



D3.5 Report on the activities on the operational network, its sustainability beyond the CSA and recommendations

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Executive Summary

Black Sea CONNECT CSA was tasked with the establishment of an operational network for the Black Sea Region. The CSA facilitated the cooperation and coordination among the Black Sea countries and the EU to promote the alignment and convergence of national research and innovation activities and relevant initiatives and investments. Black Sea WG-GSO members, having the mandate to steer the Black Sea SRIA implementation, nominated members for the ONF to actively work on the SRIA Implementation and the ONF started to work actively from the second half of 2022 onwards.

This report gives the technical and operational procedures of the ONF, including its composition, main activities, topics discussed decisions made in each of the five ONF meetings supported by the CSA. A longer synthesis of the content of their findings and recommendations towards SRIA implementation is given in D2.5.

The logistics of the meetings and travel support for the ONF members are provided by METU under the Other Direct Cost category. METU has organized the 3rd and 5th ONF meetings that took place on a hybrid basis. These meetings took place back-to-back with other project activities (Marine Litter Action Forum and Launch of the Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan). The 4th ONF meeting also took place back to back with a project activity (“Consultation with Linked Projects and Initiatives on the Implementation Plan”) which was organized by GEOECOMAR under the Black Sea CONNECT project. METU provided travel support (flight/transportation and accommodation costs) for 3rd, 4th and 5th ONF meetings. Overall, 8 different ONF members’ travel is covered for 3 hybrid meetings. In total, 14 trips are covered under the METU budget in line with the usual practices.

- 7 October 2022 (online)
- 12 October 2022 (Brussels/Hybrid)
- 15 November 2022 (Istanbul/Hybrid)
- 16 March 2023 (Bucharest/Hybrid)
- 4 May 2023 (Brussels/Hybrid)

The ONF meetings paved the way for the group and therefore the countries to work together and build trust which is necessary for further collaboration. The co-development of the Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan with the active involvement of the ONF meetings and therefore the organizations and countries they represent ensured co-ownership of the IP and created enthusiasm for its implementation.

In the 5th ONF meeting, all ONF members expressed their interest in the continuation of the group through other mechanisms that will be decided. These mechanisms and country inputs are given in Deliverable 2.5 on the legacy and sustainability of the SRIA process. Throughout the Black Sea CONNECT CSA, METU coordination provided continuous support for the ONF group to ensure all countries are represented and based on the country representatives' support, METU has taken the responsibility to convene the 6th ONF meeting in autumn even after the end of the CSA. At the time of this report (July 2023), the possibility to organize the meeting back to back with the CMA Annual Stakeholder Conference that will take place on 22-23 November 2023 in Bucharest, Romania, is being explored but other options (online, or back to back with another event) will be pursued.



1. Introduction

Black Sea CONNECT promoted a shared vision for a productive, healthy, resilient, sustainable, and better-valued Black Sea. The overall objective of the Action was to coordinate the development of the Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA), based on the defined principles in the Burgas Vision Paper and support the development of the Blue Economy in the Black Sea.

Under the Black Sea CONNECT CSA, The Black Sea Working Group of Senior Officials (Black Sea WG-GSO) was brought together to oversee the steer the update and the implementation of the Black Sea SRIA and as such provide support to the dissemination of the common vision for a healthy, resilient and productive Black Sea.

The Black Sea WG-GSO recognized the need for a network, called the Operational Network of Funders (ONF) to ensure the involvement of the Black Sea country funding agencies/ministries to strengthen the cooperation among public research funders at the regional level and facilitate the alignment of national priorities (i.e., research and innovation strategies and programmes) and prepare the ground for the focused funding of joint actions to address the key challenges and goals of the SRIA.

Black Sea CONNECT CSA is tasked with the establishment of an operational network for the Black Sea Region. The CSA facilitated the cooperation and coordination among the Black Sea countries and the EU to promote the alignment and convergence of national research and innovation activities and relevant initiatives and investments. Black Sea WG-GSO members nominated members for the ONF to actively work on the SRIA Implementation and the ONF started to work actively from the second half of 2022 onwards.

