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

Monday 22 November 2021

European Commission

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Overview

The 2021 Turkish coordination of the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) for the Black Sea is pleased to welcome you to this year's CMA Regional Stakeholders Conference.

The purpose of this event is to take stock of advancements in the implementation of the CMA across the Black Sea. It fosters discussions with regional stakeholders in areas for further action and concrete ways forward to ensure synergies across the various initiatives ongoing across the region.
This year's CMA Stakeholders Conference builds upon the results of the previous edition of the conference in 2020 as well as further regional events held throughout 2021. It also capitalises on the many actions promoted by the CMA and other partner initiatives in the Black Sea region.

The conference will outline the state of play for CMA implementation. This exercise will also cover the contributions of relevant regional initiatives (e.g., the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, Black Sea CONNECT, the Blueing the Black Sea initiative, etc.) and promote the exchange of experiences with other sea basin strategies.

The hackathons for project ideas are another key element of this event. Black Sea stakeholders will be invited to discuss project concepts that have already emerged across the CMA's goals and priorities, in order to stimulate their further development.

The conference will therefore be instrumental in the identification of concrete actions that support a resilient and sustainable blue economy in the region.
The outcomes of the conference will provide valuable bottom-up inputs to CMA implementation for the year 2022 and beyond.

Conference registration link

Social Media

Interact on **social media** with the Black Sea CMA community using the hashtag
#BlackSeaAgenda2021 on Twitter and LinkedIn

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Agenda

13.30 – 14.00	Registration to the online platform
14.00 – 14.10	Welcome and opening remarks
14.10 – 14.40	**Plenary session 1**: Taking stock of achievements and looking ahead, towards projects supporting the sustainable blue economy in the Black Sea
14.40 – 15.00	**Plenary session 2**: Cross-fertilisation across sea basins
15.00 – 15.10	Introduction to project hackathon parallel sessions
15.10 – 15.15	Technical break (shift to parallel session rooms)
15.15 – 16.10	**Project hackathon** - three **parallel sessions**

- CMA Goal 1: **healthy marine and coastal ecosystems**
- CMA Goal 2: **competitive, innovative and sustainable blue economy**
- CMA Goal 3: **sustainable investment** in the Black Sea blue economy

16.10 – 16.20	Break
16.20 – 17.00	**Plenary session 3**: Financing project opportunities for CMA implementation
17.00 – 17.15	**Plenary session 4**: Wrap-up of the project hackathon sessions
17.15 – 17.30	**Conclusions and next steps**

Sessions

Plenary Session 1 - Taking stock of achievements and looking ahead, toward projects supporting the sustainable blue economy in the Black Sea

The **Black Sea blue economy is largely dependent on established maritime sectors** such as transport, shipbuilding, fisheries and aquaculture and coastal-maritime tourism. Together, these sectors make a substantial contribution to the region's overall gross value added (GVA) and blue economy employability. While they continue to grow, emerging sectors such as blue-biotech, and to some extent renewable maritime energy, also offer notable opportunities for greater diversification in local value-chains.

While the recovery from COVID-19 pandemic, encompassing resilience to this and future shocks, as well as competitiveness on the global market must be fully developed, sustainability is and will remain the central challenge for these sectors**.** Pressures on Black Sea marine and coastal ecosystems over the past 50 years have already made the sea basin extremely vulnerable to anthropogenic impacts. Marine resources have been severely affected by over-fishing, unplanned development of coastal zones, intense maritime traffic and land-based pollution, as well as the effects of climate change.

As highlighted by the European Commission's latest communication on **'A new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU'**[1] the blue economy can help achieve this dual challenge If put on a more sustainable path, it will become an invaluable source of action and ideas creating innovation, spurring a fast and lasting recovery and protecting marine resources.

Under the broader framework of the **Black Sea Synergy**, the **Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea** (CMA)[2] and its scientific pillar, the **Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda** (SRIA)[3], represent unique regional cooperation frameworks to support Black Sea counties to jointly promote a sustainable and resilient blue economy.

