EWAsTER | Interreg Euro-MED | Co-funded by the European Union

Transforming **electronic waste** management into a sustainable and **circular economy**

#2 NEWSLETTER

February, 2025

Welcome to the second newsletter of the EWAsTER project, co-funded by the Interreg Euro-MED Programme!

Duration

01/2024 - 09/2026

Total budget

2,046,650.00 €

Interreg Funds

1.637.320 €

Project partners

10 partners and 14 associated, in tandems of technical and political bodies, covering 8 countries among MED region – Portugal, Spain, Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Cyprus

WHO WE ARE?

Lead partner

- Alentejo Science and Technology Park (PACT), Portugal

Project partners

- Municipality of Rethymno, Greece
- Marche Region, Italy
- Environmental Research Institute (ORZ), Slovenia
- Municipality of Neum, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Union of Bulgarian Black Sea Local Authorities (UBBSLA), Bulgaria
- Union of the Municipalities Pian del Bruscolo (UCPB), Italy
- Provincial Waste Consortium of Malaga (RSU-Malaga), Spain
- Association LiNK Entrepreneurial Center, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Aradippou Municipality, Cyprus

WHAT WE DO?

EWAsTER is a transnational project aiming to promote local and regional policies for better e-waste management, to reduce e-waste environmental damage in the selected areas, while promoting new innovative eco-business models based on the conversion of the currently lineal electrical and electronic (E&E) sector into a sustainable circular model.

WHAT WE ACHIEVE?

- Transnational Methodology for MED prevention and management of e-waste
- 8 new Action Plans for e-waste management
- Joint testing of 3 pre-identified innovative solutions
- Deployment of solutions for Transnational e-waste prevention and management
- Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy!

E-WASTE today

With the rapid growth of digital technologies, including the increasing use of smart devices, IoT, and electric vehicles, e-waste generation in the EU is expected to continue rising. By the **end of 2025**, it is predicted that the EU could generate up to **14 million tonnes** of e-waste annually. Efforts to enhance e-waste management infrastructure, improve public awareness, and develop more sustainable product designs will be critical in mitigating the environmental impact of this growing waste stream.

Per Capita E-Waste Generation

The EU has one of the highest rates of e-waste generation per capita in the world. In 2019, EU countries produced an average of about **16.2 kg per person** of e-waste annually. This per capita rate is significantly higher compared to global averages.

E-Waste Recycling Rates

In 2020, EU member states collectively **recycled 42.5%** of the total e-waste generated. This is above the global average recycling rate of around 17.4%. However, there is still room for improvement, as much of the e-waste is not properly collected or treated.

Environmental Impact and Challenges

E-waste contains hazardous substances such as lead, mercury, and cadmium, which can pose significant environmental and health risks if not properly disposed of.

WEEE Directive

The EU has set ambitious targets under the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive. Summary of Key WEEE Targets:

- ✓ **65% collection rate** of the average annual weight of EEE placed on the market by 2024
- ✓ **85% recovery** of e-waste by 2024
- ✓ Recycling **rates vary by product category**, large household appliances (85%) and smaller appliances (70%)
- ✓ **Extended Producer Responsibility** (EPR) for producers to finance collection and recycling

Composition of E-Waste, selected by examples

- 20.4 million tonnes: e-waste made up of small devices (e.g. microwave ovens, toys, e-cigarettes) of which 12% are recycled
- 4.6 million tonnes: e-waste in the small IT and telecommunication equipment (e.g. laptops, mobile phones, GPS devices, routers), with only 22% documented collection and recycling rate
- 2.4 million tonnes: expected mass of retired photovoltaic panels in 2030, four times as much as the 600,000 tonnes in 2022

WEEE and Circular Economy

The circular economy model encourages consumers to repair and reuse their devices instead of discarding them and to recycle electronics when they reach the end of their life.

The Project in a nutshell

Imagine a future where old phones, laptops, and appliances don't end up in landfills, but instead are transformed into valuable resources!

The EWAsTER project is working toward that vision by promoting smarter local and regional policies that reduce the environmental damages caused by e-waste.

It encourages businesses to adopt innovative, eco-friendly models that recycle and reuse materials, creating a sustainable, circular economy for the electronics sector.

This project is a collaboration of 10 core partners and 14 supporting organizations, bringing together technical experts and political leaders from six EU member states and one neighboring country. Together, we are crafting eight action plans that will guide e-waste management efforts, inspired by the EU's "Circular Economic Initiatives"

In developing these plans, the EWAsTER teams are not just addressing a pressing issue, but we are paving the way for a cleaner, greener future, where electronic waste is no longer a problem but a part of a thriving circular economy.

