



# GOOD PRACTICES HANDBOOK

## 2 | Environmental cleanups


A benchmark of educational tools  
and environmental activities already  
implemented in Europe and beyond.

# Ocean Sustainability through Education and Sport (OSES)



**Water sports offer humans a unique connection to the marine environment.** As opposed to “leisure tourists” water sports enthusiasts take advantage of this unparalleled ecosystem all year round, and many times regardless of air and water temperature. This makes water sports enthusiasts highly susceptible to environmental degradation, be it from pollution hindering water access or shifting hydrological conditions disrupting their activities.

These enthusiasts often evolve into professional athletes, ocean advocates, or water sports business owners contributing significantly to local economies. Consequently, education and awareness among water sports practitioners at all levels of engagement are essential for protecting and improving our marine environment. Sports can be a powerful tool for fostering eco-responsible actions and environmental awareness. Activities like waste collection, biodiversity awareness, coastal preservation, and oceanic issue discussions can be seamlessly integrated into sports, and help create an ocean-literate community dedicated to safeguarding our waters.



The OSES project aligns with the broader goal of supporting education through sport. We believe that sports can play a pivotal role in educating youth about environmental protection. Addressing ocean preservation serves as a pilot initiative that can be expanded to other sports in the future.

**Nautical sports, including surfing, sailing, scuba diving, and kayaking, have specific environmental concerns tied to marine area preservation. One unifying value across these sports is the imperative to protect their playground.**

Sport, with its educational and exemplary values, has the power to raise awareness and drive behavioral change in environmental protection. The «green sport» dimension in the European Union's Work Plan for Sport emphasizes the sector's potential to combat climate change and become more sustainable.

OSES seeks to strengthen the role of sports actors in addressing ocean conservation through three dimensions:




**Education for sustainable sport:** Developing tools and methodologies to instill eco-responsible actions and environmental awareness in youth through sports.



**Environmentally friendly sports practice, facilities, and events:** Gathering expertise to integrate environmental aspects into all sporting activities, including events, competitions, and organizational management.



**Evolution of sport and its practice in the context of climate change:** Focusing on ocean health and preservation by addressing activities significantly impacted by ocean challenges such as pollution, coastal development, and water quality issues.



The OSES Good Practices Handbook seeks to compile impactful actions and projects across Europe and beyond, serving as a benchmark for environmental awareness and ocean protection education.



# ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUPS

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Environmental cleanups represent one of the simplest and most direct methods for engaging the general public in addressing environmental issues. While it is true that some critics view cleanups as addressing the symptoms rather than the root causes of our unsustainable consumption and packaging practices, they remain an accessible and effective means of involving various stakeholder groups. Cleanups require no strict age limits or prerequisites for participation and are relatively cost-effective to organize. They serve as a powerful tool to connect with the public and illustrate the scale of the environmental problem.

Cleanups not only raise awareness about the issue of environmental litter but also emphasize the cumulative impact of human activities on the environment. While a single piece of litter may seem insignificant, the collective effect of billions of people contributing to the problem can be devastating.

Cleanups offer a way to engage people in practical activities that provide a sense of fulfillment and temporarily alleviate environmental pressure. Additionally, when combined with new policies and increased awareness aimed at preventing large amounts of waste from entering the natural environment, cleanup efforts become a crucial component of overall environmental improvement.

Organizing cleanups in marine environments presents unique challenges compared to land-based cleanups. However, as demonstrated in our Handbook, these challenges often lead to innovative solutions and collaborations that can further enhance community involvement in ocean protection.



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# GUARDIANS OF THE BLUE

SCUBA DIVING 

TARGET AUDIENCE



certified scuba divers

Led by *Guardians of the Blue*

## Connecting volunteers, fishermen, and scuba divers to protect the Byblos Harbor.

The goal of our activity is to enhance the understanding of local divers about marine pollution and methods to counter it, with the purpose of safeguarding local marine life. Our major activity is cleanup dives in Byblos' harbor, which hosts many juvenile species that rely on it as their nursery. Each cleanup is a collaboration between the divers, fishermen, and non-diving volunteers. Volunteer divers from Xiphias Diving Club and across Lebanon can take part in each cleanup, with so far 20 divers having participated in total. Announcements are made on social media and through our networks, and any certified diver can join. Divers are paired to work together underwater to collect the marine debris and are given bags and gloves for safe handling of the waste. A safety briefing as well as training on environmentally respectful behaviors to adopt during underwater cleanups are conducted with divers before each cleanup.