Innovation and digital transformation are essential enablers for developing and reinforcing this pathway.

In this context, cooperation with relevant organisations and bodies active in the region is pivotal. Such organisations demonstrate strong commitment to the goals and priorities of the CMA and fully support its implementation process. Among them are the Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC PERMIS), the Permanent Secretariat of the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution, the Secretariat of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (GFCM) and the Secretariat of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR). International Financing Institutions complete this list, for example the World Bank through its Blueing the Black Sea Programme.

The CMA was officially launched on 17 February 2020 in Sofia, as Bulgaria was the first country to take up the mantle of yearly coordination. Despite the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the CMA SG has met seven times thus far to steer CMA implementation.

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[1] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2021:240:FIN
[2] https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/press/black-sea-ministers-endorse-common-maritime-agenda_en
[3] https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/launch-european-black-sea-strategic-research-and-innovation-agenda-2019-may-08_en

Due the global socioeconomic crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic, as 2020 CMA coordinator Bulgaria steered the CMA SG to push ahead in finding ways to support Black Sea blue economy sectors (i.e., maritime transport, coastal tourism, fisheries and aquaculture). In this respect, digitalisation and development of circular economy were promoted as assets to be considered for sectors' resilience and sustainability. Bulgaria worked on raising awareness among Black Sea stakeholders on blue economy opportunities with the CMA as a regional policy framework for the post-COVID recovery during dedicated events in particular the first regional CMA stakeholders conference in December 2020. Furthermore in 2020 to develop areas of cooperation between CMA countries, Bulgaria proposed a regional feasibility study on the monitoring and management of maritime traffic which is to be launched in 2022. In its role as CMA coordinator, Turkey selected environment, maritime transport, tourism as priorities for 2021. Under each of the priority sector and in order to address crosscutting issues, the work was focused on "underwater heritage protection & tourism", "green maritime transport" and "blue entrepreneurship and SMEs" with a focus on the development of research and innovation and the resilience of the Black Sea blue economy. Therefore, Turkey has organised a series of virtual events to promote the CMA and the SRIA and thus engage stakeholders in the elaboration of projects related to the topics. In parallel, national CMA events have been organised, developing synergies with ongoing projects and initiatives in the Black Sea. They helped in identifying project ideas to support CMA implementation. This regional CMA stakeholder conference will take stock of all the work done so far to pave the work for 2022 under Georgia coordination.

Moderated by the European External Action Service (EEAS), this initial panel discussion sets the scene for the regional conference by offering an overview of some of the main achievements and actions promoted in support of a sustainable blue economy across the Black Sea region. It also discusses the main challenges, opportunities and lessons learned from the actions undertaken thus far, while presenting the outlook for further promoting valuable regional projects and fostering additional regional synergies.

As part of this session, regional speakers will answer the following questions:

1. *What are the key challenges and opportunities for a resilient and sustainable blue economy in the Black Sea? How can regional cooperation be further supported, concretely driving policies and projects?*

2. *Which are the key achievements so far and future perspectives in the Black Sea, particularly in terms of research and innovation supporting the transformation process toward a sustainable blue economy and digital transition?*

3. *Continuing along the lines of developing policies and projects that support a resilient and sustainable blue economy in the Black Sea, how can the dynamics between regional and local levels be further promoted? What has been the role of regional organisations as CPMR so far and what are the possible future perspectives for strengthening this process?*

4. *As 2021 coordination of the Common Maritime Agenda, Turkey developed an ambitious programme and has achieved concrete results, bringing forward the main outcomes of the 2020 Bulgarian coordination of the CMA. This despite the difficulties of having only online meetings and events.*

   What are your takeaways from leading the implementation of the CMA and how can the priorities that Turkey has promoted during 2021 be further developed in the years to come? (environmental protection, research and innovation. coastal and maritime tourism and maritime transport)

