

# PLASTIC FREE WATERS

Actions for clean waters: Strategies and tools to tackle cross-border plastic pollution of waters

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Proposal summary as submitted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> call of Interreg Central Europe to Programme priority 3. Cooperating on natural and cultural resources for sustainable growth in CENTRAL EUROPE with specific objective of 3.1 To improve integrated environmental management capacities for the protection and sustainable use of natural heritage and resources.

Lead partner: Filmjungle.eu Society (Hungary)

Project duration 36 months (01.08.2018 – 31.07.2021)

List of partners (short intro of partners at the end of the document):

1. **Filmjungle Society** (THU), Hungary
2. **Blue World Institute of Marine Research and Conservation** (BWI), Croatia
3. **ERI Hungary – European Research Institute Non-profit Ltd. Co.** (ERI), Hungary
4. **Hasso-Plattner-Institut for Digital Engineering GmbH** (HPI), Germany
5. **Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia** (IzVRS), Slovenia
6. **Czech Technical University in Prague** (CTU), Czech Republic
7. **City of Mali Lošinj** (CoML), Croatia
8. **Ravenna Municipality** (RAV), Italy
9. **Central European Initiative – Executive Secretariat** (CEI), Italy

Associated partners:

1. The Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG RRD) in South East Europe, Makedonia
2. Karlovarské minerální vody, a.s., Czech Republic
3. International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), Switzerland
4. Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe (GWP-CEE), Slovakia
5. Fisheries Local Action Group Vela Vrata, Croatia
6. Slovak Water Management Enterprise, s. e. (SWME), Slovakia
7. North-Hungarian Water Directorate (EMVIZIG), Hungary
8. PETMAT NGO, Czech Republic
9. Municipal Services Cres Losinj, Croatia
10. Republic of Slovenia Ministry of the environment and spatial planning, Slovenian Water Agency, Slovenia
11. Republic of Slovenia Ministry of the environment and spatial planning, Slovenia

## Summary

*Due to deficiencies in the waste management, it is estimated that 4.6-12.7 million tonnes of litter are added every year to the oceans, approximately 80% of this is land-based delivered through rivers. This global problem creates challenges for the water bodies (including both rivers and seas) Central Europe. Plastic pollution is a novel but growing treat for communities relying on water resources. At certain regions of Central Europe that even risks prosperity.*

*The main objective of the project is to inform decision makers on how to tackle plastic pollutions of water bodies and how to support and develop initiatives in the sense of circular economy. Decision makers are not ready to manage this complex situation, moreover not even aware of the potential risks and implications. The project will arm them with a strategy and toolbox in order to improve their integrated environmental management capacities for the protection and sustainable use of water bodies contaminated with plastics from non-visible microplastic to visible dumps of plastic bottles.*

*The novelty of the project is the supply chain approach in line with the waste hierarchy: prevention, monitoring, actions and upcycling. So far, only sporadic and segmented actions have existed and the available data for concrete measures are missing. The main output is an integrated strategy with toolbox that contains measures to tackle plastic waste proved to be effective in pilots of the project. Further outputs are the tools as piloted. Everyone, from decision makers to local stakeholders and NGO will benefit by having a standard guide and recommendations. Plastic pollution does not respect borders; thus, a transnational approach is needed. An important aspect is learning from each other and adopting best practices, and then disseminate the outputs into other sites concerned. The geographical coverage and multi-environments (focus on riverine, coastal and island environment) provides the opportunity.*

## Approach

Tackling plastic pollution of water bodies is generally limited to the activities of civil organizations around the world. While there are high level policies aiming to mitigate this issue, local decision makers, including authorities and municipalities lack capacity. Some separated best practices exist, mainly implemented in cooperation with local NGOs, but a comprehensive and integrated strategy and toolbox for local decision makers are not available. Nevertheless, the involvement of local society remains a key that both raises awareness and makes people face the problem.

The novel approach is to systematically assess the whole supply chain of plastic from local sales to pollution and upcycling. The approach will focus on all types of plastics and its fragmentation in nature (i.e. breaking down into micro scale). The aim is to develop tools, uncover intervention points and create a strategy to teach local bodies in line with the waste management hierarchy. The focus will be on the next steps of the waste hierarchy with combining existing solutions and novel approaches.

