



**SOCIAL &
ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY
REPORT 2025**

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CIIMAR SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2025
CIIMAR - Interdisciplinary Centre of Marine and Environmental Research
www.ciimar.up.pt

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Prof. Vitor Vasconcelos
President of the Board

CIIMAR's mission in the area of sustainability stems from our social and environmental responsibility, which is visible in many of our actions, both internally and externally.

In this report, we briefly present CIIMAR's main responsibilities in terms of its governance, and in environmental and social responsibilities, revealing the performance indicators that we use to measure them during 2025. The 17 Sustainable Development Challenges launched by the United Nations and the issues raised by the UN Ocean Decade are two fundamental instruments for defining our strategic lines.

However, we do not forget the issues at regional, national and international level, such as the Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3) for the North of Portugal and the country as a whole, the cross-border RIS3, North of Portugal - Galicia, as well as important instruments at European level such as the Green Deal, Mission StarFish and many challenges launched by the Horizon Europe and Inter-reg programmes. Our connection with the users of our technologies is essential and therefore our participation in major mobilisation programmes, such as those financed by the PRR – Blue Bioeconomy Pact and HUBAZUL, is essential. CIIMAR is also a signatory to the Porto Climate Pact and a member of the Local Monitoring Council of the Matosinhos Municipal Climate Action Plan.

Creating conditions for a better working environment and respect for employees are essential so that together we can make CIIMAR a better institution with a greater impact on society.



2021 United Nations Decade
2030 of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development



ABOUT CIIMAR

CIIMAR - Interdisciplinary Centre of Marine and Environmental Research - is a leading research and advanced training institution of the University of Porto, working at the **frontier of Ocean Knowledge and Innovation**.

CIIMAR's mission is to harbour transdisciplinary research, technological development, and training, contributing to advancements in **scientific knowledge and the sustainability of the marine environment**, as well as coastal and terrestrial ecosystems. CIIMAR positions itself as a national and international reference center for the acquisition and dissemination of scientific knowledge in this field, as well as for the training of future generations of researchers and society as a whole.

CIIMAR is a Research Unit within the national scientific system, integrating the associated laboratory CIMAR-LA and participating in collaborative laboratories. It is evaluated and funded by FCT, receiving an Excellent classification. CIIMAR is a private non-profit association, founded in 2000 and recognized as a public utility entity since 2021. It is composed of individual and collective members (Institute of Biomedical Sciences Abel Salazar, Faculty of Sciences, Pharmacy, Law, and Engineering, University of Porto, and Polytechnic Institute of Porto), which form the General Assembly. The members elect the Board of Directors, consisting of five members, responsible for overseeing and defining the policy for scientific and technical activities, as well as supervising daily management. The CIIMAR Scientific Council, composed of all PhD members of the institution, serves as an internal body with general responsibilities for advising and monitoring scientific and technical activities.



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1. GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS

2024 was the first year in which companies are required to report in accordance with the EU's [Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive \(CSRD\)](#) (2022/2464/EU), which expands the previous Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD) and the sustainability reporting requirements of the **European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS)**. Although CIIMAR is not obligated to comply with CSRD, we actively choose to align our sustainability report with its key principles to show transparency, commitment and support for environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices. This commitment is visible in our reporting namely in the inclusion of impact materiality, the structuring of the report in the areas and subtopics of environmental, social and governance areas, and by following the digital and transparent reporting guidelines.

1.1 CIIMAR'S GOVERNANCE MODEL AND COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

The Center has an **Ethics Committee** whose mission is to ensure and uphold ethical standards, protecting and guaranteeing integrity, dignity, honesty, and ethical quality in the marine and environmental science research conducted at CIIMAR. CIIMAR's organizational model also includes an [External Scientific Advisory Committee](#), which provides independent evaluation and guidance on the institution's scientific activities. This board is composed of four distinguished members of the international scientific community.

Sustainability is a core value of CIIMAR's organizational culture and governance model. Our Sustainability Policy is guided and implemented with a strong commitment to Social and Environmental Sustainability. Through its research and ongoing activities, CIIMAR actively contributes to the implementation and dissemination of values associated with the numerous **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** outlined in the United Nations 2030 Agenda.



The implementation of CIIMAR's Sustainability Plan is overseen by the **Environmental & Social Sustainability Office**, which works in close collaboration with the Board. This process is supported by the integrated efforts of various organizational units and internal services, which are essential for defining, implementing and monitoring the proposed measures. Key contributors include CIIMAR Green Lab, Quality, Environment & Safety Team, Human Resources, Legal Support, Onboarding, Public Procurement, Advanced Training & Careers, Maintenance & Security, the Image, Communication & Outreach Office, the Equity Commission, the Commission for the Prevention and Combat of Workplace Harassment, the PhD Students' Committee, Bioterium of Aquatic Organisms (BOGA), CIIMAR Sport and the Environmental Monitoring and Interpretation Centers (CMIA) of Matosinhos and Vila do Conde.

CIIMAR is firmly committed to upholding the principles of **freedom and ethical conduct in research**, professional responsibility, adherence to best research practices, recognition of scientific careers, good working conditions and training opportunities. Additionally, it is dedicated to gender equality, equity, non-discrimination and the protection of intellectual property rights.