This report gives the technical and operational procedures of the ONF, including its composition, main activities, topics discussed decisions made in each of the five ONF meetings supported by the CSA. A longer synthesis of the content of their findings and recommendations towards SRIA implementation is given in D2.5.

2. Objectives of the ONF

Black Sea WG-GSO has agreed to set the following objectives for the ONF:

- Ensuring cooperation among public research funders at the regional level and facilitating the alignment of national priorities;
- Focused funding of joint actions as part of the Implementation Plan to address the key challenges and goals of the SRIA;
- Working multilaterally (as a member state, associated country, or third country) in relation to Horizon Europe for Horizon Europe calls, like Pillar II Societal Challenges WP 2021- 2022/WP 2023-2024 and for the European Partnership for a climate-neutral, sustainable, and productive Blue Economy (Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership) as co-fund approach between MS/AC and EU;
- Joint preparation of dedicated calls, multilateral through parallel funding at the same time in different countries for new projects outside Horizon Europe.



3. The Composition of the ONF

Appointed by the Black Sea WG-GSO, the ONF consists of ministry representatives, observers, representatives of funding agencies and relevant EU services. **(Table 1)**

The ONF is steered in rotating co-chairmanship with a country representative and Black Sea CONNECT Coordination. In 2022, the ONF is co-chaired by Georgia and in 2023 it is co-chaired by Romania. The co-chairmanship works on a voluntary basis, with country representatives volunteering for the co-chairmanship. It is however generally aligned with the chairmanship of the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) Steering Group which is also steered on a rotating chairmanship basis of countries and their relevant ministries. This way the same country chairs both the ONF and CMA Steering Group, enabling synergies with the SRIA and CMA implementation.

The secretariat and organization of the ONF meetings are organized by the Black Sea CONNECT Coordination with support from the EC officials. More information on the meetings is provided in Section 4.



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Table 1 Composition of the ONF

Country	Members	
BULGARIA	Milen Baltov	Vice-Rector of Research and International Cooperation, Burgas Free University
	Kalin Mutavchiev	Ministry of Education and Science
ROMANIA	Viorel VULTURESCU	Ministry of Education and Research
MOLDOVA	Sveatoslav Postoroncă	National Agency for Research and Development / Moldovan Office for Science and Technology in Brussels (MOST)
TURKEY	Melike Ergün	The Scientific and Technological Research Council (TUBITAK)
GEORGIA	Rusudan Jobava	Head of International Relations and Fundraising office of Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia
	Tea Tarielashvili	Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of Georgia
	Ani Vashakmadze	Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia
UKRAINE	Viktor KOMORIN	Director, Science of the Ukrainian Scientific Center of Ecology of Sea
	Igor TARANOV	Director for International Cooperation, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
	Vitalina Kytsun	First Secretary, Agricultural, SPS, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Mission of Ukraine to the European Union
	Gamlet POGOSYAN	Deputy Director - Head of Unit, Environmental Management Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine
	Oleksandr Ustymenko	Department for the EU and NATO Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
Observers		
Black Sea CONNECT CSA	Barış Salihoğlu	Black Sea CONNECT
BSEC PERMIS	Rositsa Stoeva	Executive Manager
Black Sea Commission	Halil Ibrahim Sur	Executive Director
	Irina Makarenko	Pollution Monitoring and Assessment Officer
CPMR	Stavros Kalognomos	Executive Secretary Balkan & Black Sea Commission
EU Services		
DG RTD	Elisabetta Balzi	Head of Unit, Healthy Seas and Ocean, DG Research and Innovation
	Szilvia NEMETH	Deputy Head of Unit, Healthy Seas and Ocean, DG Research and Innovation
	Wendy Bonne	Policy Officer, Healthy Seas and Ocean, DG Research and Innovation
	Edoardo Casarotto	Policy Officer, Healthy Seas and Ocean, DG Research and Innovation
	Nikelina NASKA	Policy Officer, Horizon Europe Association, DG Research and Innovation
DG MARE	Christos Economu	Head of Unit/Deputy Director, Sea-basin Strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
	Iglika Yakova	Deputy Head of Unit, Sea-basin Strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
	Irene VECCHIATO	Policy Officer, Sea-basin Strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
EEAS	Anna REPULLO GRAU	Political Officer, Eastern Partnership, European External Action Service

4. Meetings

Under the Black Sea CONNECT CSA, five meetings are organized from October 2022 onwards. Meeting agendas were decided with the co-chairs with support from EC officials (See ANNEX).

