

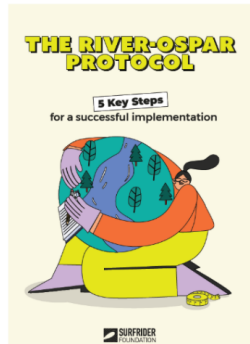
BEMED COMMUNITY RENDEZ-VOUS SUMMARY

Rivers : better understand the stakes to protect them
better from plastic pollution

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READ PROTOCOL

Présente par



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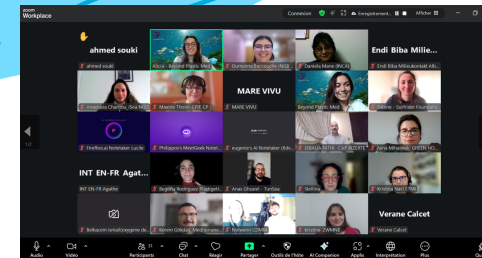


The protocol involves collecting and categorizing waste according to a grid of **250 categories**, enabling a detailed analysis of the types and sources of waste.

The goal is to produce **data that can be used by everyone**, facilitating comparisons between countries and watersheds, in accordance with the European **MSFD** and **OSPAR** directives.

The main challenge remains selecting an accessible, safe, and representative area, particularly due to vegetation and fluctuations in water levels.

This is a recent protocol that is expanding: **~20 sites** are monitored in France, with pilot studies underway in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Albania.



29th January 2026

SEE PPT

Data use

Local organizations use this data to raise awareness among municipalities and develop concrete action plans.

- In Albania, river monitoring identified **plastic bottles** as the main pollutant → leading to specific recommendations to reduce their use in municipalities, the hospitality industry, and the sports sector.
- Dialogue with local governments helps **highlight the shared responsibility between cities upstream and downstream** of rivers, facilitating regional collaboration.
- Regular monitoring also helps measure the **effectiveness of the measures taken over time**.



Different tests

Various methods have been tested since 2014 to better understand plastic pollution in rivers.

- The **Rimmel protocol**, which counts floating debris observed from a bridge, provides an estimate of the flow but not of the total pollution.
- The **Plastic Origins** program, which uses a mobile app with both manual and AI modes, has made it possible to map the distribution of debris over several kilometers.
- **Physical collection** along riverbanks and at dams provides better categorization but offers a limited view in terms of time and space.

→ The **OSPAR protocol facilitates comparisons between rivers and coastal areas** and helps identify specific sources such as wipes, agricultural tarps, or historic landfills



A clear guide, explained step by step !

"We are coordinating a program that, over the past few years, has shed light on plastic pollution in a river in northern Greece. We will now design and implement awareness-raising activities along the banks of this river. These activities will focus primarily on plastic pollution and microplastics."

Stellina, SciCo, Greece

We are implementing the MSFD protocol on the Yonne River in Marseille and conducting participatory monitoring in seasonal waterways with local organizations and schools.

Vérane, CPIE Atelier Bleu, France

iSea adapted the MSFD protocol to the banks of the Evros River on the Greece-Turkey border, identifying **agriculture** as a major source. It shared the attached report.

Anastasia, iSea, Greece

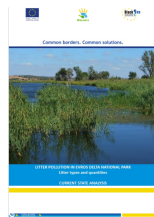
In Cyprus, we organized a **festival promoting sustainable rivers**: we're going to hold it again this year and focus on plastic pollution.

Philippos, CSTI, Cyprus

"We worked on the same river, Menç in Turkish !"
Fishers, hunter and agricultura plastic is a common waster stream found in rivers.

Begoña, CEVSAM, Turkey

"We should compare our results! We surely have more recent samples."



To go Further

AQUATIC PLASTIC (AQPLA) is an Interreg Danube nroject aimed at combating plastic pollution in rivers. The project is coming to an end, and they're producing podcasts!

AQPLA's goal is to provide a comprehensive database and methodology for mapping river plastic waste, using artificial barriers such as hydroelectric power plants (HPPs), and to implement remote sensing technologies as tools to measure, monitor, and divert accumulations of river plastic waste from the natural environment to landfills.



To go Further

The **TETHYS4ADRION** project is an Interreg project whose main objective is to study the role of rivers in marine plastic pollution in the Adriatic-Ionian region. Harmonized monitoring, methodologies, and pilot actions are being implemented with the aim of reducing the influx of river-borne waste.

They have just published a **best-practices guide with ideas** for measures to combat plastic pollution from rivers. Would you like us to invite them to present these measures at an upcoming meeting?

