



# Project factsheet - Assessment grid

PROJECT OVERVIEW	
Project Ref. No.	DRP0200235
Project title	Danube Region Programme
Acronym	AQUATIC PLASTIC
Priority axis	2. - A greener, low-carbon Danube Region
SO	2.3 - WaterManagement
Lead partner	Naturefilm.hu Society
Lead partner country	Magyarország (HU)
Lead partner legal status	Private!
Project duration	30
Total Interreg Funds	1733194.80
Total Eligible Budget	2166493.50

## Project Summary

The importance of rivers is unquestionable. Throughout history, rivers have served as crucial sources of water, food, irrigation, and more recently, hydropower generation. However, it wasn't until the mid-2010s that we truly began to comprehend the magnitude and consequences of riverine plastic pollution. It required the collaborative efforts of researchers, water authority experts, and environmental NGOs to raise awareness and shed light on the profound impact of plastic pollution in rivers. This collective endeavor has started to bring about a shift in attitudes and actions. Studies indicate that a significant proportion of marine plastic pollution, approximately 80%, originates from rivers. Plastics, which were once perceived as non-degradable, actually break down into microplastic particles when exposed to sunlight and fluctuating temperatures. This realization has prompted a heightened focus on addressing plastic pollution in rivers. The updated 2021 Danube River Basin Management Plan by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) highlights the urgency of tackling plastic pollutants as a top priority. The people behind the development of the AQUATIC PLASTIC (AQPLA) proposal come from a generation that can be described as the "pre-plastic breed." We have vivid memories of what rivers used to look like just a few decades ago when they were free from plastic bottles. Unfortunately, the younger generation growing up in the Eastern and Southern parts of the Danube River Basin now considers plastic floods, coastal landfills and riverine litter accumulations as "normal". We are aware that plastic pollution is just one of the many risks that threaten surface waters. Freshwater resources are confronted with a multitude of other challenges, ranging from habitat degradation, the loss of biodiversity, to the war in Ukraine and the impacts of global warming. In the past, the success of a river cleanup action was primarily measured by its effectiveness in removing pollutants. Nowadays, with the recent severe droughts of 2022 and increasing awareness of environmental impacts, we must consider additional factors such as the carbon footprint and environmental stress caused by these cleanup efforts. For this reason every solution, innovative tool, and output developed within AQPLA is guided by a strong commitment to sustainability. The multinational and multicultural population of the Danube River Basin is a rich source of inspiration for many of the novelties and innovations within AQPLA. The diverse partnership brings together a wide range of expertise, resulting in the development of new solutions to address the challenges of riverine plastic pollution. The application of newly developed driftnets, microplastic pumps, remote sensing technologies and machine learning plays a crucial role in detecting and monitoring riverine litter particles. The creative application of the citizen science approach brings about active participation and engagement of communities and individuals in data collection and monitoring efforts. The adoption of a collaborative

working methodology fosters cooperation among stakeholders, organizations, and sectors, so that we can pool our knowledge, resources, and experiences to develop comprehensive and holistic solutions. The development, testing and implementation of environmentally friendly riverine litter traps make a better use of the natural power of the river current. AQPLA solutions reduce carbon emissions and environmental stress associated with conventional cleanup methods. AQPLA's solutions also facilitate the separation of the collected waste. By incorporating recycling into the cleanup operations, AQPLA reduces the overall costs of mitigation efforts while promoting a circular economy approach. Furthermore, AQPLA emphasizes the importance of raising awareness through activities such as the Transnational River Cleanup Challenge. This initiative engages individuals and communities in hands-on cleanup efforts, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility for protecting rivers. The main objective of the AQUATIC PLASTIC project is to use our growing knowledge to significantly reduce riverine litter within water catchment areas like the Danube River Basin (DRB). The project will deliver several outputs, including solutions to cost-efficiently assess microplastic contamination of rivers, solution for managing and recycling large waste deposits collected at HPPs; a software to monitor potential infiltration points; a proactive stakeholder group, the RiverSaver Participatory Platform to enhance water quality in the DRB; a policy advocacy package for the upcoming update of the DRBMP to address riverine litter. By focusing on the largest accumulations of riverine plastic and the empowerment of stakeholders, the AQUATIC PLASTIC project aims to achieve significant improvements in river water quality.

<b>LIST OF PROJECT PARTNERS</b>				
<b>No.</b>	<b>Institution name</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Total Interreg funds</b>	<b>Total eligible budget</b>
THU	Naturefilm.hu Society	Magyarország (HU)	293599.84	366999.80
HAEE	Hungarian Association of Environmental Enterprises	Magyarország (HU)	198799.44	248499.30
OVF	General Directorate of Water Management	Magyarország (HU)	60799.84	75999.80
BOKU	University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna	Österreich (AT)	174959.52	218699.40
Multisalva	Multisalva Association	România (RO)	170079.84	212599.80
IWRS	Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia	Slovenija (SI)	149999.36	187499.20
IO-BAS	Institute of Oceanology - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences	Bulgaria (BG)	84800.00	106000.00
VUVH	Water Research Institute Bratislava	Slovensko (SK)	108959.76	136199.70
Mare Nostrum	Mare Nostrum	România (RO)	71999.60	89999.50
UNS	Faculty of Tehnical Sciences Novi Sad	Serbia (RS)	178399.04	222998.80
CETI	Center for Ecotoxicological Research Podgorica	Crna Gora (ME)	71199.76	88999.70
MESPU	Ministry for Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism Directorate of Ecology and climate changes	Crna Gora (ME)	86400.00	108000.00
Eko Centar	Citizen association "Eko centar" Visegrad	Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA)	83198.80	103998.50
<b>TOTAL (EUR)</b>			<b>1733194.80</b>	<b>2166493.50</b>

## LIST OF ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

No.	Institution name	Country
BOKU	International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River	Österreich (AT)
THU	Croatian Waters	Hrvatska (HR)
UNS	Serbian Environmental Protection Agency	Serbia (RS)
THU	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Magyarország (HU)
OVF	North Hungarian Water Directorate	Magyarország (HU)
IWRS	Hydropowerplants on Lower Sava	Slovenija (SI)
THU	Josip Juraj Strossmayer Water Institute	Hrvatska (HR)
VUVH	Slovak Environment Agency	Slovensko (SK)
VUVH	Slovak Environmental Inspectorate	Slovensko (SK)
VUVH	Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic	Slovensko (SK)
IWRS	Ecologists without borders association	Slovenija (SI)
IWRS	Slovenian Environment Agency	Slovenija (SI)
Multisalva	Satu Mare County Administrative-Territorial Unit	România (RO)
BOKU	via donau - Österreichische Wasserstraßen-Gesellschaft mbH	Österreich (AT)
Eko Centar	Institute for Water Management	Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA)
OVF	Middle Tisza District Water Directorate (MTDWD)	Magyarország (HU)
Multisalva	Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests (RO)	România (RO)
HAEE	MVM Hydropower Plant Ltd.	Magyarország
HAEE	RECYLABLE MATERIALS COLLECTION STATION, «PROEKTNA, 3» («STATION «PROEKTNA, 3»)	Ukraine (UA)