- Prevention of waste: the project will adopt and develop solutions to awareness raising including a toolbox for local businesses how to reduce one-way plastic materials in catering and packaging, this will result in plastic free location pilot.
- Prevention of damage: the project will develop monitoring methodologies and indicators for early warning of plastic pollution risking local economies (such as tourism or fisheries). These technical measures will be combined with local actions of clean-ups and mapping. The novel Seabin technology will be tested too, to check automatic collection system of floating plastics.
- Upcycling: as novelty the collected PET bottles will be upcycled into trash art sculptures and compositions and placed on the public spaces as memento, novel technologies to do this will include Truss Fab by HPI and PET-MAT.

## Project results and objectives

Main result is the improved understanding and management capacities of decision makers on monitoring and tackling plastic pollution, and guiding clean-ups and upcycling initiatives. Considering the multi-disciplinarily and cross-sectorial nature, this can only happen by integrating approaches, sectors and fields, and through local pilot activities, knowledge exchange (such as trainings) and stakeholder engagement (public events and forums). Strategy and toolbox will be developed to address the whole supply chain, including measures for local businesses to reduce single use plastics, to local civil bodies and NGOs to organize clean-ups and up-cycling seminars. On the Central European level the result is to raise awareness and inform decision makers on the threat of plastic pollution and provide guidance on recycling and monitoring.

These results will contribute to enhance the status for integrated environmental management capacities. The results of the project will feed from experiences of partners and jointly developed pilot actions (piloting all the measures of the proposed strategy) in 4 locations: two riverine at the Bodrog river in Hungary-Slovakia and Rižana river in Slovenia, one river-sea interface of the Po-delta, and an island in Croatia. In all cases, the current situation is result of transnational pollution, thus the solution needs to be transnational too. The results can be used in different settings to improve the management capacities.

<i>Title of specific objective</i>	<i>Please shortly explain each of the defined specific objectives</i>
Develop a best practice inventory of actions for monitoring, impact assessment and upcycling	Understanding the situation, its impact and future trends, as well as potential measures to monitor, prevent and manage are of crucial importance. As plastic pollution is spreading in water bodies and meanwhile it fragments to more dangerous substances, a set of standard methods and parameters need to be in place to follow the pollution and forecast its movement. So far, this set is not part of the relevant authorities' usual practice thus transnational cooperation for prevention and early warning is limited. Objective is to make a common guide based on best practice inventory for authorities responsible for a given water body to monitor the spread and transformation of plastic.
Implement pilot actions as basis for strategy and toolbox	Aim of this objective is to support local initiatives and businesses to tackle plastic waste and adopt a less plastic circular economy model. Through demonstrating the actions and their impact, a more realistic and powerful message will be conveyed to the decision makers and the general public prompting them to act in a bottom up approach. These pilots will not only show the challenge but the potential way-outs by clean-ups, upcycling and circular economy models. Trainings, stakeholder discussions and education materials will help engagement of citizens and helping to find cross-sectorial and cooperative strategies to tackle the challenge.
Capitalise the actions into a common strategy and awareness raising initiatives with the aim to reach general public, national decision makers and polluters	This objective will help to adopt the project's results in other settings and to secure sustainability. On the other hand, raising awareness and focusing international attention to the problem can lead to the solution at the waste source and make people in general more conscious and aware of the issue. This specific objective is key in helping other affected regions to answer the challenges of plastic pollution. We will develop an educational strategy including teacher's manual and films for the general public, which will cover the protection and importance of water, as well as the curiosities of waste recycling. We will complete them with lesson plans and exercises to make them useful and practical for teachers.