Plenary Session 2 - Cross-fertilisation across sea basins

Coastal regions and islands are key players in the blue economy. Those that share the same sea basin identify a clear added value in addressing common challenges and opportunities while protecting coastal and marine ecosystems through regional cooperation. The EU supports this approach through the development of sea basin strategies that also involve neighbouring countries in the process of tapping into growth opportunities offered by the development of a sustainable and resilient blue economy, as highlighted by the European Commission's latest communication on **'A new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU'**[4]

In more concrete terms, **the three sea basin strategies supported by the EU have proven effective** in bringing together a broad range of stakeholders (national governments, coastal regions, cities, research institutes, education networks and businesses) and in channelling work on national policies and projects as well as regional strategic projects and actions to implement jointly identified goals and priorities.

With different stages of implementation as well as challenges and opportunities specific to the geopolitical, socio-economic and environmental context, the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea, the Atlantic Action Plan[5] and the Western Mediterranean Maritime Strategy[6] share the same type of implementation process and governance as well as the same challenges in terms of projects identification, funding alignment and investments.

The Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea is the most recent EU sea basin strategies. While this panel, moderated by DG MARE, is an opportunity for the CMA stakeholders to feed the implementation process with lessons learned and best practices from the more 'experienced' sea basin strategies, it is also the first time the three sea basin strategies have the opportunity to share their views in the same panel, promoting dialogue and cross-fertilisation among the sea basins.

During this session, international speakers will discuss the following questions:

1.   How have the Western Mediterranean Maritime Strategy and the Atlantic Action Plan engaged stakeholders in the identification and development sustainable blue economy projects, supporting your respective sea basin strategy?

Which lessons and best practices can you share, both in terms of future development and the identification of funds and investments?

2.   As CMA 2022 coordinator, how do you perceive the shared experiences from the other sea basin strategies, taking into account the current dynamics and well as the challenges and opportunities of implementing the CMA?

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[4] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2021:240:FIN
[5]   http://www.atlanticstrategy.eu/en
[6] https://www.westmed-initiative.eu/

| | Hackathon Goal 1.

Healthy marine and coastal ecosystems | |

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.[7] 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[8], 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 Pollution9:

- Build on previous projects (e.g., COCONET-MPAs) activities and ongoing initiatives (i.e. EMODNET[10]) 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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[7] http://www.blacksea-commission.org/_environment.asp
[8] World Protected Areas Data Base, 2018
[9] http://www.blacksea-commission.org/_convention-protocols-biodiversity.asp
[10] 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[11].

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[12], **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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[11] EMBLAS site
[12] Black Sea Marine Litter Regional Action Plan (2018)

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Hackathon Goal 2.

Competitive, innovative and sustainable blue economy

PROJECT CONCEPT 2A

Set-up a network to boost local green/smart ports through coordinated pilot initiatives

OBJECTIVE

Set-up a **network to boost local green and smart ports** for the implementation of energy-efficiency policies and measures and to improve the regional uptake of low-carbon technologies and operations. This will also take into account feasibility studies in this area to develop and apply the concept of smart and green sea traffic management more broadly.

RATIONALE

The Black Sea basin is a major transport area with a total of 18 major ports. The area enjoys good port infrastructure and connections exist between several Black Sea countries (ferries, maritime transport, etc). To address the economic opportunities related to the increase in maritime (including river) connectivity within the Black Sea, the existing status of the marine and coastal environment in the Black Sea must be considered. Efforts are needed to tackle pollution from ships but also in ports. Efforts are requested with the upgrade of port standards but also with multilateral sharing of maritime surveillance data. Importantly, several actions to sustain the adoption of international standards are already ongoing.

