



Funded by
the European Union



CLEANER RIVERS
CLEANER SEAS

RIVERCLEAN NEWSLETTER *FIRST EDITION* *October 2025*

About the Project

The RIVERCLEAN project works to reduce plastic pollution in two of Albania's main rivers, Ishëm and Vjosa, and as a result, protect the Adriatic Sea. The project brings together communities, CSOs and local institutions to keep the environment clean and plastic-free. Over 30 months, RIVERCLEAN will support monitoring, cleanup, education activities, empowering civil society to take long-term action for cleaner rivers and seas.

1st Regional Meeting

ETMI and Milieukontakt Albania organized the first regional meeting in Tirana with representatives from CSOs, municipalities and national institutions located along the Ishëm River Basin.

The event aimed to strengthen collaboration between local actors and promote plastic waste reduction initiatives.

Mr. Jean-Noël Gangloff, representative of the EU Delegation to Albania, emphasized that Chapter 27 (Environment) remains one of the most challenging EU integration areas due to the high investment needs, but also a priority for Albania.

He highlighted the importance of policy alignment with the EU acquis, enforcement of environmental legislation, and changing community mindsets toward environmental protection.

Key takeaways from the meeting included:

- Implementing Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes;
- Promoting eco-design and sustainable materials;
- Improving public infrastructure for waste collection and recycling;

Working closely with communities and businesses along river basins.





Funded by
the European Union



CLEANER RIVERS
CLEANER SEAS

2nd Regional Meeting

As part of the RIVERCLEAN project, ETMI and Milieukontakt Albania organized the second regional meeting in the city of Vlorë, bringing together CSOs and local stakeholders from municipalities along the Vjosa River Basin.

The meeting aimed to identify and promote concrete initiatives to reduce plastic pollution through intersectoral cooperation and coordinated local action. Participants exchanged experiences and discussed practical ways to align community efforts, local governance, and private sector engagement for a cleaner river system.

Discussions focused on how improved waste management, community awareness and collaborative monitoring can effectively reduce litter reaching the Adriatic Sea.



The event strengthened the dialogue between local authorities, civil society and institutions, reinforcing their shared commitment to protecting the Vjosa, one of Europe's last wild rivers, from plastic pollution.



Funded by
the European Union



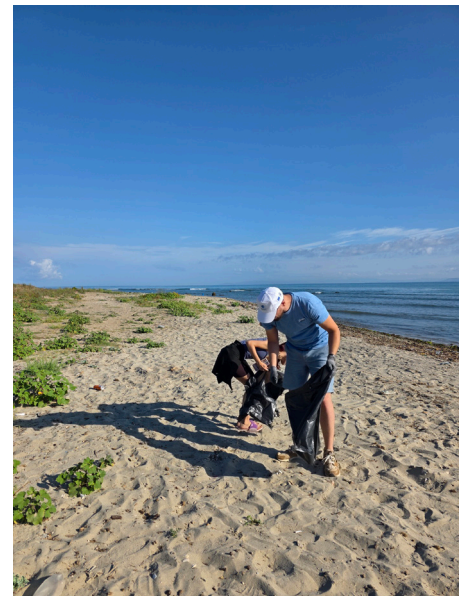
CLEANER RIVERS
CLEANER SEAS

Field Monitoring and Cleanup Activities

 Cape of Rodon - Ishëm delta - July 2025

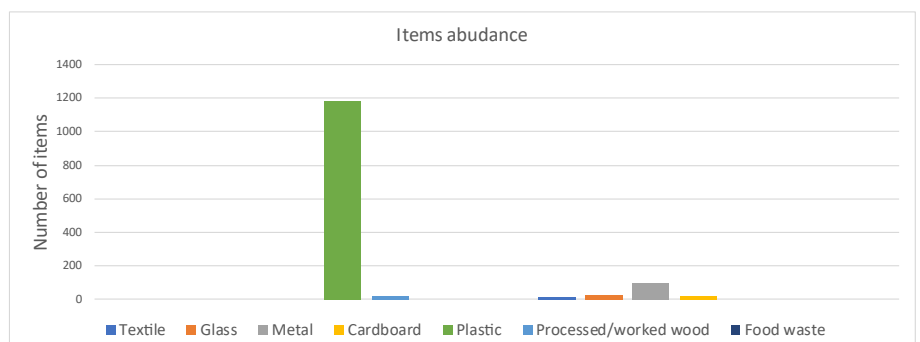
ETMI organized a clean up and beach litter monitoring activity near the Ishëm River Delta (Durrës Municipality).

Participants joined forces to collect and record litter following standard monitoring methods.



Key Results (per 100 meters):

- Total waste collected: 57.2 kg
- Plastic waste: 37.5 kg
- Other waste: 19.7 kg
- Total items recorded: 1,359



The activity helped identify main litter sources and their impact on the coastal environment.



Funded by
the European Union



CLEANER RIVERS
CLEANER SEAS

Field Monitoring and Cleanup Activities

 Delisuf beach - Vjosa Delta - July 2025

ETMI and Milieukontakt Albania organized a beach litter monitoring activity near the Vjosa River Delta (Vlora Municipality).

Participants from local CSOs and institutions worked together to observe, collect and record waste using standard monitoring protocols.