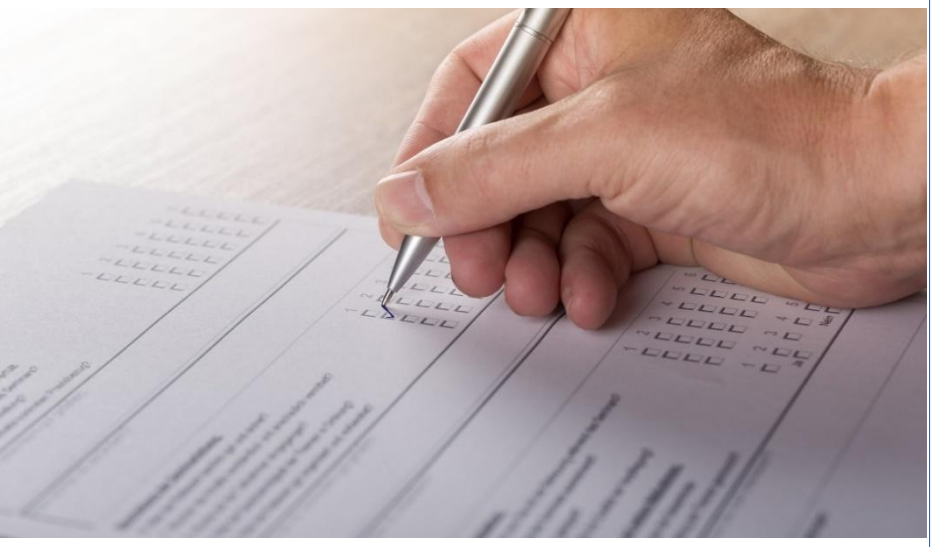
Latest project progress

It's been a year since the start of the project. Where are we today?

Just six months ago, we started the first edition of this newsletter and we presented the EWAsTER project, the objectives of the Consortium and the pilot testing actions we will implement to achieve them.

Today, the eWAsTER project has already made significant progress, moving forward with various activities across partner countries.

E-WASTE DATA STANDARDIZATION



E-WASTE MARKET DATA GATHERING

All partners managed to collect a large number of responses to online questionnaires and personal interviews, with a total of 497 answers in the questionnaires and 13 interviews, reaching the goal of 200 data source for collecting local information.

Knowledge Survey

In order to understand the degree of knowledge and difficulties with respect to the use, reuse, repair, and proper disposal of electrical and electronic equipment at the local level, we launched a survey during mid of 2024 through three instruments:

- Desk research for collecting of current information related to legislative data on WEEE management throughout the partners countries. This phase focus on reporting legislation and regulation to manage WEEE in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner.
- Online unified questionnaires for collecting of indications from national competent authorities and enforcement bodies, producers, reuse organizations, WEEE treatment companies about critical issues and improvement proposals for sustainable WEEE management.
- Personal interviews with Key stakeholders from partners countries to deeper understand the current situation on local/regional level.

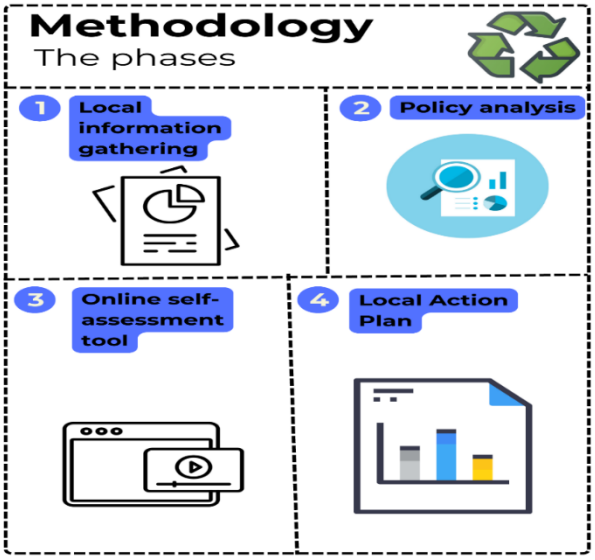
The qualitative results from this local Information gathering were the main guide to draft the LAPs that effectively address the needs of the relevant partners area.

Behind-the-scenes insights!

METHODOLOGY for designing LAP

In order to support the consortium partners to implement and integrate the pilot action into their WEEE management according to their operational sectors in the local or regional level throughout the project, number of steps need to be taken including number of testing period, feedback and evaluation.

Therefore, the Methodology for designing LAP was translated into the following implementation phases:



ONLINE SELF-ASSESMENT TOOL

The consortium, led by ORZ, integrated the Methodology in an online tool for self-assessment, which allows the self-definition of Strategies and Local Action Plans for Mediterranean e-waste prevention and management.