CIIMAR has been reinforcing its commitment to social and environmental sustainability by voluntarily **committing to standards that go beyond regulatory requirements**. It strives to raise the bar for norms and procedures related to social development, environmental protection and fundamental rights. To fulfill these commitments, CIIMAR continuously deepens its understanding of its operational reality, identifying and implementing effective measures to reduce the environmental impact of research and daily activities, enhance the well-being and safety of its members and promote awareness and training across the entire community.

To achieve these goals, CIIMAR has developed a comprehensive annual [Social & Environmental Sustainability Plan](#) since 2023. This plan includes various initiatives and indicators designed to integrate social and environmental considerations into the center's structure and daily operations, while also setting annual goals. Similarly, this Sustainability Report seeks to objectively and concisely compile the actions and performance indicators related to sustainability developed by CIIMAR throughout 2025.



1.2. REGULATORY AND ETHICAL COMMITMENTS

CIIMAR's global activities and daily actions are guided by our Ethical and Regulatory Principles, in particular:

- **Complying with and respecting legal, regulatory and normative requirements**, as well as additional requirements subscribed to or implemented in the different dimensions of commitments to environmental and social sustainability;
- **Adopting a proactive attitude and measures aimed at reducing the ecological footprint** and negative environmental impacts resulting from institutional activities, promoting a more conscious and rational use of resources, and raising awareness among all stakeholders about the importance of adopting good practices to reduce environmental impact, including sharing scientific knowledge related to Sustainability with the CIIMAR community and society at large;
- **Promoting the acquisition of products and services based on clear and impartial responsibility criteria** for selecting suppliers/ service providers, aiming to honor institutional commitments to sustainability;
- **Creating a work environment that promotes respect and guarantees individual and collective rights**, diversity, equity, well-being and the continuous improvement of working conditions;
- **Investing in human capital and promoting the creation of an inclusive and informed community**, fostering recruitment, capacity building, qualification, training and professional development aimed at achieving quality professional performance.

In addition to complying with applicable general legislation, CIIMAR has been adhering to ethical practices and principles recognized and suitable for its field of action, as well as the ethical standards documented in the various national, sectoral, and institutional codes of ethics, some of which are listed below:

CODES OF CONDUCT

CIIMAR has developed various ethical and conduct standards to ensure proper performance by CIIMAR staff, both internally and externally, contributing to an institutional image and practices of equality, equity, inclusion, rigor, transparency, efficiency, and competence.

The [Code of Conduct, Prevention, and Combating Harassment at Work](#) aims to adopt and promote a policy that seeks to prevent, identify, eliminate, and punish situations likely to constitute workplace harassment.

CIIMAR's **Gender Equality Plan** defines a policy of non-discrimination and equitable access in hiring processes for any career (technical and administrative staff, researchers, fellows), ensuring that no candidate can be privileged, benefited, harmed or deprived of any right or exempted from any duty based on factors such as age, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy or parental status, marital status, family situation, economic situation, education, origin or social condition, genetic heritage, ancestry, reduced work capacity, disability, chronic illness, appearance or physical characteristics, nationality, ethnicity or race, territory of origin, language, religion, political or ideological beliefs or union membership. According to Decree-Law No. 29/2001 of February 3, candidates with disabilities have preference in cases of equal classification, which takes precedence over any other legal preference.

ORBEA - ANIMAL WELFARE BODY

At CIIMAR, the use of animals for experimental or educational purposes complies with legal and animal welfare regulations, which are reviewed by the members of [ORBEA](#) and the Directorate-General for Food and Veterinary Affairs. CIIMAR is also a signatory of the Transparency Agreement on Animal Research in Portugal. This initiative, supported by the scientific community in collaboration with the European Animal Research Association (EARA), aims to promote openness and transparency regarding the use of animals in research.





QUALITY CERTIFICATION

CIIMAR obtained its initial certification under **ISO 9001:2015** – Quality Management System – in January 2021, and it has since been renewed with minimal non-conformities. Despite this, CIIMAR promptly works to address these non-conformities as quick as possible, demonstrating a great capacity in problem solving skills. Each year, goals and objectives are set for each service within the scope of ISO 9001 implementation, which are regularly monitored. This allows for an assessment of the current situation and the potential need for adjustments or even the establishment of more ambitious targets to foster continuous improvement among employees and processes.

In line with this commitment, preparations are underway for the implementation of EN ISO 17025 (accreditation of processes/analyses for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories) and the recognition process through the **Human Resources Strategy for Researchers**.

PORTO CLIMATE PACT

In line with its commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility, CIIMAR has signed the [Porto Climate Pact](#), joining a collective effort to accelerate the city's **transition toward carbon neutrality** by 2030. This initiative, promoted by the Municipality of Porto, brings together organizations and individuals to foster collaboration, share knowledge, and implement concrete actions aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. By participating in the Pact, CIIMAR reinforces its dedication to climate action, actively contributing to the broader goal of making Porto a national and European leader in decarbonization and environmental sustainability.

1.3 INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

CIIMAR is an active member of [Green Labs Portugal](#), an association dedicated to promoting and supporting sustainability initiatives in laboratories while fostering collaboration among various institutions. By bringing together motivated teams across Portugal and encouraging the sharing of knowledge and resources on sustainable laboratory practices, the initiative aims to drive change within the Portuguese research community, promoting more environmentally conscious research practices. The CIIMAR Green Lab specifically focuses on **reducing the ecological footprint** of the research center's laboratory activities, including energy and water consumption as well as recyclable urban waste management.

