



University of Rijeka
FACULTY OF MARITIME STUDIES

PROJECT ACRONYM AND TITLE: DRONE AID (Drones for Rescue Operations and Nautical Emergencies – Adriatic Integrated Deployment)

FUNDING PROGRAMME: Interreg Italy - Croatia

PERSON RESPONSIBLE: Srđan Žuškin, PhD, Associate Professor

FINANCIAL DATA

Overall budget	Overall funding assigned to PFRI
1.782.776,50 €	252.648,00 €

SUMMARY

The DRONE AID project aims to address the key challenges faced by maritime and coastal communities in the Northern Adriatic, particularly in emergency response, maritime search and rescue (SAR) operations, and the provision of emergency medical assistance.

The DRONE AID project builds upon existing knowledge, experience, and best practices in maritime safety and develops and implements two standardized, operationally applicable protocols for the use of drones in maritime emergency response operations:

- COAST: Adaptation of emerging drone-assisted rescue models (e.g., the delivery of a lifebuoy in SAR actions), tailored for deployment in ports and marinas, with additional applications in various *hard-to-reach* locations.
- OFFSHORE: Development of an entirely new, innovative operational protocol utilizing long-range drone actions to reach vessels/persons located up to 5 km offshore.

The project is structured into three integrated work packages, encompassing strong technological, educational, and cross-border governance components, supported by a multidisciplinary partnership with extensive expertise.

Key project outcomes will include:

- Fully operational drone docking stations established in Italy and Croatia.
- A harmonized cross-border protocol for drone-assisted maritime first aid, jointly developed and endorsed by relevant stakeholders, in compliance with relevant EU Directive,
- A certified, micro-credential-based training programme designed to establish a new professional profile entitled “Specialist Technician for Drone-Assisted Maritime First Aid”, aligned with the relevant EU Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications.



University of Rijeka
FACULTY OF MARITIME STUDIES

By integrating technological infrastructure (drone docking stations with drones), harmonized rescue procedures, and certified professional competencies into a unified operational framework, DRONE AID will establish a robust, adaptable, and cross-border deployable emergency response model, enabling rescue services to reduce response times and enhance maritime safety.

Start date	End date
01.10.2026.	31.03.2029.

PARTNERSHIP

No.	Partner organization	Country	Role
1.	University of Zadar	Croatia	Lead partner
2.	Eastern Sundial Srl	Italy	Partner
3.	Fenice Foundation Social Enterprise	Italy	Partner
4.	University of Rijeka, Faculty of Maritime Studies	Croatia	Partner
5.	Croatian Chamber of Economy	Croatia	Partner
6.	VENETO LAVORO	Italy	Partner

WEBSITE: /

ADDITIONAL INFO:

PFRI project team members:

- Srđan Žuškin, PhD, Associate Professor
- Ana Perić Hadžić, PhD, Full Professor
- Neven Grubišić, PhD, Full Professor
- David Brčić, PhD, Associate Professor
- Sanjin Valčić, PhD, Associate Professor
- Ivan Vilić, mag. ing.
- Martina Žuškin, mag. educ.