

DALMATIAN ISLANDS ENVIRONMENT FOUNDATION



**TWO YEAR REVIEW
2023 - 2025**



An aerial photograph of a rugged coastline. The top half of the image shows a rocky shore with patches of green vegetation. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, transitioning to a deeper blue as it extends into the distance. The rocks are dark and jagged, creating a complex pattern along the shoreline.

“

Real change begins with small acts of care. By investing in the people and nature of the Dalmatian islands, we are not just preserving a coastline—we are protecting a way of life, a legacy, and a future that depends on us all.

Vladimir Maoduš
Chairman





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OUR VISION & STRATEGY

The Dalmatian Islands Environment Foundation (DIEF) is committed to protecting and enhancing the natural beauty, biodiversity, and ecosystems of the Dalmatian Islands in Croatia, spanning from Silba in the north to Koločep in the south. Our vision is to sustain the diverse natural assets of the islands, ensuring a healthy, resilient, and prosperous environment for local communities.

To achieve this, we employ a strategic approach that includes:

FUNDRAISING

We raise funds from individuals and businesses with strong connections to Dalmatia to support the most effective local initiatives.

PROJECT SUPPORT

We back projects that offer both economic and social benefits to local communities, focusing on those that can be scaled up and replicated across the region.

NETWORK BUILDING

We build a robust network of dedicated individuals and organisations committed to empowering local environmental champions.

Through these combined efforts, DIEF aims to foster a thriving natural environment where the communities of the Dalmatian Islands can prosper.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

2023 - 2025



PROJECTS SUPPORTED

11



FUNDS AWARDED

€172,000



SUPPORTERS

20+



GRANTEES

8



AREAS OF INTEREST





Regenerative Land Use

We aim to secure the ecological integrity and resilience of Mediterranean ecosystems through adaptive land-use practices. Historical agricultural practices, shaped by climate, landscape, and technology, inspire us to modernise while preserving extensive agricultural traditions. Our focus includes adopting climate adaptation strategies to address global changes and ensuring sustainability for people and biodiversity.



Habitat & Biodiversity Conservation

Our primary focus is the conservation of marine, terrestrial, and freshwater habitats and the species they support. We prioritise collecting comprehensive data on natural value and ecosystem services to better understand and enhance the conservation status of areas. Special emphasis is placed on revitalising neglected freshwater habitats such as wetlands and watering holes, crucial for preserving the islands' biodiversity.



Sustainable Development & Resource Management

We are dedicated to transforming the perception that nature and development are incompatible. We do so by promoting mutually supportive practices. Addressing workforce availability challenges is pivotal while enhancing human and technical capacities for sustainable development and transitioning to green energy solutions across the islands.



BIO-WASTE MANAGEMENT FOR KINDERGARTENERS

Grantee: MOJ ŠKOJ ASSOCIATION

Duration: 06/2023 – 09/2023

Grants: €5.775

Area of Interest: Sustainable Development & Resource Management

The island of Hvar faces bio-waste disposal challenges. Due to the local utility companies not providing composting infrastructure, bio-waste gets unnecessarily sent to landfills. The result is higher methane emissions, further increased by tourism and modernisation.

THE PROJECT

The initiative tackled bio-waste management in three Hvar kindergartens by installing Oklin electric composters. These units efficiently produced compost within 24 hours, enriching soil fertility for local Mediterranean plants in their gardens. Children and staff actively participated in planting and composting, learning about sustainable practices firsthand.

Workshops were held to prepare the gardens for planting and sowing, emphasising the benefits of local plant species and efficient water use. By operating Oklin composters and utilising compost in gardens, the project advanced Moj Škoj's sustainability goals, promoting environmental stewardship within the community.



ZLARIN ISLAND LEAF EXPANSION

Grantee: TATAVAKA ASSOCIATION

Duration: 08/2023 – 03/2024

Grant: €5.200

Area of Interest: Habitat & Biodiversity Conservation

Holm oak forests are crucial to the biodiversity of the Croatian Mediterranean. They can withstand drought conditions and exhibit fire resistance. Along the Dalmatian coast, these forests have faced extensive degradation due to centuries of exploitation for their high-quality wood.

THE PROJECT

The Zlarin ILEX project initiated the establishment of a robust *Quercus ilex* (Holm oak) forest on the island of Zlarin. Tatavaka focused on educating the local community about the importance of forests and their role in mitigating climate change impacts and wildfire risks.

Volunteers and experts have worked together to prepare the ground and plant saplings, focused on creating optimal conditions for holm oak growth, particularly in areas shaded by Aleppo pine forests with fertile soil.

