



COMMON MARITIME AGENDA FOR THE BLACK SEA

Implementation report
2022-2024



Common Maritime Agenda
for the Black Sea

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Abbreviations

ASC	Annual Stakeholder Conference
BSA	Black Sea Awards / Black Sea Accelerator
BSAM	Black Sea Assistance Mechanism
BSC	Black Sea Commission
BSEC	Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CINEA	European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency
CMA	Common Maritime Agenda
CPMR	Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions
DG MARE	Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
NC	National Coordinator
NE	National Event
NH	National Hub
SRIA	Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda
SustAqua	Sustainable Aquaculture
TG	Technical Group
WB	World Bank



1. Preamble





1.1 Message from the coordinators

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

In 2023, Romania had the honour of coordinating the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) Steering Group, guided by synergy and continuity, to build on CMA's progress and prioritize 1) environmental protection, 2) blue economy entrepreneurship, and 3) blue skills.

Throughout the year, national events took place across member countries, with a notable regional event in May 2023 focusing on Black Sea Blue Economy partnerships. We held three Steering Group meetings, achieved key milestones like the activation of the Sustainable Aquaculture Technical Group, and hosted a successful CMA Stakeholders Conference in Bucharest—the first in-person regional gathering since the pandemic.

Our common priorities, partnerships and projects are the foundation of the CMA, strengthening cooperation and shared goals. For these accomplishments, we extend our heartfelt thanks to all partners, DG MARE, the Assistance Mechanism, and National Hubs for their continued support.

The Black Sea region presents unique opportunities for sustainable development and international collaboration. Achieving sustainable development in the Black Sea is a shared goal, challenge, and responsibility for all of us. Therefore, regional cooperation is our most effective tool for success. With the commitment of all stakeholders, we anticipate significant progress in the coming years, particularly through shared priorities, collaborative projects, and organized technical groups and events. We encourage everyone to stay actively engaged in this important journey.

**ALEXANDRA BOGDAN, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
THE ROMANIAN CMA COORDINATOR 2023**



1.1 Message from the coordinators

Dear colleagues and partners,

Starting in January 2024, the Republic of Moldova assumed the Coordination of the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea (CMA), in line with the initiative's rotating country coordination. Moldova has taken over this role from Romania, which successfully coordinated the CMA in 2023. The Republic of Moldova has outlined their key priorities for the 2024, aligning with the overarching CMA goals.

The Moldovan coordination actively advanced CMA goals and raised awareness of the initiative at the EU level by engaging in important events like [European Maritime Day 2024](#) and the [Macro-regional & Sea Basin Strategies Days](#). Moldova also hosted the Black Sea Common Maritime Agenda Stakeholder Conference in Chisinau on 11 September 2024, followed by the third Steering Group meeting and fourth Technical Group meeting on Sustainable Aquaculture on 12 September. Other third-party events, relevant to the work of the CMA, were organised in Moldova this year, such as the 2nd Multi-Actor Forum and the 2nd Mutual Mobilization Learning Workshop, under [DOORS](#) project.

During 2024, the Moldovan coordination supported key priorities, such as addressing marine and riverine pollution and plastic litter, and promoting sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the region, including through the work of the existing Technical Group. Moldova will continue progressing on the CMA implementation, exploring current and future funding opportunities for maritime projects in the region, and showcasing success stories that align with the goals and objectives of the CMA.

GRIGORE STRATULAT, MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT,
THE MOLDOVAN CMA COORDINATOR 2024

1.2 Executive Summary

This implementation report provides a detailed account on how Black Sea stakeholders, supported by the European Commission and the Black Sea Assistance Mechanism (BSAM), have made significant efforts to achieve progress under the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea (CMA) in 2023 and 2024. It does so by outlining the results and progress achieved, as well as identifying lessons from the past and priorities for the future. While reporting the achievements so far, this report also offers a vision for a sustainable future for the Black Sea, driving economic growth, safeguarding its unique ecosystems, and promoting cooperation among its countries, for the benefit of the region. To set the context, the report provides a concise description of the CMA, its goals and priorities, the governance structure that ensures their implementation. This structure is complemented by the BSAM and the National Hubs, which provide operational support towards the CMA implementation at the regional and national levels, and the Technical Groups (TGs) offering specific expertise in selected areas.

The CMA main achievements are presented through qualitative and quantitative outputs, address the wide range of activities carried out to support a sustainable blue economy in the Black Sea throughout the past two years. Specifically, the report outlines active involvement of stakeholders, through the Annual Black Sea CMA Stakeholder Conferences, the on-line regional thematic events and the in-person national events conducted across the Black Sea riparian countries. Project support provided by the BSAM and the National Hubs, has supported regional stakeholders to implement CMA priorities by capitalising on the funding opportunities available across the Black Sea and beyond. An overview of the main communication and dissemination activities by the BSAM is also provided. Stakeholder engagement is also highlighted with active involvement in workshops and thematic discussions whose outcomes were utilised in follow-up activities. The foundation of the CMA's progress is supported by the funding channelled to Black Sea stakeholders, primarily through EU programmes and funds. This support has led to best practices and success stories within regional blue economy projects.

The conclusions and next steps reflect upon relevant outcomes achieved thus far and highlight future priorities for action. These priorities include regional and cross-sea basin cooperation, policy alignment, and the enhancement of economic activities are underscored, while protecting and restoring the Black Sea's coastal and marine ecosystem.

1.3 Understanding the CMA

Signed in Bucharest in May 2019, the Ministerial Declaration on the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) for the Black Sea affirms the commitment of Black Sea riparian countries – Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia [1], Turkey, and Ukraine – to collaborate on fostering a sustainable blue economy. The CMA for the Black Sea is a sea basin initiative to enhance regional cooperation for achieving a sustainable blue economy in the Black Sea. Building on the [Burgas Ministerial Declaration “Towards a Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea”](#), the CMA recognises the importance of a coordinated approach to tackle shared regional challenges. It aims to achieve three main goals:

**HEALTHY MARINE AND
COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS**

**A COMPETITIVE, INNOVATIVE
AND SUSTAINABLE BLUE
ECONOMY FOR THE BLACK SEA**

**FOSTERING INVESTMENT
IN THE BLACK SEA BLUE
ECONOMY**

The CMA recognises the importance of a coordinated approach to tackling shared maritime and blue economy challenges. As a voluntary, bottom-up initiative, it builds on existing regional frameworks without establishing new structures. As such, the CMA's implementation relies on aligning and pooling funding from participating countries, the European Commission, international financial institutions, and other donors. Achievements across its goals are expected to be achieved by advancing sustainable blue economy projects, fostering cross-border cooperation, and exchanging best practices across Black Sea countries and EU sea-basins.

[1] In response to Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, the participation of the Russian Federation in the CMA has been suspended, as well as all forms of cooperation at regional and national level with Russian stakeholders.

1.3 Understanding the CMA

Implementation is driven by political coordination through ad hoc ministerial meetings and operational oversight by a Steering Group, which rotates coordination annually among participating countries. The CMA aligns funding with specific objectives and identified needs, while promoting active stakeholder engagement to support its goals, thereby laying the groundwork for enduring regional collaboration.

In addition, the CMA fosters synergies with relevant regionally active organisations such as the Black Sea Commission (BSC), the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), the World Bank (WB), as well as relevant funding instruments such as the Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme. The CMA is also complemented by its scientific pillar, the [Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda for the Black Sea \(SRIA\)](#), that provides valuable inputs for science-based decision-making.

The CMA is an integral part of the four EU Sea-Basins Strategies [2] endorsed by participating countries (EU Member States and neighbouring partners), as a basin-wide initiative focused on achieving more sustainable economic development through the responsible use of maritime and marine sectors.

[2] [Atlantic Strategy](#), [WestMED Initiative](#), [Greater North Sea Basin Initiative](#)



2. Two years of transformation: CMA implementation

The CMA is a key cooperation framework that connects the Black Sea with the EU on maritime affairs and blue economy, aligning priorities and striving for cohesion.

2.1 CMA vision and framework

1. Healthy marine and coastal ecosystems

The Black Sea and its coastal and marine ecosystems are under significant threat from the impacts of climate change effects, including sea-level rise, erosion, ecosystem shifts, acidification, and rising temperatures. In addition, unsustainable maritime, coastal, and terrestrial activities—such as pollution, marine litter, and wastewater—further harm the ecosystem. The core challenge is ensuring environmental protection and the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources. Achieving this requires voluntary regional cooperation and collective efforts to protect the shared natural heritage. This goal connects the CMA with its ‘scientific pillar’, represented by the Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA), which emphasises the importance of scientific knowledge—through ecosystem assessments, forecasting, and understanding vulnerabilities—as a foundation for informed, science-based policymaking that supports a sustainable blue economy.

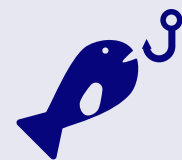
GOAL I PRIORITIES



Ensure the protection and sustainability of the marine ecosystem.



Address marine pollution and plastic litter



Support sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Black Sea.



Supporting innovative marine research infrastructures in the Black Sea.



Encourage the production, management, and sharing of marine and coastal environmental knowledge for effective environmental monitoring and observation.

2.1 CMA vision and framework

2. A competitive, innovative and sustainable blue economy for the Black Sea

This goal aims to unlock the blue economy potential of the Black Sea by prioritizing innovation, connectivity, and workforce development across both established and emerging maritime sectors. Key focus areas include modernising traditional industries such as transport, shipbuilding, fisheries, and tourism to enhance their sustainability, resilience, and global competitiveness. Improved regional connectivity is crucial for maximising the Black Sea's strategic role as bridge between Europe and Asia. Supporting research, innovation, and the transfer of knowledge from "labs to market" is vital for driving growth and enabling science-based decision-making that benefits coastal communities. As highlighted in the 2018 Burgas Vision Paper, science, education, and innovation are fundamental tools for sustainable development and for fully unlocking the region's blue economy potential.

