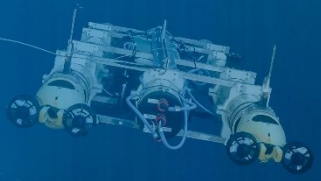
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Press Release

Pilot Demonstration of the NERITES solution in Fournoi, Greece

30-10-2026



NERITES completes its second pilot campaign at Aspros Kavos in Fournoi, Greece

The final NERITES demonstration campaign brought the project's integrated monitoring solution into operation at Wreck 15 in the Fournoi archipelago.

From 3 to 8 October 2026, the NERITES project completed its **second pilot campaign at Aspros Kavos in Fournoi, Greece**. Following the first pilot demonstration at the submerged Villa dei Pisoni in Baia, Italy, the Fournoi campaign tested the project's integrated monitoring solution in a different underwater archaeological environment and under **new operational and environmental conditions.**

The campaign focused on **Wreck 15**, an early Byzantine shipwreck dating to the 5th–6th centuries AD, located off Cape Aspros Kavos at a depth of approximately 43–49 metres. Discovered in 2015, its archaeological significance and demanding underwater conditions made it a highly relevant setting for demonstrating systematic, non-destructive monitoring approaches.

The campaign addressed **two principal use cases**. The first examined the **physical and biological degradation** of the wreck, while the second focused on the **potential impact of human activity on the stability of its archaeological remains**.

The integrated NERITES solution combines autonomous underwater operations, mission planning and precise positioning, advanced imaging and 3D documentation, environmental and material-related measurements, docking and communication infrastructure, remote monitoring and data-processing tools. Together, these elements are being developed to support **systematic, repeatable and non-destructive assessments of submerged archaeological sites.**

The campaign was supported by an operational base at Kamari, which hosted the onshore assembly, storage and Remote Monitoring and Command Centre. Following a period of **strong Aegean winds reaching 9–10 Beaufort**, marine operations and logistics were adjusted as needed, with the main operating and support vessels facilitating the transfer of equipment and personnel between Kamari and Aspros Kavos.

Day 1 – Preliminary preparations

On Saturday, 3 October, the campaign began with **preliminary activities and logistical preparations at the operational base in Kamari**.

The partners organised the equipment and working areas, coordinated the transportation of personnel and system components and reviewed the planned operational sequence. Initial setup and readiness checks were also carried out in preparation for the **full system integration** and **subsequent deployment at Aspros Kavos**.

At the same time, the archaeological teams coordinated the **site-related preparations** required for the documentation, reference measurements and field activities planned for the following day.

Day 2 – Archaeological baseline, zero-point datasets and system readiness

On Sunday, 4 October, the partners carried out the archaeological and technical activities. At Aspros Kavos, the selected **archaeological Areas of Interest** and **environmental reference stations** were re-identified and georeferenced. Common identification codes were assigned to the archaeological areas, measurement points, reference stations and authorised samples to ensure that all records and datasets could be accurately linked.

Before any cleaning activities began, the initial condition of the selected archaeological areas and artefacts was documented through photography, photogrammetry and 3D recording. **Conservation assessments, reference measurements and authorised sampling** were also carried out, establishing the **controlled pre-cleaning baseline required for subsequent comparisons.**

Following the preparation of the selected areas, the archaeological teams acquired the **post-cleaning photographic, photogrammetric and 3D documentation and repeated the conservation assessments**. The resulting information was consolidated into controlled **"zero-point" reference datasets** linking the **visual documentation, 3D models, conservation records, measurements and samples**.

The archaeological markers, acquisition points, AUV checkpoints and deployment layout were also confirmed, while the **planned missions for the two Fournoi use cases** were reviewed and approved.

In parallel, the technology partners completed the **assembly**, **integration** and **calibration of the NERITES system**. Mechanical, electrical and software interfaces, power supply, communications, data logging and information transfer were checked through dry end-to-end readiness tests. Mission planning, system deployment, launch, recovery and safety procedures were also reviewed before the integrated configuration was approved for field deployment.

By the end of the day, the **archaeological reference datasets** and the **integrated system configuration** were ready for the deployment and field-verification activities at Aspros Kavos.

Day 3 – System deployment and field verification

On Monday, 5 October, the integrated NERITES system was transported from Kamari to Aspros Kavos and installed at the pilot site. Following its deployment, the teams completed the **in-water commissioning of the system and initiated the planned field-verification runs**. These activities assessed the operation of the underwater platform and its integrated payloads, including controlled navigation, positioning, target approach and continuous mission execution.