CIIMAR was present at the third **United Nations Ocean Conference** taking place in Nice in June 2025. The participation aimed to foster connections with all stakeholders working in ocean knowledge and innovation and to join UN member states to raise awareness and boost public policy towards ocean protection, marine science and development of a sustainable blue economy. The CIIMAR delegation included Susana Moreira, Gary Kett, and Isabel Sousa Pinto.

In 2025, [CIIMAR signed the Portuguese Charter for Diversity](#), formalizing its membership of the **Portuguese Association for Diversity and Inclusion (APPDI)**, a non-profit organisation that seeks to promote and support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts. The Charter for Diversity is an initiative of the European Commission that is presented as a voluntary instrument designed to encourage employers to adopt and promote internal policies and practices aimed at valuing diversity. By joining APPDI, CIIMAR aims to connect with other organisation that actively take measures to promote DEI and to get support in implementing internal initiatives with the same goal.



In September 2025, researchers from CIMAR-LA [were received by the Minister for the Environment and Energy](#), Maria da Graça Carvalho, with the aim of presenting **the open letter “For a national restoration plan that does not leave the sea behind”**. The meeting conveyed to the Minister the importance of the sea playing a central role in the national restoration plan appropriate to the size of the national maritime space, the strategic importance of the sea for the country, and the urgent need to protect marine biodiversity.

Blue Bioeconomy remains a strategic priority for CIIMAR, contributing to the sustainable use and valorisation of marine biological resources through research, innovation, and collaboration. As part of this commitment, CIIMAR is a member of the **BlueBio Alliance**, the Portuguese collaborative network dedicated to marine bioresources and biotechnology. Through its participation, CIIMAR supports knowledge exchange, sectoral coordination, and the development of sustainable bio-based solutions. The President of CIIMAR’s Board of Directors, Vitor Vasconcelos, serves on the Advisory Board of the BlueBio Alliance and previously held the role of Executive Director of the network during the 2019–2020 mandate.

CIIMAR currently holds the presidency of the Board of Directors of the **B2E Blue Bioeconomy Colab**, reinforcing its role in promoting innovation, collaboration, and the sustainable valorisation of marine resources within the **Blue Bioeconomy sector**. Ana Paula Mucha, member of CIIMAR’s Board of Directors, represents the institution in this leadership role. Through this position, CIIMAR contributes to strengthening cooperation between academia, industry, and other stakeholders to advance research and innovation in marine bioresources.







2. SOCIAL COMMITMENTS

In 2025, numerous Social and Environmental Sustainability initiatives and policies were implemented. CIIMAR's strong commitment to environmental and social responsibility led to significant advancements in this area throughout the year, namely in workplace well-being, equality, equity and professional development, with flexible work policies, expanded health services, and the continuous expansion of its Training Plan. Among the implemented measures in 2025, the following stand out:

+130

sports events
for the community

+100

free psychology
consultations

1926

participants
of training courses

76

training courses
organised

15 000

visitors
to the CIIMAR Open Day

257

scientific exhibitions
and artistic competitions

143 231

participants
of outreach activities

41 727

followers
across all media platforms

2.1 EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE (ESRS S1)

PROVIDE CONDITIONS FOR A BALANCED PROFESSIONAL, FAMILY AND PERSONAL LIFE

- Encourage **remote work** and flexible work hours for researchers and administrative staff;
- **Birthday leave** for employees;
- **Reduction of the weekly work hours from 40 to 35 hours.** This measure was implemented with the duration of a year;
- An additional 3 **vacation days** were granted in 2025 in the context of CIIMAR's 25th anniversary.

FOSTER ORGANIZATIONAL WELL-BEING BY CREATING A SHARED SPACE FOR COLLABORATION AND INTERACTION AMONG EMPLOYEES

- Events promoting social interaction between members: CIIMAR Anniversary Celebration (March 2025), Summer Arraial (June 2025), **CIIMAR Annual Meeting** (September 2025) and the Christmas lunch (December 2025);
- The **25th Anniversary CIIMAR Conference** was also hosted, to highlight the progress and contribution of CIIMAR over the past 25 years and to create space for the many different working groups of CIIMAR to be in contact with each other's work;
- Maintenance of the **"Tea Corner"** and **"Eco-friendly Dishwashing Station"** in the common area, aiming to promote community habits and the use of organic products among CIIMAR members. In 2025 a French Press with organic coffee was added to the station in order to decrease the use of disposable capsules;
- Support internal CIIMAR community groups: **CIIMAR Sport**, that organises sports events for the community, **Green Lab**, which focuses on promoting sustainable practices at the CIIMAR labs, the **PhD Student Committee**, which provides a shared space for support among PhD students, and **CIIMAR A Jogar**, a group that regularly gathers over shared-interest in board games;
- The **CIIMAR Community WhatsApp** was created to ease informal communication within the institute. The platform hosts groups for communal sports activities, ride sharing, and laboratory material exchange, fostering collaboration and resource efficiency.