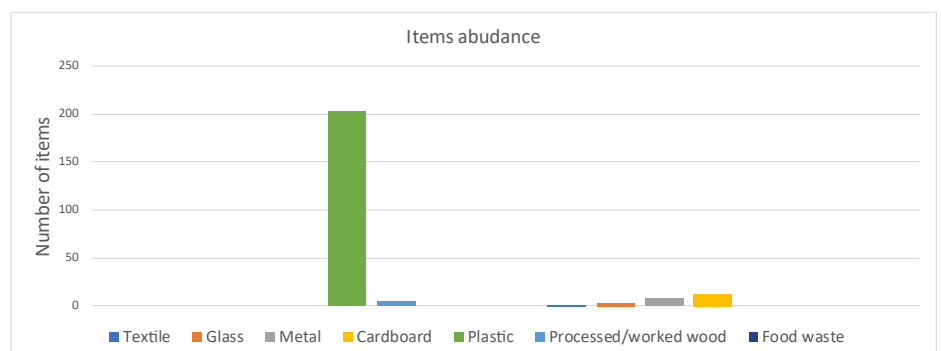
Total planned activities: **48 monitoring** actions, some led by partner CSOs.

During summer, Milieukontakt Albania and ETMI launched a Call for Proposals for CSOs to conduct part of these monitoring actions, which were reviewed in September 2025.



Key Results (per 100 meters):

- Total waste collected: 4.18 kg
- Plastic waste: 2.42 kg
- Other waste: 1.76 kg
- Total items recorded: 236



The activity helped identify main litter sources and their impact on the coastal environment.



CLEANER RIVERS
CLEANER SEAS

Call for project proposals

To strengthen local engagement in protecting Albania's rivers, RIVERCLEAN launched its Call for Project Proposals inviting CSOs based in the Ishëm and Vjosa river basins to submit their initiatives within the project framework.

The call aimed to:

- Support community-led actions that reduce plastic pollution,
- Promote sustainable waste management
- Foster cooperation among local actors along both river basins.

As part of the capacity-building process, ETMI and Milieukontakt Albania organized three orientation sessions to guide applicants.

First Orientation Session (Pre-recorded online video)

The first orientation was shared on YouTube, introducing the purpose and priorities of the RIVERCLEAN project, offering guidance on structuring project ideas and providing technical instructions for the application process.

Second Orientation Session in-person at Europe House, Tirana

The second session gathered CSO representatives at Europe House Tirana for an in-depth discussion on project goals, proposal development, and application procedures. Participants received practical information on the criteria, documentation, and submission deadlines, ensuring a smooth and transparent process.





Funded by
the European Union



CLEANER RIVERS
CLEANER SEAS

Call for project proposals

Third Orientation Session in-person in Vlorë

The third orientation session of the River-Clean Call for Proposals took place in Vlora, gathering CSOs based in the Vjosa River basin. During the session, participants were introduced to the objectives and priorities of the RiverClean project and received detailed guidance on how to structure a successful proposal.

The session also provided technical instructions on the application process, required documentation, evaluation criteria and submission deadlines.



CSO Capacity Assessment Workshop in Vlorë

Following the orientation session, a capacity assessment workshop was held in Vlora with participating CSOs. The workshop focused on evaluating the knowledge, experience and practical skills of local organizations in monitoring plastic litter in rivers and along sea-shores. Through group discussions and interactive exercises, participants shared their challenges, experiences and training needs in addressing plastic pollution.

The results of this workshop will serve as a basis for future capacity-building activities under the RiverClean project, ensuring that CSOs are well equipped to conduct standardized monitoring and contribute reliable data for reducing plastic pollution.





Funded by
the European Union



CLEANER RIVERS
CLEANER SEAS

‘Blue without plastic’ Summer school

 Durrës - Ishëm delta - September 2025

From **23 to 27 September 2025**, the coastal city of Durrës hosted the “Blue Without Plastic” summer school, organized by Milieukontakt Albania and the Environmental and Territorial Management Institute (ETMI). The initiative brought together 30 enthusiastic young participants, mostly students, who shared a common interest in protecting Albania’s rivers, coasts and marine environments. The program aimed to raise awareness about plastic pollution and marine litter while equipping youth with the knowledge and tools to take meaningful action in their communities.



A major highlight of the summer school was the field trip to the Ishmi Delta on the third day. There, participants joined organizers for a large-scale cleanup campaign, collecting plastic and other litter from the sensitive delta ecosystem.

The summer school concluded with a certificate ceremony recognizing the dedication and active participation of all attendees. Beyond the formal recognition, the program fostered lasting connections among participants, creating a network of environmentally conscious youth ready to continue advocating for cleaner rivers, coasts, and communities across Albania





Funded by
the European Union



CLEANER RIVERS
CLEANER SEAS



Future actions

As the RiverClean project moves forward, several exciting activities are planned for the coming months:



Launch of the 2nd Call for Proposals

A new call will be opened focusing on the implementation of standardized monitoring methodologies for marine litter. This will further engage CSOs in applying practical tools for data collection and analysis.



Announcement of Sub-Granted CSOs

Five CSOs selected through the first Call for Proposals will soon be announced and contracted to implement the monitoring initiatives aimed at reducing plastic pollution within the Ishëm and Vjosa river basins.



HAPI Index Implementation

Sub-granted CSOs will begin applying the HAPI Index to assess and track the effectiveness of local actions and behavioral change regarding plastic waste reduction.



Ongoing Monitoring and Cleanup Activities

RiverClean partners and CSOs will continue conducting regular monitoring and cleanup actions along rivers and coastal areas, gathering valuable data and promoting community engagement for a cleaner, healthier environment.



Milieukontakt Albania



milieukontaktalbania



milieukontakt.org



Environmental and Territorial
Management Institute



etmi_albania



etmi-al.org