

Blueing the Black Sea Program: A regional initiative to tackle marine pollution and climate change in support of the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea

Consultation workshop in Ukraine, 11 March 2021

Summary

I. What was discussed?

Co-hosted by the World Bank and the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS), in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution, and the Common Maritime Agenda National Hub of Ukraine, the workshop (held as a webinar) was the third in a series of 'National Consultations' organised in all six Black Sea littoral states, incl. the Republic of Moldova to seek:

- ▶ input from respective stakeholder communities on marine pollution, pressing issues and priorities related to pollution prevention, reduction, and control in the Black Sea, and opportunities to inform the planned 'Blueing the Black Sea' (BBSEA) programme¹ architecture and implementation modalities;
- ▶ information to support a national and regional pollution diagnostic tool that will form the baseline for further action.

II. Who was present?

The webinar was opened by a panel of key speakers - *H.E. Amb. Michael B. CHRISTIDES, Secretary General, Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS), Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), Ms. Iryna Stavchuk, Deputy Minister of Regional and European Integration of Ukraine, Mr. Steven Schonberger, Regional Director, Sustainable Development for Europe and Central Asia, World Bank, Ms. Patrizia Busolini, Policy Officer, Sea-basin Strategies, Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission.* Brief outline of their remarks can be found in section IV below.

At the peak, 102 people have joined the webinar, among them representatives of the public and the private sector. The webinar was streamed online on the [World Bank Facebook Live channel](#)². The majority of participants were from the host country. Additionally, international experts active in the region and representatives of international organisations, such as representatives of the United Nations Development Programme and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, took joined the event. Participants mainly represented

¹ The Blueing the Black Sea (BBSEA) is a regional initiative, to be led by BSEC PERMIS, to address pollution and develop Blue Economy investments in the Black Sea region as part of the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA), agreed in 2019 by the six Black Sea littoral states plus the Republic of Moldova. BBSEA is funded by the World Bank with an ongoing preparatory investigative phase supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

² The BBSEA Ukraine Consultation had a robust reach via World Bank Ukraine Facebook [Page](#). To promote the event, the World Bank communications team developed five posts reaching about 1,400 Facebook users with 33 engagements, and uploaded a recording of the zoom meeting, which had more than 100 views. The posts were subsequently promoted and viewed by nearly 8,000 users. The World Bank Ukraine [webpage](#) had 85 views as of March 12.

national and regional authorities, academia and financial institutions active in the country. For a complete stakeholder list refer to Annex I: Participating Organisations.

III. How was the workshop structured?

As indicated in the [webinar agenda](#), the official opening by key speakers was followed by:

- ▶ a general scene setter, where the architecture of the BBSEA umbrella programme was presented.

It was followed by two interactive working sessions offering an overview of how the BBSEA Program will work especially its potential activities in Ukraine. The two sessions have focused on:

- ▶ the analytical component of BBSEA – to build the analytical fundamentals of the intervention;
- ▶ the BBSEA Regional GEF-funded project – to identify avenues to incentivize investments in pollution reduction technology, innovation and finance.

A key part of the workshop was spent gathering information from participants – who included experts, academics, government officials, municipalities and businesses – via a voting system to inform how the BBSEA program could be implemented not only in Ukraine but also across the wider Black Sea region.

This virtual public event was held via Facebook and Zoom, in English and Ukrainian. Simultaneous translation was provided.

IV. What feedback was received?

In the **Welcoming Address** *BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B Christides* raised the issue of marine pollution in the Black Sea as a regional challenge. He highlighted the fact that the BSEC Secretariat supports BSEC Member States in addressing this challenge.

In her opening remarks by *Ms. Iryna Stavchuk of Ministry of environment and natural resources* emphasized on the importance of the project to understand the current state of the Black Sea and to take action towards the blue economy. She mentioned 40 pollution sources identified for the Black sea through EMBLAS project. In addition, she reminded that much plastic is flowing into the sea; the volume is twice as high as the Mediterranean Sea; chemical compounds are also identified as pollution source. On the positive side, Ms Stavchuk recalled a finding from the EMBLAS project according to which, the Black Sea has some species that are nearly extinct but there is real hope to conserve them. A Scientist board at national level will continue the research on the Black Sea with view of developing a strategy and corresponding action plan for the next 6 years. This remark provoked a proposal from *Ambassador Michael B Christides*, who suggested that the scientific work involves also scientists from the neighboring countries.

Mr Steven Schonberger, World Bank Sustainable Development Regional Director, underlined the significance of the BBSEA project. He recalled that Black sea is important place for recreation. Pollution is happening literally in the last 20 years. Coastal and marine activities in one country can provoke transboundary issues that call for better integration of policies and action at national level, as well as common effort at regional level. The BBSEA program was created precisely to support such collective action and to increase the economic and social health.

