



Report on the Georgian National Workshop on Blue Growth in the Black Sea Tbilisi, Radisson Blu Hotel, 11/05/2018

1. Overview of the National Workshop on Blue Growth in the Black Sea

The workshop was organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) and the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia- Maritime Transport Agency and it was held at the premises of the Radisson Blu Hotel in Tbilisi. Its duration exceeded the arranged time by more than an hour, since the participation of the attendees was very active and the discussions very lively, not only during the working group, but also during the plenary sessions. The agenda of the workshop is attached to the report.

2. List of points discussed

2.1. Introduction and Plenary Opening Session

Mr. Lasha Inauri, Head of the European Integration Department of MEPA, moderated the workshop. After introducing the topic and welcoming the participants, Mr. Inauri gave the floor to Mr. Nodar Kereselidze, first deputy Minister of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture. Mr. Kereselidze thanked the Facility for its work, which he considers of high importance, and asked for the Facility's help in order for Georgia to formulate its maritime policies.

Ms. Tamar Ioseliani, Director of the Maritime Transport Agency of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, then took the floor. Ms. Ioseliani highlighted the importance that Georgia places on formulating a sustainable Blue Growth policy and encouraged all attendees to participate actively in the workshop.

Mr. Riëks Bosch, the Facility's Project Manager, explained the aims of the workshop; to set Georgia's priorities on Blue Growth and to revise the SWOT analysis on the country. He also explained the process of work of the Facility, in that if three countries have matching priorities, these priorities will be supported by the Facility and, as far as possible, by DG MARE. He also mentioned the upcoming ministerial meeting in Burgas, where all the BS countries are expected to sign the Blue Growth Declaration.

2.2. Blue Growth Session

2.2.1. Financing and funding mechanisms presentation and discussion

During this session, Mr. Matteo Bocci, the Facility's Maritime Policy/Blue Economy expert, presented the funding and financing mechanisms identified by the Facility,





explaining the differences between them. The discussion that followed focused on the topics of fisheries, tourism, harbors, as well as on environmental issues.

2.2.2. Integrated Maritime Policy illustrated by concrete examples presentation and discussion

In this session, Mr. Bocci explained what the Integrated Maritime Policy is through concrete examples. The issues discussed covered research and education, coastal tourism on the local level, the creation of the first deep-sea container port in Georgia, the Integrated Coastal Zone Management initiative in the country that has unfortunately stopped and the problem regarding monitoring, given that the majority of the data are outdated, dating back to the Soviet era.

2.2.3. Initial Blue Growth Assessment presentation and discussion

After the conclusion of the first round of discussions with the audience, Mr. Bocci went on to present the Blue Growth preliminary assessment on Georgia. Mr. Bosch mentioned briefly the priorities identified during the workshops of the other countries, so that correlations could be found. The discussion that followed covered the topics of remote sensing aquaculture, pollution, agro-tourism and Maritime Spatial Planning. The importance of Research and Education for innovation was highlighted, as well as the lack of platforms to meet with business. The participants emphasized that initiatives should be taken to support the private sector in order to carry out projects. Marine monitoring would be particularly useful in order for maritime resources to be developed. The available marine data are too weak and not related to standards and policy. Earth observation could be a solution to solve budget restrictions.

3. Working group

During the working group, all the participants sat in a circular formation and collectively worked on the country assessment, providing and updating the information to identify Georgia's priorities on Blue Economy at national level but also at Black Sea level. The participants firstly brainstormed, identifying various priorities and then voted on them, so as to get down to four main ones. Each of the four main priorities contains several sub-priorities, but dealing with them in groups facilitates their processing. The importance of combined marine and coastal policy development, the need for stakeholder involvement and the need to support local companies to access funding were strongly highlighted. The results of the working group, i.e. the priorities, are presented in section 3.

3.1 Outcomes

3.1.1. Maritime and coastal governance





- Blue Economy (inter-ministerial) coordination/governance (commission), including marine and coastal aspects (in the framework of climate change and sustainable development) – share experiences, technical support;
- Coordination amongst Focal Points - cross-sectoral coordination;
- Awareness and dialogue - with Blue Economy stakeholders including Local/Regional Authorities, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Education and research bodies, etc.

3.1.2. Maritime and coastal policies

- Environmental monitoring support – support capacity for in-depth ecosystem analysis including sea shore bank erosion monitoring, automated sea meteorological stations and early warning system for storm surges and related laboratory equipment;
- MSP support - fostering environmental sustainability and joint work with local port administrations;
- MPA experiences – Georgian/Turkish joint project to establish mutual MPAs that foster sustainable behaviour;
- To assist the relevant bodies in establishing the fishing gear factory, to develop well managed fish markets, to develop environmentally sound cage culture in the Black Sea.

3.1.3. Blue Economy

- Sustainable cruising – support in fostering sustainable models on small cruises/yachting and greater cooperation with private sector and bodies in the region (e.g. Turkey);
- Coastal tourism, agriculture, fisheries, nature and cultural heritage – coordination and joint strategies/activities (build on agro-tourism) and cross-sectoral quality labels;
- Mariculture potentials – technical support (licence holders, GPRS/nets), scientific knowledge for development in coordination with research/innovation and business operators (higher end and added value); monitoring capacity and remote sensing;
- Micro-level infrastructures and inter-modal transport connectivity – sustainable infrastructures, inland, etc.

3.1.4. Human capital

- Research project financing capacity/competitiveness - How to raise capacity to access project support;
- Education, research and innovation – Masters and doctoral papers (identify areas of specialisation – engineering/business) and in general development of professional education programs for commercial fishing specialists in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia;





- Involve SMEs and foster dialogue with education/training bodies in marine/maritime areas – how/where;
- Empower women in blue growth - awareness raising campaigns/exchanges.

4. Conclusion and next steps

After a very fruitful discussion, the Facility members thanked the participants for their contributions and informed them that they would proceed with amending the country assessment based on the information collected during the workshop. After that, the assessment will be sent back to the focal points for validation and then it will be made public. The participants agreed that during the next workshop the aim will be to identify particular projects for implementation, based on the priorities that will be set after the current workshop. Blue Growth development policies should also be framed in other national mainstream policies including the Georgian strategies to address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Climate Change (CC). In this respect, the funding mechanisms available at national and regional levels to address these mainstream policies (e.g. SDGs and CC) could in fact also be available to support sustainable Blue Growth in the country.

As a final remark, the Director of the Maritime Transport Agency of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development asked the Facility to support the Georgia International Maritime Forum on 12-14 September, 2018 with the widest participation of maritime businesses and investors in the region. Especially the support of a side-event on Small Cruise development as an example of Blue Growth would be appreciated.

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