For example, the EU funded Black and Caspian Sea project provides training in several areas: (i) on IMO Port State Control Procedures for non MoU on Port State Control countries; (ii) for full endorsement of the responsibility of Vessel Traffic Services staff in accordance with the guidelines set out in IALA (International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities) Recommendation V-103/1; (iii) for promulgation, establishment of legislation, and implementation of national procedures enabling Black Sea countries to effectively perform their obligations, and to exercise an effective Flag State jurisdiction in accordance with relevant instruments. These **activities should be further supported to achieve a sufficient level of capabilities across the Black Sea** to boost green port facilities and international environmental standards. There is a strong need to explore pathways for **ports to become energy hubs in the transition to sustainable and renewable energy** in the Black Sea, considering that greening the sector will be supported by both policies and funding in the following years. Beyond transhipment and logistics the future of ports lies in developing their key role as energy hubs (for integrated electricity, hydrogen and other renewable and low-carbon fuels systems), for the circular economy (for collecting, transhipping and disposing of waste from ships and other port industries, and for decommissioning ships), for communication (for submarine cables), and for industry (as industrial clusters).

MAIN TASKS

- Work with maritime administrations, port authorities and other relevant public and private stakeholders to **facilitate the uptake of low-carbon technologies and operations** through pilot projects;
- **Identify local barriers and bottlenecks** to improving technologies and fostering alternative sources of energy, towards fully sustainable energy/fuel sources;

- Support the **acceleration of innovative business models, SMEs and administrative practices** (e.g., innovative procurement to support local innovation);
- Duly **consider and reflect upon the feasibility study on Sea Traffic Monitoring**, currently under discussion in the Black Sea[13].

PROJECT CONCEPT 2B

Support local strategies for sustainable tourism in coastal and maritime areas including through greater use of digital tools

OBJECTIVE
Support a greater **uptake of innovative and sustainable services**, including through robust generation and access to data and a better understanding of the role to be played by big data.

RATIONALE
The Black Sea is an increasingly attractive tourist destination. A clearer assessment of market potentials, and current patterns of visits and tourist preferences at the regional level is essential for effective marketing activities. And yet, such assessment is not possible at the time being due to a highly fragmented range of data across providers and countries and a limited use of new technologies to overcome such barriers. In this respect, greater adoption of ICTs, social media and other high-end technological innovation would be beneficial not only to boost new services, marketing approaches and access to global niches of visitors, but also to allow a better understanding of market trends and future opportunities[14] and foster tailor-made marketing approaches

Digitalisation and data analytics offer a huge opportunity to innovate and transform the sector but **remains largely unexplored.**

MAIN TASKS
- **Assess the many good practices available across the Black Sea** region and try to extract some general insights and recommendations for a full upscaling of digitalisation opportunities;
- Address **bottlenecks for a full uptake of sustainable tourism development** in a selected number of pilot areas;
- Foster **alternative tourism experiences including** the discovery and promotion of **underwater cultural heritage,** through interactive maps and big data (e.g., multidisciplinary underwater archaeology exploration as a source for on and off-line experiences).

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[13] To be launched in 2022 by European Maritime Security Agency (EMSA)
[14] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/295594839_ENVIRONMENTAL_SUSTAINABLE_TOURISM _WITHIN_THE_BLACK_SEA_REGION

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Hackathon Goal 3.

Sustainable investment in the blue economy

PROJECT CONCEPT 3A

Encouraging business hubs, business labs and accelerators for a sustainable and innovative blue economy across the Black Sea

OBJECTIVE
Boost innovation and the uptake of state-of-the-art technologies and business models, for businesses and other blue economy operators across the Black Sea.

RATIONALE
The Black Sea blue economy has significant potential for development focused on local value and job creation. However, the region currently remains highly dependent on traditional and existing sectors. These sectors require modernization, while emerging sectors should be further supported.
Added value can be created by the adaptation of business models in mature sectors as well as further investment in innovation, technologies and the provision of services. This will generate greater income and high-quality jobs at local level within the Black Sea. Moreover, support for marine and maritime research and innovation can create synergies and increase economic benefit. In order to fully seize the opportunities and contribute to growth and jobs, the projects and initiatives should include the private sector, SMEs and start-ups.