The fishermen and non-diving volunteers collect the retrieved waste from the land, which is then weighed and assessed. The waste is then transported to the recycling facilities of Ziad Abi Chaker, a Lebanese pioneer in recycling. So far, we removed around 3,600kg of waste from the harbor.

Apart from these initiatives, we've crafted infographics and a poster highlighting marine species found in the area. This marine species poster was made by Laura Khatib, the co-founder of Guardians of the Blue, by using all the pictures taken by the diving club over the years. This process allowed us to identify all recorded species and create the database we used for the poster. These visuals are exhibited at Xiphias Diving Club, fostering diver education about local marine life and marine science. The scuba diving training at the club is intertwined with nurturing environmental consciousness. Recent pictures taken by the club allowed us to record for the first time an invasive species from the Red Sea in the Mediterranean. This first record will be published in a scientific journal, thanks to our collaboration with local marine biologist Dr. Ali Badreddine.

Additionally, we provide divers with training on lionfish hunting techniques and insights into the repercussions of invasive species in Lebanon. Divers can take a special course on lionfish hunting, which then allows them to hunt and safely handle the fish in Lebanese waters. The training is given on land for information on lionfish and its impact on local marine life, as well as safety measures, and underwater for the hunting techniques using a Hawaiian sling and a container. The necessary hunting gear is provided for the training and can then be bought at the club.



👉 [www.weareguardiansoftheblue.org/underwater-cleanups](http://www.weareguardiansoftheblue.org/underwater-cleanups)

Contact us to get more information about our work :  
[contact@weareguardiansoftheblue.org](mailto:contact@weareguardiansoftheblue.org)

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# UNDERWATER CLEANING

«Limpiezas subacuáticas»

SCUBA DIVING AND FREE DIVING (APNEA) 

**TARGET AUDIENCE**  certified scuba and free divers

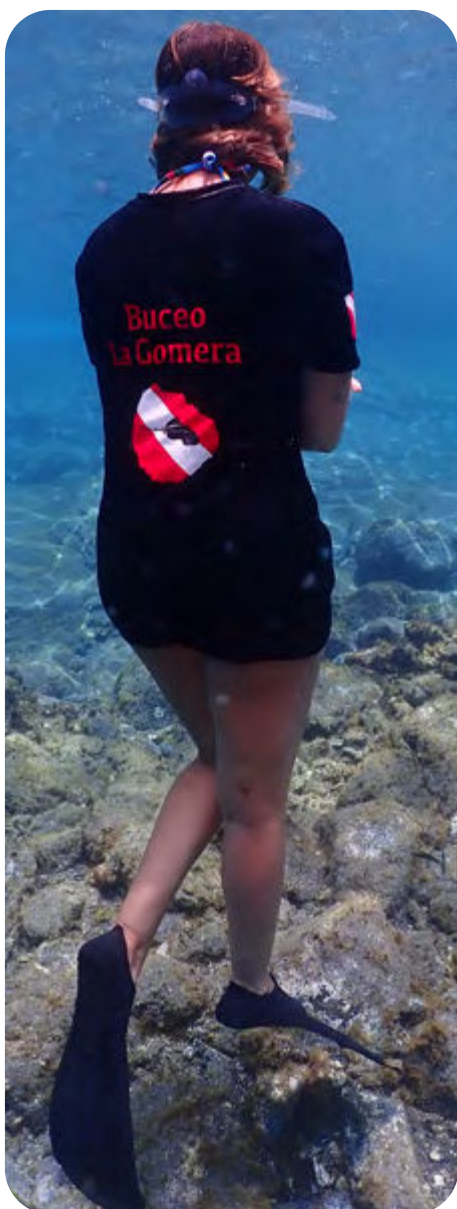
**Led by** *Club de Buceo Hupalupa*

Streamlining the underwater cleanups through the collaboration of free and scuba divers.

