Project HATCH: Hadriaticum Data Hub – Successfully finished

MARCHE REGION has participated as PROJECT partner in project HATCH: Hadriaticum Data Hub that has successfully finished.

The main goal of the HATCH project was to capitalize on the results of the previously conducted projects of the Interreg Italy-Croatia CBC Programme: ECOMAP, ECOSS, SASPAS, AdSWiM, WATERCARE, CREW, SOUNDSCAPE. The cooperation of six project partners and five external expert organizations from Italy and Croatia produced HATCH Data Hub, a geo-platform that unifies results from various research and monitoring programs and adapts them for implementation in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP).

The continuous expansion and growth of human activities at sea exposes the marine environment to numerous threats stemming from various sectors such as tourism, fisheries and aquaculture, hydrocarbon extraction and marine traffic, to name but a few. Climate change and pollution present additional pressure that the fragile ecosystems of the Adriatic Sea are exposed to. Maritime Spatial Planning is one of the means that helps preserve the health of the marine environment and biodiversity. It is a process that involves stakeholders from various sectors with the aim to organize human activities at sea and harmonize often conflicting requirements: ecological and socio-economic. Therefore, for MSP to be successful, a thorough understanding of the state of the marine environment and the anthropogenic impacts upon it is required. The

decision-making in MSP should be based on scientifically obtained data.

The research and monitoring programs conducted within the previous projects of the Interreg Italy-Croatia Programme have significantly improved our knowledge of the state of the Adriatic Sea and its exposure to human impacts. In particular, the research included diffusion of chemical compounds in marine environment, microbiological and nutrient parameters at and near the river mouths of several Adriatic rivers and near the sewage and purification plants outlets. Furthermore, the state of biodiversity, distribution and conservation status of sea plants and benthic habitats were researched, along with the marine litter and levels and distribution of underwater noise.

Thus, the main result of the HATCH project is the development of a new tool for implementation in MSP – HATCH Data Hub geo-platform, which includes harmonized results of the afore mentioned research and monitoring programs. This geo-platform enables flexible visualizations of the results on maps and is therefore an excellent aid to all stakeholders involved in MSP, such as authorities and decision-makers, but also useful to anyone interested in sea water quality, state of biodiversity or anthropogenic influences. Within this context, the HATCH Data Hub geo-platform, enables assessment of various human activities and their overlaps, which can help overcome potential conflicts between sectors and thus contribute to long-term sustainable use of marine resources and ecosystem services.

Besides the geo-platform, the HATCH project has developed guidelines for planners and policy makers on the optimal use of the geoportal in MSP process. Furthermore, an exploitation plan was devised, analysing existing knowledge, methods and technologies and proposing solutions based on issues identified.

The effective conservation of the sea relies not only on scientific research, but also on cooperation among all relevant stakeholders and on the public support. That is why HATCH project conducted networking and visibility actions, including study visits, joint actions with other projects and EU initiatives, public presentations and meetings. Through three study visits of project partners and external experts in Venice lagoon, Marano-Grado lagoon and Veli Lošinj, the participants had exchanged experiences among themselves and local stakeholders involved in marine and coastal waters conservation. The HATCH project was also presented at events of other Interreg Italy-Croatia Programme, RESISTANCE and CREATE, as well as at annual forum of EUSAIR held in Sarajevo and annual event of Interreg Italy-Croatia Programme held in Venice. These joint actions have further strengthened the capacity of project partners and expanded the network of stakeholders involved in marine conservation initiatives.

To gain public support for marine conservation, general public and younger generations, from kindergarten age to university students, were involved through a series of public presentations and study visits. For example, HATCH partners held presentations and workshops as parts of the Science Festival events in Split and Pula, Croatia, Sharper Night in Ancona and Sealogy in

Ferrara in Italy. The project was also presented to general public during the Barcolana regatta in Trieste and to university students during study visit to depuration plant in Fano.

Finally, the project ended with final conference that was held in Split, where all project partners and external experts gathered together with representatives from Interreg Italy-Croatia Programme and other projects to present the main project results and discuss synergies and options for future collaborations. The HATCH project team is thankful to everyone who participated or contributed to the project and we are looking forward to future cooperation on the preservation of the Adriatic Sea.

Project HATCH (Hadriaticum Data Hub. Data management, protocols harmonization, preparations of guidelines: cross-border tools for maritime spatial planning decision-makers) has a total worth of 566.621,00 EUR, of which 481.627,85 EUR is funded by the EU through ERDF and Interreg Italy-Croatia cross-border cooperation program.

Project duration: from 1st June 2022 to 30th June 2023

Project partners:

University of Udine (lead partner)
CORILA - Consortium for coordination of research activities concerning the Venice lagoon system
Marche Region
Istrian University of Applied Sciences
Blue World Institute
University Department of Marine Studies, University of Split

External experts:

Università Politecnica delle Marche
CNR-IRBIM
CNR-ISMAR
Università Iuav di Venezia
OGS

More about the project: https://programming14-20.italy-croatia.eu/web/hatch

HATCH Data Hub geo-platform: https://geoplatform.tools4msp.eu/apps/133/view#/

Capitalized projects:

https://programming14-20.italy-croatia.eu/web/adswim
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