## Project outputs

<i>Programme output indicator</i>	<i>Project output indicator target</i>	<i>Measurement Unit</i>	<i>Project output quantification (target)</i>	<i>Project output number</i>	<i>Project output (title)</i>
S.O.3.1 - Number of strategies and action plans developed and/or implemented for the protection and sustainable use of natural heritage and resources	1,00	Number	1,00	Output O.T3.1.1	Integrated strategy to manage plastic pollution of waters
S.O.3.1 - Number of tools developed and/or implemented for the protection and sustainable use of natural heritage and resources	23,00	Number	5,00	Output O.T1.1.1	Development of monitoring protocols
			1,00	Output O.T1.3.1	Database and development of upcycling technologies
			4,00	Output O.T2.1.1	Plastic free location initiative
			1,00	Output O.T2.2.1	Tool to measure degree, hotspots and type of plastic contamination
			8,00	Output O.T2.3.1	Clean-up actions with community involvement
			3,00	Output O.T2.4.1	Upcycling of waste into statues as mementos
			1,00	Output O.T3.2.1	Toolbox of measures for local actions
S.O.3.1 - Number of trainings implemented on the protection and sustainable use of natural heritage and resources	6,00	Number	4,00	Output O.T1.2.1	Trainings on litter monitoring
			2,00	Output O.T3.3.1	Trainings for decision makers in source countries
S.O.3.1 - Investment	2,00	Number	1,00	Output O.I1.1.1	PET(f)act - Mini recycling machine
			1,00	Output O.I2.1.1	Micro FTIR

## Thematic Work Packages

### WP1 – Technological background and best practices by IzVRS

The overarching aim of WP T1 is to prepare the basis for internationally coordinated actions conducted in the following WPs. Preparation of best practice inventory and uniform approaches to monitor litter will be used in pilot cases within WP T2. The overview of possible impacts that litter and plastics have on the aquatic environment, human health and economy will build knowledge and offer grounds for measures and identify gaps and needs as a basis for priorities of actions in WP T3. In addition, the prepared overview of impacts will serve dissemination and awareness raising activities carried out within WP Communication.

In order to address the issue of plastic litter in the aquatic environment effectively, there is a need for a transnationally correlated approach (common method) that will allow sharing scientific knowledge and providing a base for regionally integrated management approach including preparation of reduction and/or recycling measures. The activities in WP T1 will be in line with the key principles of Water Framework Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive as they will facilitate efforts for integrated planning to reduce the negative environmental impact of plastic litter. With the advent of Circular Economy (and recent Chinese ban on waste import), upcycling into added value products has growing importance. For example, plastic bottles have a large potential for use as building material, but there have been no overarching studies.

IzVRS will lead this WP in cooperation with BWI and CEI in preparing best practice inventory, and THU in developing monitoring protocols. CoML, RAV, THU and IzVRS will organize trainings for pilot locations' stakeholders. HPI and CTU will examine and classify the reusability of plastic bottles for building and other purposes including tests. Partners will interview schools and fablabs, who are already using TrussFab to identify the potential for practical use.

Outputs:

- Development of monitoring protocols for litter pollution assessment. Protocols will offer a comparable approach to monitoring in different settings. They will be based on existing knowledge, experience and will be further tested. These will include: (1) Macro litter on water surface, (2) Micro litter in water column, (3) Macro litter on banks/shores, (4) Micro litter in sediment, and (5) Micro litter in biota.
- Trainings on litter monitoring. Project partners and interested stakeholders will be trained to conduct monitoring activities according to the developed methodologies. This will offer knowledge transfer and building capacities within project countries and provide comparable monitoring results.
- Database and development of upcycling technologies. CTU and HPI will set up a structured database (PETRIBUTES) of upcycling technologies and projects with the intention to show all the possible upcycling options which are used around the world, as well as work and test upcycling technologies. The database will be divided into architectural and design projects (further used in WP2) and other possible use of collected plastic waste (mainly bottles) on site in daily life might be reuse or recycling.

#### WP2 – Pilot actions by BWI

The aim of this WP is to contribute to enhancing of the capacity of local authorities and stakeholders by showcasing the measures against plastic pollution in 4 pilot areas of the project. These areas cover riverine (Rižana and Bodrog rivers with Natura2000 sites), marine and coastal (Lošinj island, Croatia – Natura2000 site HR3000161), and the transitional waters (the Po Delta, Italy – Natura2000 site IT3270017). A partner will be responsible for coordinating the local actions: THU, BWI/CoML, IzVRS and RAV, respectively. While the 4 areas are environmentally different they face similar problems from single use plastics, particularly single use plastic bottles and plastic bags. The outputs of the projects are concrete actions and its documentation for WP3 in the strategy and toolbox compilation and WPC by films and photos.