GOAL II PRIORITIES



Foster innovative business models, stimulate research and innovation and sustainable growth and up-to-date jobs.



Promote transport and digital connectivity of the Black Sea.



Promote blue skills and blue careers as an engine for innovation and competitiveness.

2.1 CMA vision and framework

3. Fostering Investment in the Black Sea blue economy.

Advancing the Black Sea blue economy will rely on political support and financial investment from national governments, guided by clear, science-based priorities and enhanced regional collaboration on maritime issues. Funding for regional initiatives should also be sought from international financial institutions, EU programmes, and regional funds to complement national budgets. This goal aims to ensure the coordination of funding mechanisms to effectively support the blue economy, promote collaboration across maritime sectors, research, education, and investors, and facilitate the development of environmentally responsible infrastructure investments, such as waste management. Additionally, under this goal, the CMA encourages the sharing of best practices among national authorities and the strengthening of administrative capacity to optimise the use of available funding.

GOAL III PRIORITIES



Improve access to financial resources and promote sustainable investment in the blue economy.



Promote maritime entrepreneurship and clusters.

2.2 Governance of CMA

2.2.1 Political and operational coordination

The CMA governance framework ensures alignment among participating countries, establishes priorities, coordinates policies and funding at the national level, encourages private sector investment, and allocates resources based on capacity.

Ministerial Meetings are held periodically and ensure high-level political coordination. To date, the only ministerial meeting under the CMA initiative was the founding meeting in 2018.

The Steering Group handles the implementation of CMA priorities and actions. It includes representatives from each participating country, appointed by their national governments and acting as National Coordinators, as well as the European Commission (DG MARE). Each year, a different National Coordinator assumes the responsibility of coordinating the Steering Group and by extension the CMA. Between end of 2022 and 2024, the CMA has had two coordinators: Romania in 2023, and Moldova in 2024.

The Steering Group provides political guidance, monitors progress, sets priorities, and supports regional flagship projects. It collaborates with national and EU authorities and establishes temporary technical groups for specific tasks. Decisions are made by consensus, allowing countries to pursue independent projects aligned with CMA principles while keeping the Steering Group informed. The European Commission also ensures that EU policies and funds align with the CMA priorities.

Regional and international organisations such as the Black Sea Commission (BSC) and Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) act as consultative and observer bodies, complementing the Steering Group's work.

2.2 Governance of CMA

2.2.2 Black Sea Assistance Mechanism and National Hubs

To support the implementation of EU sea basin initiatives, the European Commission has established an Assistance Mechanism for these strategies. The CMA is supported by the Black Sea Assistance Mechanism (BSAM), a dedicated team that provides practical support by collaborating with the Steering Group and technical working groups, offering operational, logistical, and administrative assistance. In doing so it engages with and supports CMA stakeholders at regional and national levels (e.g. through the organisation of dedicated events), supports the set-up of project consortia and offers access and guidance on relevant funding opportunities.

The [BSAM central team's](#) efforts are complemented by [National Hubs](#) in each participating country. These hubs consist of national experts with extensive networks and in-depth knowledge of funding options. The National Hubs support the National Coordinators in their respective countries, organise national events and support the Central Team organisation of regional events, identify high-potential areas, assist stakeholders in project development, and provide confidential, tailored advice on funding opportunities and partner matchmaking, while addressing local priorities. Both the BSAM Central Team and the NHs also raise awareness of the CMA, disseminate funding information and maximise the engagement of national and local stakeholders around the CMA's goals and priorities.

Six National Hubs have been established in Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Türkiye and Ukraine.

2.2 Governance of CMA

2.2.2 Black Sea Assistance Mechanism and National Hubs

The BSAM is part of a dedicated Assistance Mechanism for the Sea Basin Strategies, launched in October 2022, integrating the WestMED Initiative, Atlantic Strategy, and Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea. This initiative fosters synergies, knowledge exchange, and joint actions on key topics such as blue skills, investment, green shipping, and sustainable aquaculture. By expanding its stakeholder network and expertise, the Sea Basin Strategies Assistance Mechanism (SBS AM) will continue supporting project development, funding access, and regional collaboration, ensuring greater visibility, impact, and tailored support for each sea basin.

The functioning of the SBS AM is funded by the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund ([EMFAF](#)) and managed by the European Climate Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency ([CINEA](#)) under the policy supervision of the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries ([DG MARE](#)) of the European Commission.

2.2 Governance of CMA

2.2.3 Sectoral Exchanges: Technical Groups

The CMA Steering Group supports the formation of Technical Groups (TG), which bring together national experts in specific sectors and activities which are deemed relevant for a sustainable blue economy in the Black Sea. These groups focus on specific objectives, fostering collaboration knowledge exchange, and the sharing of best practices emerging across the Black Sea or in other EU sea-basins. The BSAM provides operational support, with leadership from designated experts. This framework enables countries to work together towards shared blue economy goals.

The first TG, dedicated to ['Sustainable Aquaculture'](#) (SustAqua), was established in 2023 following Romania's proposal as CMA coordinator and aims to promote the growth of a sustainable, resilient aquaculture sector in the Black Sea, enhancing food security and adapting to climate change. It does so by fostering regional technical collaboration, connects with other EU sea basins, and identifying best practices in sustainable aquaculture, including its regulatory, technical, and scientific aspects.

During the 2024 Moldovan Coordination of the CMA, following a proposal from Türkiye and under the joint leadership of Türkiye and Georgia, a second TG on Coastal and Maritime Sustainable Tourism was endorsed by the Steering Group, with its activities set to begin during the first quarter of 2025.

The TG aims to enhance sustainable tourism by identifying priorities, integrating knowledge of underwater cultural heritage, and supporting projects aligned with shared goals. It will also develop innovative cultural and recreational ecosystem services to foster synergies between tourism and other sectors, while advancing governance, green transition, and digitalisation. The group will establish a multidisciplinary forum to promote sustainable coastal and maritime tourism across the Black Sea, with a specific attention to research and exploration of underwater cultural heritage and its socio-economic potential for the tourism sector and the entire region.

2.2 Governance of CMA

2.2.3 Technical Groups - SustAqua



CONTEXT

- The Black Sea region hosts diverse freshwater and marine aquaculture activities, offering strong potential for sustainable blue economy growth.
- With rapid expansion and ambitious policies, aquaculture can become a key pillar of the region's sustainable blue economy.
- Sustainable aquaculture provides nutritious food, employment, and economic opportunities for coastal and rural communities.
- Innovative and sustainable practices help diversify value chains, ensure food security, and reduce reliance on wild fish stocks, supporting efforts to mitigate overfishing.
- To enhance resilience, aquaculture must grow sustainably by leveraging innovation, digitalisation, and knowledge sharing, while attracting financial investment.
- Meeting the growing demand for aquaculture products requires aligning regional practices with global and European advancements.



OBJECTIVES

- Identify and share relevant knowledge on innovation and development of sustainable aquaculture in the Black Sea region, as well as identify aspects of the sector where further action is needed;
- Facilitate contact and exchange between national and regional institutions and authorities in charge of aquaculture development in the Black Sea region;
- Facilitate contact between relevant actors of the aquaculture sector in the Black Sea to identify, share best practices of sustainable aquaculture and promote the establishment of effective regional partnerships between aquaculture stakeholders (i.e., from industry, research and academia, public authorities, and civil society);
- Identify funding available at EU, regional and national level with the assistance of Black Sea Assistance Mechanism and National Hubs and support the development of high-quality projects ideas for the identified funds.

2.2 Governance of CMA

2.2.3 Technical Groups - SustAqua

ACTIVITIES - NEWS

Preliminary meeting on 26 September 2023



Kick-off meeting on 23 November 2023



Second Meeting of the Technical Group on Sustainable Aquaculture – Black Sea SustAqua



TECHNICAL GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE HOLDS THIRD MEETING



Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea



Technical Group on Sustainable Aquaculture holds third meeting

4TH TECHNICAL GROUP MEETING ON SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE



Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea



4th Technical Group meeting on Sustainable Aquaculture

2.2 Governance of CMA

2.2.3 Technical Groups - Sustainable Tourism and Underwater heritage



CONTEXT

- A Key Sector with Challenges: Maritime and coastal tourism drives the Black Sea's blue economy, but faces environmental, social, and economic pressures.
- Growth Potential: With pre-pandemic annual growth of 6%, expanding niche tourism, maritime routes, and inland-coastal synergies can boost jobs and innovation.
- Barriers to Sustainability: Over-commercialization, pollution, mass tourism, and skills gaps threaten long-term viability, requiring targeted solutions.
- Cultural Heritage as an Asset: The Black Sea's preserved shipwrecks and artifacts offer opportunities for underwater parks, museums, and virtual tourism.
- Driving Innovation Through a Technical Group: A coordinated expert group will foster innovation, policy alignment, and investment, positioning the Black Sea as a leader in sustainable tourism.



OBJECTIVES

- Asses the state of and identify sectoral and scientific priorities in coastal and maritime sustainable tourism¹ in the Black Sea;
- Integrate existing (published) knowledge and emerging data from novel exploration and assessment of the Black Sea underwater cultural heritage, and develop projects based on common priorities;
- Further develop innovative cultural and recreational ecosystem services to promote synergies between sustainable coastal tourism and other activities (i.e. pesca-tourism, culture and underwater heritage, aquaculture, yachting) as defined in the SRIA;
- Support participants in developing project ideas or other activities on tourism-related topics i.e., green transition, digitalization, social inclusion, governance, and skills.

