

“Navigating Funding Opportunities in the Black Sea Blue Economy”

CMA Regional Thematic Event

Date: 8 May 2024

Location: Zoom

Type of event: Online

Table of Contents

1	Executive summary	3
2	Objectives, format, and achievements	4
2.1	Objectives	4
2.2	Format	4
3	Audience	4
	Annex 1: Agenda	7

1 Executive summary

The CMA regional event “**Navigating Funding Opportunities in the Black Sea Blue Economy**” was held online on 8 May 2024. The event was opened by the Moldovan Ministry of Environment (Black Sea Common Maritime Agenda Coordinator 2024), and by the European Commission (DG MARE). It was moderated by the Black Sea Assistance Mechanism coordinator. The Common Maritime Agenda 2024 coordinator introduced the objectives of the event and shared important information as regards the CMA next developments, such as the dates of the Black Sea Stakeholder Conference 2024, to be held 11-12 September 2024, in Chisinau, Moldova.

The event was divided into two sessions:

Session 1: Active EU funding opportunities in the Black Sea

From 9:30 till 10:30 CET, this session focused on the presentation of active EU funding opportunities. Different presentations were shown in the following order:

- **INTERREG NEXT Black Sea – second call for proposals currently open (deadline for applications 28 June 2024):** Presented by the Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme. Information was shared about the programme’s priorities, fields of action, the second call for proposals window, financial allocation, partnership composition, application packs, submission of the application form and dates of the information events. The Interreg NEXT Black Sea programme is the main fund for the implementation of the CMA.
- **EMFAF programme – an opportunity for Black Sea blue economy:** Presented by CINEA, it contained information about the different types of opportunities under the EMFAF, like the regional flagship calls under the three Sea Basin Strategies, the Maritime Spatial Planning flagship calls, calls to support the energy transition in fisheries and aquaculture sector, other ongoing EMFAF calls and tenders, and future EMFAF funding opportunities.
- **Black Sea SRIA - overview of other relevant EU funds:** This presentation done by DG RTD, which shared opportunities under HORIZON EUROPE, the EU Mission Restore our Oceans and Waters, and the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership.

Participants were able to ask questions using the Q&A section in Zoom.

Session 2: Building Partnership for Project Ideas

This session consisted of tailored sessions of 20 minutes dedicated to building partnerships and receiving guidance, providing a platform to refine and shape project ideas. Any group, formal or informal, belonging to one or more organisations was welcomed, whether they had an advanced concept or were in the initial phase of developing a project idea. Eight tailored sessions were held in parallel in two groups of four. Members of the Black Sea Assistance Mechanism, and National Hubs were present in each session sharing their expertise and advice to applicants for them to connect their ideas with the CMA goals and to link with interesting potential partners.

Due to confidentiality issues the project ideas discussed will not be presented. However, the general topics targeted biodiversity conservation and marine pollution reduction, carbon sequestration, sustainable tourism and maritime spatial planning.

Participants will benefit from a follow up with organisers who will share contacts or interesting links that might be useful for the eventual preparation of the project proposal.

Besides the 8 ideas discussed during the event in the bilateral sessions, the other 23 applications will be addressed and followed up on by the National Hubs, as part of their project support work.

2 Objectives, format, and achievements

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the event were the following:

- Objective 1: Raise awareness about funding opportunities under CMA and available support to regional stakeholders.
- Objective 2: Build on the CMA ambitions and support the implementation of previously generated project ideas in the Black Sea region.
- Objective 3: Ensure alignment of CMA main goals and priorities with relevant financing opportunities.

2.2 Format

The event was held 100% in online format, using Zoom platform for session 1, and Teams platform for session 2. To make the event more interactive, SLIDO tool was also used. This tool is an easy-to-use Q&A and polling platform for live, remote or hybrid meetings or events. The results of the SLIDO satisfaction survey are on the annexes' section of the report.

The registrations for this second session exceeded initial expectations. The maximum number of applicants that could be accommodated for this second session was 8. The rest of the applicants will have a follow up session during May-June, to also support their project ideas and partnership creation.