PROMOTE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

In 2025, **partnerships with local sports centers** were established to give special admission conditions to CIIMAR members in order to promote physical activity and local businesses. To jumpstart these partnerships, a class or activity for the community was organised. The partners were: the **bouldering** gym PROA in Matosinhos, the **surf** school Surfing Life in praia de Matosinhos and the SEVEN Fitness **gym**.

Beside these, there are biweekly **yoga** classes at the CIIMAR facilities (84 classes with over 20 regular participants) and other recurring activities such as:

- Organisation of weekly **football** and padel games;
- Creation of a **bouldering** group;
- Organisation of **volleyball** games (3 matches with circa 20 participants);
- **Running club and trail** group that go out for weekly 5 km runs and collective participation in 2 running events: **Corrida Porto de Leixões** (with 28 participants, placing in 25th for the global team score), and the **Porto Marathon** (with two participants).



OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AND PREVENTION MEASURES

- Free of charge **psychology consultations**, with extension of this offer to grant holders;
- The **Quality, Environment and Safety Office (QES)** organized 73 training sessions focusing on “Safety Training and Good Practices at CIIMAR”, reaching 315 people;
- To mark the **National Day for the Prevention of Occupational Risks and Safety at Work** (April 28th), the QES prepared a series of activities throughout the month of April to engage the entire CIIMAR community in this important topic. Trainings were conducted on the topics of Indoor Air Quality and Safety Procedures in Case of Chemical and Biological Spills, as well as a competition of the “Safest Lab” which was awarded a “Safest Lab” award badge and a prize;
- Trainings and **seminars on the topic of mental health** hosted by psychologists, such as the “Mind Tide” seminars - focusing on Burnout, Imposter Syndrome, Suicide Prevention, Parenthood and the Demands of Science, and Expectations Management -, and professional trainings – such as the Psychological First Aid Training.

2.2 DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI) (ESRS S4)

IMPLEMENT THE [GENDER EQUALITY PLAN](#)

- Establishment of the **Equity Commission** responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of Gender Equality Plans and other initiatives aimed at fostering a more inclusive and diverse workplace;
- Full payment of the **Christmas and holiday bonus** for employees on parental leave;
- Celebration of the **International Day of Women in Science**;
- Creation of **two gender-neutral bathrooms** to ensure a safe, accessible, and respectful environment for all. One of these facilities includes the **“Menstrual Care Box”**: a shared container offering free menstrual products for anyone who needs them;
- CIIMAR participated in the training session **“Inclusive Science: Tools and Strategies for Gender Integration”** organized by the RESET project. This initiative aimed to equip participants with practical tools and strategies to promote gender equality and inclusion within scientific projects.



PROMOTE EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN CIIMAR'S CROSS-CUTTING MATTERS

- Availability of a “Suggestion Box” in the building’s break room to encourage the submission of new ideas to the Management.

2.3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT (ESRS S1)

RECOGNITION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Awarding of the **Nautilus Prize** for: International Project (GREASEDLIGHTNING), Media Project (BUFFER and RED-COR2), Article of the Year (Veronica Baldasso, Carlos Gomes, Marisa Almeida, and Agostinho Antunes) and Media Article (Isabel Sousa Pinto);
- Awarding the **Blue Community Award**, aiming to recognize personal contributions to the CIIMAR community (awarded to Pedro Leão);
- And the **CIIMAR Career Tribute** (attributed to Agnès Marhadour, Isabel Regal and Sofia Gonçalves).



PROVIDE CONTINUOUS EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The Training & Careers Office is dedicated to structuring educational and training programmes for the CIIMAR community and for setting CIIMAR as a reference educational center.

Over the course of 2025, the **Training and Careers Office** developed several training programs organized according to their target audiences, along five main areas: Staff, Community, Researchers, PhD Students, and training sessions conducted by Researchers for Researchers. A total of **76 training** events reaching **1926 participants** were organized, in particular:

- 18 trainings for Staff;
- 9 trainings for the Community;
- 12 trainings for Researchers;
- 4 trainings for PhD Students;
- 33 training sessions by Researchers for Researchers.

2.4 COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL IMPACT (ESRS S3, S4)

CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL SOLIDARITY ACTIONS

- Participation in the “Pirilampo Mágico” campaign to raise donations to the National Federation of Social Solidarity Cooperatives;
- Donation of items and donations collected in the CIIMAR Circular events to social impact associations.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC LITERACY AND EDUCATION

CIIMAR is dedicated to improving scientific literacy in the fields of ocean and environmental sciences, as well as promoting greater knowledge and awareness of global environmental issues, fostering an informed society committed to adopting more sustainable behaviors. CIIMAR has an extensive educational program for schools across various educational levels, which includes visits to CIIMAR, lectures, field trips, experimental activities, games, conversations with scientists, beach cleanups, and training sessions for teachers.

Considering all the **literacy, communication and outreach activities**, namely outdoor activities, public lectures, exhibitions, scientific seminars, workshops, teacher’s trainings and public events, 1293 activities were organised reaching **143 231 participants**, including students, educators and the general public.

CIIMAR also develops **educational activities** in collaboration with various entities and national programs, including “Ciência Viva Clubs in Schools” and several municipal councils. In total in the year of 2025, **440 educational activities** were carried out with schools, with 13 834 participants.

In 2025, CIIMAR participated in several high-visibility **public events**, such as the **Mostra da UP** and **CIIMAR Open Day** which attracted **17,525 and 15,000 visitors**, respectively. These events provided direct engagement with various sectors of society, enhancing public awareness and perception of the Center.