The project involved expert assessments of selected terrain, workshops for children and adults, and volunteering opportunities to prepare planting sites. By fostering community engagement and raising awareness about holm oak conservation, Tatavaka is committed to improving the sustainability and resilience of Zlarin's natural ecosystem for future generations.

PUZZLE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Grantee: EKO ZADAR ASSOCIATION

Duration: 04/2024 – 07/2024

Grant: €7.636,27

Area of Interest: Sustainable Development & Resource Management



Dugi otok is a biodiverse island in the Adriatic, with protected areas including the Nature Park Telašćica and the Special Reserve Olive Grove Saljsko Polje. However, it faces environmental challenges from tourism, with plastic pollution threatening its coasts. By 2022, the Municipality of Sali's waste per capita surpassed the national average.

THE PROJECT

The project focused on educating Dugi otok's community (elementary school children especially) about reducing plastic use and protecting marine habitats. Initiatives included waste-art exhibitions from collected debris, educational puzzles depicting local protected areas and threats, and collaborative clean-ups with Petar Lorini Elementary School students.

The project fostered environmental awareness and promoted sustainable practices among the island residents. Through education and hands-on activities, it aimed to instil a sense of responsibility in the younger generation towards preserving Dugi otok's natural beauty and biodiversity.





MARINE LITTER-FREE DALMATIAN ISLANDS

Grantee: SUNCE ASSOCIATION

Duration: 08/2023 – 06/2024

Grant: €9.940

Area of Interest: Sustainable Development & Resource Management

Marine litter, primarily plastic waste, poses an escalating threat to the Adriatic Sea, impacting both environmental and economic landscapes. The Adriatic region has found higher levels of floating debris than other parts of the Mediterranean, with plastic comprising over 80%. Globally, experts recognise marine waste poses a significant threat to aquatic ecosystems.



THE PROJECT

Sunce Association initiated a project to combat marine litter by educating and empowering local communities and organisations on the Dalmatian islands. Sunce collected data to understand the distribution of marine waste, organised clean-up events, and implemented monitoring initiatives. They established a network of local initiatives and organisations to promote sustainable waste management and advocate for waste reduction on the islands. Their advocacy efforts extended to regional and national levels, emphasising the importance of sustainable waste management.

Sunce educated project partners to enhance marine litter data collection capacity and clean-up implementation. Their four monitored clean-up events generated valuable data to advocate for sustainable waste management practices at the local community and policy-making levels. They launched a joint communication initiative to raise awareness about marine litter, aiming to change community behaviour.



REEFQUEST: CLADOCORA CAESPITOSA EXPLORATION

Grantee: KPA ZADAR ASSOCIATION

Duration: 04/2024 – 03/2025

Grant: €7.995

Area of Interest: Habitat & Biodiversity Conservation

Climate change, ocean acidification, habitat disturbance, fishing and tourism pose significant risks to the endangered coral species *Cladocora caespitosa*.

THE PROJECT

Focused on the island of Iž, [the project](#) mapped and documented the *Cladocora caespitosa* coral in 20 locations to establish a baseline for future monitoring. The foundational database will assess the species' distribution, density, and size, which are key for future conservation efforts in the Zadar archipelago.

The project provided essential data on *Cladocora caespitosa* in the region, enhancing the understanding of its ecological role and vulnerabilities. Through education, field data collection, and geospatial analysis, the initiative contributed to safeguarding marine biodiversity and coral reef health in the Adriatic Sea.

MAPPING AGRI-FOOD VALUE CHAIN ON KORČULA

Grantee: MIRO ASSOCIATION

Duration: 04/2023 – 04/2025

Grant: €8.000

Area of Interest: Regenerative Land Use

This project tackled the degradation of high nature value farmland on Korčula, which has been exacerbated by trends including land encroachment, reforestation and the growth of tourism.



THE PROJECT

Focusing on balancing socio-economic development with nature preservation, the project created high-resolution crop maps in collaboration with local communities. These maps, accessible via a dedicated website, facilitated stakeholder discussions on sustainable development strategies. This initiative aimed to harmonise tourism benefits with Korčula's unique natural environment conservation.

The project delivered comprehensive crop maps and a robust database, providing insights into crop distribution and farming practices on Korčula. By publishing findings in a peer-reviewed technical report, the project supported informed decision-making for sustainable agriculture and nature preservation, ensuring Korčula's environmental and economic vitality.

PLASTIC-FREE CROATIAN ISLAND

Grantee: SUNCE ASSOCIATION

Duration: 04/2024 – 12/2025

Grant: €40.771,60

Area of Interest: Sustainable Development & Resource Management

Marine litter (primarily plastic waste) poses a rapidly escalating threat to the Adriatic Sea, with significant environmental and economic consequences. Plastic constitutes a considerable portion of debris in the Adriatic, highlighting an urgent need for action to mitigate its impact on marine ecosystems.