2.2 Governance of CMA

2.2.3 Technical Groups - Sustainable Tourism and Underwater heritage



ACTIVITIES - NEWS



Technical Group Concept Note presented and endorsed by the Steering Group, during the meeting on 6 December 2024.



Terms of References composed, currently being reviewed by the CMA National Coordinators.



The first meeting of the Technical Group is expected to take place in March 2025.

2.3 CMA goals achievements

Goal 1: Healthy marine and coastal ecosystems

The deterioration of the marine and coastal environment of the riparian countries, recognised as a serious challenge and priority under the CMA, has prompted/urged collective efforts of regional and EU actors towards ecosystem conservation and restoration.

The CMA activities are closely linked to Relevant policy initiatives, such as the [Danube and Black Sea Lighthouse](#), a key component of the EU Mission [Restore Our Ocean and Waters by 2030](#). This initiative promotes a "source-to-sea" approach, bringing together countries to focus on ecosystem restoration, pollution reduction, while advancing carbon neutrality and circularity in the region. This is an essential synergy with the CMA and a boost to cross-country cooperation in this area, aligned with this strategic goal for the CMA. As part of the efforts to achieve this CMA goal, public and private stakeholders are taking action to protect and restore local ecosystems through awareness-raising events, capacity-building workshops, projects, and funding opportunities. This goal is also reflected in the National Hubs' roadmaps, which outline their objectives and planned activities each semester. In addition, all Black Sea National Hubs have organised National Events addressing marine waste, war pollution, artificial reefs, and sustainable aquaculture. These efforts are linked to the [SustAqua Technical Group](#), which has identified key research areas such as improving carp breeding, developing floating cages for sea farming, integrating green energy in aquaculture, advancing multi-trophic aquaculture systems, and supporting local, small-scale producer value chains.

2.3 CMA goals achievements

Goal 1: Healthy marine and coastal ecosystems

EU-funded projects and initiatives, supported under the CAM implementation, also contributed to this important goal. These include [PREP4BLUE](#), [EcoDalli](#), [RESPONSE](#), [Black Sea SIERRA](#), [ANEMONE](#), [Recycllux](#) and Ballast Water Treatment Service ([BWTS](#)), many of which have been nominees and/or winners of the Black Sea Project Awards, an annual competition showcasing numerous initiatives dedicated to creating healthier marine and coastal ecosystems.

The Annual Black Sea CMA Stakeholder Conferences, organised in Bucharest (2023) and Chişinău (2024) also reinforced the priorities under CMA Goal I, by including and promoting actions towards water restoration, marine pollution prevention, and sustainable resource use. These actions brought awareness on more specific developments that contribute to the achievement of CMA Goal I. Advanced technologies, including robotic gliders and satellite analysis, have enhanced understanding of the Black Sea's ecological status. Pollution control efforts target hazardous substances, emerging pollutants, and "forever chemicals" through advanced methodologies, public awareness campaigns, and regulatory reforms. Conservation efforts prioritise managing plastic pollution, adopting circular practices, utilising new technologies, improving data management, and strengthening cross-border collaboration for sustainability.

2.3 CMA goals achievements

Goal 2: A competitive, innovative and sustainable blue economy for the Black Sea

The Black Sea blue economy holds immense economic potential, with opportunities in competitiveness and innovation still untapped. Since 2023, efforts have focused on fostering investment and innovation in areas like sustainable aquaculture, eco-packaging, and underwater technology. Initiatives such as the EU-level [BlueInvest](#) programme and the [Black Sea Accelerator](#) have been key in building a sustainable investment ecosystem and scaling businesses.

The SustAqua Technical Group has produced policy recommendations to enhance sustainable aquaculture governance, including a background analysis, key recommendations, and an implementation timeline, presented to the CMA Steering Group in December 2024. The main recommendations focus on harmonising legislation with unified permitting, one-stop offices, digital systems for permits and data, and minimum 10-year water concessions. It also highlights environmental monitoring, cross-country data collaboration, and pilot projects. Investment incentives involve transparent processes, support for sustainable investments, and regional best practice sharing. Experts will continue to update the Steering Group and seek funding to implement these solutions.

2.3 CMA goals achievements

Goal 2: A competitive, innovative and sustainable blue economy for the Black Sea

Advancing blue skills remains a priority for stakeholders, with National Hubs leading awareness-raising and capacity-building activities. CMA's regional workshops have supported these efforts by promoting partnerships, innovation, and skill development in biotechnology, renewable energy, and pollution mitigation. Proposed initiatives, such as standardised curricula, ocean literacy campaigns, gamification, and school-operated aquafarms, aim to address skill gaps and engage youth in the blue economy. Several projects have been recognised for their contributions to advancing a competitive, innovative, and sustainable blue economy in the Black Sea.

In 2024, [BLACK SEA CONNECT](#) and [DOORS](#) were honoured with awards in this category. Similarly, in 2023, the [Tourism 4.0](#) (T4BS) project received the same accolade, showcasing the region's progress in driving impactful initiatives.

2.3 CMA goals achievements

Goal 3: Fostering investment in the Black Sea blue economy.

Progress towards investments in a sustainable blue economy in the Black Sea is supported by the funding mobilised and the initiatives set up. Over five years, EUR 500 million were attracted in funding across more than 90 projects focused on marine pollution, blue economy entrepreneurship, tourism, and environmental protection [3]. Interest in attracting investment continues to grow, with BSAM directly supporting around 50 projects for submission and hosting capacity-building events on proposal writing [4].

The Black Sea Stakeholder Conference, held in 2023 and 2024, has strengthened ties with blue economy SMEs, enhancing visibility and recognising regional investment needs. A dedicated [BlueInvest](#) workshop featured start up pitches showcasing innovative solutions in AI, blockchain, and algae-derived products, which are mentioned below:



[3] [Joint staff working document - Black Sea Synergy: 4th review of a regional cooperation initiative - period 2019-2023](#)

[4] Sea Basin Strategies Report 2024.

2.3 CMA goals achievements

Goal 3: Fostering investment in the Black Sea blue economy.

Under the 2023 Black Sea CMA Stakeholder conference, the projects [DBAN](#) and [4BIZ](#) were awarded under the category “Fostering Investment in the Black Sea Blue Economy”.

The [Black Sea Accelerator \(BSA\)](#) recognised as a success in the 2024 Black Sea Project Awards, is a strategic initiative under the Horizon 2020-funded BRIDGE-BS and DOORS projects. In 2023, it received 30 applications from sectors like aquaculture, fisheries, and maritime transport. Ten projects underwent tailored training in business analysis and investor engagement, improving their market readiness and increasing their potential to attract international investment.



All of the activities and progress described in this chapter are further elaborated upon in the sections that follow. Synergies, events, projects and success stories are presented in more detail and accompanied by links for further information. To illustrate the achievements of the CMA more clearly, the Section 2.6 Two years of CMA implementation in numbers contains numeric information on the CMA activities.

2.4 Driving collaboration through stakeholder engagement activities

The CMA thrives on continuous stakeholder engagement, with BSAM playing a key role in supporting events that promote the exchange of best practices and foster networking for future projects.

Regional Thematic Event 2023: “Building Black Sea Blue Economy: Partnership and Funding Opportunities”

The regional event “Building Black Sea Blue Economy: Partnership and Funding Opportunities” took place online on 10 May 2023. It was organized by BSAM under the CMA Romanian Coordination, with the support from the European Commission. The event aimed to support stakeholder engagement, raise awareness of EU funding opportunities, and promote regional partnerships to develop successful projects aligned with the goals and priorities of the CMA.

The event provided valuable insights into funding opportunities that can support the development of the CMA, highlighting the potential of EU funding instruments such as [EMFAF](#) and [Horizon Europe](#), as well as the [Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme](#). To capitalize on these opportunities, speakers emphasized the importance of high-quality project proposals and shared guidance on effective proposal drafting, partnership building, and project relevance. The event also facilitated targeted discussions and collaboration through breakout groups on topics such as blue competitiveness, digitalization and decarbonization of maritime transport, and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. These discussions highlighted the need for knowledge-sharing and cooperation to drive blue growth in the Black Sea region through innovative projects.

2.4 Driving collaboration through stakeholder engagement activities

[Black Sea Common Maritime Agenda Stakeholder Conference 2023](#)

The Black Sea CMA Stakeholder Conference took place on 22–23 November 2023, in Bucharest, Romania, with over 180 participants. Hosted by Romania as the 2023 CMA coordinator, the event facilitated networking, best practice exchange, project development, and discussions on achievements and future actions in the regional sustainable blue economy.

Thematic Sessions: Focused on regional geopolitical developments and CMA's role in advancing the blue economy through thematic panels on:

Healthy Marine Ecosystems

Healthy Marine Ecosystems: The panel discussion addressed water restoration, marine pollution prevention, sustainable resource use, and efforts for healthy marine ecosystems. Speakers highlighted initiatives like the EU Mission Ocean Danube lighthouse, the [SRIA implementation plan](#), the [Blueing the Black Sea Programme](#), and [GFCM's](#) work on sustainable fisheries. Projects such as [DOORS](#) and [BRIDGE-BS](#) were noted for advancing ecological transition, digitalization, and sustainability in the region.

Investment for Entrepreneurship

Investment for Entrepreneurship: Key organizations, including the [European Investment Fund](#) and [BlueInvest](#), emphasized the need for strong investment support in the Black Sea's blue economy, focusing on areas like sustainable aquaculture, eco-packaging, and underwater technology. Despite its potential, the sector is often overlooked by financiers, necessitating a robust, sustainable investment ecosystem. Tools like the European Investment Fund aim to bridge gaps and mobilize stakeholders for innovation and growth in the region.