In each meeting, time is dedicated to updates on the relevant EC initiatives for the Black Sea countries. Followed by that, updates from the Black Sea CONNECT are provided focusing on the joint actions of the CSA (Young Ambassador Programme, Marine Litter Joint Action, COVID-19/One Health Action), Implementation Plan and its relevant procedures (national consultations etc.)

Table 2 ONF Meetings as of June 2023

Date	Meeting
07.10.2022	1. ONF Meeting (Online)
12.10.2023	2. ONF Meeting (Brussels – Hybrid)
15.11.2022	3. ONF Meeting (Istanbul – Hybrid)
16.03.2023	4. ONF Meeting (Bucharest – Hybrid)
04.05.2023	5. ONF Meeting (Brussels – Hybrid)

4.1. 1st ONF Meeting

The first meeting of the ONF took place on 7 October 2023 as an online meeting to allow the introduction of the ONF members.

Participants: Barış Salihoğlu (Black Sea CONNECT), Mustafa Yücel (Black Sea CONNECT), Pinar Uygurer (Black Sea CONNECT), Wendy Bonne (DG R&I), Patrizia Busolini (DG MARE), Tea Tarielashvili (Georgia), Rusudan Jobava (Georgia), Ani Vashakmadze (Georgia), Melike Ergun (TUBITAK/TÜRKİYE), Edoardo Casarotto (DG R&I), Gonzalo GARCIA DE ARBOLEYA (REA), Sieglinde Gruber (DG R&I), Milen Baltov (Bulgaria), Szilvia Németh (DG R&I)

Highlights:

- The meeting is co-chaired by Tea Tarielashvili of Georgia and Barış Salihoğlu of Black Sea CONNECT
- A roundtable was held for ONF members to introduce themselves.
- Relevant initiatives and news were introduced by DG R&I and DG MARE.
 - DG R&I mentioned the upcoming SBEP meeting on 13 October 2022 in Brussels which also welcomes the ONF members. It is informed that under Horizon Europe Mission Ocean and Waters calls, one CSA has been funded for the Danube, starting in 2023.
 - DG MARE informed of the CMA activities: steering group meeting to take place in December 2022 and the next chair of the CMA Steering Group is decided to be Romania. The Smart Specialization Platform to be activated in November 2022 was introduced. A new assistance mechanism is to start soon to ensure alignment with SRIA and CMA implementation, especially in joint actions such as marine litter.

- An overview of the Black Sea CONNECT project and the SRIA Implementation process is provided.
 - **Implementation Plan** Input from the Ministries would be necessary for the organization of the second national consultations and 1st draft of the Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan.
 - **Progress on joint actions** was presented. The upcoming Marine Litter Forum was explained.
 - Georgia: It is mentioned that there is a national interest in the Black Sea research and targeted calls for the Black Sea at the national level are in the pipeline. Synergies with the Plastic Pirates initiatives are in place.
 - Bulgaria: Plastic Pirates initiative is kicked off in Bulgaria to contribute to the Marine Litter Forum to be organized under the Black Sea CONNECT Project.

Next Steps Agreed:

- The next meeting would take place on 12 October 2022 as a hybrid meeting in Brussels back to back with the SBEP Black Sea workshop.

4.2. 2nd ONF Meeting

The 2nd meeting of the ONF took place on 12 October 2023 as a back-to-back event with the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership – Black Sea Regional Workshop on 13 October. The meeting took place at the DG R&I premises in Brussels as a hybrid event.