The purpose of the EWAsTER tool is to facilitate users in comprehending their present WEEE management performance in the context of prospects, as well as identifying the subsequent actions required to enhance performance. The tool encompasses the fundamental principles of the circular economy model, which include sharing, leasing, reuse, repair, refurbishing, and recycling.

Now, we are working on creation of video tutorials and manuals explaining the use of the online tool, the Methodology and the steps for the self-definition of Strategies/LAP's.

Starting in November 2024, partners began working on their LAPs

The Local Action Plans are documents based on the joint MED Methodology. They present the best solutions to be applied at a local, regional, and national level for the prevention and management of e-waste, and detail the process and resources to implement it, such as actions, tasks, calendar, resources, and key actors.

The LAPs are working documents, and will be updated with results and feedback following the pilot tests taking place in 2025 and finalized with recommendations from local, regional, and national stakeholders in 2026.

Discover more project updates!

3rd Validation Workshop, organized by RSU Málaga in Spain

Highlights from the Workshop

During the period 18-19.02.2025, the 3rd Validation Workshop and partners meeting took place at the "La Térmica" Cultural Center in Malaga, Spain. Within two days partners had the opportunity to debriefing of the project roadmap and the project's next steps, hosted by RSU Málaga. Malaga Provincial Waste Consortium (RSU Malaga) is a public administration that manages the waste of 91 municipalities in the Province of Malaga, serving some 540,000 inhabitants. In the municipalities RSU carry out the selective collection of paper, glass and light packaging from homes, as well as the treatment of mixed waste from home collection. RSU also carry out the management of bulky waste, WEEE and RCDs in municipalities that request it. The workshop program was mainly focused on presenting the drafts of LAPs, the Methodology and the online self-assessment tool. Also, the pilot tests WEEE Behave, WEEE Procure and WEEE Reuse, that will be applied throughout 2025 were clarified and suggestions for their implementation were shared by each partner representative.

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MARCHE REGION: First Local Stakeholders Group meeting in **Italy**

The first meeting of the project's Local Stakeholders Group in Italy was held online with the involvement of the five Territorial Area Assemblies of the Marche Region.

During the meeting, Marche Region team had the opportunity to explain the objectives of the project and encourage the widest involvement of local stakeholders. Indeed, stakeholder involvement is crucial to the achievement of the project objectives, with particular reference to the drafting of the action plan.

Further meetings are therefore planned, at least one per semester, to present the main steps and results of the project during its implementation.

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Environmental Research Institute (ORZ), **Slovenia**

During the period 16-24.11.2024, the 16th edition of the European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR), gathered over 12,700 actions, focusing on waste reduction, product reuse and repair, materials recycling and clean-ups, across 29 countries in Europe and beyond.

Within this initiative, our project partner ORZ organized at various public points an inspiring exhibition about sustainable consumption and waste management with a special focus on household appliances.