In order to have an integrated and supply chain wise strategy as main output, the pilot actions will also follow this logic. Prevention type actions will focus on advising businesses to switch to less single use plastics and promote recycling - THU, BWI, IzVRS and RAV will work together with local stakeholders (some already AP) to develop strategies for less plastics use. Based on the protocols by WP1, waste monitoring will be performed and IzVRS will test samples from pilots and results used to plan local actions. THU, BWI/CoML, IzVRS and RAV will organize local clean-up actions with involvement of citizens and decision makers with the double objective of make people face the problem and initiate community building. Innovative Seabin technology will be also tested for removing floating objects in 2 locations. Collected plastic will be upcycled based on the knowledge and involvement of CTU and HPI, the upcycled objects will be placed on public places as mementos. ERI will follow the actions for the of updating communication. The aim of this WP to show tangible actions every location could make.

Outputs:

- Plastic free location initiative. In all project locations, guides will be developed with involvement of local businesses and decision makers to encourage local businesses to start using and delivering plastic free products by implementing the first step of a “plastic free community” certification.
- Tool to measure degree, hotspots and type of plastic contamination. In all pilot locations, maps of waste accumulation hotspots and monitoring actions (including sampling) will be carried out with involvement of trained team of stakeholder representatives. Process will be documented and recorded in order to use it for strategy (WP3) and communication (WPC) purposes.

- Clean-up actions with community involvement. Based on the monitoring results, external data and citizen science application data collected, clean up actions (at least 2 per case study) will be implemented and documented for strategy and communication purposes. As community involvement being a key measure, participant recruitment and motivation will be in focus. Seabin technology to increase the volume of collected waste will be applied too.
- Upcycling of waste into statues as mementos. Collected plastic waste will be turned into statues by applying methods of CTU, HPI and other initiatives (such as Trash Art by THU) to be selected depending the quantity and quality. In order to raise awareness, those objects will be placed in public locations.

### WP3 – Integrated strategy development by THU

As a final step of the project, using the entire knowledge and experience of the 36-month period, an integrated strategy with toolbox will be prepared. The strategy will contain policy recommendations, guide to manage the plastic waste issue and a toolbox with measures along the supply chain for local stakeholders to act. The strategy and the toolbox are the main vehicles to the achievement of the specific objective of the project. The document will include recommendations on 3 levels: local/municipality, national and macroregion. Each partner will contribute to the national level recommendations considering their own experiences and pilot outcomes while the lead will harmonize and finalize policy recommendations, as well as extend them to macroregional level. The strategy will formulate the recommendations and toolbox in a general manner applicable for new locations either at river or sea. THU will take the lead on the strategy and toolbox compilation with the involvement of all partners based on their contribution in the earlier WPs.

This WP will involve also decision makers from countries where the plastic waste originates and spread on water. For this reason, even targeted trainings will be held at the source locations to make sure the outreach for the strategy at the root of the problem. Through its network CEI will organize those events, while training material will be based on the contribution by each partner based on their specific competences. The training material will follow the logic and structure of the strategy and toolbox. The main aim of this WP is the summarize in an easy to read and comprehensive way the main findings during the project streaming from all WPs. With the recommendations the weaknesses of current frameworks could be addressed easily and quickly contributing to the change identified in the project's intervention logic.

#### Outputs:

- Integrated strategy to manage plastic pollution of waters. Based on the trans-boundary and interdisciplinary nature of plastic pollution of water bodies, this strategy will provide a coherent picture and recommendations to manage it considering different angles and sectors.
- Toolbox of measures for local actions. The toolbox will be a guide to implement actions along the plastic supply chain delivered in a user-friendly and application focused manner based on the pilots' implementation. It will include actions for prevention, monitoring, awareness raising actions and upcycling – in all cases with focus on implementation.
- Trainings for decision makers in source countries. Based on the strategy and toolbox 2 trainings will be organized for decision makers in the source countries in order to help implementation of waste management practices. One training will focus on rivers and one for the Adriatic Sea.

Those WPs are supported by project management and communication actions in separate WPs.

