

Newsletter N°1

**Unlocking potential, preserving the Environment:
Fostering growth of outermost regions through
smart UW Cultural & Nature Tourism**

In this newsletter, we are excited to share the latest updates and milestones of the ecoRoute project, an EU co-funded initiative aimed at transforming outermost regions into smart underwater cultural and nature tourism (UCNT) destinations. By leveraging their rich underwater cultural heritage and natural assets, we aim to create sustainable and innovative tourism offerings that benefit both residents and visitors.



About the project



Acronym & Title : ecoRoute

Multidimensional and integrated approach fostering smart underwater cultural and nature tourism offer in Outermost Regions

Call: EMFAF-2023-PIA-FLAGSHIP-5-OR

Duration: 1/10/2023 - 31/3/2026

Budget: 1.176.466 €

Partners and countries involved:

9 partners from Greece, France, Portugal, Azores, Madeira and Martinique

Outermost regions have an exceptionally high cultural, natural and biodiversity value, with tourism contributing to a significant share of their economy. However, there is still an untapped potential to reinforce tourism flows in these Regions, by combining their underwater (UW) cultural heritage with natural assets and biodiversity.

Motivated from the above, ecoRoute proposes to design and implement a multidimensional and integrated approach fostering smart **UW Cultural & Nature Tourism (UCNT)** offer in the participating Outermost Regions, enabling their transformation to smart UCNT Destinations, with a new ecological focus that draws on natural and cultural resources, diversifying and developing smart UCNT services for the benefit of both residents and visitors. Our work spans across multiple dimensions seamlessly integrated, particularly:



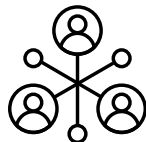
Strategic

in terms of smart and sustainable Strategies and Action Plans.



Policymaking & financing

in terms of applicable policy pathways and investment/financing facilitation



Capacity building

in terms of bottom-up stakeholders' engagement and management of conflicting interests



Local Interventions

in terms of campaigns and measures supporting smart UCNT integrated in green/circular economy



Smart eco-tourism packages

in terms of

addressing seasonality challenges and promoting unique assets of the participating Regions linked under a Route brand, through a multi-destination eco-tourism product.

Know the sites

Azores

Azores promotes two sites, the Main shipwreck and its surroundings in Fayal Island (Porto Pim) and Caroline shipwreck in Pico Island. The Main shipwreck, visible from the surface on clear days, remains in the memory of the local population, particularly because of the transportation of animals, which was then released from the slopes of Monte da Guia located in the Canal Faial – Pico (Faial – Pico). Caroline shipwreck, is one of the last vessels from the sailing fleet that travelled in the Atlantic before the introduction of steamboats.

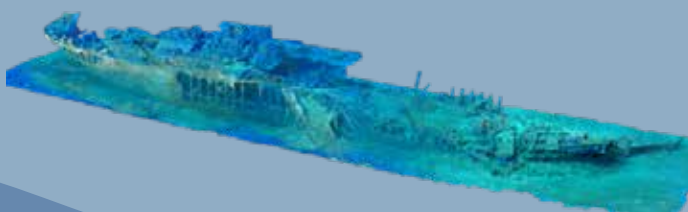
[Read more](#)



Madeira

The Prompt/Pronto shipwreck is an UWCH site in the bay of Funchal, on a light-coloured sandy bottom outside Madeira main harbour. The wreck took place on 18 April 1929 and since then, it has become a significant cultural dive site with an abundance of sea life species. This wreck has significant historical importance as it is the last known physical evidence of Madeira’s intense cabotage industry.

[Read more](#)



North Martinique

The Saint-Pierre's Bay is known all around the world for its wrecks dating from the 8th of May 1902 linked to Montagne Pelée's volcanic eruption. The town is at this time the French Indies' main port, also called the "Little Antilles' Paris". Around ten wrecks are display in all the harbor, testimony of the catastrophe and of the maritime traffic in the end of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century; describing the switch from sail to steam. Two other wrecks sites have been chosen for their historical and cultural interest in the Caribbean landscape: the Cygne 1808 (Le Prêcheur) and the Amelie 1902 (Le Carbet).

[Read more](#)

South Martinique

South Martinique has an exceptional potential for scuba diving, with a quarter of Martinican dive centers near Anses-d'Arlets and around forty in the entire southern part of the island. Three scuba diving sites have been identified in southern Martinique, as offering an ideal combination of history, biodiversity and culture: the Diamond Rock (Le Rocher du Diamant), the Nahoon wreck and Apricot Cove (la Crique Abricot)

[Read more](#)



Our first pillar of work

UCNT capacity building, strategies, policy pathways and business environment

Our first pillars focuses on building capacity for Underwater Cultural and Nature Tourism (UCNT) and developing sustainability strategies and policy pathways for the Azores, Madeira, and Martinique. Since October, we have progressed in creating a policy toolkit and green action plans, and are now preparing for stakeholder involvement and capacity building.



