

## **AdriaSAR Project Launches to Revolutionize Cross-Border Search and Rescue Coordination in the Adriatic**

On February 18, 2026, the AdriaSAR project ("SAR Adriatic Connect: Enhancing Cross-Border Search and Rescue Coordination through Digital Innovation") officially entered its operational phase following a successful virtual Kick-off Meeting. This 18-month initiative is a small-scale cross-border project funded under the Interreg VI A Italy-Croatia CBC Programme 2021-2027. The partnership brings together a diverse consortium including the Municipality of Martano (IT), Municipality of Ston (HR), Development Agency of Ston (HR) and the CNA Lecce (IT), each contributing unique territorial assets and technical expertise to the mission. Led by the Municipality of Martano, the project leverages digital innovation to streamline maritime search and rescue operations between Italy and Croatia. It aims to significantly enhance maritime safety by reducing cross-border Search and Rescue (SAR) coordination delays by 20%.

The meeting was inaugurated with institutional greetings from Mr. Fabio Tarantino, Mayor of Martano, and Municipal Councillor Mrs. Maria Antonietta Bufano. Representing the project's Lead Partner, they emphasized AdriaSAR's vital role in fostering Adriatic integration and regional resilience.

At the heart of the project is the development of an open-source digital SAR platform and the harmonization of cross-border operational frameworks. To achieve these ambitious goals, the consortium has established a rigorous roadmap. Key upcoming milestones include the delivery of a comprehensive barrier analysis report by the sixth month, supported by twelve expert meetings and four stakeholder workshops conducted across both Italy and Croatia.

"While this initial session was held virtually, the partners have expressed a strong commitment to ongoing collaboration and reciprocal visits". Operational planning is already well underway, the partnership is preparing for significant in-person activity in the coming months, including stakeholder workshops scheduled in Italy between March 20th and 30th featuring a delegation from Ston, followed by the first Steering Committee meeting in Ston, Croatia, between April 15th and 20th.

Beyond digital innovation, AdriaSAR will focus on practical human impact through awareness campaigns and workshop targeting 200 youth (13-30), 10 communities and 20 SMEs in Italy and Croatia, joint training sessions for 50 SAR personnel and the execution of three pilot exercises designed to validate the new framework and platform in real-world scenarios. Through these efforts, AdriaSAR aims to create a lasting legacy of safety and cooperation for all communities bordering the Adriatic Sea.