EUROPEAN WEEK FOR WASTE REDUCTION
16 TO 24 NOVEMBER 2024

Other activities within the Project

2nd ISE Community of Practice gathering

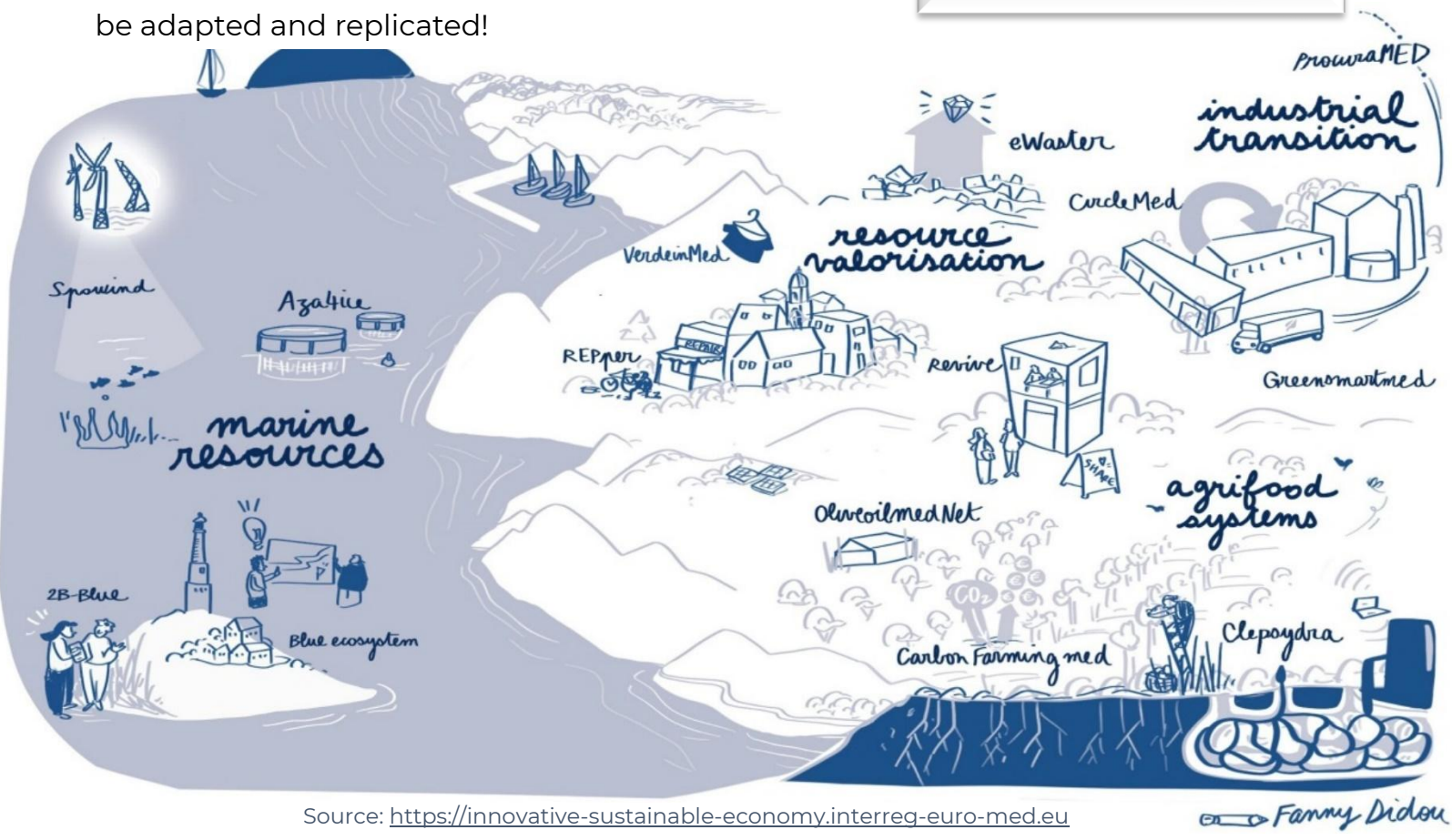
On 14.11.2024, the lead partner PACT together with the partners UBBSLA, Municipality of Rethymno and ORZ attended the second ISE Community of Practice gathering. The online event was an opportunity for eWAsTER partners to further clarify the key Governance Projects activities and to discuss the Thematic projects key productions during the working groups session.

Putting together in one working group the projects #REPper, #VERDEinMED and #eWAsTER, we found the synergy between them, as well as what from each project could be adapted and replicated!

Later on, the participants were involved in master class style training, dedicated to amplifying projects' results by explaining amplifying concepts and successful processes within and beyond the Interreg Euro-MED Programme.

The ISE Community of Practice (CoP) is a key element to build a strong network between 16 projects in the ISE Mission to increase the project's impacts.

READ MORE about ISE MISSION >>>



Source: https://innovative-sustainable-economy.interreg-euro-med.eu

What's next in 2025?

We are starting the year with finalized draft versions of eight LAP's based on the joint MED Methodology and now it is time to start with testing the pilot innovative solutions in our areas!

WEEE Innovative solutions: testing stage

SOON

EWAsTER project is slightly entering a testing phase and 3 pre-identified innovative solutions will be tested in partner's countries:

It will be tested by Aradippou, Rethymno, UBBSLA, UCPB and RSU-Malaga

Implementation of the pilot action **WEEE BEHAVE** will be tested in Cyprus, Greece, Bulgaria, Italy, Spain.

It is expected to reach 100 students and 50 policy makers through direct training, awareness actions and competitions.

It will be tested by Municipality of Neum, Marche and UBBSLA

Implementation of the pilot action **WEEE PROCURE** will be tested in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Bulgaria.

During 12 months, relevant partners will gather data from demand and offer side, creating the legal framework for the launching of the tenders, which will be done outside the project funding. The effect will be monitored one year.

It will be tested by PACT, LINK and ORZ

Implementation of the pilot action **WEEE REUSE** will be tested in Portugal, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia.

Relevant partners will promote the creation or reconversion of business towards WEEE second life, plastic reuse, or WEEE reparation, especially social enterprises.

After testing stage, each partner will be in charge of pilot results monitoring and transferring the results of the pilot into a policy document, converting the **Draft Action Plan** into a **final Action Plan** at local or regional level!

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Euro-MED0200699 **EWAsTER**
Preventing e-waste from polluting MED water by turning waste into a resource

Project co-funded by European Union, European Regional Development fund (ERDF)
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