Participants: Onsite: Barış Salihoğlu (Black Sea CONNECT), Mustafa Yücel (Black Sea CONNECT), Pinar Uygurer (Black Sea CONNECT), Wendy Bonne (DG R&I), Ms Silvia BOJINOVA(DG R&I) **Online:** Tea Tarielashvili (Georgia), Rusudan Jobava (Georgia), Ani Vashakmadze (Georgia), Melike Ergun (TUBITAK/TÜRKİYE), Edoardo Casarotto (DG R&I), Nikelinda Naska (DG R&I), Milen Baltov (Bulgaria), Laura van Doorne (DG MARE), Sveatoslav Postoronca (Moldova), Ludmila Nistor Mihajlova, (Moldova).

Highlights:

- The meeting was co-chaired by Tea Tarielashvili of Georgia and Barış Salihoğlu of Black Sea CONNECT
- Relevant recent initiatives and updates were introduced by DG R&I and DG MARE.
- The overview of the Black Sea CONNECT project and the first draft of the Implementation Plan were presented for the input of the ONF members

Next Steps Agreed

- The next ONF meeting would be on 15 November 2022 in Istanbul back to back with the Marine Litter Action Forum
 - 1st draft of the Implementation Plan would be finalized in December after the ONF meeting in November.



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- From December onwards, 2nd round of national consultations would take place based on the 1st draft of the IP.
- In mid-march, the 4th ONF meeting would take place back to back with the international level consultations on the IP with relevant projects.

4.3. 3rd ONF Meeting

The 3rd meeting of the ONF took place on 15 November 2023 right after the Black Sea CONNECT Marine Litter Action Forum in Istanbul. The meeting was organized in a hybrid mode, allowing both online and onsite participants.

Participants: Onsite: Barış Salihoğlu (Black Sea CONNECT), Mustafa Yücel (Black Sea CONNECT), Pinar Uygurer (Black Sea CONNECT), Wendy Bonne (DG R&I), Tea Tarielashvili (Georgia), Rusudan Jobava (Georgia), Milen Baltov (Bulgaria), Nina Dzhebekova (Black Sea CONNECT/Bulgaria), Irina Stanciu (Black Sea CONNECT/Romania), Mamuka Gliava (Black Sea CONNECT/Georgia), Vangelis Papathanassiou (Black Sea CONNECT), Ezgi Şahin (Black Sea CONNECT), Rositsa Stoeva (BSEC) **Online:** Ani Vashakmadze (Georgia), Melike Ergun (TUBITAK/TÜRKİYE), Viktor Komorin (Ukraine), Eleni HATZIYANNI (DG MARE), Stavros Kalognomos (CPMR), Sophia Zherebchuk (Ukraine), Vitalina Kytsun (Ukraine), Anna SHATOKHINA (Ukraine), Igor GONCHARUK (Ukraine), Edoardo Casarotto (DG R&I)

Highlights:

- The meeting was co-chaired by Tea Tarielashvili of Georgia and Barış Salihoğlu of Black Sea CONNECT
- Relevant initiatives and news were introduced by DG R&I and DG MARE.
 - DG MARE announced the EMFAF call with the deadline of 31 January 2023 and an info day will take place on 24 November 2022 with CINEA. The latest edition of Communication on the Sustainable Economy was published. Together with DG REGIO, DG MARE has set up a new thematic smart specialization platform on the sustainable economy to mobilize countries and regions coming from different sea basins.
- The overview of the Black Sea CONNECT project and the first draft of the Implementation Plan were presented for the input of the ONF members. Collaborative work on each theme and action took place and comments are integrated based on the consensus. Additionally, how the second round of national consultations (methodology of the consultations) would be organized is discussed with the ONF and Black Sea CONNECT CSA members.

Next Steps Agreed

- For the launch of the SRIA Implementation Plan, 3 or 4 May in Brussels were considered. It would be confirmed based on the availability of the venue and high-level speakers.
- Back to back with the launch, an ONF meeting would also be held.
- 4th ONF meeting would take place on 16 March 2023 in Bucharest after the international level consultations.
- Dates would be set immediately for the second round of national consultations.





