



Towards a ‘Blueing the Black Sea Programme’

A regional initiative to tackle marine pollution in the Black Sea in support of the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea

Consultation workshop in Turkey, 4 February 2021

Discussion paper

I. Introduction

The 2019 Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea, negotiated with the active support of the Permanent International Secretariat of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC PERMIS), has created a new dynamic in the regional dialogue on sustainable Blue economy development and once more highlighted the need for effective preservation of the marine environment. In response to the ambitious political commitments under the [Common Maritime Agenda](#) by the six Black Sea littoral states and the Republic of Moldova (CMA countries), the World Bank has announced the deployment of the “[Blueing the Black Sea Program](#)” (BBSEA) aiming to catalyse blue economy investments for the Black Sea and strengthen regional dialogue and institutions. The first activities under this umbrella programme consists of an *analytical work* and a *project*. The latter, the [BBSEA Regional project](#), will be implemented by BSEC PERMIS and is expected to be launched in the 2nd half of 2021 with a focus on water borne marine pollution.

A preparatory action, funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and led by BSEC PERMIS, is expected to deliver the critical elements for the design of the BBSEA Regional project (BBSEA GEF Regional project) for 2021-2023 which in turn will support identification and preparation of investment to reduce pollution in the Black Sea. To this effect, 7 national stakeholder consultation workshops will be organised – one in each CMA country. The **cycle of consultations starts in Turkey** due to the importance of the country in the Black Sea region – the host country of the BSEC PERMIS, the coordinator of the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea in 2021, and the country with the longest coastline on the Black Sea.

The national consultations, held as webinars, will gather selected participants that include public authorities and policy makers responsible for issues related to marine environment, research, blue economy development and investment, as well as private organisation working on marine pollution and financial institutions. In practice, the consultations will seek feedback on the *state of play, pressing issues and priorities related to pollution prevention, reduction and the control in the Black Sea, as well as the opportunities that result in the process*.

II. The pollution problem in the Black Sea

The Black Sea has a pollution problem that has turned it into one of Europe’s most polluted sea in the past two decades and has implications for the littoral countries at economic, social (health) and environmental levels. It is a common problem, which requires a joint and coordinated regional solution. Although climate change is expected to exacerbate the pollution problem, the future impacts of pollution under a “business as usual” scenario in the Black Sea are fully known (**Knowledge gap**). Some existing national and regional policy and legal

frameworks are not sufficient or conducive to support regional action against pollution and when they are, implementation is not necessarily effective (**Policy, legal and institutional gap**). The lack of an accurate evaluation of pollution risks hampers the prioritization of impactful pollution reduction investments in the Black Sea basin (**Financial gap**). This is evidenced by the limited innovation and coordinated investments towards pollution prevention, as well as the partial involvement of financial institutions in this domain.

Some of these gaps have already been addressed by policy initiatives at national and regional levels or actions by the industry (e.g. on waterborne pollution by ships). Others have been tackled mostly separately at the level of the coastal regions (e.g. collection and recycling of marine litter).

The current activities under the BBSEA program are described in the table below. The webinar in Turkey will seek to discuss all key gaps in a uniform and focused manner, which will allow BSEC PERMIS and the World Bank to fine tune its actions on both fronts – analytical and investment – and gather concrete input for the Regional project design at the end of the webinar.

Identified Gaps	Analytical Work Turning the Tide of Pollution	BBSEA GEF Regional Project	Timeframe								
			2021 S1	2021 S2	2022 S1	2022 S2	2023 S1	2023 S2	2024 S1	2024 S2	
Information & Knowledge	Sources of pollution/ Hotspots of pollution										
	Benefits of addressing pollution										
	Business as usual scenarios (Qualitative assessment)										
	Cost of inaction (Quantitative assessment)										
Policy, Legal and Institutions	Institutional policy and legal analysis										
	Regional dialogue										
	Capacity building for regional coordination										
Financing and Investments	Sustainable business standards and guidelines										
	Investment prioritization										
	Investment plans for pollution prevention and circular economy prepared.										
	Eco-business grants provided through competition										

III. Structure of the consultation

1. Choreography

Following the opening ceremony and the brief introduction of the BBSEA umbrella programme, the consultation in Turkey will be practically carried out during the two working sessions. Working session 1: Turning the Tide of Pollution in the Black Sea will focus on the analytical component of the BBSEA, while Working session 2: BBSEA GEF Regional project, Focus on Turkey on the BBSEA investment component.

Following a brief reminder of the topic and the objectives of the respective session, the moderator will seek feedback from the participants on the questions put forward in this paper. The participants may use the chat function to provide answers or participate in the poles if suggested by the moderators. High-quality interpretation will be available to facilitate interaction.