CIIMAR hosts several itinerant **scientific exhibitions** designed to present important environmental and scientific topics to the public in an engaging and accessible way. In 2025, 257 exhibitions were organised, notable examples include exhibitions include “**Verde Perto**”, organized by the Municipality of Matosinhos, “**A Look at the World of Sponges**”, organized by CMIA Vila do Conde, “**BlueHub**”, “**BioBank**”, “**Mergulho nas Florestas Marinhas**”, “**Vamos perguntar à Natureza?**”, “**Monstros Marinhos**”, created in collaboration with artist Ricardo Nicolau de Almeida, and “**Mar de Plástico**”. In 2025, CIIMAR also organized the 4rd Scientific Photography Contest, with the finalist photographs showcased during the CIIMAR Open Day, and was a partner in the





organization of the photographic contest “**Wiki Loves Portugal**” and subsequent traveling exhibition “**Wiki Loves Earth**”, in collaboration with Wikimedia Portugal.

CIIMAR organizes a significant number of **seminars, public lectures, and debates**, often in collaboration with other organizations, to disseminate scientific knowledge to diverse audiences. The institute holds weekly scientific seminars under the names Oceanus, Neptune, and Nautilus, aimed at the CIIMAR community but also open to the public, complemented by the CIMAR-LA seminars developed in collaboration with CCMAR to strengthen scientific exchange within the CIIMAR-LA network. Additionally, CIIMAR runs the seminar series “**Conversa com Ciência**” and “**Café com Ciência**”, in partnership with the Serralves Foundation and the CMIA of Matosinhos and Vila do Conde, respectively, targeting the general public. In 2025, a total of 84 seminars and public lectures were organized, covering a wide range of scientific topics and audiences. Sessions were held primarily in person, with hybrid and online options ensuring broader accessibility and participation.

CIIMAR collaborated as a scientific partner in the **BioBlitz Serralves** in partnership with the Serralves Foundation engaging over 500 participants and promoting greater knowledge and direct interaction with various fauna and flora groups.



CIIMAR hosted two screenings of the [Braga Science Film Fest](#), an international short film festival dedicated to science communication through cinema, which features environmentally themed and award-winning films. One screening was at the Planetário do Porto and another at CIIMAR for the internal community, each followed by discussions with participating directors on creative processes and the festival. The initiative also benefits from the involvement of Fábio Faria, one of the festival's organizers and a member of CIIMAR, strengthening the link between the institute and science outreach through audiovisual media.

CIIMAR manages two **Environmental Monitoring and Interpretation Centers (CMIA)** through cooperation agreements with the Municipalities of [Vila do Conde](#) and [Matosinhos](#). These local centers are dedicated to scientific outreach and environmental education, with a strong focus on ocean and marine ecosystems. They play a crucial role in bridging scientific research and society, promoting environmental management and fostering a deeper understanding of marine ecosystems. The CMIA's offer diverse and complementary educational programs tailored for all audiences, especially students, including hands-on workshops conducted at the centers, in schools, or in the field, as well as exhibitions and interactive activities.

Additionally, **media engagement** - including press, radio, and television - along with the management of CIIMAR's **social media platforms** ([Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [BlueSky](#), [YouTube](#)) and official website (www.ciimar.up.pt), has significantly increased the visibility and recognition of CIIMAR's research and ongoing sustainability initiatives. In this past year, a total of 469 news clippings were published across various media outlets, and 2 831 social media posts were shared about CIIMAR, with a total of 41 727 followers across all platforms.



3. ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

CIIMAR, as a research center in marine and environmental sciences and technologies, recognizes the fundamental importance of adopting sustainable practices in its management and research activities. It integrates environmental criteria as key factors in creating value and ensuring the sustainability of its research, innovation, advanced training, policy support, and knowledge dissemination, reinforcing our strategy and institutional image.

In order to further decrease the negative and increase the positive environmental impact of our actions and to promote sustainable and regenerative practices, CIIMAR has implemented various measures such as:

110 kg of pipette tip boxes plastic recycled	681 items of clothes donated to social impact organizations in the “Circular markets”	93 second-hand items circulated within the community in the “Circular markets”	89 maintenance and creation activities in ponds for biodiversity
150+ books in 8+ languages circulated in the “CIIMAR Book Sharing”	2 beach cleaning initiatives	452€ donated to Associação de Apoio à Vítima	1977 participants and visitors of “Charcos com Vida” activities and events

3.1 SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (ESRS E1, E3, E5)

REDUCE WATER CONSUMPTION (ESRS E3)

Regarding water consumption, CIIMAR continued to invest in the promotion of measures among employees to reduce water usage.

In the Bioterium of Aquatic Organisms (BOGA), most experimental systems operate under a Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS), allowing better water quality control and preventing excessive water consumption. At CIIMAR, three types of water are distributed: municipal freshwater, dechlorinated freshwater, and seawater. Dechlorinated freshwater is obtained by removing chlorine from municipal water through aeration and chemical filtration systems. It is mainly used in BOGA's experimental rooms, where it is essential for maintaining freshwater aquatic organisms, as well as in the preparation of ultrapure and deionized water in some laboratories. Seawater is collected at the entrance of Porto de Leixões and undergoes successive treatment through disc filters (40, 100, 130, and 200 µm), a sand filter, an ultraviolet filter, cartridge filters (25 µm), and activated carbon filters before being distributed across different areas of the facility and some laboratories on the second floor. Seawater is crucial for BOGA's operations, as more than 80% of its experimental systems rely on saltwater or brackish water.