Our activities initiated in January 2023, strive to connect scuba diving and free diving with environmental stewardship by conducting underwater cleanups. Our dedicated team, comprising 20 passionate volunteers, aspires to organize a total of 20 underwater cleanups annually, spanning diverse locations around La Gomera Island. Throughout the year, we typically carry out multiple cleanups each month. Our outreach efforts predominantly rely on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, complemented by word-of-mouth promotion. The frequency of our cleanups varies depending on the availability of our club members, ranging from three cleanups in some months to just one in others.







Our operations are coordinated to optimize efficiency. Typically, our scuba divers descend below the water's surface, while our freedivers retrieve bags filled with debris, streamlining the cleanup process and reducing the need for divers to repeatedly ascend and descend. In certain instances, a single diver can fill as many as 6 to 8 bags with litter.

We have established a collaboration with the environmental department of Cabildo, which assumes responsibility for waste collection, classification, and recycling. To facilitate our volunteer efforts, Buceo La Gomera, my company, generously provides all the necessary diving and cleaning equipment.

We conscientiously track the volume of waste removed during our cleanups, although for minor cleanup efforts, weighing may be omitted. Over time, our endeavors have led to the retrieval of a wide array of items, ranging from sunken boats to cell phones, cans, boat components, fishing equipment, cookware, bottles, and more. Some cleanup sites are revisited periodically, particularly harbors, while others result from pre-dive reconnaissance missions that unveil substantial quantities of litter.



Contact us to get more information about our work :  
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# LET'S GO

«GoazenUp»

STAND UP PADDLEBOARD (SUP)     

**TARGET AUDIENCE**  anyone interested in SUP practice

**Led by** *GoazenUp*

## Paddling for wellness and ocean protection.



**We are a sports association dedicated to promoting physical and emotional well-being while caring for our environment.**

The project was initiated a decade ago by Aketza Sánchez, also known as the Waterman, a survivor, who overcame a spinal cord injury from a surfing accident. Since 2012, Aketza has shared his passion for paddle surfing and the sea, using them as tools to enhance physical and emotional health and to raise awareness about the ocean's importance while contributing to its protection.

Utilizing stand-up paddleboards (SUPs) as both practical tools and modes of transportation, we explore various locations through water routes. Over the years, the GoazenUp project has evolved into a vibrant community of over 200 volunteers

from Spain, France, Portugal, Norway, and Morocco. We clean and care for the environment in all the areas we visit!

Our community organizes environmental cleanups both in our local areas and during our members' travels. The activities are voluntary, led by our members for our members, or arranged for groups reaching out to us for therapeutic and awareness purposes. Over the past decade, the GoazenUp initiative has organized cleanups in diverse places, around cliffs, beaches, and estuaries, often using SUPs to reach areas inaccessible from the shore. Depending on the activity and the garbage, part of it is discarded, and part is recycled. We collect up to 8500 kg of trash per year.

In addition to cleanups, our volunteers conduct awareness talks in schools, universities, and businesses. In these sessions, we not only showcase our activities but also shed light on the challenges our marine environment faces, emphasizing issues such as trash and other forms of pollution. We discuss marine life encountered during our SUP cleaning outings, fostering an understanding of the aquatic ecosystem.



👉 [www.instagram.com/goazenup/?hl=fr](https://www.instagram.com/goazenup/?hl=fr)

Contact us to get more information about our work :  
[goazenup@gmail.com](mailto:goazenup@gmail.com)



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# PLUMBUM PROJECT

«Proyecto PLUMBUM»

SCUBA DIVING



TARGET AUDIENCE



certified scuba divers

Led by *Asociación Hippocampus*

## Underwater lead cleanup: circular economy initiative

The main objective of our initiative is to decontaminate the seabed from lead, reduce the negative impact it produces, and promote recovery and remanufacturing, fostering an effective circular economy.