Boosting Innovation in Blue Economy

Boosting Innovation in the Blue Economy: The [Black Sea Accelerator](#), supported by the BRIDGE-BS and DOORS projects, has advanced sustainable blue economy businesses in 2023. Discussions highlighted [Bulgaria's smart specialization strategy](#) and EU funding from [CINEA](#) in fostering maritime innovation, environmental protection, and entrepreneurship. Emphasis was also placed on the CMA's role in international cooperation and the importance of developing future skills and careers in the blue economy.

2.4 Driving collaboration through stakeholder engagement activities

Black Sea Common Maritime Agenda Stakeholder Conference 2023

The Black Sea CMA Stakeholders Conference showcased a range of interactive features designed to foster engagement and collaboration among participants. The [BlueInvest](#) workshop shared blue technology success stories and featured pitches from investors across the Black Sea. hackathons,

The exhibition of Black Sea projects [displayed 14 projects](#), and lastly the hackathon sessions touched upon three areas of interest, concerning blue skills, maritime transport and ports, and coastal and maritime tourism. Several side events complemented the main program, including discussions on marine pollution led by the World Bank, EU Black Sea Synergy talks, the launch of the Sustainable Aquaculture Technical Group, and a meeting of the SRIA Operational Network of Funders. The Conference closed with the Black Sea Project Awards.



4,7/5

GENERAL SATISFACTION SCORE



180

PARTICIPANTS



16

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

2.4 Driving collaboration through stakeholder engagement activities

National Events 2023

In 2023, National Hubs hosted a range of events addressing key topics to advance the Black Sea's blue economy. Bulgaria focused on port resilience with [“Challenges and Resilience Capacity of the Bulgarian Ports in a Changing Black Sea Region”](#) and explored future-oriented skills with [“Blue Skills of the Future.”](#) Georgia emphasized innovation and entrepreneurship in the blue economy with events such as [“Bringing Science Closer to Businesses and Policy Makers”](#) and [“Innovative Project Ideas for the Development of Georgia’s Blue Economy”](#). Moldova held a [national event](#) on aligning national legal framework for aquaculture and fisheries with EU legal acquis and standards. Romania showcased blue skills development with [“Blue Skills: Next Wave of Learning”](#) organized the [“Hack-a-Sea: Black Sea”](#) hackathon, and supported cross-border cooperation through the hybrid event “INTERREG NEXT Black Sea Basin Cross-Border Cooperation Programme.” Türkiye also focused on cross-border collaboration under INTERREG NEXT, while also hosting a workshop on [synergies and innovative approaches for aquaculture.](#) Ukraine addressed the impacts of conflict with [“Assessment of Marine Scientific Infrastructure and Human Capital Losses”](#) and explored opportunities in aquaculture through events like [“Artificial Reefs and Aquaculture Development”](#). Online, events tackled harmonizing fisheries legal frameworks and innovative aquaculture practices across sectors.



2.4 Driving collaboration through stakeholder engagement activities

Regional Thematic Event 2024: “Navigating Funding Opportunities in the Black Sea Blue Economy”

The online CMA regional event, "Navigating Funding Opportunities in the Black Sea Blue Economy," took place on May 8, 2024, and was opened by Moldova's Ministry of Environment, the 2024 CMA Coordinator, alongside the European Commission (DG MARE). Moderated by the BSAM, focused on CMA funding opportunities, supporting project development, and aligning regional initiatives with CMA priorities.

The event provided key insights into active EU funding opportunities, including the INTERREG NEXT Black Sea second call, EMFAF support for the blue economy, Horizon Europe, and the [Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership](#). Participants explored how to align their projects with funding priorities, with eight stakeholder groups receiving expert guidance on biodiversity, marine pollution, carbon sequestration, sustainable tourism, and maritime spatial planning. Follow-up support offered valuable contacts and resources to help develop projects and encourage collaboration.

2.4 Driving collaboration through stakeholder engagement activities

Black Sea Common Maritime Agenda Stakeholder Conference 2024

The Black Sea CMA Stakeholder Conference was held on 11 September 2024, in Chişinău, Moldova, hosted by the Moldova as coordinator of the CMA in 2024. This annual event reinforced its role as a key platform for collaboration among CMA stakeholders, driving progress towards a sustainable blue economy in the Black Sea. The conference brought together around 100 participants, effectively linking past achievements with future goals, while emphasizing collaboration, innovation, and sustainability in the region.

Thematic Sessions: Aligned with the three CMA goals, sessions addressed key topics for the Black Sea blue economy, with expert speakers and audience interaction:

Marine scientific knowledge for the Black Sea blue economy

This session addressed environmental challenges that the Black Sea faces, such as pollution, overfishing, and invasive species. Representatives from the projects [DOORS](#), [BRIDGE](#) and [EX-AQUA](#) emphasised that researchers across the region are implementing the Black Sea SRIA to promote sustainable growth while preserving ecosystem health, using advanced technologies like robotic gliders and satellite analysis. The focus is on balancing environmental protection with economic development, while consistent efforts are made to improve ocean literacy.

Challenges and opportunities on the Black Sea's path to sustainability and zero pollution

During this session, key representatives from regional projects were invited to elaborate on their work around pollution and sustainability, specifically the [BLACK SEA SIERRA](#) and the [SOSZEROPOL2030](#) projects. The conversation focused on hazardous materials discussed challenges in achieving zero pollution by 2050, particularly due to emerging pollutants from war and armed conflicts. They highlighted the need for advanced methodologies like water sampling and in-situ measurements, while stressing that addressing hazardous substances, such as "forever chemicals", requires both improved public awareness and new regulations to limit usage and ensure safe disposal.

Innovation perspectives for the Black Sea's blue economy community

Three SMEs/startups in the Black Sea region, [Tresoil](#), [Recycllux](#) and QBIOTECH Chemicals shared updates on innovative solutions for environmental challenges, such as plastic pollution and energy from waste. Emerging technologies like AI, blockchain, and digital twins offer cost-effective solutions with significant environmental, economic, and societal impacts, including job preservation and new business opportunities.

2.4 Driving collaboration through stakeholder engagement activities

Black Sea Common Maritime Agenda Stakeholder Conference 2024

The Black Sea CMA Stakeholders Conference always aims at actively involving the attendees, opening the floor to productive dialogue, synergies and ideation. In 2024, the Poster Exhibition happened as a parallel session, with [12 projects participating](#), by showcasing their posters and discussing results and future steps with other conference participants. The co-creation workshops brought another interactive element to the conference, encouraging the generation of ideas and opening the floor for stakeholders to share challenges and opportunities identified in 3 areas: blue economy skills and ocean literacy, decarbonisation and energy transition, and black sea ecosystem conservation. The Conference closed with the Black Sea Project Awards. On 12 September, 2024, the CMA Steering Group Group held its third meeting of the year, while the [SustAqua](#) TG convened for a dedicated session to develop the first proposal for policy recommendations.



4,7/5

GENERAL SATISFACTION SCORE



100

PARTICIPANTS



16

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

2.4 Driving collaboration through stakeholder engagement activities

National Events 2024

In 2024, National Hubs organized a series of events focusing on emerging priorities in the Black Sea's blue economy. Bulgaria hosted sessions on fostering a sustainable and resilient blue economy and explored innovation and development prospects for regional collaboration. Moldova hosted the Black Sea Forum of Beneficiaries and Stakeholders to strengthen regional collaboration. Romania focused on blue skills with the "Beyond the Waves" workshop and advanced project development with "From Skills to Action". Türkiye hosted discussions on developing coastal and underwater cultural heritage tourism and ran an informative event under the scope of the Bridge BS Living Lab. Ukraine tackled marine waste transformation and promoted understanding blue skills through interactive games.



2.5 Empowering projects and support best practices

Supporting projects and making funding opportunities more visible and accessible to Black Sea stakeholders is a key activity under the CMA. Over the past two years, the CMA, through the work of the national hubs has collectively supported around 50 projects[5] under various EU funded calls. Of these, around 23 projects [6], primarily implemented in the Black Sea region, have received funding. Additionally, more projects are in the pipeline for further development and, where applicable, (re)submission.

Some of the supported projects have gained additional visibility by participating in CMA events, being recognised at the Black Sea Project Awards, or showcasing their work in the interactive project exhibition at the Black Sea CMA Stakeholder Conferences in 2023 and 2024.

POSTER EXHIBITION 2023

POSTER EXHIBITION 2024

[5] Source: Black Sea Assistance Mechanism internal monitoring data.

[6] Source: Maritime Data Hub.

2.6 Project support and successful practices

2.6.1 Black Sea Project Awards

The Black Sea Project Awards recognize outstanding projects that align with the three goals of the CMA. The award focus on projects from the Black Sea riparian countries: Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Türkiye, and Ukraine. The awards seek to highlight exceptional initiatives across various sectors, showcasing innovative and replicable solutions that support the CMA's main objectives and priorities for the Black Sea sustainable blue economy.

The awards are divided into three categories, each reflecting the main CMA's goals:

Projects Awarded under Goal 1 | Healthy Marine and Coastal Ecosystems:

In 2023, the [ANEMONE](#) project (co-funded CBC Joint Operational Programme Black Sea Basin 2014-2020) received an award under Goal 1, for its work in enhancing Black Sea environmental data through monitoring methodologies, ecological tools, and awareness campaigns. In 2024, two projects were recognised: [Recycllux](#) and [Ballast Water Treatment Service \(BWTS\)](#). These projects complement each other in terms of objectives, ambition and geographic coverage. BWTS supports global shipping to comply with IMO rules by reducing invasive species in ballast water, while Recycllux tackles marine plastic pollution with a tech-driven, end-to-end solution that integrates data insights and an Uber-like model for efficient cleanup, promoting sustainable resource use and environmental monitoring.

