Corsica, France): waste collection at sea, treated as statistical data to raise awareness among public and political bodies
Enhancement of public awareness and education	Awareness actions, clean ups, information for visitors and businesses.	#zeroplastic, awareness raising campaign against plastic debris and microplastics (Greece/Cyprus): use of “shock” photography in social media and sculptures in public spaces to demonstrate the impacts of plastic pollution



Together for zero plastic in Albanian Islands



Plastic Free Balearics

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For more information

<https://www.beyondplasticmed.org/en/the-call-for-projects-in-the-mediterranean-islands/>

Contact

info@scprac.org

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