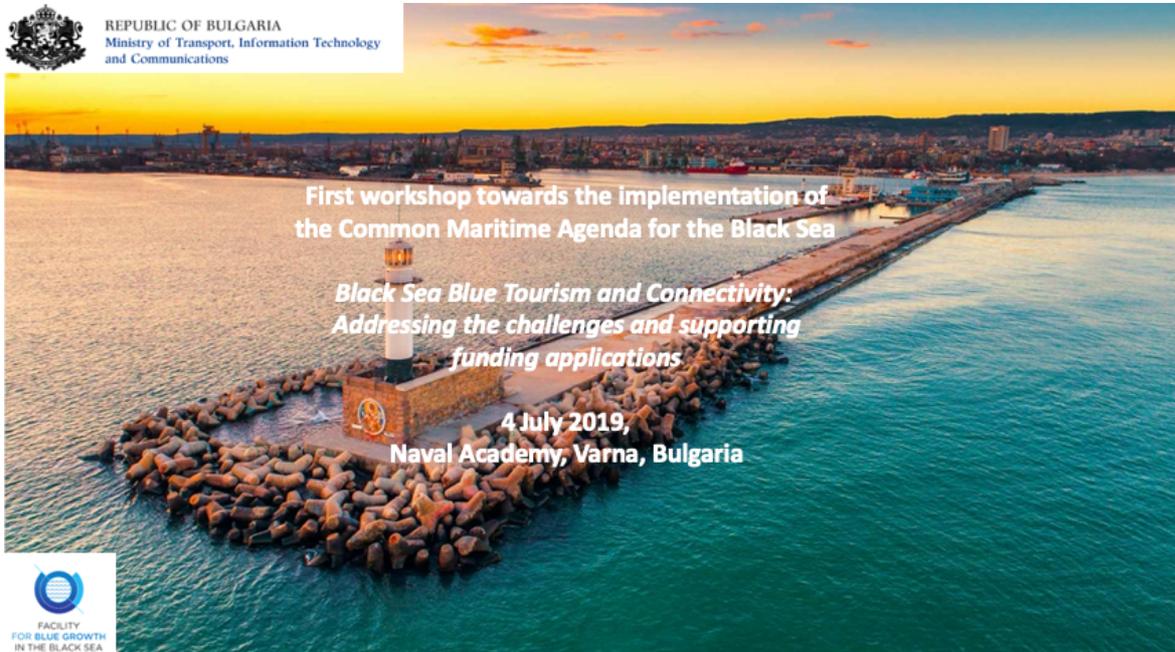




REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
Ministry of Transport, Information Technology
and Communications



Facility for Blue Growth in the Black Sea

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**First workshop towards the implementation of the Common
Maritime Agenda**

4 July, 2019, Varna, Bulgaria

Event Report



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Contents

- 1. Introduction.....4
- 2. Objectives of the cooperation workshop and expected outcomes4
- 3. Structure of the cooperation workshop5
- 4. Cooperation workshop outcomes5
- 5. Conclusions/Recommendations6

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1. Introduction

This report presents the main features and outcomes of the First cooperation workshop towards the implementation of the Common Maritime Agenda that was held at the Naval Academy premises in Varna, Bulgaria on July 4th, 2019.

The workshop's theme was "Black Sea Coastal Maritime Tourism and Connectivity: Addressing the challenges and supporting funding applications".

The present report includes the following annexes:

1. The agenda (Annex 1)
2. The concept note for the workshop (Annex 2)
3. The list of Conference attendees (Annex 3).

2. Objectives of the cooperation workshop and expected outcomes

The purpose of this workshop was to exchange on potential areas of interest for cooperation and identify project ideas at regional level between Black Sea stakeholders in line with the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea¹, and the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, which were endorsed by Black Sea countries in May 2019.

This meeting aimed also to capitalize on the achievements of the regional workshop held in Istanbul on March 19th, which identified a series of projects to be developed in the sectors of coastal and maritime tourism as well as maritime connectivity while encouraging participants to propose other ideas of cooperation in the identified sectors.

The ultimate objective of the workshop was to identify a series of pre-projects and specify, to the extend feasible, the main objectives, the national and regional partner organizations to be involved, as well as existing and potential funding/financing mechanisms through which they could be supported.