Table 1 presents the total consumption of different types of water at CIIMAR and BOGA between 2022 and 2025. During this period, there was a significant increase in freshwater consumption in 2023 and again in 2025 associated with the resource demand for trials with trout. However, in 2024, the total annual consumption lowered to the values of 2022.

The continuous decrease in the company's freshwater water consumption at the headquarters demonstrates the effectiveness of the above-mentioned implemented measures. The decrease in water consumption at BOGA in 2024 (-876 m³) was particularly significant in the consumption of dechlorinated freshwater, this is likely related to the reduction of the number of experimental trials with freshwater species (namely trout), in contrast to the less consuming toxicology trials, which require a continuous water renewal throughout the trials to comply with water quality requirements and animal welfare. This decrease was reverted in 2025 due to a similar demand for continuous water renovation for trials with trout.



Table 1. Total value of water consumption at the CIIMAR headquarters from 2021 to 2025. Values preceded by a downward arrow (↓) indicate a decrease in comparison to the previous year.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total water consumption (m³)	3041	3566	5153	↓3680	4655
Company's freshwater consumption (m ³)	1955	2813	↓2260	↓2047	↓1894
Dechlorinated freshwater consumption (m ³)	1086	↓753	2893	↓1633	2761
Total freshwater consumption at BOGA (m³)	1412	↓931	2420	↓1544	2490
Company's freshwater consumption at BOGA (m ³)	598	↓492	↓357	↓302	↓120
Dechlorinated freshwater consumption at BOGA(m ³)	814	↓439	2063	↓1241	2370
Saltwater consumption at BOGA (m ³)	1765	1927	2212	2344	↓708

REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION (ESRS E1)

CIIMAR continued to develop a strategy aimed at reducing energy consumption and, consequently, greenhouse gas emissions. This strategy encompasses both research activities and the management and administration of the center, with the goal of minimizing our environmental footprint. Among the ongoing measures, notable examples include the implementation of a timer system to turn off lights in common areas and laboratories outside working hours and the adoption of a shared autoclave system to optimize usage and reduce the number of cycles.

Table 2 compares energy consumption at CIIMAR facilities between 2021 and 2025. Overall, there was a **reduction in energy consumption in 2025**, in line with the results of 2024. In previous years, an analysis of partial energy consumption was made which allowed us to differentiate between the energy consumption in floors 2 and 3 (labs and offices) and in BOGA. However, updates in the electricity meters only allow us to present a total analysis of consumption and seem to indicate that previous values only reflected a partial portion of total annual consumption. The overall decrease in electrical energy expenditure since 2023 could be a result of the increasingly adopted abovementioned measures promoted by CIIMAR. However, the BOGA section of the headquarters building can have significant variations in consumption due to different trials being conducted. Looking forward, CIIMAR will try to partialize energy consumption measurements across different floors and facilities at CIIMAR in order to better access the source of variation. Independently, we analyze these values as positive in terms of effective energy consumption reduction.

Table 2. Total value of electrical energy consumption at the CIIMAR headquarters from 2021 to 2025. Values preceded by a downward arrow (↓) indicate a decrease in comparison to the previous year.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total energy consumption (MWh)	994,2	1099,5	1227,8	↓1192,6	↓1058,4



REDUCE PAPER CONSUMPTION (ESRS E5)

With multiple printers available at the headquarters, CIIMAR has installed message boards displaying the daily number of printed sheets to raise awareness about paper waste. Additionally, recycling stations have been placed near the printers to promote proper waste separation. Furthermore, panels promoting the conscious use of paper towels were installed in all the bathrooms at the headquarters.

To further encourage the reduction of paper consumption, CIIMAR implemented a Draft Paper Station at its headquarters, where people can place and collect single-sided printed sheets for reuse. This initiative promotes the extended use of paper before disposal and reinforces resource efficiency. Although the material impact of this measure is difficult to quantify, considering our statistics don't differentiate between new and reused paper, the initiative aims to raise awareness and support behavioral change among the community regarding responsible paper use.

Table 3 presents the number of printed sheets over the past four years, showing a significant increase after 2022. This rise may be linked to the growing number of staff and students at CIIMAR's headquarters. To counteract this trend, internal communication channels have been increasingly digitized to reduce reliance on printed materials. However, despite these measures, the number of printed sheets remains high. Therefore, additional steps should be taken to further reduce paper usage, in line with the goals outlined in CIIMAR's Sustainability Plan for 2026.

Table 3. Number of printed paper sheets per month at the CIIMAR headquarters from 2022 to 2025. Values preceded by a downward arrow (↓) indicate a decrease in comparison to the previous year.

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total copies per month	3816	8054	8548	8573
Black & white copies per month	2195	4459	4569	4805
Color copies per month	1621	3595	3978	↓3768

3.2 SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT, MOBILITY AND COMMITMENTS (ESRS E1, E2, S2)

PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY (ESRS E1)

- Celebration of World Bicycle Day (June 2025) with a bike ride and picnic.