Figure 1. 3rd Operational Network of Funders Meeting on 12 November 2022 in Istanbul

4.4. 4th ONF Meeting

The 4th meeting of the ONF took place on 16 March 2023 right after the “Consultation with Linked Projects and Initiatives on the Implementation Plan” event in Bucharest which focused on complementing the national input with the international feedback on the Black Sea SRIA IP. The meeting was organized in a hybrid mode, allowing both online and onsite participants.

Participants: Onsite: Barış Salihoğlu (Black Sea CONNECT), Mustafa Yücel (Black Sea CONNECT), Pinar Uygurer (Black Sea CONNECT), Tea Tarielashvili (Georgia), Nina Dzhembekova (Black Sea CONNECT /Bulgaria), Kremena Stefanova (Black Sea CONNECT/Bulgaria), Viorel VULTURESCU (Romania), Adrian Stanica (Black Sea CONNECT/Romania), Selma Menabit (Black Sea CONNECT/Romania), Irina Stanciu (Black Sea CONNECT/Romania), Mamuka Gliava (Black Sea CONNECT/Georgia), Vangelis Papathanassiou (Black Sea CONNECT), Ezgi Şahin (Black Sea CONNECT), Rositsa Stoeva (BSEC), Tudor Castravet (Moldova), Olena MARUSHEVSKA (Ukraine), Bogdan Avramchuk (Ukraine) **Online:** Rusudan Jobava (Georgia), Milen Baltov (Bulgaria), Melike Ergun (TUBITAK/TÜRKİYE), Viktor Komorin (Ukraine), Irene VECCHIATO (DG MARE), Stavros Kalognomos (CPMR), Vitalina Kytsun (Ukraine), Sveatoslav Postoronca (Moldova), Wendy Bonne (DG R&I), Edoardo Casarotto (DG R&I)

Highlights:

- The meeting was co-chaired by Viorel VULTURESCU of Romania and Barış Salihoğlu of Black Sea CONNECT
- Relevant initiatives and news were introduced by DG R&I and DG MARE.
 - DG R&I mentioned the current calls for 2023 that are open under Horizon Europe Work Programme and Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030. The first joint



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call of Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership was launched on 13th February until 14th April 2023.

- DG MARE announced the new CMA website, with the latest developments in the region. Additionally, DG MARE reminded the online launch event of the Smart Specialisation (S3) Community of Practice, with presentations of the services offered through the S3 thematic platforms.
- Outputs of the national consultation that took place in the Black Sea countries based on the 1st draft of the IP were presented by the CSA members. The outputs were welcome by the ONF members as all strategic research actions ranked high in terms of feasibility and necessity/importance.

Next Steps Agreed

- Brussels Event was set for 4 May 2023 under SEARICA and it will take place at the European Parliament with the support of CPMR. It will be hosted by the MEP Marian-Jean MARINESCU.
- A survey in Ukraine was agreed to be launched to take place remotely and the outputs will also be integrated into the final version of the Black Sea SRIA IP.
- The drafting team would integrate the input received during the consultations and prepare the final draft
- It was often repeated that even though the Black Sea CONNECT CSA is ending, the launch event marked a new beginning and further work between the countries and countries should take regionally or bi- or trilaterally to implement the joint actions.



Figure 2. 4th Operational Network of Funders Meeting on 16 March 2023 in Bucharest



4.5. 5th ONF Meeting

The 5th meeting of the ONF took place on 4 May 2023 in Brussels before the official Launch of the Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan. The official Launch took place in the European Parliament with high-level participation from the EC services. (For details of the launch event, please see D2.5). A session is dedicated to the ONF members to reflect on their national perspective on the influence of the Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan at the national level. Based on this, the 5th ONF meeting focused on the Black Sea SRIA Implementation beyond the Black Sea CONNECT CSA that has ended as of 30 June 2023.