In accordance with the funding opportunities' calendar and the expected date for the workshop, it was decided to elaborate and discuss the COSME funding program, and especially the open call of [COS-ENTRECOMP-2018-3-01](https://blackseablueconomy.eu/library/key-documents) which aims at supporting the **implementation of the Entrepreneurship Competence Framework**. The overall goal of this call for proposal is to turn "EntreComp" into specific actions that will bring value to the user communities at local, regional national level. This initiative aims to get together relevant players in several countries to create a collaborative community that will explore how the framework can function as a catalyst and a tool to foster the entrepreneurial skills of young people and citizens in general. Regarding the objectives of the call and the workshop topics, project activities identification was focused on (i) setting the foundation for future actions, establishing *cross-sectoral collaborative communities* to support the development and the assessment of entrepreneurial skills in maritime and coastal tourism or maritime connectivity in the Black Sea and (ii) designing a strategy with a concrete action plan for several actions, i.e. the design of new education and training curricula, the provision of support services for competence development for coastal and maritime tourism or maritime connectivity in the Black Sea.

¹<https://blackseablueconomy.eu/library/key-documents>

The **Erasmus Plus** programme was also explored. Even if the actual deadline for these submission goes beyond the Facility mandate (Call in October and Submission in February/May 2020), it was considered that its time-frame allows for more effective and successful initiatives for BS partners.

3. Structure of the cooperation workshop

The following format was chosen for this one day Workshop:

- **Welcome addresses** by the representative of the hosting organization, the Naval Academy.
- **Plenary opening Session**
 - presentation by MITTIC and the representative of the European Commission addressing the state of play for blue economy in the Black Sea, the design process and endorsement of the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea,
 - Presentation of the Burgas Free University on the state of play regarding the Research and Innovation Agenda for the Black Sea;
 - Presentation of CPMR as regards lessons learnt and experiences in project development in coastal and maritime tourism and maritime transport.
- **Plenary working group** was structured and moderated by the Facility experts on the basis of three components: (i) introduction of the objectives and expected outcomes of the day, (ii) summary of the regional seminar outcomes on Blue Growth with emphasis on coastal and maritime tourism and connectivity, (iii) presentation of targeted funding opportunities COSME and ERASMUS+.
- **Project identification** was initiated with open discussion in plenary and based on a screening form, circulated along with the invitations and aimed to focus project ideas in identified fields taking into account the possibilities and criteria offered by COSME and ERASMUS+
- **Priority project ideas** were further developed in three sub-groups according to preferred interests among participants expressed by the end of the plenary working group.
- A **plenary wrap-up** of the three parallel working groups presenting **four potential cooperation projects** and next steps agreed among working group participants. The wrap-up session was also an opportunity to share point of view on project ideas.
- **Closing remarks** by the Naval Academy and the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications.

4. Cooperation workshop outcomes

At the end of the morning plenary session utilized to to identify project ideas, three groups of projects emerged that were further detailed in the parallel working groups held in the afternoon. Each group was invited to present the outcome of their exchanges using the same structure: (i) features of the project (outcomes, actions and roles), (ii) relevance of funding (how to use and when), (iii) next steps foreseen (leader, key participants, other partners to be involved - how/when?).

Project ideas discussed related to the following topics:

- a) **Boosting entrepreneurship for innovative sustainable blue tourism (COSME)**
- b) **Master on Governance and Management of the Black Sea Blue Economy**
- c) **Development of Motorways of the Sea (MOS) in the Black Sea**
- d) **Education and training platform for maritime connectivity**

5. Conclusions/Recommendations

In general, the Workshop achieved its expected results, i.e.:

- The overall process supported by the Facility for blue Growth in the Black Sea so far was explained and discussed with local and international practitioners, through the detailed presentation of Bulgarian and EU stakeholders involved in the process, so to explain the coordinated actions fostered by the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) and the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) promoted by the EU Commission for the Black Sea;
- Specific project ideas were identified and further detailed, so to agree on an overall work-plan for the next steps towards the identified financing opportunities, leadership and partnership roles, overall coordination for the submission of specific project proposals in line with the priorities of the Black Sea Common Maritime Agenda (CMA), as well as the project pipelines identified in the Istanbul Regional Workshop;
- Concrete action plans were discussed and agreed in order to bring the project ideas detailed to a successful end in line with the financing instruments being identified at short-term (COSME) and mid-term (Erasmus +, Connecting Europe Facility, etc.);
- Greater cooperation and exchanges amongst stakeholders has been ensured, by allowing for Black Sea practitioners who rarely work together in the past to share concrete needs, challenges and ideas for projects where they can work together;
- The follow-up activities by the Facility for Blue Growth in the Black Sea have been disseminated and discussed amongst local practitioners to increase their awareness, understanding and willingness to be further involved through the future cycle of support.

The organization of two similar events planned in Romania and Ukraine in September and October is an opportunity to strengthen and develop these first achievements in terms of project ideas and thus stimulate the initiated dynamics of operationalization of the Common Maritime Agenda.