THE PROJECT

The project addresses this pressing challenge by promoting sustainable waste management practices, reducing and reusing single-use plastics. By fostering awareness and collaboration, the initiative seeks to significantly decrease the accumulation of plastic waste on the island of Dugi otok and enhance overall waste management practices. These efforts are crucial in safeguarding the Adriatic environment and promoting long-term sustainability.

The project is achieving significant milestones. The Second Interdisciplinary Conference on Marine Litter will bring together stakeholders to discuss strategies and solutions. Sunce is running extensive communication and advocacy activities to raise awareness and mobilise support for plastic-free initiatives.



The project has also implemented the Plastic-Free initiative in collaboration with the tourism sector and concessionaires in protected areas of Dugi Otok, promoting sustainable practices and reducing plastic pollution. Moreover, rigorous monitoring is ongoing to assess the implementation of the Action Plan to Reduce Plastic Pollution for 2021-2026 in Sali (Dugi otok), ensuring accountability and progress towards sustainable waste management goals. These efforts collectively contribute to a cleaner Adriatic and reinforce the commitment to preserving marine ecosystems for future generations.

Plastic-Free Dalmatian Islands is supported by DIEF – Dalmatian Islands Environment Foundation, thanks to funding received from Conservation Collective through their Depeche Mode & Hublot partnership during the Memento Mori world tour.





REVIVAL OF HISTORICAL PATHS WITH CIRCULAR TECHNOLOGY & TRADITION

Grantee: MOJ ŠKOJ ASSOCIATION

Duration: 06/2024 – 06/2026

Grant: €20.791

Area of Interest: Sustainable Development & Resource Management

Hvar boasts a vast network of historical paths that once linked towns and villages. Many of these have become overgrown and are unfit for use by locals or tourists.

35% of waste collected on Hvar is bio-waste, significantly contributing to landfill and creating methane. This initiative aims to significantly decrease the avoidable stream of bio-waste while educating future generations on effective bio-waste management practices.

THE PROJECT

The project focuses on revitalising historical paths, starting with routes linking Jelsa to its southern villages and merging tradition with modern technology for sustainability. Addressing waste separation in Jelsa, the project advocates a circular bio-waste management approach, utilising bio-waste for compost production. The compost will sustain restored hiking trails featuring resting areas with tables, benches, and Mediterranean plants.

In collaboration with local partners like Jelkom and the Jelsa Tourist Office, the project will install an electric composter (75 kg/day capacity) to promote the use of bio-waste. The initiative aims to foster community involvement, preserve cultural heritage, and advance sustainable tourism.



Moj Škoj is making significant progress in revitalising several hiking paths across Jelsa, including Pitve, Vrh, Zavala, Tor, and Gromin Dolac. The efforts are focused on clearing undergrowth to improve accessibility for hikers, while also transforming designated rest areas. Furthermore, a caretaker role is currently being implemented, supported by a donkey companion, to ensure ongoing upkeep and maintenance of these newly accessible trails, reinforcing a commitment to preserving natural beauty and promoting outdoor recreational opportunities in the region.

Revival of Historical Paths with Circular Technology and Tradition is supported by DIEF – Dalmatian Islands Environment Foundation, thanks to funding received from Conservation Collective through their partnership with Inntravel.

Inntravel





REFILL HVAR: POUR IT UP FOR LESS PLASTIC

Grantee: MOJ ŠKOJ ASSOCIATION

Duration: 01/2025 – 01/2027

Grant: €46.958

Area of Interest: Sustainable Development & Resource Management

There has been a significant increase in waste volume during the peak season due to Croatia's growing tourism market. Plastic bottles constitute an alarming 20-30% of packaging waste.

Consumer habits show that bottled water tops tourists' purchasing priorities; leading to substantial plastic waste when they depart. In fact, Croatia has excellent quality tap water, making bottled unnecessary, but this knowledge is not adequately communicated to visitors.

THE PROJECT

The project aims to reduce single-use plastic by installing public water fountains across Hvar and promoting Croatia's high-quality tap water.

Through partnerships with Sunce Association, Jelsa Municipality, and Jelsa Tourist Board, the initiative will establish free water refill stations at key tourist locations while conducting educational campaigns about tap water quality and plastic reduction.



The project will install nine water fountains across Jelsa Municipality: four in Jelsa, three in Vrboska, one in Ivan Dolac, and one in Zavala. The exact water fountain locations will be presented online and on ferries and fast ferry lines. Sunce Association is co-organising two clean-up actions to support the project and raise awareness about the threats of single-use plastic. The first clean-up event will take place just before the official start of the summer season, enhancing the initiative's mission to reduce the impact of mass tourism.