The connection with the docking and surface-support infrastructure was also examined, together with the transfer of power, data and operational information. **Communication between the offshore system and the Remote Monitoring and Command Centre in Kamari was verified throughout the activities**.

Further field runs focused on autonomous mission execution, path tracking, obstacle avoidance and precise positioning. Imaging and 3D datasets were acquired with the required coverage, resolution, georeferencing and supporting metadata, while environmental and material-related measurements were conducted under real seawater conditions. The collected field information was organised and prepared for subsequent processing through the project's deterioration-assessment and preservation-support tools.

Day 4 – End-to-end execution of the Fournoi use cases

On Tuesday, 6 October, the verified field configuration was used for the **end-to-end execution of the two Fournoi use cases**, with **designated end users** following the operations from the Remote Monitoring and Command Centre in Kamari.

The first use case focused on the **physical and biological degradation of Wreck 15**. The field team carried out the planned imaging and 3D documentation mission, together with the required reference acquisitions.

The second use case addressed **anthropogenic impacts on the stability of the archaeological artefacts**. The planned sensor runs were conducted alongside environmental measurements, CTD data collection, authorised sampling and other reference activities.

At the end of the operational day, the partners and designated end users **jointly reviewed the execution status, collected datasets, mission logs, identified deviations and initial observations**. The resulting records were linked to the relevant field activities and test procedures to support the subsequent assessment of the project's performance indicators.

Day 5 & 6 – System recovery, demobilisation, data closure and site handover

During the final two days of the campaign, on 7 and 8 October, the underwater platform, integrated payloads, docking station, buoy, moorings, cables and supporting equipment were **recovered** from Aspros Kavos and **transferred** back to Kamari and the main port of Fournoi.

The recovered equipment was safely disconnected, inspected, cleaned where required, labelled and prepared for transport. Any anomalies or equipment-related observations identified during the recovery process were also documented.

In parallel, the partners reconciled the field datasets, operational logs, samples and evidence records and verified that controlled backups had been completed. This process ensured the completeness, traceability and secure custody of the information collected throughout the pilot campaign.

Temporary materials were removed from the working area, the condition of the site was inspected and documented, and the pilot area was restored and formally handed back. The campaign concluded with the completion of the demobilisation process and the preparation of the equipment for departure from Fournoi.

About NERITES project

NERITES is a Horizon Europe Research and Innovation project running from January 2024 to December 2026. With a total budget of €3,994,750, the project develops non-destructive, cost-effective and transportable technologies for the systematic remote monitoring of Underwater Cultural Heritage.

By combining autonomous underwater platforms, advanced sensors, imaging and photogrammetry, remote supervision and intelligent data processing, NERITES aims to improve preservation assessments while reducing operational costs and risks to human operators.

The project is funded by the European Union under Grant Agreement No. 101132575.