MAIN TASKS
- Promotion of 'maritime business networks' **and business ecosystem support** in the Black Sea at national and regional level;
- Support blue economy businesses to **identify and upscale innovative practices**;
- **Facilitate access to finance** to support 'business-model innovation';
- Dissemination of innovation potential for **greater awareness among businesses and society**.

PROJECT CONCEPT 3B

Supporting existing maritime clusters, or newly created innovation clusters, to improve regional cooperation

OBJECTIVE
Support the **creation of sectoral clusters and further development of existing ones** as an essential tool to foster sustainable blue economy innovation and business support.

RATIONALE
Added value in the blue economy can be created by supporting businesses, especially SMEs, through the formation of networks/clusters; enhancing connections between research and market communities to support innovation and knowledge transfer or to stimulate synergies

between them. Such initiatives eventually boost business ideas and projects with high returns on investments across the region, thus further attracting private investors.

Maritime clusters are increasingly important **tools to support sustainable innovation, capacity building and access to finance for blue economy** stakeholders - their role should be strengthened to further contribute to growth and jobs.

MAIN TASKS
- **Map and screen the most relevant embryonic and emerging clusters** in the Black Sea – both in the maritime field as well as in other sectors with a high potential for emerging blue economy activities;
- Identify areas of gaps and possibilities for the **set-up of innovative maritime clusters (emerging topics, critical value-chains, etc.)** and synergies needed to make those a reality;
- Provide an **overall platform for clusters** (maritime and non-maritime) to exchange views, discuss innovation possibilities and foster networking in the region – including for access to investments.
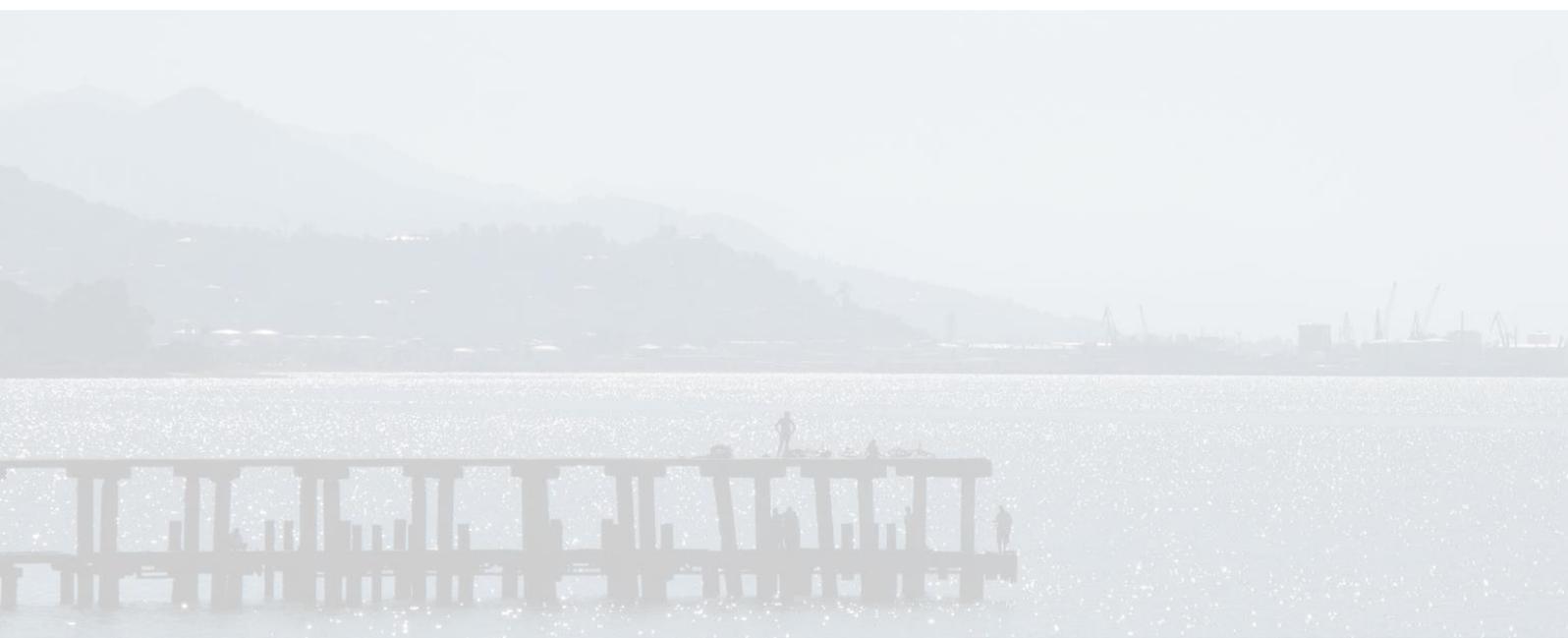
Plenary Session 3 - Financing project opportunities for CMA implementation