#### Short introduction of partners:

1. **Filmjungle Society** (THU), Hungary is a Hungarian NGO established in 1996. It is nationally and internationally acclaimed for its multi-award winning nature films and environmentalist films. THU considers films as a tool to communicate not only the beauty of nature to the society but also the negative impacts of human living and the actions of committed experts working on solutions. This is how THU took, literally, a deep dive into plastic pollution, as the situation on Tisza river, Hungary was shocking. Thus, THU launched a spin-off called PLASTIC Cup. Since its launch 6 years ago, the PLASTIC Cup has removed tonnes of garbage from the river and became an internationally recognized environmental initiative. It's grown more than cleaning-up the river. It has built a partnership including national level decision makers, sponsoring companies and local communities. It has been running awareness raising actions, stakeholder discussions and scientific communication. It has been monitoring the waste on the river and planning accordingly. It has been investigating technical solutions that can automatically remove waste and also upcycling options. It has been applying, lobbying and going international. And, of course, by the original job, THU has been recording all of these, the let the society know the impact of living. The movie will be premiered in February 2018.
2. **Blue World Institute of Marine Research and Conservation** (BWI), Croatia was founded in 1999 and researches large marine vertebrate (LMV) species under permits issued by the Ministry of the Environmental and Nature Protection of the Republic of Croatia. The BWI collaborates with the Croatian Environment Agency, the Ministry of Tourism, local and regional authorities and various management institutions. The BWI focuses on the monitoring and conservation of the LMV species of the Adriatic Sea to help to stop the loss of biodiversity, maintain favourable conservation status of these species, and keep good environmental status. The BWI has investigated threats on the populations of LMV with particular emphasis on marine litter. Marine litter is a threat due to entanglement, ingestion and a secondary threat to LMVs through the bio-accumulation through the food chain. The BWI is experienced in conducting public campaigns, including dolphin day and many beach and underwater clean-ups. Additionally the BWI will work with the local authorities, local community and local markets to promote the 'plastic bag free island' of Lošinj. This is an important tool to keep plastics out of the marine environment.
3. **ERI Hungary – European Research Institute Non-profit Ltd. Co.** (ERI), Hungary aims to promote research for innovation in practice for science and society. Our goal is to improve the economic, health, education and cultural conditions of European citizens, and advocate respect for the environment, land and living beings through the activities. The organisation promotes non-profit social solidarity through scientific research and innovative practical solutions. We target to act for the well-being of the citizens in Europe through scientific and societal activities. ERI uses all possible and legal instruments to reach, its goals of: • social and scientific research activities among target groups • wide spread researches and applications for supporting societal and cultural objectives, and the amelioration of scientific environment • developing and managing strategic and innovation projects • enhancing cooperation of professional actors from public, private and civil organizations • supporting activities and knowledge sharing • involving and actively practising scientific research activities • supporting new horizons for social workers, teachers and trainers • innovative ways and methods for life-long learning • supporting opportunities for people with difficulties, disabilities, disadvantages • sharing experiences, building cooperation in national and international environments • collecting and sharing best practices • supporting living and working conditions and needs.
4. **Hasso-Plattner-Institut for Digital Engineering GmbH** (HPI), Germany is a German information technology university college, affiliated to the University of Potsdam. The HPI in Potsdam is the only university faculty in Germany where a degree program in "IT Systems Engineering" is completely and privately financed—made possible by founder Prof. Hasso Plattner. One of the HPI's major goals is to become an elite, world-class educational facility. The institute already offers an optimal study and work environment and cooperates very closely with the business community. The HPI also maintains strong international contacts, for example with Stanford University, the American ivy league university in Palo Alto, California.

Reflecting the needs of the industry, the educational program at HPI is provided by a total of twelve professors and more than 200 senior researchers, lecturers, and research assistants. 500 highly gifted young people are currently enrolled in the Bachelor's and Master's degree program in IT system engineering. HPI is developing a software system (TrussFab) for reusing plastic bottles as building elements in furniture and architectural objects. The idea behind TrussFab is that it empowers individuals to design their own large-scale truss objects by using commodity 3D printing technology combined with upcycled plastic bottles.

