

Operation Clean Coasts (France)

Over the past forty years, associations, District Interest Committees, sports clubs, etc. have been organizing cleanups of portions of the coast.

In 2003, Marseille Horizon proposed to unite their efforts on the same day to reinforce the message and facilitate logistics. This is how Operation Clean Coasts was born.

In 2005, Marseille Horizon approached MerTerre, which then invited participants to quantitatively and qualitatively assess the collected waste. In 2008, the overall coordination of the operation was entrusted to MerTerre.

Since its inception, the operation continues to grow in size. In 2012, 90 m³ of submarine and terrestrial waste were collected by 1000 persons from 50 organisations/ associations.

Facts

Place / Location	Ensues-la-Redonne, Sausset-les-Pins, Marseille, Cassis, La Ciotat in Bouches-du-Rhône, Provence Alpes Côtes d'Azur région
Commencement Date	June 2003
Duration	Ongoing
Theme	Mitigation, Awareness (Cross-cutting)
Type of Initiative	Practice/ Activity/ Action, Campaign
Initiated by	Marseille Horizon (NGO)
Involved Stakeholders	50 associations, District Interest Committees, sports clubs, municipalities.

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Funding/Financial Support	Yes, by the City of Marseille, the Parc National des Calanques, Private Bodies and Marseille Provence Métropole
Success Rate	Very Successful
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What is at Stake?

The main beaches along the coastline of Marseille and the surrounding municipalities are cleaned by the public services. Much of the coast is rock, yet crowded and interrupted by small sandy beaches. These areas are not cleaned by the public services.

Many associations have been carrying out cleaning campaigns for small portions of this coast over the last forty years. These actions were disparate and uncoordinated.

Given the presence of a lot of waste in the areas and on the seabed, Marseille Horizon offered to coordinate the actions of all other actors, to carry out a larger cleanup campaign on the same day to raise awareness of decision-makers about the extent of user demand.

The intervention of MerTerre, with experience in the characterization of marine litter, was also desired to better understand the extent of pollution and provide public decision-makers with more accurate data. Additionally, association MerTerre could put its experience to this citizen eco-action to further extend the reach of the message with the public authorities.

The data on the types and quantities of collected waste demonstrate the behaviour of

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users and provide greater accuracy to the information provided to the media and policy makers.

What is the Scale of the Problem?

In 2005, 150 people gathered 50 m³ of waste. In 2012, 87 m³ of litter were collected by 1000 people. Since the beginning of the characterization of litter collected during this operation, those collected in larger quantities on the seabed, are always scrap metal, pieces of wrecked cars or wheels and tires. Plastic packaging (bottles, caps, bags, pieces of plastic), glass (especially cans of liquor bottles), aluminium, cardboard / paper are always represented either on land or seabed.

The coast of Marseille and the surrounding coast is heavily polluted by the presence of waste washed out to shore or abandoned by users. The presence of these wastes on a space of leisure and relaxation, supposed to aesthetically attract the public, harms the image of Marseille already known to have difficulties with urban waste management. Moreover, the presence of these coastal wastes is partly due to bad management of the streets in a city near the sea.

Unfortunately, year-round cleaning undertaken by public services on the entire coastline would be too costly to the community. The population, as well as technical staff are still not sensitised regarding the issue of marine debris, especially since they do not realize that litter thrown on the streets could end up in the sea through storm drainage systems and water courses.

Most are not aware of the severity of the pollution generated by marine debris including plastics.

Project/ Activity Results:

The cleaning is done on land and underwater in the coastal municipalities of Ensués-la-Redonne, Le Rove, Marseille, Cassis and La Ciotat, on either side of a line that extends about 40 km of coastline.

On the coast, a significant presence of litter is observed on the transition zones between urban and natural areas that are easily accessible by car. Users visibly retain the

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behaviour adopted in the city of throwing their garbage on the ground in the gutter, thinking that waste will be collected by public services.

Numerous small pieces of plastic rubbish and caps and cotton swabs are collected on areas exposed to the prevailing Northwest wind.

On the seabed, especially on the bottom of the ports, many tires and pieces of shipwrecks, batteries, motors, pieces of scrap and many plastic containers, glass and aluminium are collected.

Success and Fail factors and Lessons Learned:

This operation is a success as it is becoming known to the general public and is being covered by the media.

Unfortunately, the amount of waste abandoned on the coast by users remains the same. We note, however, a little less waste on the seabed.

The operation has especially helped to raise awareness in public authorities, which today provide technical support to the organisation. In addition, public authorities also launched a government contract for cleaning up the seabed of the harbour of Marseilles. A company is trying to remove the marine "monsters" previously identified in a study.

The Urban Community of Marseille Provence Métropole, which is responsible for the maintenance of coastal, urban cleanliness and maintenance of storm drainage system, signed an agreement with Association MerTerre to launch a programme of joint litter management. MerTerre has to study the characteristics of the waste on the coast and to propose solutions for preventive and curative reduction. Awareness campaigns have been conducted with the technical staff, an awareness programme was proposed for cigarette butts, and coordination of actors in environmental education addressing this topic is in progress.

Additional Information on Finances:

Overall Coast = 20000 €

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Funders :

Ville de Marseille : 3900 €

Communauté Urbaine Marseille Provence Métropole = 4500 €

Parc National des Calanques : 5000 €

Private bodies = 3500 €

Auto financing= 3100

Total Funding = 20000 €

Assessment of Project/ Activity Sustainability:

The project is evaluated using quantitative and qualitative characterization of the waste, the number of structures and people participating in the operation, media coverage and the height of the financial support of the various stakeholders.

The sustainability of the project is decided based on the results of these assessment tools.

How Transferable is the Project/ Activity to other European Countries/Seas?

This operation is fully transferable provided that a structure/organisation is leading the project and that the presence of waste on land and coastal seafloor has been detected.

The main challenge is to coordinate local stakeholders, associations, sports clubs, businesses, local authorities and managers of natural areas around a common day for an eco citizen cleaning.

For interested parties, a method of waste characterization is provided and the website with the online database will soon be available in English : www.resodema.org

Available documentation and further information

www.mer-terre.org

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www.marseille-horizon.org/

www.gipcalanques.fr

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