Participants: Onsite: Barış Salihoğlu (Black Sea CONNECT), Mustafa Yücel (Black Sea CONNECT), Pinar Uygurer (Black Sea CONNECT), Tea Tarielashvili (Georgia), Nina Dzhembekova (Black Sea CONNECT /Bulgaria), Kremena Stefanova (Black Sea CONNECT/Bulgaria), Viorel VULTURESCU (Romania), Adrian Stanica (Black Sea CONNECT/Romania), Selma Menabit (Black Sea CONNECT/Romania), Irina Stanciu (Black Sea CONNECT/Romania), Iryna Makarenko (Black Sea Commission), Rositsa Stoeva (BSEC), Tudor Castravet (Moldova), Rusudan Jobava (Georgia), Milen Baltov (Bulgaria), Irene VECCHIATO (DG MARE), Stavros Kalognomos (CPMR), Vitalina Kytsun (Ukraine), Sveatoslav Postoronca (Moldova), Wendy Bonne (DG R&I), Nikelina NASKA (DG R&I), Igor Taranov (Ukraine), Olena MARUSHEVSKA (Ukraine), Mihaela MIREA (CMA), Salome Kobaidze (Black Sea CONNECT/Georgia) **Online:** Szilvia Németh (DG R&I), Melike Ergun (TUBITAK/TÜRKİYE), Viktor Komorin (Ukraine)

Highlights:

- The meeting was co-chaired by Viorel VULTURESCU of Romania and Barış Salihoğlu of Black Sea CONNECT
- Relevant initiatives and news were introduced by DG R&I and DG MARE.
 - DG R&I mentioned the current calls for 2023 and reminded that innovation actions under the Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030 will have calls for associated regions. The opportunities for associated countries and third countries under SBEP are also mentioned and it was reminded that the SBEP Steering Committee meeting is open to observer countries (MS, AC or third countries) to learn more about the strategic perspectives and discussions. The ONF members are reminded that they can contribute to the success of the mission by adhering to the mission charter.
 - DG MARE invited the ONF members to the Regional workshop on “Building Black Sea Blue Economy: Partnership and Funding Opportunities” taking place on 10 May 2023 virtually. It was also mentioned that technical groups under the CMA implementation will be launched on specific topics such as sustainable aquaculture. CMA Annual Stakeholder Conference finally in person for the first time ever in Bucharest Romanian towards the end of the year.
- Interventions for the Launch event and therefore commitments of the ONF members for the SRIA implementations were overviewed.

Next Steps Agreed

- The importance of continuing bilateral and multilateral cooperation on research and innovation in the Black Sea is emphasized.



- ONF members were asked for their explicit consent on the continuation of the ONF meetings after the end of the Black Sea CONNECT CSA and all members expressed their interest for the next ONF meetings. It is tentatively agreed that METU will convene the next ONF meeting virtually in fall 2023.
- Regional organizations (BSEC, BSC, CPMR) also expressed their support for the continuation of the ONF group. BSEC expressed their interest to host the group in Istanbul.
- Horizon-2020 funded research and innovation actions BRIDGE-BS and DOORS continue to scientifically support the SRIA Implementation. However, the setup of certain mechanisms may be necessary for the continuation of the ONF group.



Figure 3 5th Operational Network of Funders Meeting on 04 May 2023 in Brussels

5.Support Provided for the ONF Meetings

Secretariat

Black Sea CONNECT CSA coordination is tasked to support the ONF meetings. The Black Sea CONNECT CSA Coordinator (METU) acted as the co-chair of the ONF group throughout the five meetings organized while the other co-chair has been taken over by country representatives on a rotating basis (in line with the CMA Steering Group). Communication (draft agendas, next steps, meetings and other documents) in between the meetings are maintained by METU in close cooperation with the EC services and co-chair of the ONF.

Financial Support

As foreseen in the Black Sea CONNECT CSA description of the action, the logistics of the meetings and travel support for the ONF members are provided by METU under the Other Direct Cost category. METU has organized the 3rd and 5th ONF meetings that took place on a hybrid basis. These meetings took place back-to-back with other project activities (Marine Litter Action Forum and Launch of the Black Sea SRIA



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Implementation Plan). The 4th ONF meeting also took place back to back with a project activity (“Consultation with Linked Projects and Initiatives on the Implementation Plan”) which was organized by GEOECOMAR. The logistics costs are borne by GEOECOMAR for this ONF under the Black Sea CONNECT project budget. METU, however, provided travel support (flight/transportation and accommodation costs) for the 3rd, 4th and 5th ONF meetings. Overall, 8 different ONF members’ travel is covered for 3 hybrid meetings. In total, 14 trips were covered under the METU budget in line with the usual practices.

