



TREASURE



TREASURE 2023

STARTING THE FIGHT AGAINST PLASTIC LITTER

The TREASURE consortium had an exciting first six months after officially getting started right in time for the summer of 2023.

Together with 15 partners from 5 countries, TREASURE aims to utilise the transnational cooperation in order to effectively tackle the outflow of plastic litter from inland waters into the North Sea.

Through 5 different Living Labs, the project will address four interrelated “pillars”: governance & policy, data collection & analysis, prevention & behaviour change, and the removal of plastic litter.

One forerunner is the Living Lab in Belgium, where the project partners have already successfully initiated the stakeholder mobilisation:

Nestled along the Belgian coast lies the picturesque town and seaside haven of Nieuwpoort that hosted an enthralling TREASURE kick-off meeting for the Living Lab Nieuwpoort.

Home to one of Europe's largest marinas, the focus of this groundbreaking initiative is the Ganzepoot ('goose foot') water system—an integral component managing water levels and tidal flow in the Nieuwpoort harbor and the adjoining Yser River. The Ganzepoot water system serves as a crucial guardian against flooding, ensuring the seamless entry and exit of boats. Comprising a lock complex at the inner port area, six waterways converge here, linking the Yser estuary and the North Sea.

In October, the Living Lab Nieuwpoort partners—VLIZ, IMDC, Multi.engineering, and ULCO—orchestrated a dynamic stakeholder meeting in collaboration with the Province of West Flanders. This event, held in the heart of Nieuwpoort, brought together a diverse array of stakeholders, including government agencies, yacht clubs, water sports clubs, clean-up organizations, business clusters, and scientific institutions.

Engaging presentations illuminated the stakeholders on monitoring activities and the invaluable role of citizen science. The intricate flow model of Nieuwpoort's water system and preliminary designs of the plastic collection system were discussed in detail, sparking a lively and interactive session. Detailed maps served as the canvas for collaborative discussions, emphasizing the powers at play, ongoing measures, public initiatives, and potential locations for the plastic catcher.



Photo: Lisa Devriese (VLIZ) at the Nieuwpoort stakeholder kick-off

Another inspiring forerunner is the French Living Lab, where the involved project partners (Nausicaá, Cedre, Cerema, and ULCO) also started the local stakeholder mobilisation phase in November. For instance, Nausicaá has developed “The Blue Academy” as a new space dedicated to scientific education for schools and the public. Within the Blue Academy, the team will, e.g., conduct workshops for children and families on the issue of macro plastic, collect people’s ideas and points of view on solutions, offer a space for creation and expression through arts and DIY using 3D printer and plastic waste to talk about plastic pollution. The science education team will organize at least four open doors events for different local stakeholders (representatives of the French National Education Ministry, local authorities, local executives, teachers, local cultural stakeholders, tour operators, etc.) in the new spaces.

Then, finally, in October 2023, the TREASURE consortium got together in person to officially kick off the project together and to build the foundation for the collaboration between the different living labs and pillars during a two-day project meeting in Wilhelmshaven and Oldenburg. Through interactive presentations and discussions about the activities and aims within the four pillars that each living lab comprises, the consortium could map out the interrelations between the pillars. On this basis, the consortium identified crucial links for cooperation and exchange, e.g. between the data collection & analysis and the governance & policy pillars.



2023 has been a promising start for the TREASURE project and we are excited for the coming years. We are looking forward to sharing our future endeavours with you along the way. For now, TREASURE would like to wish you happy holidays and a wonderful and prosperous New Year!

HAPPY
holidays

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