Refill Hvar – Pour It Up For Less Plastic is supported by DIEF – Dalmatian Islands Environment Foundation, thanks to funding received from Conservation Collective through their Depeche Mode & Hublot partnership during the Memento Mori world tour.



SMALL ISLAND REPAIRS

Grantee: PERMAKULTURA DALMACIJA

Duration: 09/2025 – 06/2026

Grant: €8.000

Area of Interest: Sustainable Development & Resource Management

Hvar faces pressing waste management challenges due to limited waste disposal and recycling infrastructure, high dependence on imported goods, and a growing influx of tourists. The existing non-hazardous waste disposal site Stanišće, currently used for waste disposal, is nearly full, intensifying the urgency of addressing waste management.

THE PROJECT

The Small Island Repairs project is a comprehensive initiative to address the pressing waste management challenges. The project aims to alleviate these issues by fostering a sustainable culture rooted in repair, reuse, and mindful consumption among residents, particularly children and their families. Through educational workshops, repair events, clean-up action, and creative upcycling activities, the project empowers participants to adopt the **5 R's – Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, and Recycle** – as daily waste practices and strengthen community resilience.

By engaging people of all ages, though mainly children, the project seeks to instil lifelong sustainable habits, protect local ecosystems, and reduce the impact of waste on marine and terrestrial habitats.



ROOTS OF RESILIENCE

Grantee: SAMOTVORAC SOCIETY

Duration: 04/2025 – 10/2026

Grant: €11.000

Area of Interest: Regenerative Land Use

Soil degradation is a massive environmental challenge on the island of Silba. Its naturally shallow and marginal agricultural soils take a toll, and high summer temperatures, harsh coastal winds, and limited freshwater sources exacerbate the issue. The move away from regenerative farming and gardening practices and the loss of locally adapted seed and crop populations has led to practices that further degrade the soil and destroy wildlife habitats. Besides these, climate change and dependence on industrial products cause difficult growing conditions.

THE PROJECT

This project will support the community in adopting environmentally friendly methods of cultivation that enhance soil health, conserve resources, and boost local food production. Workshops, lectures, and hands-on gardening will develop sustainable skills and resilience among Silba's residents. By emphasising practical and scalable techniques for vegetable gardening, prioritising local seeds, and cultivating olives and fruit, the initiative aims to empower the community to become effective stewards of their land.

OUR TEAM



Inga Jurin
Executive Director



Maša Pavičić
Communications & Fundraising
Coordinator



Vladimir Maoduš
Chairman



David Taylor
Steering Committee



Michael Unsworth
Steering Committee



Tonči Korunić
Steering Committee



Taida Garibović
Steering Committee



Vitomir Palinec
Steering Committee



Ben Goldsmith
Founder
Conservation Collective



Jade Brudenell
Executive Director
Conservation Collective

ADVISORY BOARD

The Advisory Board comprises of experts who voluntarily share their time, advising the Dalmatian Islands Environment Foundation in order to turbocharge local capacity. All projects are screened by the Advisory Board before funding is decided by the Steering Committee.

We are so lucky to have the support of:

Marko Pećarević | Andreja Baraba | Sylvain Petit | Andrej Fric |
Antonio Morić-Španić



Aside from the environmental impact, we aim to strengthen civil society on the islands. Our hope is that DIEF grants provide just the right amount of push they need to grow from a volunteer initiative to a structured project.

MARKO PEĆAREVIĆ
Head of Advisory Board





The Dalmatian Islands Environment Foundation is a member of Conservation Collective, an environmental charity on a mission to protect and restore the wild places we all know and love.

WHAT'S NEXT

Our primary mission is to expand funding opportunities for local, practical nature-based solutions, fostering greater engagement from individuals and organisations.

We are committed to supporting grassroots regenerative projects across the Dalmatian Islands by providing vital mentoring, expertise, networking, and financial resources.

Looking ahead, we aim to broaden funding sources for these initiatives, encouraging increased participation from local residents and businesses alike.

With your support, we can develop more nature-based solutions, showcasing successful projects that inspire hope and drive broader, systemic change.





OUR SUPPORTERS



and many other individual donors.
We couldn't have done it without
your generous support.

SPECIAL THANKS

To talented Dalmatian photographers
who donated photos for this brochure:

Gabriela Bašić
Marko Lorenzo Blaslov
Toni Opačić

THANK YOU

To all our donors and supporters.
We couldn't have done any of this
without your generous support.



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