PRIORITIZE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY IN THE PROCUREMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES (ESRS E1, S2)

CIIMAR applies a supplier evaluation method through the Laborders platform, where the person responsible for each order must assess the supplier based on various satisfaction criteria, including sustainability. This approach aims to integrate environmental criteria into the supplier selection process, taking on the role of a change agent in the value chain and collaborating with corporate clients and suppliers in risk management and improving their environmental performance.

To raise awareness among suppliers and CIIMAR members about our concerns regarding the environmental impact of our activities and relationships, as well as to encourage the adoption of sustainable best practices, the following statement has been included in the email signature field of CIIMAR's public procurement communications:

“The adoption of environmentally friendly practices in CIIMAR’s laboratories and common areas is part of our mission. Choosing more sustainable resources, materials, and services with lower environmental impact is increasingly important to us.”

3.3 CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND WASTE MANAGEMENT (ESRS E5)

PROMOTE CIRCULARITY

- **CIIMAR’s Circular Markets** are an initiative aimed at reducing consumption and promoting the circular use of second-hand items within the community. In 2025, a **Christmas Circular Market** was hosted where members of CIIMAR donated items they no longer needed to be bought at the market or donated to social work institutions. The event circulated 93 items, and donated 590 items, such as clothing, books and shoes, to Associação A Casa do Caminho - that supports children at risk and their families – and **donated 451,50€ and 91 personal care and hygiene items** to Associação de Apoio à Vítima (APAV) – that provides support for survivors of domestic violence;
- **CIIMAR’s Book Sharing** is a small shared library, where all members can leave pre-loved books in exchange for others. This initiative has circulated over 75 children books in 4 languages, and over 83 adult books in 8 languages;
- **Coolers collection campaign** is an initiative that aims to repurpose and redirect otherwise discarded cooler packs that are received with cold packages orders, considering these are toxic and non-recyclable. A partnership was established with the lab material manufacturer NZYTech, where the coolers are sent back to this provider for reuse in future orders;



- **Pipette tip box recycling.** CIIMAR has, over the years, collaborated with Precious Plastic Portugal to recycle pipette tip box plastic that is not recyclable through mainstream recycling processes. In 2025, the collected plastic, was donated to CEINOP, in Póvoa do Varzim – a company that recycles plastic through melting to produce produce boxes for local producers -, and VivaLab – a design workshop that uses plastic for various workshops and creative outputs, namely in activities with schools - in a total of circa 110 kgs of plastic.



PIPETTE BOX RECYCLING

Let's reduce plastic waste!

Help us gather useless **pipette tip boxes** and recycle them into something useful!

Pipette tip boxes are not recyclable through the usual process, so CIIMAR partnered with CEINOP to transform pipette boxes and palettes into **fruit boxes** for local farmers to sell their produce.



1. COLLECT
Pipette tip boxes are gathered at CIIMAR.



2. TRANSFORM
At CEINOP, in Póvoa de Varzim, they will be processed, melted and moulded.



3. CREATE
CEINOP produces plastic boxes for local producers to sell fruit and veggies.

Do you want to **help us make CIIMAR more sustainable?**

Join the CIIMAR **Green Lab Team!**
Contact us through: greenlab@ciimar.up.pt or sustentabilidade@ciimar.up.pt.







SUSTAINABILITY WEEK

CIIMAR's **Sustainability Week**, organized by CIIMAR GreenLab and the Sustainability Office as part of the institute's 25th anniversary, brought together the community to celebrate and promote sustainable practices. From May 26 to 30, a series of activities engaged participants in practical actions to improve sustainability in laboratories and daily routines. The week began with a **Lab Cleaning Day**, including energy-efficient freezer maintenance, chemical disposal, and preparation for the Laboratory Flea Market, with the **Most Sustainable Laboratory prize** awarded to exemplary teams. A poster exhibition showcased past and ongoing GreenLab and sustainability initiatives, inspiring the community to continue improving practices. The Neptune Seminar featured **Dr. Joana Magalhães** from i3s and Green Labs Portugal, who shared insights on challenges and solutions for sustainable laboratories. The **Laboratory Flea Market** allowed the exchange of unused lab materials, promoting reuse and reducing waste. The week concluded with an informal session including a **quiz**, open discussion, and a vegan coffee break, fostering reflection and community engagement. Overall, Sustainability Week combined education, action, and collaboration to promote and reinforce CIIMAR's sustainability initiatives and community involvement.

INCENTIVES FOR WASTE REDUCTION AND INCREASED RECYCLING

Waste management policies have evolved towards the sustainable management of materials to protect, preserve and improve environmental quality, safeguard human health, ensure the efficient and rational use of natural resources, promote circular economy principles, enhance the use of renewable energy, reduce dependence on imported resources, create new economic opportunities and contribute to long-term competitiveness.

Since 2023, CIIMAR has distributed and maintained approximately 30 differentiated containers for the selective collection and recycling of paper, plastic and glass at strategic locations, both in laboratories and in the dining areas and corridors of the offices. In 2025, new message boards were installed to encourage better paper separation and collection and additional recycling points were installed in the building.

