

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PartArt4OW Second Open Call Participatory Art Initiatives already Restoring the Mediterranean

EU-funded projects unite art, science and citizens to tackle marine pollution across Italy and Spain in 2026

Rome, April 2026 — Five pioneering participatory art initiatives — **THALASSONIA** (Salerno), **Isola Alter Ego** (Ventotene), **ANZIO R.I.S.E. for the Ocean** (Anzio), **WIPES OUT!** (Barcelona–Badalona) and **MEDSAIL** (Naples) — are transforming marine litter, hidden pollution and industrial legacies into art, music, architecture and collective action, mobilising citizens as active stewards of the sea. All five initiatives are supported under the Horizon Europe Mission Ocean through the PartArt4OW consortium, contributing to the EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters” and the UN Ocean Decade.

1. THALASSONIA — Salerno, Italy | March–July 2026

Giving marine litter a voice to restore the Mediterranean

THALASSONIA blends Citizen Science, participatory art and circular economy principles into an immersive experience that reconnects people with the sea. Volunteers from Plastic Free, certified divers from Lega Navale, and local citizens collect marine litter from beaches, coastal waters and the seabed, classifying waste via the European Environment Agency’s *Marine Litter Watch* app. Collected plastic is then transformed at the **Marine Ateliers at Marina d’Arechi** into musical instruments and stage scenography, turning pollution into sound and awareness into expression.

The project culminates on **8 July 2026** with “*Sharing the Magic*”, a large-scale public orchestral concert at Marina d’Arechi coinciding with the arrival of the PartArt4OW Sailing Lab. An open-access *Marine Atelier Toolkit* and pedagogical kits for schools will be released to replicate the model across the Mediterranean.

“In a sea where pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss converge, THALASSONIA transforms data into emotion, waste into meaning, and participation into responsibility. Here, citizens are not spectators — they are protagonists of change.”

— Francesco Bottigliero, Artistic Lead, THALASSONIA

Key highlights

- **Marine litter clean-ups:** Plastic Free, Lega Navale and citizens using the Marine Litter Watch app.
- **Marine Ateliers:** plastic transformed into musical instruments and stage scenography.
- **“Sharing the Magic” — 8 July 2026:** public orchestral concert with upcycled instruments at Marina d’Arechi.
- **Open-access Marine Atelier Toolkit:** replicable methodology and pedagogical kits for schools and coastal communities.

2. Isola Alter Ego — Ventotene, Italy | Spring–Summer 2026

Engaging citizens in tackling marine plastic through art, science and circular design

Isola Alter Ego brings together artists, scientists and citizens on the Mediterranean island of Ventotene to address marine plastic pollution through hands-on workshops with schoolchildren, community clean-up campaigns, citizen-science classification and co-creation sessions. Collected plastic is transformed into modular circular architectural elements — seating, shelters and temporary structures — serving as spaces for community dialogue and exhibitions.



A **public showcase event on 2 July 2026** in Ventotene's harbour will present outcomes of workshops, clean-ups and scientific activities. The initiative expects to directly involve around **200 participants** and reach approximately **2,000 people** through communication activities.

Key highlights

- **Educational workshops:** ocean literacy, marine ecosystem learning and creative plastic reuse with schoolchildren.
- **Community clean-up campaigns:** families, fishermen, divers and volunteers removing plastic from beaches and coastal waters.
- **Circular co-creation sessions:** plastic transformed into modular community architectural structures.
- **Public harbour showcase — 2 July 2026, Ventotene.**

3. ANZIO R.I.S.E. for the Ocean — Anzio (RM), Italy | February–July 2026

A community campaign to tackle polystyrene fish-crate pollution in Anzio's harbour

ANZIO R.I.S.E. for the Ocean, led by Raw Drivers APS with the Municipality of Anzio, Legambiente, WWF Italia, ATCL and DUWO, addresses single-use expanded polystyrene (EPS) fish crates — an overlooked source of micro- and nano-plastic pollution in Mediterranean ports. At the heart of the initiative is the **“Adopt a Fish Crate”** campaign, through which citizens, organisations and businesses sponsor fishers with reusable, EU-accredited crates, building public awareness and a mandate for change.

Citizen science field documentation, a participatory art programme and a digital archive of testimonies from fishers and residents complement the campaign. The initiative culminates in a **Harbour Festival (late June 2026)** aligned with the PartArt4OW Sailing Lab, including a large participatory sculpture by Dadara assembled from reclaimed polystyrene.

“By working with citizens, fishers, institutions and NGOs, we aim to strengthen ocean literacy and create the social and cultural mandate needed for a durable transition.”

— Marcello Dato, Project Manager, Raw Drivers APS

Key highlights

- **“Adopt a Fish Crate” campaign:** civic sponsorship of reusable EU-accredited fish crates replacing single-use polystyrene.
- **Citizen science monitoring:** volunteer-led documentation of polystyrene in the harbour and coastal zone.
- **Participatory art programme:** polystyrene transformed into public artworks, including a sculpture by Dadara.
- **Harbour Festival — late June 2026:** aligned with the PartArt4OW Sailing Lab, Anzio.