Our methodology involves scuba diving and snorkeling, utilizing compact metal detectors designed for underwater use. The cleanup dives are conducted by volunteers primarily from the Hippocampus Association. Many of the participants are experienced divers, though recent certifications are welcome to join and gain valuable experience. Certification, insurance, or a license is mandatory for all participants.

Each dive begins with a briefing, providing an overview of the dive, the operational aspects of metal detectors, and the equipment used for lead retrieval, including



abandoned fishing gear. The dives target coastal areas, shallows, or islands—regions frequented by fishing activities, a major contributor to lead contamination.

Once lead is brought to the shore it is cleaned, removing all the remains of plastic, other metals, and other possible

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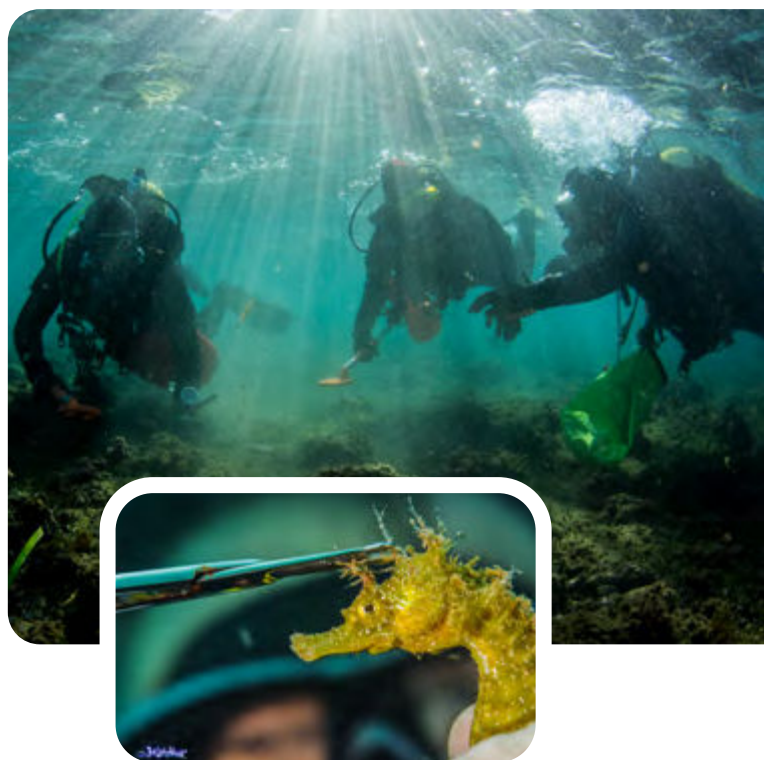
residues. Subsequently, the amount of extracted lead pieces is counted and the total weight collected per person per day is recorded, contributing to the project's geo-referenced database.

Collaboration with companies has played a vital role, with three large companies responsibly processing the collected material. A notable partnership involves a company manufacturing lead weights for scuba diving belts, incorporating material recovered from the sea. This circular approach encourages diving centers to exchange dirty lead for clean lead weights, aligning with the project's commitment to circularity.

To date, the project has extracted 1400 kilograms of lead, equivalent to recovering 18,000 lead pieces from the seabed. A network of 150 containers across the Iberian Peninsula facilitates the deposition of lead waste, primarily from fishing. This remarkable achievement is attributed to the dedicated efforts of volunteers from the Hippocampus Association, scout groups, ADAPT Association, and various collaborators, including institutions like the Oceanographic of Valencia and the aquarium of Almeria.

Beyond dive operations, our volunteers actively engage in outreach activities at conferences, exhibitions, and festivals,

highlighting the impact of marine litter, particularly lead. This outreach fosters growth in our volunteer group. Expansion plans include extending the network into regions like the Canary Islands, Balearic Islands, Basque Country, Valencia, and Madrid, ensuring the sustained impact of our initiative.



