



## Newsletter 03

# MicroDrink

Capacity building for management and governance  
of MICROplastics in DRINKing water resources of  
Danube Region





## 3<sup>rd</sup> Partner Meeting of the MicroDrink project held in Neufahrn bei Freising, Germany

The MicroDrink project held its 3<sup>rd</sup> Partner Meeting in Neufahrn bei Freising, Germany, from March 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025. Organized by Project Partner No. 12, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, and supported by the Lead Partner, the Croatian Geological Survey, along with the Communication Manager, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Mining and Geology, the meeting brought together all project partners to advance their collaborative research on microplastics.



Significant progress has been achieved in collecting and consolidating knowledge on microplastics in drinking water, including reviews of policies, sampling methods, laboratory instruments, and analytical techniques. The creation of synergies with other EU projects and the establishment of the MicroDrink Knowledge Base have further strengthened knowledge-sharing efforts.

The collection of pilot site information, development of templates for sampling and analysis, and the design of joint sampling activities as well as knowledge transfer have been successfully completed. The monitoring and sampling campaigns started with coordinated efforts across multiple partner countries.

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Templates for identifying needs and capacity-building concepts were already shared with partners, and the deadline set for the end of May 2025. A key output under development is the Decision-Making Support Tool (DMST), designed as a decision tree to guide users through identifying and managing microplastics issues at various stages of the water supply system.



The MicroDrink project has established a strong and well-structured management and coordination framework. The Lead Partner (LP) ensures continuous and regular communication with the leaders of the Specific Objectives (SO), and holds additional meetings with individual partners when necessary, contributing to effective coordination and alignment with project goals and timelines.

An independent quality assurance expert has been appointed to validate project outputs, ensuring objectivity and high standards, while the Communication Manager coordinates external communication, maintaining high project visibility and engagement with stakeholders.

During Period 2, the Quality and Risk Management Plan and the Communication Strategy were finalized, further strengthening the project's management framework.



## 3<sup>rd</sup> Partner Meeting of the MicroDrink project held in Neufahrn bei Freising, Germany

The meeting featured a guided tour of the water utility Zweckverband Wasserversorgungsgruppe Freising-Süd (Pilot site of PP12) and after that visit of the FAU premises in Erlangen and a collaborative discussion on enhancing the synergy between the MicroDrink and DALIA projects. Final stop of the tour was at the national Lab (INAM) in Forchheim. Dinner has been organized at Bräustüberl Weihenstephan the oldest beer brewery in the world.





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The final day of the meeting began with a session on project communication, led by the Communication Manager - PP9 University of Belgrade, Faculty of Mining and Geology. This session featured presentations from all partners, showcasing their dissemination activities during the first year of project implementation and outlining plans for future outreach.

The meeting concluded with a successful First Year Review, which included a monitoring visit by Mr. Gusztáv Csomor, a Senior Project Officer from the Joint Secretariat, to evaluate the project's technical and financial performance. The external project manager delivered a presentation summarizing thematic and financial implementation throughout the first year, highlighting the strong commitment of all partners to advancing microplastics research and fostering cross-border collaboration. The effective implementation of first-year activities establishes a solid foundation for the project's continued progress.





## National Stakeholder Workshops 2024

The National Stakeholder Workshops have been held according to plan and provided connection of decision-makers with interested parties, examined the needs and opportunities of water supply companies, existing and potential legislation, as well as problems in the implementation of the provisions of the EU Drinking Water Directive 2020/2184.





## National Stakeholder Workshops 2024

The National Stakeholder Workshops of the MicroDrink project have engaged 123 diverse stakeholders, including:

- 35 water suppliers and companies involved in communal waste and wastewater management
- 23 university faculties
- 24 research and scientific institutes
- 9 government institutions
- 8 laboratories
- 5 environmental agencies
- 4 EU-based organizations focused on environmental protection
- 3 non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- 3 factories
- 2 (environmental) centers
- 2 independent researchers/scientists specializing in environmental protection
- 1 diving club
- 1 organization focused on European projects
- 1 civic initiative
- 1 global engineering company
- 1 energy sector company



# National Stakeholder Workshops 2024

## Key takeaways

### Key Challenges Identified

- Non-standardized sampling methods for microplastic analysis in drinking water exist at both national and regional levels.
- Lack of available analysis equipment, laboratory instruments and laboratories with capacities of conducting microplastics analyse.
- High costs of microplastic analysis in water, food, sediment, and other environmental sectors significantly limit its frequency.
- Water suppliers have little to no experience in microplastic testing.
- Analytical challenges include contamination in testing materials, clogging of filters, and long analysis times.
- Limited expertise in microplastic research at the national level, with only a small number of experts addressing this environmental issue.
- Low motivation to act without legal requirements.
- Lack of regulation and unclear sampling frequency create uncertainty.
- Trust issues in analytical methods and limited experience hinder progress.
- Poor communication about microplastics risks.
- Lack of knowledge on health impacts.
- Plastic waste management needs stricter regulations.



# National Stakeholder Workshops 2024

## Key takeaways

### Recommendations & Next Steps

- Establish a microplastic monitoring database to assess risks.
- Additional research and funding is necessary,
- More research on the analytical methods.
- Avoid unnecessary sampling without expertise.
- Improved communication and collaboration among researchers are essential, as data is often inaccessible, and information is rarely shared or freely available.
- Increase capacity building for water suppliers on communication.
- Implement stricter regulations on plastic use and waste management.
- Enhance education campaigns to inform the public without unnecessary alarm.
- Governments should play a more active role when dealing with the problem of microplastics



## Invitation

### Synergy creation - Roundtable discussion

Dear colleagues,

We would like to invite you to an **online roundtable discussion** focused on exchange of experiences and practical knowledge on microplastics research in water, with particular emphasis on:

- Sampling methods
- Analytical methods
- Instruments used for microplastic detection

Each project may give a pitch presentation highlighting its objectives, key findings, and ongoing efforts.

 Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2025

 Time: 14:00–15:30 CEST

 Hosted by: MicroDrink project partner Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU)

To help us structure the session, please complete the short form linked below by 10 May 2025:

- <https://forms.gle/sj8B4EdxQNFswCPt7>

The online meeting link will be sent to registered participants after they complete the form.

*We look forward to your participation and hope to build stronger collaboration between initiatives.*



## Overview of established synergies with other projects dealing with microplastics

Cooperation is key to tackling microplastics!

The Interreg Danube Region Programme promotes collaboration and knowledge-sharing between projects to enhance impact, streamline efforts, and foster innovation.

Through various events, Project MicroDrink connected with microplastic researchers from across the Danube Region and beyond, creating synergies with several initiatives focused on tackling microplastic.

Some of the initiatives that the MicroDrink project team has established synergies with include:

- Interreg DRP project AQUATIC PLASTIC
- Horizon Europe project DALIA
- Synergy meeting of projects Danube Water Balance, DanubeSediment\_Q2, GeoNetSee, Tethys and MicroDrink
- Interreg CBC Hungary-Serbia project MICROPLASTICS



**Interreg  
Danube Region**



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**MicroDrink**

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