2.6 Project support and successful practices

2.6.1 Black Sea Project Awards

Projects Awarded under Goal 2 | A Competitive, Innovative, and Sustainable Blue Economy for the Black Sea:

In 2023, [Tourism 4.0 \(T4BS\)](#) won the category with its Industry 4.0-driven approach to making tourism a driver of sustainable development, using data-driven decision-making and the Tourism Impact Model. In 2024, the award was shared by [DOORS](#) and [Black Sea CONNECT](#), both funded by Horizon 2020. DOORS addressed environmental challenges and blue economy growth via evidence-based systems, a startup accelerator, and training initiatives. Black Sea CONNECT created the [SRIA](#) for the Black Sea, prepared its implementation plan, and launched the region's first Young Ambassador Program with innovative outreach strategies.

Projects Awarded under Goal 3 | Fostering Investment in the Black Sea Blue Economy:

The projects awarded under Goal 3, both funded by EMFAF, cover the Black Sea and Europe. The [4BIZ - Boosting the Blue Economy in the Black Sea Region](#) aims to assess the needs of SMEs and start-ups from the blue business sector, identify gaps and co-create support services. This is facilitated by the 4BIZ Digital Platform and the regional brokerage events. The [Digital Blue economy and innovation Acceleration Network \(DBAN\)](#) focuses on supporting and commercialising blue growth initiatives in the participating countries, helping SMEs transition to sustainable resource management. This support includes knowledge transfer, strengthening cooperation between research and education and building a network of local entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems.

2.6 Project support and successful practices

2.6.1 Black Sea Project Awards



Winner of Winners 2023:

ANEMONE “Assessing the vulnerability of the Black Sea marine ecosystem to human pressures”

Short Description	ANEMONE tackled critical environmental challenges in the Black Sea through advanced monitoring and assessment techniques. Key achievements include identifying environmental hotspots, developing monitoring guidelines, and launching public engagement initiatives to raise awareness on marine protection. The project also enhanced understanding of the impacts of human activities on marine ecosystems and proposed measures to mitigate these pressures.
Objectives	The ANEMONE project aimed to enhance cross-border collaboration and research capacity to address pollution, eutrophication, and biodiversity loss in the Black Sea. By developing standardized methodologies and collecting quality-controlled data, it sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of the region's environmental status, informing decision-making and promoting sustainable management practices.
Key outcomes	The initiative focuses on addressing knowledge gaps and research needs in the Black Sea region by developing standardised monitoring methodologies, new tools, and indicators for ecological assessments. It aims to generate quality-controlled datasets through pilot studies, update the list of environmental hotspots, and create guidelines for evaluating maritime activities' impacts. The project will produce a comprehensive environmental report, address gaps in chemical contamination, and use case studies on beach litter and dolphin populations to support education and awareness campaigns, leveraging field data for public engagement.
Partners	National Institute for Marine Research and Development “Grigore Antipa” (NIMRD), Romania Non-governmental environmental organization Mare Nostrum (Mare Nostrum), Romania Institute of Oceanology – Bulgarian Academy of Science (IO-BAS), Bulgaria Scientific Research Institution «Ukrainian Scientific Centre of Ecology of the Sea» (UkrSCES), Ukraine The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, Marmara Research Center (TUBİTAK-MAM), Türkiye Turkish Marine Research Foundation (TUDAV), Türkiye
Funding	The project was funded by the ENI CBC Black Sea Basin Programme 2014-2020 (Project Number BSB319).

2.6 Project support and successful practices

2.6.1 Black Sea Project Awards



Winner of Winners 2024:

[Black Sea CONNECT](#)

Short Description

Black Sea CONNECT is a flagship H2020 coordination and support action (CSA) aimed at advancing the Black Sea Blue Growth Initiative, supported by the European Commission. It represents the first project of its kind in the region, focused on developing and implementing the [SRIA](#) based on the principles of the Burgas Vision Paper.

The project fosters collaboration among academia, industry, policymakers, and society to address key challenges, promote the blue economy, and enhance regional prosperity. Through the SRIA and its implementation plan, Black Sea CONNECT supports innovative research, critical infrastructure development, and capacity building, guiding stakeholders toward a sustainable and thriving Black Sea region.

Objectives

Black Sea CONNECT focuses on four key areas to advance the region's sustainability and prosperity: Black Sea Knowledge Bridge, Black Sea Blue Economy, Key Infrastructures & Policy Enablers, Empowered Citizens & Blue Workforce. The initiative aims to enhance multidisciplinary research, develop smart monitoring systems, and promote data sharing to build ecosystem resilience and address climate change impacts. It fosters innovation and economic development in blue economy sectors by supporting new technologies, harmonised methodologies, and start-ups. Additionally, it prioritises education, training, and citizen engagement to empower communities and strengthen the marine workforce. Finally, it supports science-policy dialogue to drive informed coastal and marine governance.

2.6 Project support and successful practices

2.6.1 Black Sea Project Awards



Winner of Winners 2024:

[Black Sea CONNECT](#)

Partners

Middle East Technical University ([METU-IMS](#)), Coordinator, Türkiye
Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation ([BSEC](#)), Türkiye
The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, Marmara Research Center ([TUBİTAK-MAM](#)), Türkiye
The National Institute for Research and Development of Marine Geology and Geoecology ([GeoEcoMar](#)), Romania
Secretariat of the Black Sea University Network ([BSUN](#)), Romania
National Institute for Marine Research and Development “Grigore Antipa” ([NIMRD](#)), Romania
Institute of Oceanology – Bulgarian Academy of Science ([IO-BAS](#)), Bulgaria
Scientific Research Institution «Ukrainian Scientific Centre of Ecology of the Sea» ([UkrSCES](#)), Ukraine
Helmholtz-Zentrum hereon GmbH ([Hereon](#)), Germany
Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University ([UPSC](#)), Moldova
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University ([TSU](#)), Georgia
French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea ([IFREMER](#)), France

Funding

This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 860055.

2.6 Project support and successful practices

2.6.1 Black Sea Success Stories

The Black Sea Success Stories are an output of the CMA BSAM, designed to report on and disseminate best practices across the region. They aim to celebrate remarkable results and processes, while also promoting projects and initiatives as models.

[Success Story - 2024 - Recycllux: a Success Story in fighting marine plastic pollution in the Black Sea](#)

Recycllux combats marine plastic pollution in the Black Sea through innovative technology and local partnerships. Using machine learning algorithms trained with data from the European Space Agency's Copernicus programme, the company detects marine plastic hotspots. Local fishermen collect and sort the waste, and Recycllux processes it through conventional recycling, waste-to-energy conversion, co-processing, and repurposing into new products. Blockchain technology ensures full transparency and regulatory compliance throughout the process. The company plans a full-scale pilot in the Black Sea to optimise its technology, enhance scalability, and attract further investment, with a long-term vision to expanding globally. Backed by [EIT Climate KIC](#), [Horizon Europe](#), and other initiatives, Recycllux has gained recognition, including the Black Sea CMA Project Award for Healthy Marine and Coastal Ecosystems.

[Success Story- 2023- DBAN- Nurturing a Sustainable and Digitalized Blue Economy in the Black Sea Region](#)

The Digital Blue Economy and Innovation Acceleration Network (DBAN) focuses on fostering a sustainable and digitalised blue economy in the Black Sea region. It aims to promote innovation, circular solutions, and local development by supporting SMEs and regional business initiatives. Running from July 2022 to June 2024, the project is co-funded by [EMFAF](#) and involves Bulgaria, Georgia, and Ukraine. Key activities include developing a regional blue development strategy, launching a digital platform for collaboration, hosting innovation hackathons, organising expos, and offering digital skills training to approximately 300 participants. The project was also awarded under the category “Fostering Investment in the Black Sea Blue Economy” at the 2023 Black Sea Project Awards.

2.6 Project support and successful practices

2.6.1 Black Sea Success Stories

Success Story - 2024 - The Black Sea Accelerator initiative transforming science into business

The Black Sea Accelerator (BSA) supports stakeholders transform innovative ideas into businesses that contribute to a sustainable blue economy in the Black Sea region. A joint initiative of the [BRIDGE-BS](#) and [DOORS](#) projects, funded by [Horizon-2020](#), it was launched in 2023. The initiative received 30 project applications, mostly from the Black Sea region, focusing on areas such as aquaculture, fisheries, and waste management. The selected projects were featured at the 2024 High-Tech Summit, focusing on advancing technologies and supporting established startups.

Success Story - 2024 - Meet “ANEMONE” Winner of the Black Sea Common Maritime Agenda Annual Stakeholder Conference Project Awards 2023 edition

ANEMONE was celebrated as the best project in the Healthy Marine and Coastal Ecosystems category and crowned the overall ‘winner of winners’, at the 2023 Black Sea Project Awards. The project improved Black Sea monitoring and conservation by creating guidelines, evaluating pollution and marine litter, and conducting pilot studies on human impacts. It also promoted public awareness through education and citizen science, contributing to sustainable marine management and long-term stakeholder engagement. The project was funded by the INTEREG NEXT programme ([ENI CBC Black Sea Basin Programme 2014-2020](#)).

2.6 Project support and successful practices

2.6.1 Black Sea Success Stories

Success Story- 2023- ISOLMET- Innovative Soft Skills to Maritime Education and Training

The iSOL-MET project, funded by [Erasmus+](#), addressed the gap between maritime education and industry requirement by emphasising the soft skills crucial for the shipping sector. It has created educational tools including case study handbooks, course programs, and evaluation frameworks to equip students for real-world challenges while meeting industry demand for skilled professional. The project promotes innovation, sustainability, and collaboration in maritime education, advancing blue skills and careers in the Black Sea region.