3.4 CHEMICAL AND ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION (ESRS E2, E4)

HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS (ESRS E2)

CIIMAR is committed to identifying and replacing hazardous chemicals with environmental-friendly alternatives or implementing alternative laboratory techniques that do not require such chemicals. The cooperation and knowledge sharing among all stakeholders help to identify and track technological advancements, enabling the implementation of improvements that protect the environment.

Chemical and biological waste (which can be hazardous to the environment) is an integral part of normal laboratory research activities. The management of this waste aims to prevent and minimize negative impacts on public health and the environment. We handle hazardous waste responsibly, in accordance with the General Waste Management Regime. Waste classification is carried out according to the List of Waste Regulations to facilitate better management and tracking of the waste generated. These chemical and biological wastes are collected by a specialized company and subsequently treated, with the possibility of being refined, reused, or discarded. The table below shows the waste values generated over the last three years.

Table 4. Discarded volume of Hazardous Chemicals, in tons, at CIIMAR between 2021 and 2025. Codes are listed according to the List of Waste Regulations. Values preceded by an upward arrow (↑) indicate an increase in comparison to the previous year.

		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
06 01 06	Other acids	0,400	0,382	0,323	↑0,440	0,216
06 02 05	Other bases	0,084	0,072	0,042	↑0,044	↑0,069
06 04 04	Wastes containing mercury				↑0,00006	
06 04 05	Wastes containing other heavy metals	0,051	0,006	↑0,050	0,036	↑0,060
14 06 02	Other halogenated solvents and solvent mixtures	0,410	↑0,470	0,526	↑0,535	0,174
14 06 03	Other solvents and solvent mixtures	1,220	0,968	0,675	↑0,727	0,610
15 01 10	Packaging containing residues of or contaminated by hazardous substances	0,567	0,322	0,235	↑0,260	0,126
15 02 02	Absorbents, filter materials (including oil filters not otherwise specified), wiping cloths, protective clothing contaminated by hazardous substances				↑0,119	
16 01 14	Antifreeze fluids containing hazardous substances				↑0,019	↑0,030
16 03 03	Inorganic wastes containing hazardous substances	0,854	0,697	↑0,550	↑0,825	0,579
16 05 06	Laboratory chemicals, consisting of or containing hazardous substances, including mixtures of laboratory chemicals	0,547	0,167	↑0,188	↑0,584	0,150
18 01 06	Hazardous chemicals consisting of or containing dangerous substances					↑0,470
18 01 03	Wastes whose collection and disposal is subject to special requirements in order to prevent infection	0,310	↑2,781	↑3,379	2,539	2,347
18 01 01	Sharp objects	0,691	↑0,995	↑1,499	1,412	↑1,692
	TOTAL	5,134	↑6,860	↑7,467	6,840	6,523

PROTECTION, CREATION AND RESTORATION OF ECOSYSTEMS (ESRS E4)

CIIMAR actively promotes numerous initiatives and projects aimed at the creation, restoration, and protection of valuable ecosystems, as well as fostering active citizenship. These efforts include the creation and restoration of ponds, marine algae reforestation, and river and beach clean-up activities. Among the key projects in 2025, notable initiatives included Charcos com Vida, SeaGrassRIAwild, BlueForests and BlueForesteing. One significant achievement was the construction of **3 new ponds and the restoration of 7 ponds**, in a total of 83 pond maintenance activities, which serve as notable biodiversity conservation sites and provide valuable educational spaces for hands-on experiences with nature and wildlife. Furthermore, the project “Charcos com Vida” organized 73 activities at schools and outdoor activities, public lectures, training actions and public events, reaching a total of **1977 participants and visitors**.

In 2025, CIIMAR organized **two beach cleaning initiatives**. The first, “Christmas Beach Cleaning,” was held in partnership with CMIA Matosinhos and the Municipality of Matosinhos. The second, “Sunset Beach Cleanup,” was co-organized with the Municipality of Vila do Conde, CMIA de Vila do Conde, and Counting Stars. Beyond collecting waste from the beaches, both events served as opportunities to raise public awareness about beach pollution and educate participants on the environmental impact of plastics on coastal ecosystems.





4. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This report provides a summary of the Social and Environmental Sustainability initiatives implemented by CIIMAR in 2025, in alignment with the goals and metrics defined by the **Social and Environmental Sustainability Plan for 2025**. In order for CIIMAR to adopt the best practices in this field and reinforce our commitment to sustainable development, this document follows the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards and is structured according to the ESG dimensions (Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance).

The **CIIMAR Social and Environmental Sustainability Report 2025**, as well as previous editions of the CIIMAR Sustainability reports and plans, is available in digital format and can be accessed on the CIIMAR website at www.ciimar.up.pt/reports-plans. This interactive report provides additional information through various hyperlinks to external websites and internal CIIMAR pages.

The annual commitment to the development of the Social and Environmental Sustainability Plan ensures a structured and comprehensive approach in defining and planning our sustainability measures. These measures, coordinated by various internal offices and organizational units, allow for thorough monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of the implemented actions in a systematic and objective manner.

CIIMAR reaffirms its commitment to adopting best practices in environmental and social sustainability and integrating sustainability policies and principles into its organizational culture, governance model, research, and daily activities. The institution is dedicated to becoming a leading Scientific Research Center in this field, demonstrating both ambition and responsibility in its sustainability efforts.



CIIMAR - Interdisciplinary Centre of Marine and Environmental Research

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