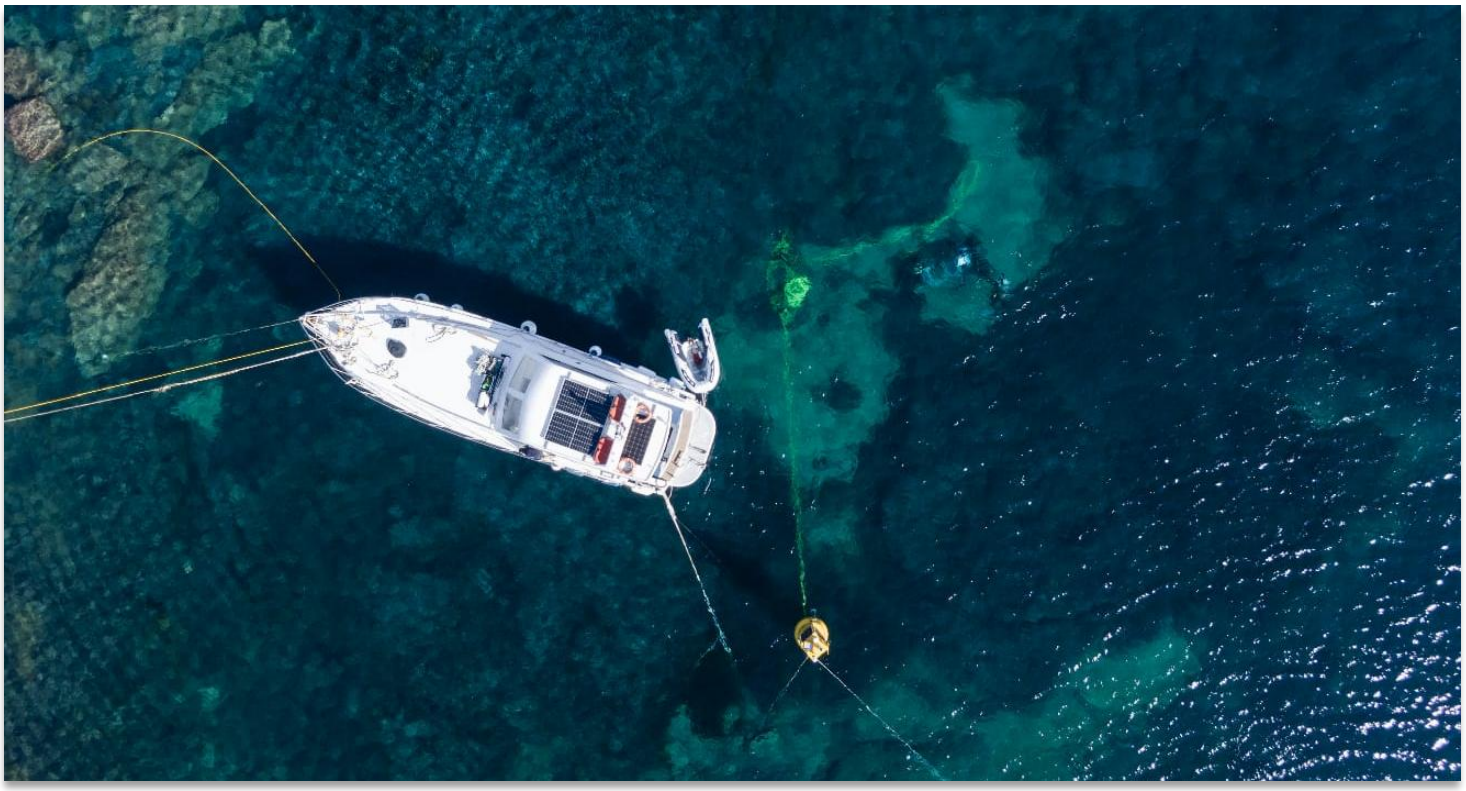
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