4. WIPES OUT! — Barcelona–Badalona, Spain | February–July 2026

Turning hidden pollution into shared action

WIPES OUT! addresses a largely invisible but pervasive form of marine pollution: flushed wet wipes. When disposed of via toilets, wet wipes travel through sewers, rivers and wastewater treatment plants, ultimately reaching coastal waters where they damage marine ecosystems, fisheries and community well-being. Led by **Mediterracom**, a cooperative specialising in environmental education and communication, the project brings





together citizens, artists, scientists, fishers and decision-makers to make this hidden pollution pathway visible, understandable and actionable.

The initiative combines citizen science, participatory performance and civic dialogue. Communities collaboratively trace the journey of wet wipes from land to sea, transforming scientific evidence into collective performances that turn data into emotion and shared responsibility. The main public event and the PartArt40W Sailing Lab are hosted at **La Mar d'Activitats, Port Vell (Barcelona)**. An open-access "suitcase toolkit" will enable other communities to replicate and adapt the process in different coastal contexts.

Key highlights

- **Citizen science tracing:** communities map the journey of flushed wet wipes from bathrooms to coastal waters.
- **Participatory performances:** scientific data transformed into emotionally engaging collective public experiences.
- **Civic dialogue:** bringing together citizens, fishers, scientists, artists and decision-makers around pollution prevention.
- **Open-access suitcase toolkit:** replicable methodologies and materials for other coastal communities.
- **Public event at La Mar d'Activitats, Port Vell, Barcelona,** coinciding with the PartArt40W Sailing Lab.

Key leads

Chantal Ménard (Mediterracom) — Project Coordinator & Environmental Communication; **Roberta Genova** (Mediterracom) — Artistic Co-director; **Anna Bozzano** — Marine Scientist & Educator; **Ramon Guimaraes** — Artist, Visual Storyteller and Performer.

5. MEDSAIL — Naples (Bagnoli–Coroglio), Italy | February–July 2026

Mediterranean Ecologies and co-Design through the Sailing Art Inclusive Lab

MEDSAIL unfolds along Naples' western coastline, between the historic city centre and the post-industrial area of Bagnoli–Coroglio — a Site of National Interest marked by decades of industrial pollution and social marginalisation. Led by the **Department of Architecture (DiARC) of the University of Naples Federico II**, in collaboration with the curatorial collective **Collettivo Zero APS**, the project brings together residents, artists, scientists and civic actors to explore how environmental contamination intersects with memory, identity and access to the sea.

Through workshops, artistic residencies and co-design sessions, participants engage with environmental data, lived experiences and local histories. Two artistic processes anchor the work: one involving **young people from the Nisida juvenile penitentiary**, and another engaging **women from Bagnoli's former industrial community**, transforming personal narratives into collective performances and installations. The **Luise Pier** serves as the hosting harbour for the PartArt40W Sailing Lab. The project culminates in a public festival featuring exhibitions, performances and dialogues, with all outputs shared openly.

Key highlights

- **Participatory art and co-design sessions:** residents, artists and scientists engage with environmental data and local histories.
- **Inclusive artistic residencies:** working with young people from Nisida juvenile penitentiary and women from Bagnoli's industrial community.
- **Public festival at Luise Pier:** exhibitions, performances and civic dialogues, hosting the PartArt40W Sailing Lab.
- **Openly shared outputs:** documentation, methodologies and artistic works accessible to wider Mediterranean audiences.

Key leads

DiARC – University of Naples Federico II — Scientific and institutional lead; **Collettivo Zero APS** — Curatorial and participatory art coordination; **Maria Giovanna Abbate** — Artist; **Teresa Antignani** — Artist.

About PartArt4OW

PartArt4OW (Participatory Art for Society Engagement with Ocean and Water) is a Horizon Europe–funded project exploring how participatory art practices can strengthen collaboration between artists, scientists, civic society actors and citizens to address ocean and water basin challenges across Europe. The project supports 19 interdisciplinary, inclusive and ethically grounded initiatives that combine artistic creation with scientific knowledge and civic engagement.



Funded under HORIZON-MISS-2023-OCEAN-01, Grant Agreement No 101157247. Views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency (REA). UK participant Raw-News Visual LTD is supported by UKRI grant no. 10136713. All outputs shared under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Part of the UN Ocean Decade. Contributing to the EU Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters.

Media contacts

THALASSONIA

Małgorzata Bottigliero, Graphics and Communication Lead — malgorzata.bottigliero@gmail.com

Francesco Bottigliero, Artistic Lead — francescobottigliero@autograf.pl

Isola Alter Ego

Michael Posch, Illuseum Berlin — michael.posch@illuseum-berlin.de

ANZIO R.I.S.E. for the Ocean

Marcello Dato, Project Manager, Raw Drivers APS — rawdriversaps@gmail.com

WIPES OUT!

Chantal Ménard, Project Coordinator, Mediterracom — cmenardcomms@gmail.com

MEDSAIL

DiARC / Collettivo Zero APS, University of Naples Federico II — mariarosariamorelli7@gmail.com

PartArt4OW Programme

Carolina Dopico, Communications Manager, PartArt4OW — contact@partart4ow.eu

www.partart4ow.eu