5. **Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia (IzVRS)**, Slovenia provides technical assistance and expert support to the Ministry of the environment and spatial planning of the Republic of Slovenia in efficient management of water resources and in implementation of common European water policies (i.e. Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive) and international strategies and conventions (i.e. the Barcelona and its protocols). IzVRS employs a multi-disciplinary group of specialists working in many fields of research. Furthermore, it possesses all necessary resources and equipment for professionally participating in international projects. IzVRS is involved in the implementation of descriptor 10 (marine litter) of the MSFD in Slovenia, which includes developing methodologies and pilot activities for monitoring marine litter (beach macro litter, floating macro and micro litter, bottom macro litter, microplastics in the sediment and microplastics in fish). In addition, IzVRS has experience in sampling litter on inland waters. These include sampling and analysing microplastics in lakes, rivers, sediment and at waste water treatment plants. IzVRS has experience in litter cleaning events (co-organising traditional yearly coastal cleaning event with 150 participants), raising awareness through public events (preparing exhibitions, public presentations, school workshops etc.) and through including citizens in citizen science projects (Marine LitterWatch app).
6. **Czech Technical University in Prague (CTU)**, Czech Republic is one of the biggest and oldest technical universities in Europe. CTU currently has eight faculties (Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Nuclear Science and Physical Engineering, Architecture, Transportation Sciences, Biomedical Engineering, Information Technology) and about 21,000 students. PETMAT research group from the Faculty of Architecture is participating in the project. PETMAT has been researching the role of recycled plastic in architecture as sponsored research project since 2014. Main mission of PETMAT is the research and development of a building unit out of recycled PET in shape of a bottle.
7. **City of Mali Lošinj (CoML)**, Croatia is a part of the local Government structure of Croatia. Mali Lošinj is situated on the island of Lošinj and it is the largest settlement on the islands in Croatia. Tourism in Mali Lošinj began to develop in late 19th century, and Mali Lošinj was among the first recognized tourist destinations in Croatia. The CoML implemented numerous activities in the field of island development, particularly manufacture and sale of therapeutic /medical and aromatic plants, healthy organic food production and sales, production of autochthonous plant species, the promotion of alternative tourism and protection of nature. The CoML works closely with all sectors of society and being a high quality tourist destination we put special emphasis on care for our environment. Therefore, we have long history in organizing clean up actions aimed to remove plastic litter and other pollutants from our sea. Additionally, we regularly participate in global clean up actions, such as "Let's do it! – Mediterranean". In all these activities related to marine environment we work closely with the BWI and other marine orientated local organisations such as FLAG Vela vrata, water sports clubs etc. These associations will enable the CoML to develop the actions to reduce plastics in the municipality area.
8. **Ravenna Municipality (RAV)**, Italy is a local public body with responsibility for the management of municipal waste for Ravenna city in Emilia Romagna region, and overlooks the Adriatic Sea near the Delta of Po river. The territory of reference has an extension of 654.88 square km and is the second for territorial extension after Rome. It is a city rich in history as testified, characterized by a heritage of 1500 years of history with 8 monuments recognized UNESCO heritage. The agricultural sector dominates the landscape and includes the naturalistic and cultural peculiarities of great relevance (Po Regional Park, protected areas). The coastline extends for 39 km and presents 9 seaside resorts that attract many tourists. The Municipality has always been attentive to environmental issues and has obtained



ISO 14001 certification and the EMAS Certification to give substance to its environmental commitments. Since 2012 it has been equipped with a Sustainability education structure called CEAS Ra 21 (Ravenna Education Center for Sustainability Agenda 21) which carries out numerous activities for schools and citizens on various environmental issues and on waste in particular, in collaboration with the local community, numerous activities to clean coastal areas and along rivers.

9. **Central European Initiative – Executive Secretariat (CEI)**, Italy, founded in 1989, is the largest regional intergovernmental forum committed to supporting European integration through cooperation among its 18 Member States of Central and Eastern Europe. It combines multilateral diplomacy and fund/programme/project management, while bridging European macro-regions. R&I cooperation is on top of the CEI agenda, aiming at facilitating the links between science, academia and entrepreneurship. Indeed, the CEI's experience in the sectors of Research and Innovation, SMEs/Business Development and Life-long Education and Training are in line with the 'Europe 2020 Strategy' and closely linked to the actions and projects developed in these sectors. Through its activities, the CEI endeavours to invest in and contribute to developing sustainable economy by placing these sectors of action high on its agenda. The CEI focuses in particular on transferring experience and best practices, enhancing cooperation relations among its 18 Member States, as well as fostering policies and activities promoting R&I, small and medium entrepreneurship, and education on innovation. Moreover, the CEI is strongly experienced in communication and awareness raising activities within EU funded projects. It has successfully played the role of Communication WP Leader and supporter in most of the 29 EU projects it has contributed to implement over the last 12 years (5 as LP).