CMA Regional Stakeholders Conference

#BlackSeaAgenda2021

22 November 2021

Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea
2021 Turkish Coordination

Regional Stakeholders Conference
Towards CMA projects for a resilient and sustainable blue economy in the Black Sea

Hackathon Goal 1

PROJECT CONCEPT 1A

Establish a network between existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

OBJECTIVE

Strengthen the **cooperation and further empowerment of MPAs,** as an essential tool for protecting ecosystems while allowing for sustainable development in the Black Sea.

RATIONALE

The Black Sea and its coastal and marine ecosystems are at risk.[1] As such, adequate environmental protection measures, including for rivers flowing into the Black Sea, must be enacted to improve the resilience of the Black Sea's ecosystem. According to the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre[2], numerous protected areas have been designated along the Black Sea coast. These vary in size from tiny scientific reserves (1 ha) to the Zernov's Phyllophora Field in the northwest shelf of Ukraine (402,500 ha). Some 1.1 million ha of coastal/marine protected areas have been designated by Black Sea countries, but the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve represents roughly half of this amount.

Even if there is an increasing number of protected areas, most of them are in coastal zones. Therefore, the low level of marine environmental protection and the lack of a consistent network of protected areas often leads to unrecoverable damage to the fragile heritage of Black Sea ecosystems.

MPAs provide an essential boost to the **protection of local heritage areas across the sea basin, while actively supporting fully sustainable economic activities**. That said, to be fully effective their status and capacity across the Black Sea should be further supported.

MAIN TASKS

In accordance with the Black Sea Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation Protocol to the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution3:

- Build on previous projects (e.g., COCONET-MPAs) activities and ongoing initiatives (i.e. EMODNET[4]) to strengthen and expand MPA cooperation – including through the set-up of a dedicated network;
- Carry out management effectiveness appraisals for all designated sites and support MPA capacity building through twinning and exchange visits – including with other sea basins;
- Establishment of a digital platform for joint promotion and interaction within blue economy sectors (e.g., tourism);
- Support ecological and natural heritage 'eco-tourism' routes among the Black Sea Marine Protected Areas considering integrated coastal zone management.
- Design and establish further MPAs in the region, including coverage of NATURA 2000 birds and habitats protection objectives.

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[1] http://www.blacksea-commission.org/_environment.asp
[2] World Protected Areas Data Base, 2018
[3] http://www.blacksea-commission.org/_convention-protocols-biodiversity.asp
[4] https://emodnet.ec.europa.eu/en/checkpoint/black-sea/challenges/marine-protected-areas

PROJECT CONCEPT 1B

Foster digitalisation and maritime high-tech devices for water/air/environment quality and safety monitoring issues

OBJECTIVE
Deployment of IT devices and drone technologies as a tool to **monitor Black Sea pollution hotspots** through the evolution of the Citizen Science Network.

RATIONALE
The Black Sea is one of the most vulnerable regional seas given its limited exchange of water with open oceans and its proximity to a large area of continental Europe from which it receives drainage[5].

As a prerequisite for efficient protection actions, **the monitoring of the environment and of impacts is essential in order to target efforts, define restrictions on activities that are the most harmful to the marine environment and raise awareness among local communities**. Actions have already been launched, such implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) in Bulgaria and Romania. Similarly, the EMBLAS project supports Georgia, Ukraine and the Russian Federation, to improve Black Sea protection by enhancing the countries' capacity to perform marine environmental monitoring. At global, regional and national level, efforts are increasingly being made to address marine litter. However, aa **wider range of sources of pollution (e.g., eutrophication, waste management, river disposal) must be tackled.**

MAIN TASKS
- In accordance with the Black Sea Marine Litter Regional Action Plan[6], **build on the success of regional projects** (e.g., MARLITER, ANEMONE, EMBLAS and LitOUTer) that have started to develop networks of citizens, organisations, and local authorities across the Black Sea interested in monitoring and solving the marine litter issue;
- **Expand the database with other sources of pollution,** as a way to support concrete actions to ensure the sustainable development of the blue economy across the Black Sea – and to allow for (a) cost-effectiveness, (b) prioritisation and (c) fine-tuning of policy activities by local authorities;
- The collected data will serve as an outreach tool to **create awareness around growing concerns** on overall marine pollution and to identify pathways for sound policy responses.

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[5] EMBLAS site
[6] Black Sea Marine Litter Regional Action Plan (2018)