The indicative questions will guide the conversation and: help validate/fine-tune the findings of the gap analysis carried out by the World Bank analytical teams; help understand what concrete actions/interventions are planned at national level to overcome the identified gaps and the marine pollution problem; help identify the actors that can take these actions forward and appropriate funding avenues; help understand the interest in and identify the practical shape of a potential eco-business competition that may cover Turkey.

2. Themes and questions

Working session 1: Turning the Tide of Pollution in the Black Sea

The working session will introduce the World Bank-led effort to establish an up-to-date diagnostic of the state of play and issues at stake regarding marine pollution in the Black Sea on the example of the efforts of the coastal countries. Through a targeted discussion, the panel will aim at identifying the sources, impacts and prevention efforts (information and institutional gaps) related to marine pollution, as well the key pollution challenges in Turkey. The findings will feed into an in-country pollution diagnostic paper, which, in turn, will inform the BBSEA-GEF architecture.

Indicative Questions for discussion

- ▶ *Will the diagnostic (i) legal and institutional analysis; and (ii) regional pollution diagnostic contribute to the regional efforts to address marine pollution?*
- ▶ *Does the scope of the diagnostic activities reflect on the main gaps that need to be addressed?*
- ▶ *Which are the stakeholders that have the most important role in addressing marine pollution and should be involved in the technical committee?*
- ▶ *Does the diagnostic risk any overlap with existing projects or initiatives at national and regional levels?*
- ▶ *What are the pollution sources, circulation patterns and impacts?*
- ▶ *What are the business as usual scenarios at national and regional levels if nothing is done to address pollution issues?*
- ▶ *How can institutional, legal and policy reforms help to address pollution issues?*
- ▶ *What are the priorities of Turkey related to marine pollution prevention and reduction; pragmatic avenues to reduce marine pollution and stimulate sustainable practices?*
- ▶ *What support schemes are in place to accompany the development of smart pollution reduction techniques?*

Working session 2: BBSEA GEF Regional project, Focus on Turkey

The working session will present the planned BBSEA-GEF project and aim at gathering feedback on its key components. The panel discussion will aim at understanding the priorities of public authorities and private stakeholders related to the overall project and within it, the promotion of eco-sustainable business practices, innovation and finance supporting pollution reduction. The session will touch upon avenues to involve financial institutions in funding and promoting green technology investments, focusing on pollution reduction.

Indicative Questions for discussion

- ▶ *Are there any particular standards for sustainable business operations and investments applied by Turkish banks, private investors and development agencies in projects in the domains of agriculture, aquaculture, tourism, shipping and water management? If not, do you find it useful if such standards were developed?*
- ▶ *Which organisations should be the promoters of such standards? Which is the best avenue to promote such standards (e.g. trainings, guidelines, best practice exchange)?*
- ▶ *What challenges does the development of innovative, sustainable business models face? Which sources of funding are available to spur their development at national level?*
- ▶ *Do you consider sufficient the investments at national and local levels to address green infrastructure and technology gaps (e.g. on waste water treatment, water depollution, water recycling)? If not, how can they be spurred?*
- ▶ *Are there any institutions, at national level or at regional level, that promote investments in green technologies, circular economy models or novel green infrastructures for pollution reduction, waste management and recycling related to marine pollution?*
- ▶ *Are there any financial institutions and (equity) funds that strategically target and support companies or early-stage ventures that develop solutions for the pollution problem and the blue economy as a whole (e.g. renewable energy, sustainable seafood, blue biotech, maritime IT)?*
- ▶ *What can be done to catalyse innovative financing solutions to overcome the pollution problem and get critical projects off the ground? Which actors are best placed to do so? How can cooperation and collaboration be fostered?*
- ▶ *How can financial engineering be exploited as an asset in the solution of the marine pollution problem? Which cooperation opportunities present themselves? Which actors are best placed to assist with funding of projects?*
- ▶ *Do you think that a dedicated eco-business competition that provides small grants to distinguished innovations could add value in the fight against pollution? If so, should this competition be organised at national level or at sea-basin level? Who should be the target group of this competition – public authorities or private entrepreneurs? What actors are best placed to accompany the development from start to finish to ensure coherence?*
- ▶ *What investments are necessary to increase the recycling capacities of Black Sea regions? Can cooperation between regions increase the recycling possibilities? Can Public-Private Partnerships speed up the process?*

These consultation themes do not include all topics related to marine pollution in the Black Sea, nor can they embrace all potential activities for the investment and analytical components of BBSEA as outlined above. However, they offer a good entry point for discussion. Not least, with the progress of the consultations in the other countries, the thematic focus could evolve and integrate additional facets based on the audience, interest or the overall needs of the consultation.