[www.proyectoplumbum.com](http://www.proyectoplumbum.com)

Contact us to get more information about our work :  
[info@asociacionhippocampus.com](mailto:info@asociacionhippocampus.com)

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# GHOST DIVING POLAND

«Proyecto PLUMBUM»

SCUBA DIVING



TARGET AUDIENCE



technical divers

Led by *Ghost Diving Poland*

## Scuba divers tackling ghost gear pollution

**Ghost fishing, defined as abandoned fishing gear catching and killing marine life, poses a severe threat to our oceans.**

The term 'ghost gear' refers to discarded nets, lines, and traps, constituting one of the most harmful forms of marine debris. Annually, an estimated 640,000 tons of fishing gear are lost or abandoned, with the potential to continue fishing for multiple decades or even centuries.

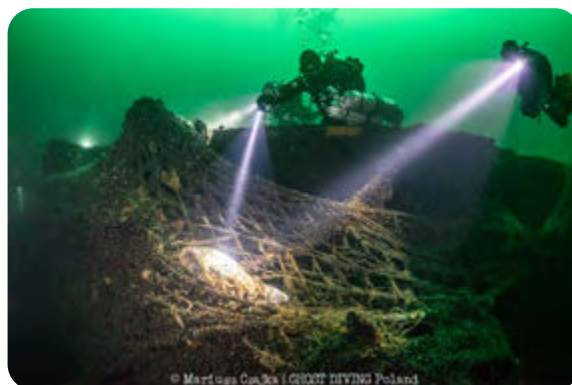
Ghost Diving Poland is a local chapter of the international initiative - Ghost Diving. Our mission is clear: locate and extract ghost gear from seas, lakes, and oceans. We are a team of 28 volunteer technical divers, who are committed to removing lost fishing gear and raising awareness about this global issue. We conduct approximately 20 dives each year, primarily in the Baltic region, with additional dives in cooperation with Ghost Diving chapters in other countries, like Croatia, Spain, Malta.



© Mariusz Olska | GHOST DIVING Poland



Our divers undergo specialized training, adhering to strict standards and procedures to minimize risks. Each dive is meticulously planned, always preceded by recon dives for thorough analysis. Each diver is assigned a specific role during the operation. Most dives are conducted from chartered boats or in collaboration with boat operators.



Since 2019, we have successfully cleaned wrecks and seabed from lost fishing nets, gear, and marine debris. Recovered ghost gear, when possible, undergoes the regeneration process through our partners. Healthy Seas Foundation helps us to transform ghost nets into new sustainable materials that serve to manufacture various products such as swimwear, shorts, socks, bracelets, and more.



Our commitment extends beyond direct action; we advocate for awareness and education on the issue of lost fishing gear. Many of our volunteers are underwater photographers and filmmakers, documenting our activities for evaluation and presentation purposes. We give educational presentations and workshops at diving clubs, events, exhibitions, and shows. In 2021, we collaborated with the Gdynia Aquarium to create a Ghost Diving exhibition to educate all visitors about the problem of ghost fishing.



[www.ghostdiving.pl/](http://www.ghostdiving.pl/)

Contact us to get more information about our work :  
[kontakt@ghostdiving.pl](mailto:kontakt@ghostdiving.pl)

# GOOD PRACTICES HANDBOOK

The OSES Good Practices Handbook serves as a reference point for assessing our progress as a society in terms of connecting water sports with OL, environmental awareness, and marine education.

It is aimed at people and organizations at different stages of their journey towards a cleaner, more sustainable ocean, and covers a number of themes :

1. **Connecting schools, water sports, and ocean literacy**
2. **Environmental cleanups**
3. **Citizen science, environmental data collection, and monitoring**
4. **Sustainable practices in water sport tourism**
5. **Engaging with local communities**
6. **Good Practices in Professional Sports**

**Discover the other sections of  
the handbook on :  
[www.oses-project.org](http://www.oses-project.org)**

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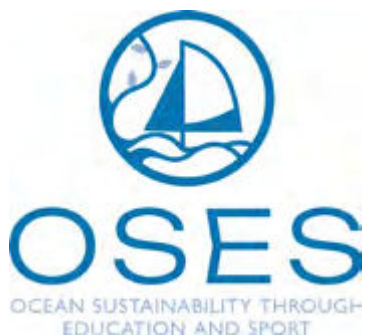
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