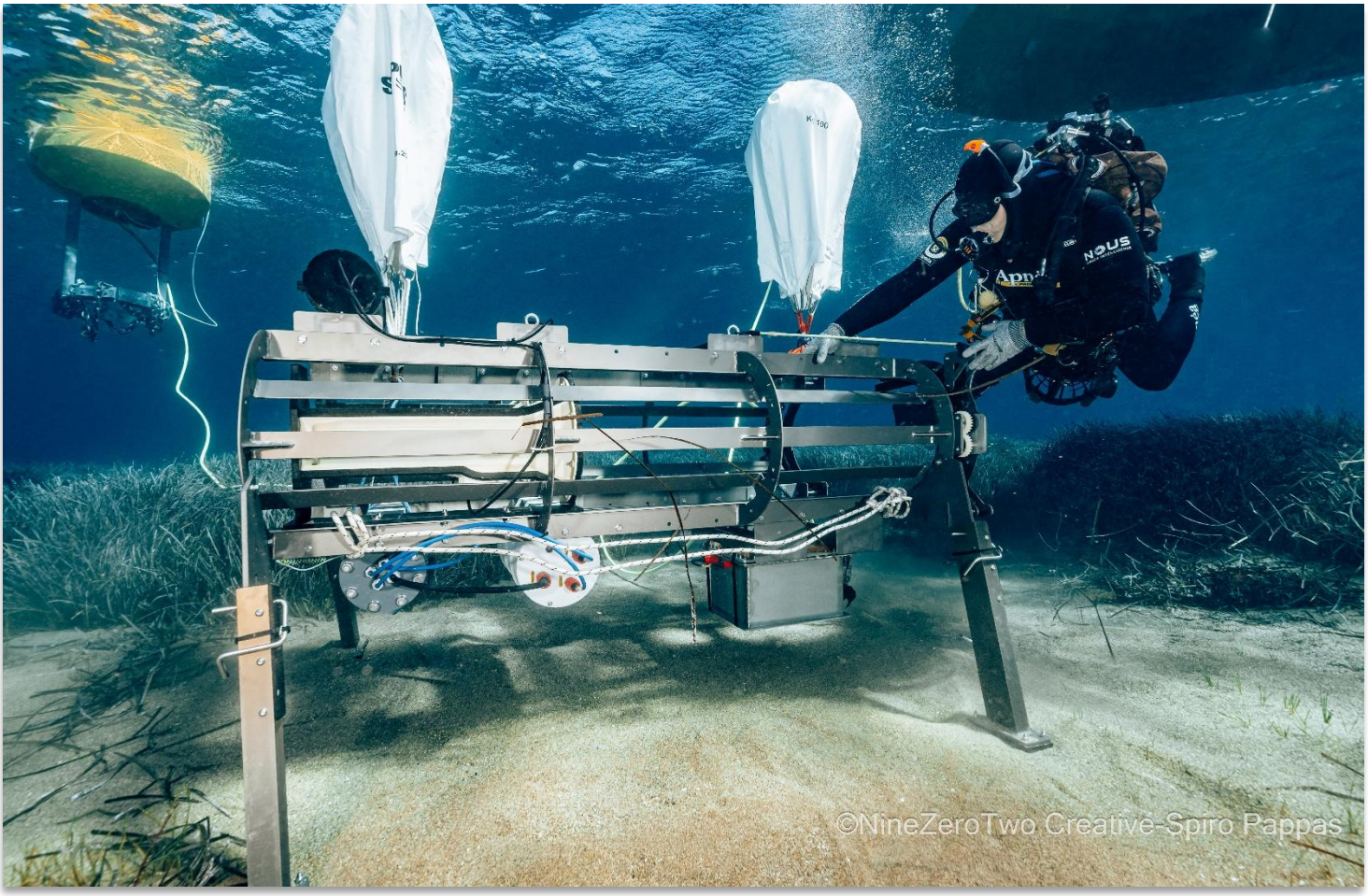