Success Story- 2023- 4BIZ - Boosting the Blue Economy in the Black Sea Region

The 4BIZ project, funded by [EMFAF](#), supports SMEs and start-ups in the Black Sea blue economy across Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Georgia, and Ukraine. It focuses on fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, and transport, addressing funding gaps, enhancing local capacities, and promoting innovation and digitalisation in line with CMA goals. Key achievements include mapping the sector through Country and Regional Reports, identifying support services, and engaging 150 SMEs, with 15 receiving direct assistance. Awarded under the "Fostering Investment in the Black Sea Blue Economy" section at the 2023 Black Sea Project Awards, the project aimed to expand its ecosystem to 300 entities by 2024, driving regional business growth and collaboration.

2.4 CMA implementation 2022-2024 in numbers

7

STEERING GROUP MEETINGS

5

TECHNICAL GROUP MEETINGS

20

NATIONAL EVENTS

2

REGIONAL THEMATIC EVENTS

2

BLACK SEA STAKEHOLDER
CONFERENCES

6

SUCCESS STORIES

8

AWARDED PROJECTS

8

NEWSLETTERS

2

FACTSHEETS

2.4 CMA implementation 2022-2024 in numbers

100

participants

BLACK SEA COMMON MARITIME
AGENDA STAKEHOLDER
CONFERENCE 2024

180

participants

BLACK SEA COMMON MARITIME
AGENDA STAKEHOLDER
CONFERENCE 2023

138

participants

REGIONAL THEMATIC EVENT 2024

197

participants

REGIONAL THEMATIC EVENT 2023

847

participants so far,

970

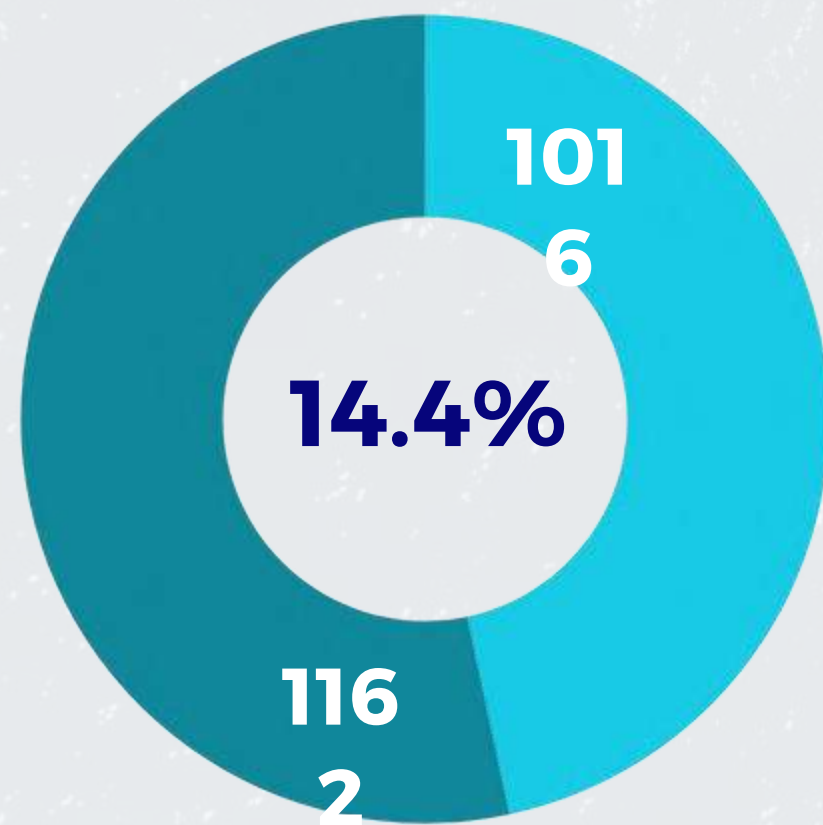
approx. participants
by end 2024

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS OF
NATIONAL EVENTS

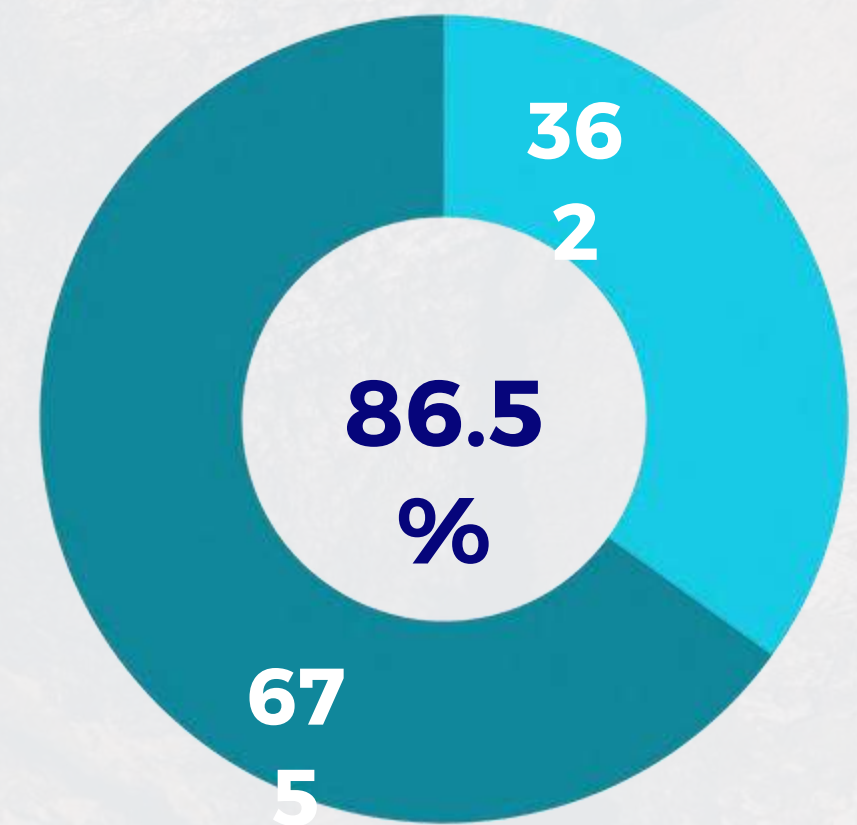
2.7 Communication and social media

The CMA uses multiple communication channels to share updates, promote funding opportunities and events, engage the Black Sea blue economy community, and highlight best practices. These channels include the CMA website, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), newsletters, and news flashes.

Number of followers



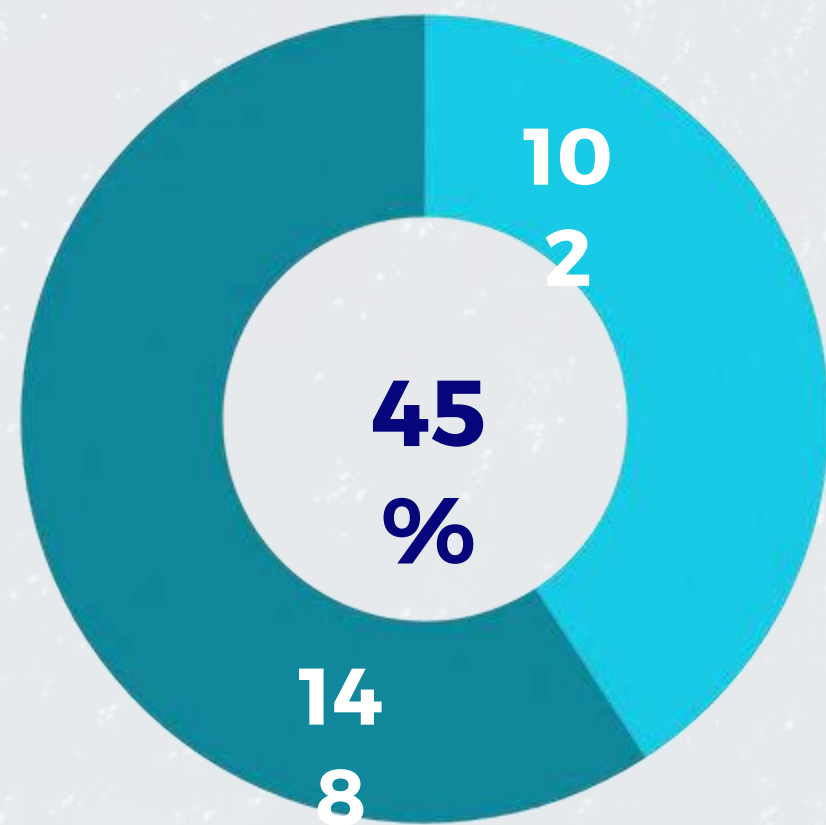
These metrics highlight substantial growth for both channels, with LinkedIn demonstrating the strongest performance. LinkedIn gained 313 followers (an 86.5% increase), while Twitter added 146 followers (14.4% growth).