A sound implementation of the Common Maritime Agenda relies on the alignment of different funds and investment opportunities at EU, national and international level. Although a wide range of resources, both public and private, have already been mobilised to support the region's blue economy, further actions are needed to strengthen and operationalise synergies.

A number of development banks conduct considerable operations across the Black Sea. In addition to the main Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) that provide loans for blue economy sectors, e.g., the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank[15], the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank notably operates under the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and is able to invest in sustainable blue economy projects at national and regional level.

In 2021, significant efforts have been carried out to liaise and engage with these regional and international donors during and between dedicated regional CMA events[16] organised under the CMA Turkish coordination. International and regional donors active in the region are now well aware of the regional cooperation framework the CMA provides to foster sustainable growth opportunities in blue economy sectors of the Black Sea and have started looking into synergies to optimise efforts.

In parallel, several opportunities to support a sustainable blue economy in the Black Sea region exist within the framework of the EU's 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework.

Such opportunities include:
- numerous programmes for EU member states financed under the Cohesion Policy;
- the Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) for regional and national programmes;
- Horizon Europe, which is also open to associated countries;
- the Cross Border Cooperation Programme INTERREG NEXT Black Sea 2021-2027. (This programme will be a key enabler to support the implementation of CMA via regional projects and under its priorities supporting "Blue and smart region" and "Green and Clean Region".)

Last but not least, on 28 September 2021 the European Commission launched a call under the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)[17] for proposals to support the blue economy entrepreneurship environment by financing pilot actions that bring together blue economy stakeholders from the EU and non-EU CMA countries. The EMFAF also finances DG MARE initiatives such as BlueInvest that contribute to the improvement of the investment climate and/or build capacity among intermediary organisations and clusters.

Building on the main outcomes of the previous session and on the progress made to date in engaging with financial actors and programmes, panellists will discuss challenges and opportunities related to financing project ideas in the framework of CMA implementation.

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[15] Blueing the Black Sea - presentation
[16] CMA event 25 May 2021, CMA event 4 October 2021, CMA Green Maritime Transport event 11 November 2021
[17] Call for proposals - EMFAF-2021-PIA-FLAGSHIP

Moderated by DG NEAR, speakers will discuss the following questions:

1. *What are the key challenges and possible ways forward to foster blue investment across the Black Sea?*

2. *How can project ideas supporting the CMA be easily shifted into bankable projects?*