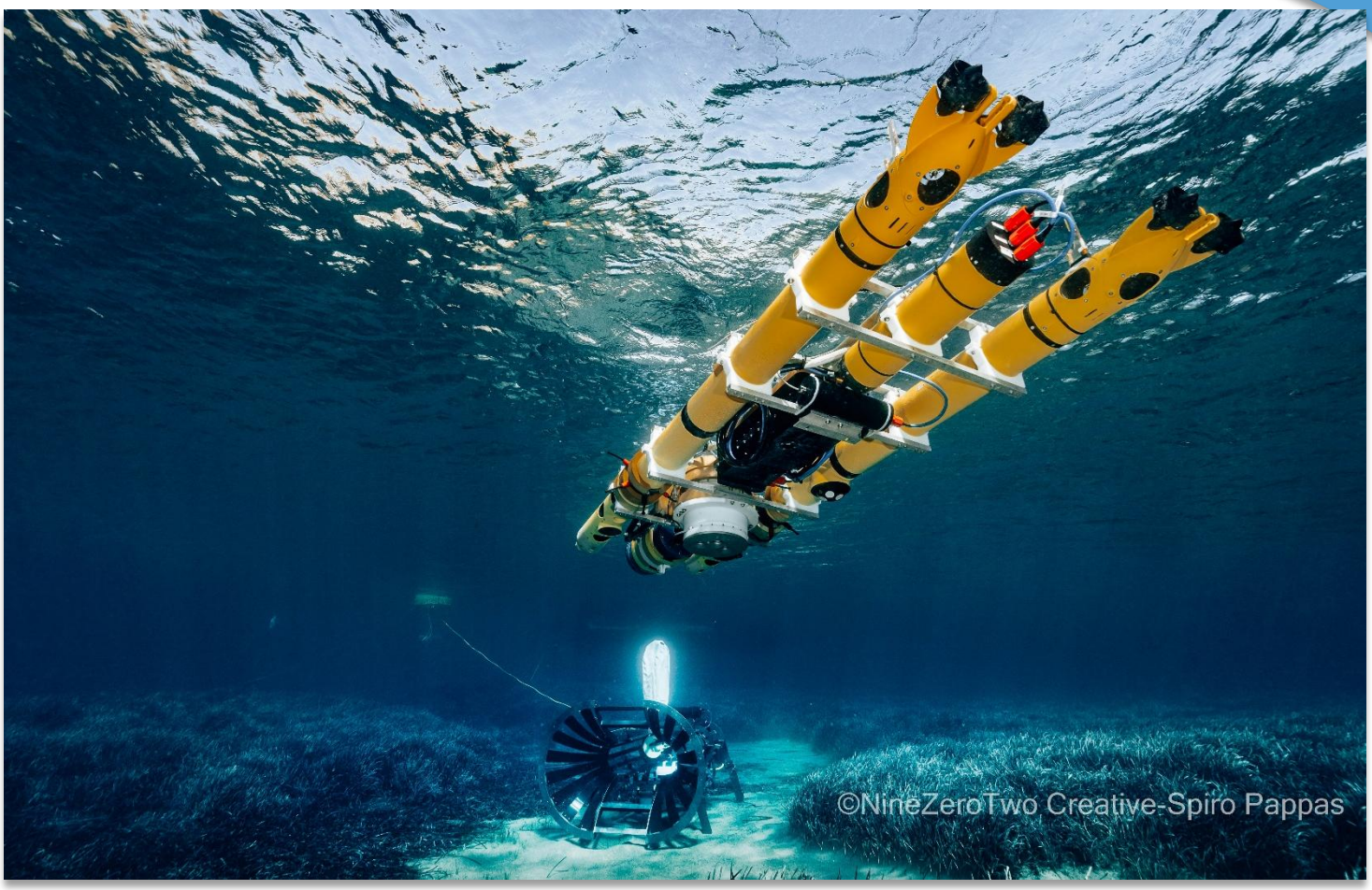


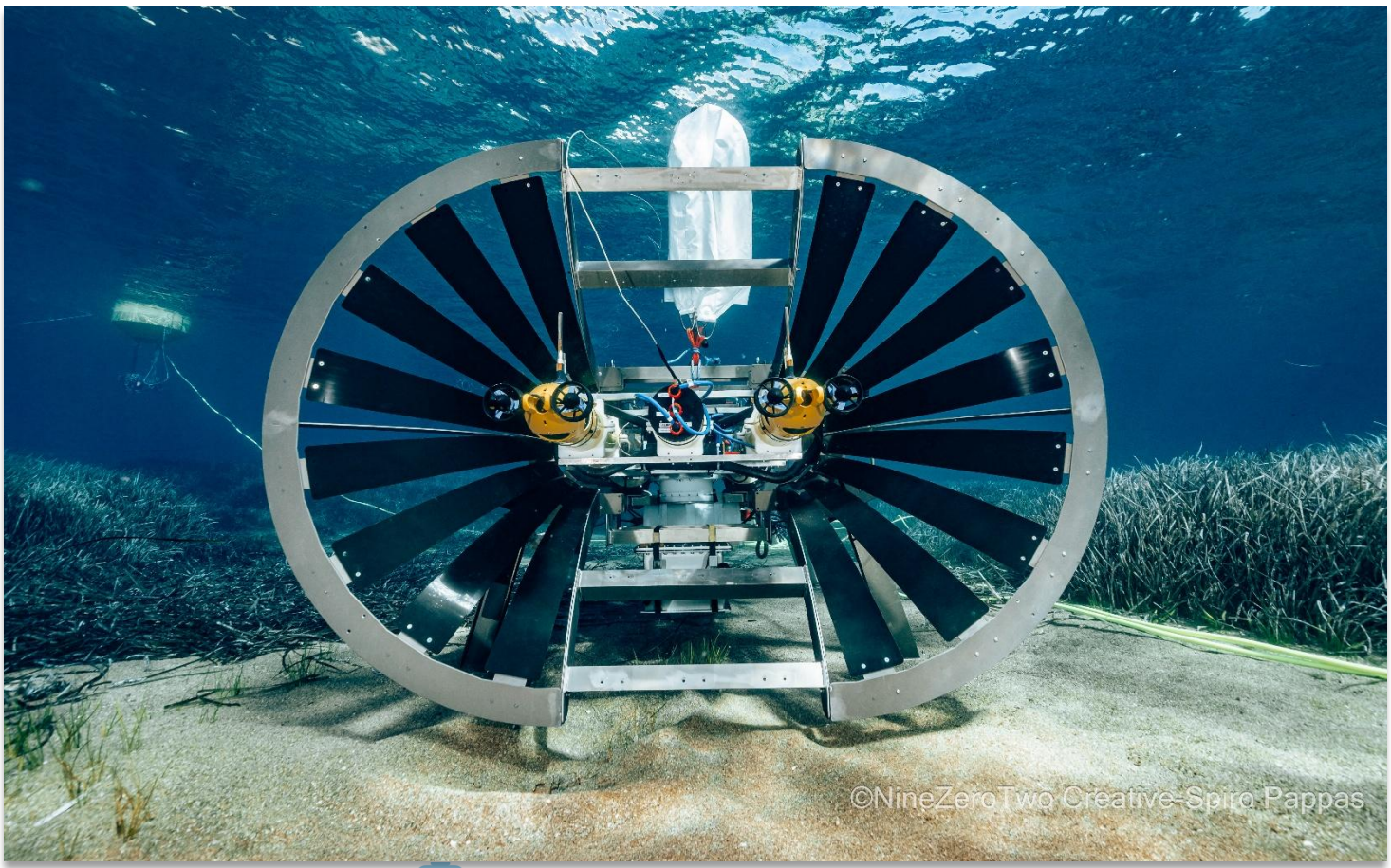

Remote console
Overview
81W