The ONF meetings were organized always in a hybrid format to ensure the participation of all members and specifically of Ukrainian colleagues who experience problems with attending the meetings on-site due to the ongoing war.

6. ONF beyond the Black Sea CONNECT CSA

In the 2022-2023 period, the ONF meetings organized paved the way for the group and therefore the countries to work together and build trust which is necessary for further collaboration. The co-development of the Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan with the active involvement of the ONF meetings and therefore the organizations and countries they represent ensured co-ownership of the IP and created enthusiasm for its implementation.

In the 5th ONF meeting, all ONF members expressed their interest in the continuation of the group through other mechanisms that will be decided. These mechanisms and country inputs are given in Deliverable 2.5 on the legacy and sustainability of the SRIA process. Throughout the Black Sea CONNECT CSA, METU coordination provided continuous support for the ONF group to ensure all countries are represented and based on the country representatives' support, METU has taken the responsibility to convene the 6th ONF meeting in autumn even after the end of the CSA. At the time of this report (July 2023), the possibility to organize the meeting back to back with the CMA Annual Stakeholder Conference that will take place on 22-23 November 2023 in Bucharest, Romania, is being explored but other options (online, or back to back with another event) will be pursued.

The interest in the continuation of the ONF is also stressed during the official launch event of the Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan on 4 May and details of the outputs of this meeting are provided under D2.5. High-Level EU officials that took part in the event also emphasized the importance of regional cooperation for the Black Sea SRIA Implementation.





DRAFT AGENDA

Information meeting for the Operational Network of Funders

7 October 2022
Time: 9:30 - 11:30 CEST
Venue: ONLINE¹

1. Welcome (Georgia ONF, Tea Tarielashvili, and Black Sea CONNECT, Baris Salihoglu)
2. **Update on EC initiatives (EC)** (9:40 - 10:00)
 - **Potential additional questions/comments (ALL)**
3. **Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan** (10:00 - 11:00)
 - Presentation on the state of the art of the Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan (Black Sea CONNECT, Baris Salihoglu, 20 min.)
 - **Tour de table (ALL)**
4. **Joint actions** (11:00 - 11:15)
 - State of the art (COVID-19 action, Marine Plastic action, Education/Youth Action by Black Sea CONNECT)
 - **Potential additional questions/comments (ALL)**
5. **Conclusions on agreed actions for the Operational Network of Funders** (11:15 - 11:25)
6. A.O.B.
 - Meeting schedule 2022 (ALL)

¹ Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81440902431?pwd=KzBqTTNlcEkwN2ZOMG0wSkMrRiM4QT09>
Meeting ID: 814 4090 2431
Passcode: 277783



DRAFT AGENDA

ONF meeting on 12 October 2022

Brussels at 10:30 – 13:30 CEST (11:30 – 14:30 GMT+3)

Venue: *Champ de Mars building (CDMA), 3rd floor, room 03/A148,*

Rue Champ de Mars 21, 1000 Bruxelles

+ HYBRID¹

1. Welcome (Georgia, Tea Tarielashvili, and Black Sea CONNECT, Baris Salihoglu)
2. **Update on EC initiatives (EC)** (10:45 - 11:00)
 - Potential additional questions/comments (ALL)
3. **Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan & Joint Actions** (11:00 - 11:45)
 - Presentation on the state of the art of the Black Sea SRIA ~~Implementation Plan~~ (Black Sea CONNECT)
 - State of the art of ongoing actions
 - Education/Youth Action by Black Sea CONNECT
 - Black Sea CONNECT Marine Litter Action Forum Agenda
4. **Implementation Plan, Joint actions, Funding mechanisms/opportunities** (11:45 – 12:45)
 - Discussion on content (priorities) and process Implementation Plan
 - Activity schedule content development
 - Target groups and format of national consultations
 - Tour de table (ALL)
 - Potential additional questions/comments (ALL)
5. **Conclusions on agreed actions for the Operational Network of Funders** (12:45 - 13:15)
6. A.O.B.
 - Meeting schedule 2022-2023, November ONF meeting, Black Sea CONNECT closing event place/time (ALL)

