

NEW ERA ACTIONS FOR THE ERA POLICY AGENDA 2025-2027
TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL CONSULTATION PROCESS

This template follows up on the debate in the ERA Forum on 25 May, in which Forum representatives agreed on a coordinated approach towards the definition of new actions for the ERA Policy Agenda 2025-2027. It builds on a gap analysis exercise in which the ERA Forum assessed, which parts of the [Pact for Research and Innovation](#) are already covered by the [Policy Agenda 2022-2024](#) and where there should be additions.

Action title: <i>(Please use as a maximum two lines.)</i>	Empowering the next generation through citizen science across Europe: Scale-up of the Plastic Pirates initiative
Description of the action <i>(Please explain the proposed action in a <u>simple, clear and communicable</u> narrative).</i>	<p>The action focusses on bringing science closer to the next generation by empowering and engaging young people transnationally across Europe in citizen science to take part in the green transition.</p> <p>At the centre of this action is the Plastic Pirates – Go Europe! citizen science initiative, which activates students and youth groups across Europe to monitor and tackle plastic pollution in rivers, coasts and sea. By continuing the scale-up of the Plastic Pirates to all of Europe, the initiative will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expand to additional MS/AC, • build on the successful pilot actions to secure lasting results • broaden its focus to include the marine environment, • assess the impact of citizen science on the awareness for environmental challenges and willingness to take action amongst its participants, • intensify transnational youth exchanges via citizen science, • further develop the initiative in co-creation with all stakeholders <p>The action makes a direct contribution to the objectives of the Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2023 and supports MS/AC to reach their zero pollution targets.</p>
Actors <i>(Please explain who would take part in the action and who would benefit from it).</i>	<p>The initiative targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member States and Associated Countries to implement citizen science activities in their countries. An informal European Plastic Pirates Interest Group has been set up to connect, collaborate and coordinate among MS and AC. • Young people and students will carry out the actual sampling of plastic pollution in rivers, coasts and seas. • Scientists will verify and analyse the samples. • Educators will be empowered to teach young people about plastic pollution through dedicated didactic material. • Public authorities and researchers will benefit from increased data on plastic pollution and citizen engagement for a clean aquatic environment.
Expected impact <i>(Please describe the expected impact of the action (including outside the scientific community), paying attention to the fact that it needs to focus on <u>concrete results and reachable deliverables</u>).</i>	<p>By continuing the Action, the expected impact will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enlarging the initiative from currently 13 MS/AC to >20 MS/AC, 10.000 students and 750 schools • Expanding and deepening the broad partnership of over 30 local and scientific partners • Assess on a pan-European scale how citizen science has an impact on young people's awareness for environmental challenges, their trust and interest in science, and willingness to take action for the green transition

NEW ERA ACTIONS FOR THE ERA POLICY AGENDA 2025-2027
TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL CONSULTATION PROCESS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the monitoring of EU policies through data gathering of more than 750 samplings at EU rivers, waterways and beaches • Contributing directly to the implementation of the EU Mission Ocean and Waters and supporting MS/AC in achieving their zero pollution targets • Mobilising the public and raising awareness for the green transition by communicating the impact and results of the Plastic Pirates to the European public • Further developing the Plastic Pirates citizen science initiative in co-creation with all stakeholders involved (policymakers, scientists, students, educators, researchers) to close (additional) data gaps for monitoring EU policy objectives and to strengthen the citizen science approach • Providing and testing best practices for pan-European citizen science, building on the MLE on “Citizen Science initiatives – Policy and Practice” and preparing the ground for future EU-wide citizen science campaigns in support of the European Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030.
<p>Why do we need this action?</p> <p><i>(Please indicate the need for this action in view of implementing the <u>Pact for R&I and achieving the ERA objectives</u> and explain why its <u>objective cannot be reached through existing programmes/ activities</u>. What is the action's <u>added value</u> at national and European level as well as for stakeholders? How does it <u>make a change</u> and how is <u>co-creation</u> ensured?)</i></p>	<p>The need for this action is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower young citizens across Europe to act to eliminate pollution and restore our ocean and waters • Help reduce marine litter by 50% by 2030 in MS/AC and EU, through improved monitoring and understanding of pollution sources, pathways and hotspots • Allow sampling in rivers and on coastlines across Europe in a harmonised and standardised manner, which will significantly extend existing data, improve scientific understanding and knowledge and thus help to develop systemic solutions for the prevention and elimination of plastic pollution • Provide and test best practices for future up-scaling of citizen science campaigns to the European level • Assess the level of impact citizen science has on its participants to increase the awareness for environmental challenges and their willingness to take action in the green transition • Make the Plastic Pirates sustainable by securing further funding in addition to the EUR 2.94 m + in-kind contributions mobilised • Strengthen links with EU (Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps) and national programmes • Increase transnational cooperation in citizen science • Support excellent science and allow researchers across Europe to draw on open and accessible data integrated in existing European data portals.
<p>Additional information</p> <p><i>(For example, timing and milestones, which already could be envisaged, can be indicated.)</i></p>	<p>https://www.plastic-pirates.eu/en</p>