

# Cooperation stories

## from the MED PROGRAMME

### Let's share clean air

Harbours are key infrastructures for the economic development, but they also have potential negative environmental impact due to multiple emission sources. The ever-growing activities around these areas affect the air quality in ways that often lack monitoring and surveillance. To mitigate air pollution while promoting sustainable development of port activities, improved spatial planning policies at local level are needed.

Solutions are proposed by the APICE project, a cooperation initiative co-financed by the European Cooperation Programme MED and composed by partners from 4 Mediterranean countries. These partners of institutional as well as of scientific background realised a coordinated set of actions in selected study areas, namely the important port cities: Venice, Marseille, Thessaloniki, Genoa and Barcelona.

The comparison of data acquired in these areas constituted an important first step allowing to test and choose a common model and to create necessary intervention scenarios. What happened next was to concretely change the situation in the study cities, little by little, and thus to contribute to improve the air we breathe.

Let's take Barcelona as an example:

The Catalan project partners, the Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC) and the Spanish Research Council - Institute of Environmental Assessment and Water Research (IDAEA), have persuaded the Port Authority and the Catalan Government to involve themselves in the project actions, namely by providing information and feedback during the development and by using the project results, such as models and tools, once finalised. The Port Authority thus followed all project phases and proposed amendments to the plans for the study activities realised. . The Catalan Government even decided to continue the proposed actions with their own means and on their own responsibility.



Both institutions also have contributed to formalize a joint working table to follow-up the realisation of the developed plan. Hence, already existing bonds could be increased and some procedures could be updated. A concrete example to illustrate the shared process and its benefits: Today, if the Catalan Government detects air quality problems, it will immediately inform the Port Authority so that on-going works can temporarily be stopped.

The regional network of stakeholders involved by the APICE Spanish partners also includes the Merchant Navy General Directorate or economic stakeholders such as Gas Natural Fenosa. Important benefits of this collaboration are the introduction of on-board emissions control or the agreement with TCB (containers terminal) to introduce natural gas in cargo handling machinery, following the decision of using the natural gas in the Port Authority activities.

In short, the transnational cooperation allowed thus the comparison of local data to define a common model based on which action plans were customized to local specificities. In the case of Barcelona, the execution of this proposal is projected to reduce gas and particles emissions by 12% in the forthcoming years!

Why has this become a success story? Mainly thanks to the creation of a strong tandem between science and policy partners, which permitted comparisons at transnational level and, at regional and local level, adaptations according to both side's needs. In particular, it allowed APICE partners to answer their end users' expectations. In this sense, the scenarios were tailored in a way that enabled the Catalan Government (and other actors) to easily integrate it in their routine work and existing regional planning procedures.

So this is not a happy end, rather a very hopeful beginning: just breathe the clean air!

More information about the project? [www.apice-project.eu](http://www.apice-project.eu)



More about the MED Programme on

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