¹ Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86134415660?pwd=YkNBUE1VUyY29oR3BaTm9UV29ObG8wQT09>

Meeting ID: 861 3441 5660

Passcode: 106337





DRAFT AGENDA

ONF meeting on 15 November 2022

Istanbul at 15:00 – 17:30 (13:00 – 15:30 CET)

Venue: *Hilton Maslak Hotel*

Maslak, Büyükdere Cd. No:233, 34485 Sarıyer/İstanbul
+ HYBRID¹

1. Welcome (Georgia, Tea Tarielashvili, and Black Sea CONNECT, Baris Salihoglu)
2. **Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan & Joint Actions** (15:15 – 15:45)
 - **Presentation on the state of the art of the Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan (Black Sea CONNECT)**
3. **Implementation Plan, Joint actions, Funding mechanisms/opportunities** (15:45 – 17:00)
 - **Discussion on content (priorities) and process Implementation Plan (ONF and EC Services)**
 - **Activity schedule content development**
 - **Target groups, format and dates of national consultations**
 - **Tour de table on Joint Actions of the Implementation Plan (ONF and EC Services)**
 - **Potential additional questions/comments (ONF and EC Services)**
4. **Conclusions on agreed actions for the Operational Network of Funders** (17:00 – 17:15)
5. A.O.B. (17:15 – 17:30)
 - **Black Sea CONNECT closing event place/time (ONF and EC Services)**

¹ Time: Nov 15, 2022 15:00 Istanbul (13:00 CET)

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85098643542?pwd=Ukc3MTVRREMvaHJHVU55Wkpzc01Odz09>

Meeting ID: 850 9864 3542

Passcode: 736841





DRAFT AGENDA

Operational Network of Funders Meeting

16 March 2023

Hand cu Tei Bucharest / Hybrid¹

Time: 09:30 – 13:30 EET²

1. **Registration** (for on-site participants) (09:30 – 10:00)
2. **Welcome (Viorel Vulturescu and Baris Salihoglu)** (10:00 – 10:10)
3. **Update on EC initiatives (EC)** (10:10 - 10:30)
 - *Potential additional questions/comments (ALL)*
4. **Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan – Input from National and International Consultation** (10:30 - 11:15)
 - *Tour de table (ALL)*
5. **Coffee Break** (11:15 - 11:45)
6. **Next Steps and way forward: Launch event of SRIA Implementation Plan in Brussels and SRIA Implementation beyond Black Sea CONNECT CSA** (11:45 - 13:15)
7. **A.O.B.**

¹ Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/96549786432?pwd=ajVSc1h5OTMlckNucGhiSWQ0b0haUT09>
Meeting ID: 965 4978 6432
Passcode: 704421
² 09:00 12:30 CET





DRAFT AGENDA

Operational Network of Funders Meeting

Renaissance Brussels Hotel, Brussels & Hybrid¹

4 May 2023

Time: 09:30 – 13:00 CEST

1. **Registration** (for on-site participants) (09:30 – 10:00)
2. **Welcome** (10:00 – 10:10)
3. **Update on EC initiatives (EC)** (10:10 - 10:30)
 - Potential additional questions/comments (ALL)
4. **Next Steps and way forward SRIA Implementation beyond Black Sea CONNECT CSA** (10:30 - 11:30)
 - Tour de table (ALL)
5. **A.O.B** (11:30 – 12:00)
6. **End of meeting** (12:00)
7. **Working Lunch** (12:00 – 13:00)

¹ Link: <https://zoom.us/j/92977161873?pwd=eVNwU0ZxMDhHb3VlRTN4Q2phdHdYdz09>
Meeting ID: 929 7716 1873
Passcode: 614082





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