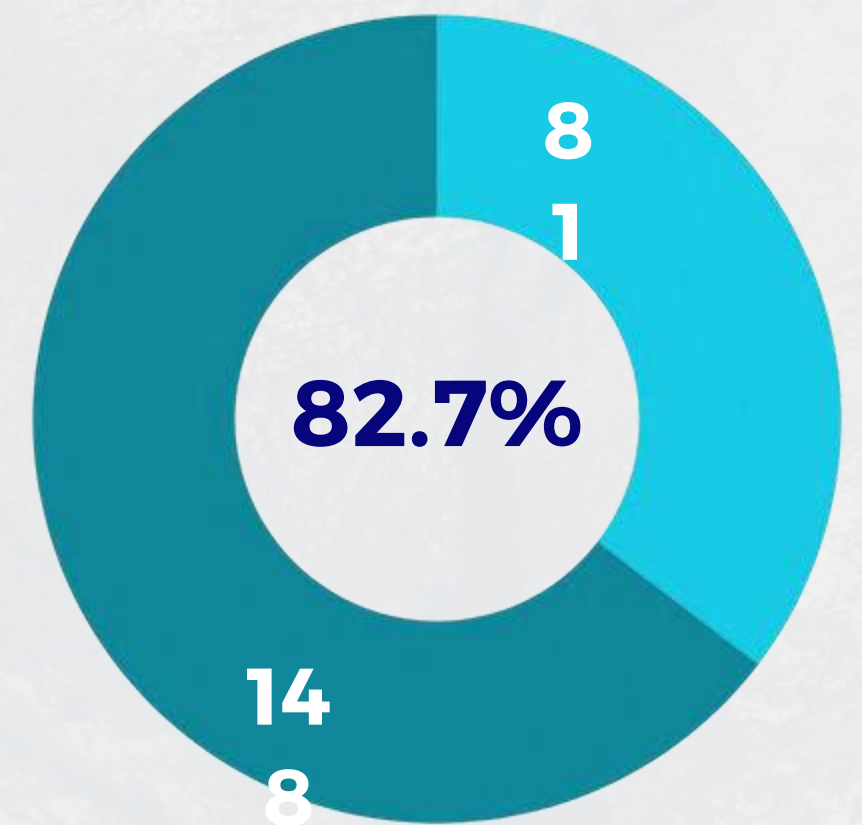
2.7 Communication and social media

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Number of post published



Content activity also surged, with LinkedIn increasing posts by 82.7% and Twitter by 45% compared to the previous year.



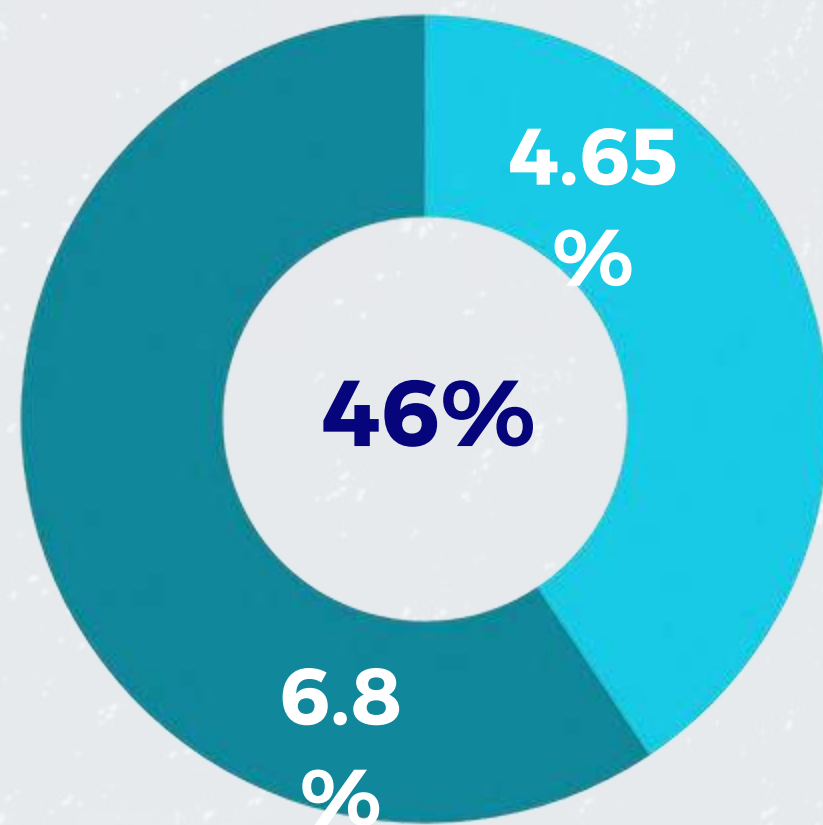
2023

2024

2.7 Communication and social media

The CMA uses multiple communication channels to share updates, promote funding opportunities and events, engage the Black Sea blue economy community, and highlight best practices. These channels include the CMA website, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), newsletters, and news flashes.

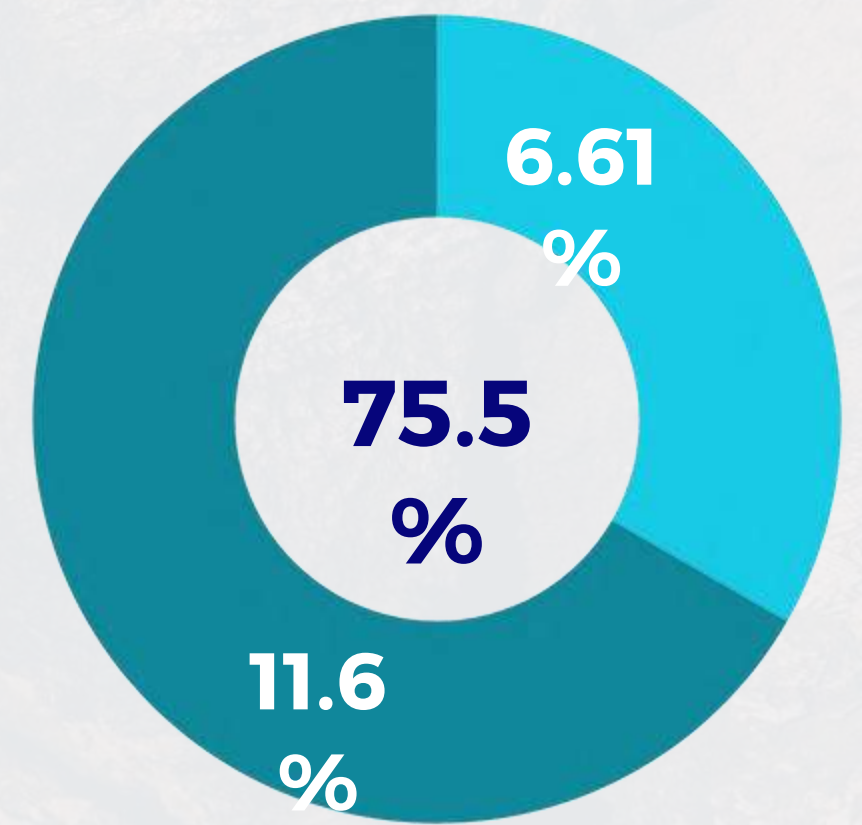
Engagement rate



Engagement rates saw marked improvement in 2024, with LinkedIn rising from 6.61% to 11.6% (a 75.5% increase) and Twitter increasing from 4.65% to 6.8% (a 46% growth).

2023

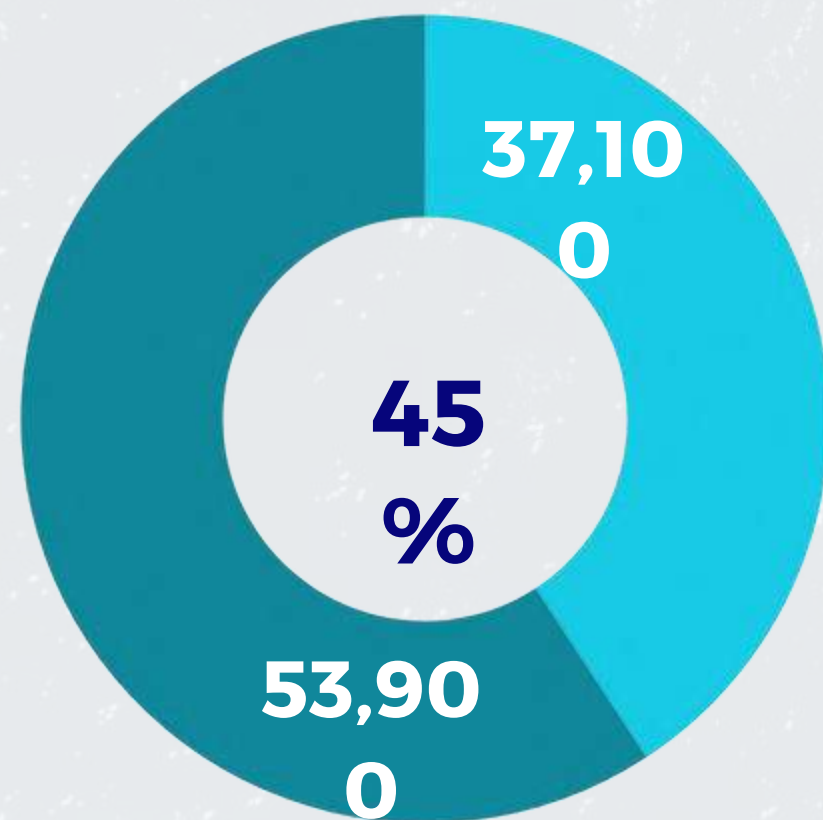
2024



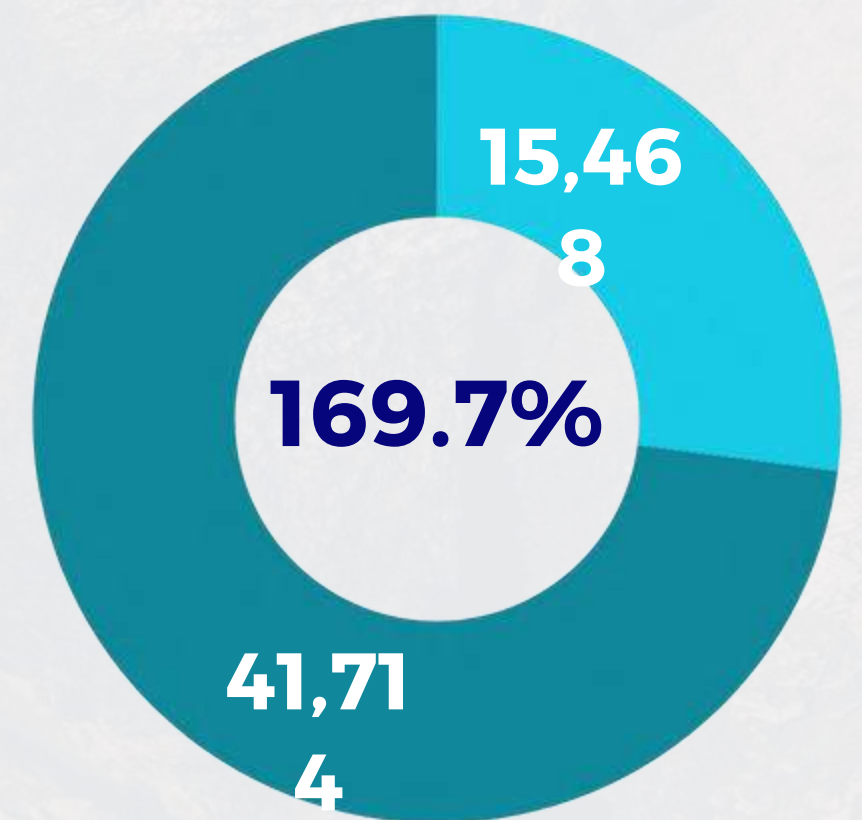
2.7 Communication and social media

The CMA uses multiple communication channels to share updates, promote funding opportunities and events, engage the Black Sea blue economy community, and highlight best practices. These channels include the CMA website, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), newsletters, and news flashes.