Speaking for the European Commission, Ms. Patrizia Busolini informed that since September 2020 DG MARE has activated the Assistance Mechanism for Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) meant to help the countries to implement the objectives of the latter and foster awareness raising about the existing financial avenues and to support the dialogue between

the stakeholders from the region. National hubs are created in each of the 7 CMA countries to help coordinate the stakeholders in the country. Ms Busolini highlighted the key role of BSEC in implementing the CMA and in maintaining a repository of knowledge under its Black Sea Virtual Knowledge Centre. In conclusion, Ms Busolini recalled the existence of the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda for the Black Sea (scientific pillar of the CMA) and the related EU-funded CONNECT project, which is led by a Turkish research institute. She expressed certainty that this body of projects and knowledge will be well used by the Turkish rotation chairmanship of the CMA in 2021. Not least, the blue aspect of the European Green Deal policy was highlighted.

In **Working Session 1: Turning the tide of pollution in the Black Sea**, a 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 was presented. With contributions from *Mr Owen MacIntyre, Director, LLM, University College Cork* and *Mr Nicola Bertolini, Manager, Ambiente SPA* an attempt was made via discussion and some questions asked of the audience, to identify the sources, impacts and prevention efforts (information and institutional gaps) related to marine pollution in the region, as well the key pollution challenges in Ukraine. The findings will feed into an in-country pollution diagnostic paper, which, in turn, will inform the BBSEA-GEF architecture and the creation of an effective national and regional diagnostic tool.

The **Working Session 2: Blueing the Black Sea Program: BBSEA-GEF regional project, focus on Georgia** was a highly interactive consultation exercise. It began with an overview of the of the 3-year BBSEA-GEF project, from BSEC Executive Manager, *Ms Rositsa Stoeva* who said it had “*the long-term objective of an improved environmental status of the Black Sea with increased economic and social benefits for the population*”. This was followed by the gathering of feedback and ideas on the key components of the project especially with regard to Ukraine. Moderated by *Mr Svetoslav Stoyanov from the BBSEA Project*, a series of votes were held for all participants to share their preferences on questions related to the priorities of the overall project, the key concerns related to Ukraine, eco-sustainable business practices and innovation, how to develop awareness raising and funding avenues that could support pollution reduction.

Judging by the initial reactions of the live poll, there is high interest on preparation of an investment plan on marine pollution and circular economy at national level. Same goes for the development of sustainable business standards and guidelines, followed by awareness raising on marine pollution at national level. The majority of the participants in the poll voted for the need of a circular economy plan in Ukraine. As for the eco business competition, a voice from the audience indicated that the NGO sector should be part of the target group. Finally, among the avenues to support/promote sustainable business practices and innovation towards pollution reduction, legislation got the highest score, followed by capacity building to business entrepreneurs and more investment by bank or development institutions.

Ms Berengere Prince, Lead Natural Resources Specialist, World Bank, who **closed the webinar** thanked the audience for their contribution and announced that it was expected that implementation of the BBSEA-GEF project would start in September 2021. Other ‘national consultation’ sessions will be held shortly in Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania and Russia.

Each of the main sessions presented a number of topics, which provoked active participation in the live voting, the results of which can be found in the presentation [here](#).

For interested stakeholders, who couldn't join the webinar or simply like to give additional feedback. a tailor-made [Survey in English](#) is available online to gather opinions after the event.

Annex I: Participating Organisations

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine	Агентство местного развития Коблевской ОТГ
Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine	National Ecological Center of Ukraine
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine	Kherson State Maritime Academy
Ministry for Development of Economy, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine	NGO Ecoaction
National Academy of sciences of Ukraine, SSI MorGeoEcoCenter	NGO Ukraine's fishing industry cluster of innovation
Управління екології та природних ресурсів Миколаївської ОДА	АБ "УКРГАЗБАНК"
Департамент екології та природних ресурсів ОДА	GFCM
Institute of marine biology of the NAS of Ukraine	UNDP
Каховський районний осередок БЕЛ	NGO Agricola
Odessa National Polytechnic University	State Scientific Institution "Center for Problems of Marine Geology, Geocology and Sedimentary Ore Formation of the National Academy of Sciences
Odessa State Environmental University	Odessa National I.I. Mechnikov University
Bilhorod-Dnistrovsky City Council	Ассоциация Портовое сообщество
The State Agency of Fisheries of Ukraine	Admiral Makarov National University of Shipbuilding
ДП "Адміністрація морських портів України"	Common Maritime Agenda National Hub of Ukraine
National Antarctic research center of Ukraine	Daynewspaper
HYDROGEN SYSTEM ENGINEERING LLC	Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)