Dissemination & Communication plan and activities: Creation and implementation of communication materials for the entire project

Deep Turtle Plongee and ATLANTIS lead our communication strategy, aiming to effectively reach target groups with the project's messages and results. After six months, the ecoRoute project has achieved strong visibility through its website, social media, and multilingual promotional materials, including flyers, brochures, press kits, and newsletters.



Our events

in the first 6 months



[ecoRoute Consortium Kick-off meeting: start of the journey towards Smart UW Cultural & Nature Tourism](#)

It took place at ATLANTIS Consulting headquarters in Thessaloniki, Greece on the 31st of October 2023 and was dedicated to the overall project presentation, partners' presentation, and the presentation of various financial/administrative issues of the project by the Project Coordinator, presentations of the WPs by the responsible partner. At the end of the meeting, an action list until March 2024 was agreed.

[Read more](#)



[ecoRoute presentation during CEAM's 20th Anniversary event](#)

The first public presentation of ecoRoute in Madeira took place during CEAM's 20th anniversary celebration on the 23rd of January 2024 at the Barreirinha Bar Café in Funchal. The event was attended by around 50 people from different backgrounds, including directors of the regional and municipal departments of culture, other associations, NGOs, collaborators and friends, with the aim of sharing our work over the past 20 years and the projects for the future, with ecoRoute being emphasized.

[Read more](#)



[Navigating History: Unveiling the Maritime Cultural Heritage of Martinique through ecoRoute](#)

On 8th of December 2023, ecoRoute project was presented by AAPA (Prof. Jean-Sébastien Guibert) at the AREBIO conference, at Fort-de-France Lycée de Bellevue, Martinique, through a paper entitled: *Épave de Martinique et d'ailleurs : de l'histoire et du patrimoine à un projet touristique culturel et naturel durable.*

[Read more](#)

Other Events

- **Boat Fishing Show-Sea & Tourism Expo in Athens, Greece,** 7-10 March, 24, by EnaliaTec
- **The Beyond Expo 2024,** one of the world's leading showcases for innovation, business development, and technology in Thessaloniki, Greece 25-27/04/2024, by ATLANTIS.
- **Forward Green Expo 2024:** Fostering Sustainable Development in Greece ecoRoute, in Thessaloniki, Greece 7-9 March, 2024 at TIFF Helexpo by ATLANTIS

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GREECE



ATLANTIS RESEARCH is a key EcoRoute partner with over 30 years of experience in sustainable tourism, ICT, and innovative financing. They collaborate with public and private sectors to develop blue economy policies and engage local communities.

[Learn more here.](#)



EnaliaTec, a spin-off from CERTH, specializes in underwater technology solutions for global diving research, including autonomous vehicles and 3D mapping. They support various marine-related entities.

[Learn more here.](#)

FRANCE



Aix-Marseille University, the largest multidisciplinary French-speaking university, specializes in maritime and underwater archaeology and offers France's only Master's program in this field. They will host an international workshop and the project's final event.

[Learn more here.](#)

PORTUGAL



Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, a top-ranked university, hosts the UNESCO Chair in The Oceans Cultural Heritage. EcoRoute is supported by NOVA FCSH, focusing on Archaeology and Landscapes.

[Learn more here.](#)

Region of Madeira



CEAM in Madeira studies and preserves modern and contemporary archaeological heritage. They create AR & VR content to make underwater heritage accessible and develop sustainable tourism strategies. [Learn more here.](#)

Region of Martinique



DEEP TURTLE PLONGEE is a leading diving center in South Martinique, involved in marine biodiversity protection and professional diver training. They lead EcoRoute's dissemination and sustainability efforts. [Learn more here.](#)

involved in ecoRoute project ?

Region of Azores



The Sea Observatory of the Azores promotes marine science and environmental education from its base on Faial Island. It is part of the Regional Networks of Science Centers of the Azores and raises public awareness of the region's heritage. [Learn more here.](#)



Founded in 2010, AAPA promotes scientific archaeology in the Lesser Antilles, focusing on coastal and maritime research, public heritage promotion, and biodiversity preservation. [Learn more here.](#)



Founded in 2018, this association promotes sustainable tourism in Faial, preserving nature and culture. They design eco-tourism packages and coordinate the UCNH Route. [Learn more here.](#)

Who are the 9 partners

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