Impressions



Impressions on LinkedIn nearly tripled, climbing by 169.7% to 41,714, while Twitter impressions grew by 45%, reaching 53,900.



2023

2024

2.7 Communication and social media

These consistently rising metrics underscore the value of producing high-quality content and effectively communicating updates and activities to foster engagement, raise awareness of funding opportunities, and promote events. Strategic use of platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter not only boost visibility and strengthens connections within the blue economy community but also facilitates the dissemination of key information.

Other channels: website and newsletter (2024)



31

NEWS ITEMS PUBLISHED

38,017

PAGE VIEWS



977

SUBSCRIBERS

8

ISSUES

By leveraging these platforms, the CMA successfully steers community engagement and actively supports the implementation of its goals, ensuring stakeholders are informed, motivated, and aligned with the shared objectives of advancing sustainability and innovation in the Black Sea region.



3. Conclusions and next steps

The responsibility for the CMA lies with the riparian countries, with the European Commission and the BSAM continuing to provide support for its implementation. All CMA activities are designed with stakeholder engagement and broad representation in mind. Over the past two years, stakeholders from across the Black Sea have contributed to numerous discussions and workshops. The following sections provide a brief overview of these contributions, organised by CMA goals.

3.1 Main outcomes from stakeholder's contributions

Goal 1. Healthy marine and coastal ecosystems

The Black Sea faces significant environmental challenges, including pollution, overfishing, invasive species, and the exploitation of marine resources, threaten the region's ecosystems and economic stability. Stakeholders suggest that future efforts should focus on restoring water systems, reducing pollution, and promoting sustainable marine management.

The implementation of the [SRIA](#) will be central to these efforts, providing a framework for sustainable blue development. Advanced technologies, such as robotic gliders and satellite analysis, are expected to be vital in collecting ecosystem data and developing effective solutions.

Collaboration will be key, with diverse stakeholders from international organisations and local programmes working together to tackle issues like pollution and unsustainable fishing practices. This collective approach will drive ecological transition and ensure long-term sustainability. Public awareness and ocean literacy will also play a crucial role in building support for sustainable practices. By emphasising both environmental and economic benefits, these efforts will aim to establish a "safe operating space" for the Black Sea, ensuring its sustainability for future generations.

3.1 Main outcomes from stakeholder's contributions

Goal 2. A competitive, innovative and sustainable blue economy for the Black Sea

Stakeholders need support to foster innovation and enhance competitiveness in the Blue Economy. Future efforts should focus on building capacity to leverage EU funding and national frameworks to promote innovation, entrepreneurship, and long-term economic sustainability.

Proposals include digitising and decarbonising maritime activities, adopting electric vessels, clean energy technologies, and AI-driven tools for improved port management and operational efficiency. Innovative monitoring solutions, such as data collection by fishing vessels, will improve data sharing and support regional maritime sustainability.

Developing blue skills and workforce readiness is a priority, with initiatives focusing on targeted training, online courses, and aligning education with industry needs. These programmes aim to reduce brain drain and prepare a resilient workforce for emerging opportunities in the blue economy.

Future strategies will focus on strengthening sustainability in fisheries and aquaculture, addressing overfishing, mitigating climate change impacts, and conserving biodiversity. Specific measures will include stock assessments, sustainable aquaculture practices, and cetacean preservation. Collaborative regional efforts will be essential to advancing a sustainable blue economy by integrating international actions, addressing capacity-building needs, and closing regulatory gaps.

3.1 Main outcomes from stakeholder's contributions

Goal 3. Fostering Investment in the Black Sea blue economy

Stakeholders envision a future where technological advancements and market innovations drive sustainable development. SMEs and startups are expected to lead the way, developing solutions for tackling plastic pollution, converting waste into energy and raw materials, and advancing technologies such as AI, blockchain, digital twins, and algae-based products. These innovations will open new economic opportunities and drive market expansion within the Black Sea and Danube ecosystems.

Emerging technologies will also enhance sustainability, creating opportunities to preserve jobs in traditional sectors like fishing and tourism while promoting pollution reduction and ecosystem restoration. By fostering innovative business models, these advancements will reinforce the economic and environmental value of the blue economy. Strategic investments in high-potential sectors like sustainable aquaculture, eco-packaging, microalgae production, and underwater technology are priorities. Investment tools, mentoring, and guidance will help companies secure financial support, bridging funding gaps and ensuring market readiness, scalability, and sustainability.

Despite challenges in securing mainstream financial support, stakeholders must actively address these funding challenges. Collaborative efforts will align environmental, social, and economic goals, driving investments in sustainable development. Building a resilient investment ecosystem is central to this vision, focusing on resource-efficient solutions that provide long-term benefits for the Black Sea region.

3.2 Charting the path forward: key next steps for the CMA

In January 2025, Ukraine will take over the coordination of the CMA for the year, building on the work of Romania and Moldova. The Ukrainian coordination has outlined its priorities, focusing on raising awareness of the CMA and maintaining engagement within the Black Sea blue economy community.

Ukraine will prioritise sharing best practices, particularly in joint environmental monitoring, including addressing the impact of the ongoing war on the marine environment—a shared issue across the Black Sea. The focus will also be on advancing discussions around green ports, innovative transport solutions, and infrastructure. In alignment with the region's future enlargement prospects, Ukraine will place emphasis on gaining experience with the implementation of EU policies and legislation related to the marine environment.

Additionally, Ukraine will support the SustAqua Technical Group in identifying new research opportunities and solutions to strengthen local value chains in marine aquaculture. The newly established Technical Group on Coastal and Maritime Tourism, aimed at ensuring a healthy, sustainable, and resilient Black Sea, will define its priorities under the leadership of Türkiye and Georgia.

To further assist local and regional stakeholders in realising CMA goals, Ukraine will continue to facilitate access to funding mechanisms, raising awareness and promoting investment in blue economy projects. With BSAM securing a further two-year contract, funded by CINEA, the CMA will continue to strengthen stakeholder engagement in the region and maintain strong connections with sister sea basins across the EU.

3.3 Conclusions

Despite significant geopolitical challenges in the Black Sea, particularly Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the region has made notable progress towards achieving its blue economy goals over the past two years. The Romanian and Moldovan coordination played key roles in this progress. In 2023, under Romanian coordination, the technical group on sustainable aquaculture was established, producing its first policy and governance recommendations in 2024, along with a comprehensive list of research topics.

From 2022 to 2024, numerous stakeholder engagement activities took place, with the BSAM ensuring that these events were interactive and that stakeholders' contributions were meaningfully incorporated. Project support has been a crucial element of the work, helping align CMA goals with grassroots stakeholders, regional, and national institutions. This support has provided the tools, funding, and capacity needed for concrete progress toward a sustainable blue economy.

The CMA has been a key driver in promoting the blue economy, disseminating funding opportunities, and advancing regional cooperation. It has contributed significantly to fostering collaboration among Black Sea countries and stakeholders, within the broader EU framework of the Eastern Partnership and Black Sea Synergy. As highlighted in the [Black Sea Synergy 4th Implementation report](#), the CMA has aligned Black Sea countries' priorities around a shared vision of sustainable blue economy development, boosted funding, and encouraged cross-border cooperation and multi-stakeholder involvement. The CMA places attention on promoting synergies with other regional actors ranging from private companies, SMEs, funding instruments such as [INTERREG](#), the [Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership \(SBEP\)](#), and the already engaged CMA Observers, such as the [Black Sea Commission](#), to strengthen the Black Sea Blue Economy Community.

3.3 Conclusions

Additionally, its successful high-level coordination with WestMED and the Atlantic Strategy, as demonstrated at the last European Maritime Day (EMD), marks a significant step towards enhancing collaboration between sea basins and fostering a broader EU Sea Basin perspective.

Looking ahead, the CMA will continue to evolve, building on the lessons learned and addressing emerging gaps. Its governance and support mechanisms will adapt to ensure that initiatives, projects, activities, and policy feedback remain reflective of the bottom-up approach, truly representing the views of all stakeholders in the Black Sea region. The CMA is what the countries make of it, and as the cooperation expands beyond the Black Sea region to other Sea Basins, it will be crucial to maintain and strengthen this momentum for sustainable blue development.

Together, we will continue driving progress towards a sustainable, innovative, and prosperous Black Sea region.

Thank you.

Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea



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