3 Audience

For session 1 of the event, a total of **138 participants registered** during the weeks prior to the event. A total of **80 participants assisted** on the day of the event.

The type of organisations that registered are shown in

TYPE OF STAKEHOLDERS	Total
NGOs	31
Private companies	29
Academia	24
Research organisations	19
National Authorities	16

Individuals	7
EU Networks	6
Local/regional policy decision-makers	2
International Organisations	2
Local/regional managers of financing tools/funding programmes	1
Regional networks	1
Total	138

Table 1 and prove a greater interest from NGOs, academia, private companies, research organisations and national authorities.

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TABLE 1. STAKEHOLDERS DISTRIBUTION

The highest number of participants are from Georgia, with a total of 17 registrants, followed by Romania with 13, Türkiye and Bulgaria with 12, Greece with 8, Ukraine with 6, and Moldova with 1 (Figure 1). This proves a fair distribution among the Black Sea countries and a clear interest from Greece that is also an eligible country for the INTERREG NEXT Black SEA program. Participants from Germany, Italy, Belgium, Spain, and Sweden also joined the event.

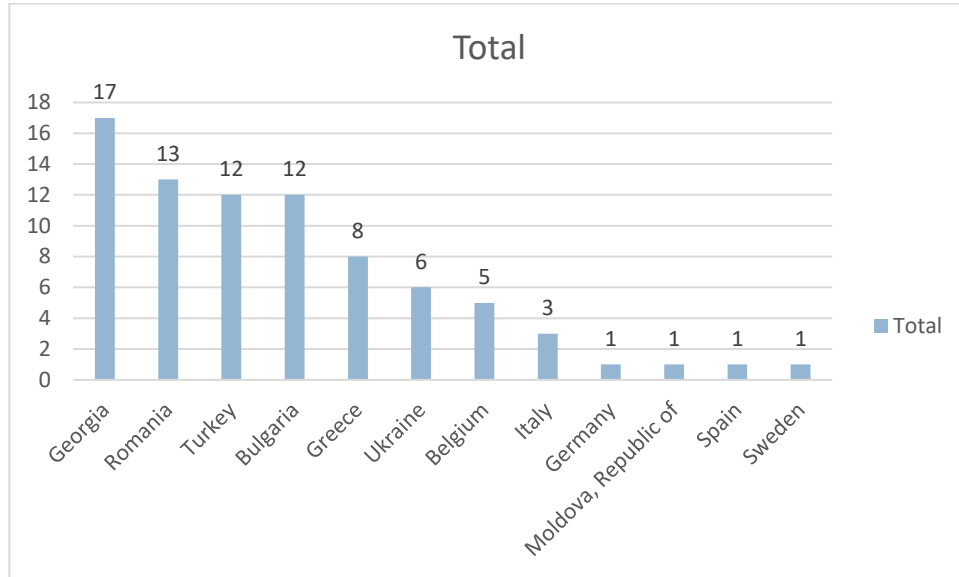


FIGURE 1. PARTICIPANTS DISTRIBUTION PER COUNTRY

Annex 1: Agenda

8 May 2024

9:10 – 9:30

Connecting of the participants and rules of the meeting

9:30 – 9:40

Opening of the meeting

*Grigore Stratulat, Moldovan Ministry of Environment, (Black Sea Common Maritime Agenda Coordinator 2024)
European Commission, DG MARE*

9:40 – 10:20

Active funding opportunities in the Black Sea

- INTERREG NEXT Black Sea – second call for proposals currently open, *Eugenia Stanciu, Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme*
- EMFAF programme – an opportunity for Black Sea blue economy, *CINEA*
- Black Sea SRIA - overview of other relevant EU funds, *DG RTD*
- Q&A

10:20 – 10:30

Wrap-up and introduction to the parallel sessions

10:30 – 10:45

Coffee break

10:45 – 12:30

Building partnerships for project ideas (bilateral, 'virtual' closed doors meetings)