



BIODIVERSITY RESTORATION 'BIOHUTS'

HIGHLIGHT

The installation of 'Biohuts' in the Porto de Aveiro pontoons will increase the aquatic biodiversity and biomass, contributing to the environmental improvement of Ria de Aveiro.

Put your text here In the scope of the Portuguese demonstrator of the A-AAGORA project, a set of artificial fish nurseries structures were deployed in the areas of the Porto de Aveiro.



These structures ('Biohuts') are composed by an internal cage, which were filled with empty oyster shells, and an external, empty cage. The 'Biohuts' were complemented with an underwater sound-emitting device, which emulates the soundscapes of natural habitats. The increased structural complexity provided by the 'Biohuts' will attract several epibenthic species: the combination of available food, shelter, and acoustic enrichment will attract juvenile fishes and other species, enhancing biodiversity and biomass within the installation areas.

Installation

Preparatory technical meeting

The installation of the 'Biohuts' was preceded by a technical meeting on the 31st of July, 14h30, at ECOMARE - UA, Gafanha da Nazaré. In this meeting, the project partners involved in the "Biodiversity Restoration in the Porto de Aveiro" solution (Porto de Aveiro, STRIX and University of Aveiro) participated with 9 members, and invited APARA – Associação Pesca Artesanal Região Aveiro, an important stakeholder for this action, which was represented by two members.

The meeting allowed to present the solution and to fine tune the procedures that took place two weeks later, with insightful contributions from APARA members, which represent the main users of the areas where the 'Biohuts' were installed. The meeting included a visit to the intervention area.



Installation Procedures

The installation took place along the 12th and 13th of August 2024, with the operations starting at 9h. With the support of the Porto de Aveiro staff and APARA, STRIX was the responsible for the installation of the 'Biohuts'.

The guests were informed about project A-AAGORA and the Biodiversity Restoration solution and were invited to observe the installation of a few 'Biohuts'.



Public Presentation

On the 13th, at 10h, a public presentation of the A-AAGORA's solution was held for an audience of guests from regional stakeholders, and a local newspaper, at the headquarters of APARA.

The participants

A total of 11 guests, representing 7 stakeholders and a local newspaper attended the public presentation of the solution. The represented stakeholders were the local administration (municipalities and parishes), and institutions enrolled in fisheries and shipping.



To assess the effect of these structures, four different groups of 'Biohuts' were deployed:

- A control group: no oyster shells and no acoustic enrichment;
- With oyster shells, but no acoustic enrichment;
- With oyster shells, and white noise only;
- With oyster shells, and reproduction of natural habitat soundscape.

This will allow comparisons between treatments and to measure the real impact of the solution to the biodiversity.



What's next?



The involved partners of project A-AAGORA will follow a monitoring plan, with monthly verification of the equipment and data recovery, at least until July 2026. This will provide details on the effectiveness of the solution to the local biodiversity and biomass. These activities will also provide opportunities to involve the local communities, in dissemination actions.



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