

## We are looking for urban partners for the Interreg-NWE project: Against Littering In urban Environment and Nature (ALIEN)

More and more waste is simply thrown away or left lying around in public spaces (littering). Municipalities in north-west Europe are also increasingly confronted with littering and soiling.

Littering not only spoils the cityscape, but also has considerable negative ecological and economic consequences. Some materials and products take several decades or even centuries to decompose. Harmful decomposition products accumulate in the environment, with negative effects on humans too.

Littering results in higher cleaning and disposal costs for local authorities than emptying waste bins, as the waste is usually dispersed and cannot be collected by machine. Illegal littering in natural landscapes and urban forests also incurs high costs. Cigarette butts and chewing gum also cause high cleaning costs. Littering increases the number of cleaning cycles required, for which local authorities often lack the resources. The waste can no longer be recycled and thus escapes the circular economy.

In addition, people do not feel comfortable in polluted cities. The quality of life is reduced. Littered neighbourhoods are unattractive and are equated with less safety. Littering leads to an exodus of affluent milieus and reinforces the socio-economic weakness of neighbourhoods.

### What goal are we pursuing?

With the ALIEN (Against Littering In urban Environment and Nature) project, we want to reduce littering in green spaces and bodies of water with the participating municipalities from north-west Europe within four years from 2025 and thus promote a nature-oriented green infrastructure in and between cities in north-west Europe.

We are thus pursuing Priority 1, Climate and Environment, of the Interreg Northwest Europe funding programme, specifically the specific objective of "Improving nature conservation, biodiversity and reducing all forms of environmental pollution" (SZ 2.7).

The programme provides funding of 287 million euros from the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) for transnational cooperation projects. In the event of funding, ALIEN would be co-financed with up to 60 %.

### What is our approach?

ALIEN aims to curb littering with adapted measures from Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design ("CPTED"): This involves supporting socially appropriate behaviour through the attractive design of public spaces. The aim is to increase the quality of stay for everyone in such a way that diverse use and encounters are possible and the people living there identify with the public space. An integrative and participative use of space promotes communication and the willingness to take responsibility. At the same time, the remodelling creates spaces that are close to nature. This creates social spaces that are ecologically valuable

and form the basis for green infrastructure in and between cities. The approach thus directly promotes green infrastructure and at the same time increases its quality by reducing littering.

Supported by advisory project partners, participating municipalities select an urban area with green spaces that is heavily affected by littering to implement the measures. The municipality forms an interdisciplinary working group of the various municipal departments, which involves local citizens' initiatives or (environmental protection) associations, residents, tradespeople and companies as well as the municipal cleaning and waste disposal services.

After an inventory and analysis of the situation in the selected area, an action plan is developed to promote and live a culture of caring, improve the quality of life, enhance the area's green spaces and make it accessible to all user groups. The implementation of the measures will be monitored and evaluated and the effects recorded as part of a monitoring programme. Successful approaches from the pilot programme will be gradually extended to surrounding areas.

The project partners are also jointly developing a littering strategy. This involves establishing standardised methods for measuring littering that can be implemented by the municipalities, improving the infrastructure for waste disposal and awareness-raising measures.

### Who is coordinating the project?

The Institute for Social Research and Social Economy e. V. in Saarbrücken (iso-Institut) supports the implementation of the pilot measures in the project network and is responsible for the evaluation, monitoring and standardised implementation of the pilot measures by the project partners. The iso-Institute is also coordinating the development of a strategy against littering.

The iso-Institute has been active in applied social research for over 50 years. As a non-profit and independent research institute, it has decades of experience in the management and coordination of collaborative projects as well as in the development and implementation of project concepts and their evaluation.

Are you interested? Then write to us!

Your contact persons:

Melanie Schmitt, [schmitt@iso-institut.de](mailto:schmitt@iso-institut.de), +49 (0) 681-95424-21

Jana Rößler, [roessler@iso-institut.de](mailto:roessler@iso-institut.de), +49 (0) 681-95424-18