3. *What are banks' expectations regarding funding candidates?*

5. *Which areas the INTERREG NEXT Black Sea 2021-2027 will target that can support the development of sustainable blue economy projects in the Black Sea?*
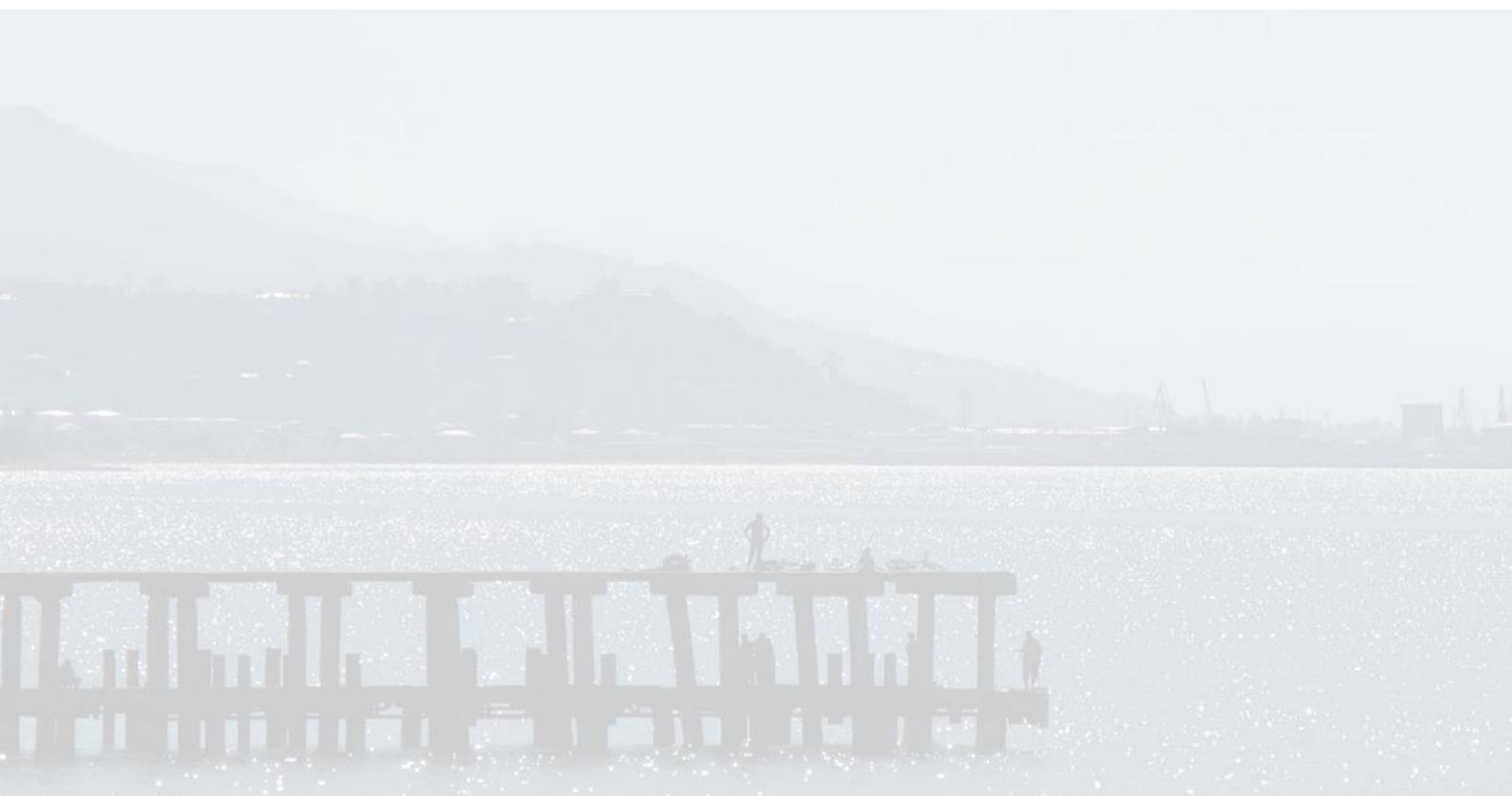
For any additional information and details

➢ **Contact** the Black Sea Assistance Mechanism**: news@blackseablueeconomy.eu**

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