Inverting
46%
25W
29W



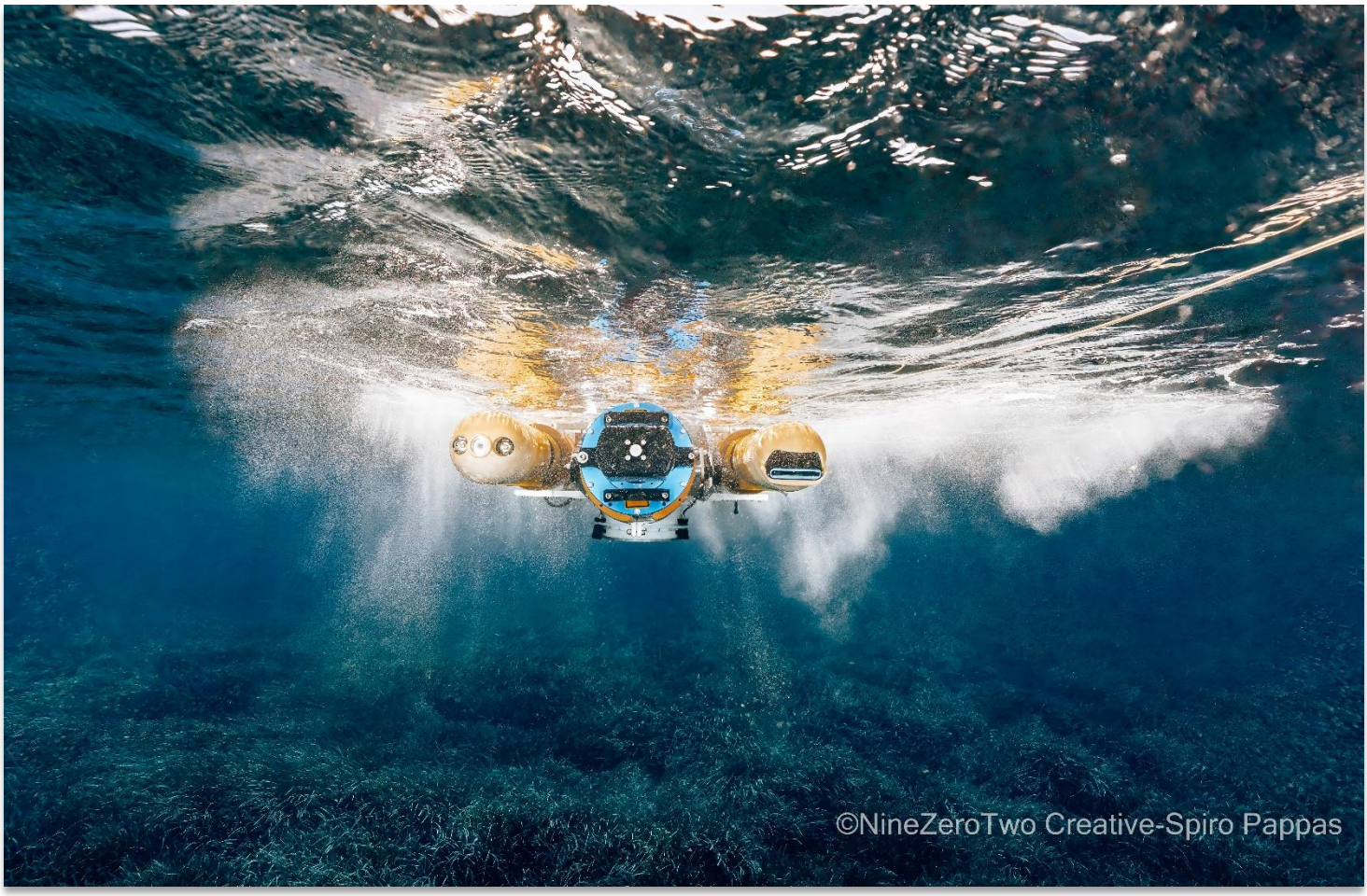

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