Implementing Ecosystem Based Management approaches in the Black Sea LME

Part I: Project Information

GEF ID
10725

Project Type
FSP

Type of Trust Fund
GET

CBIT/NGI
CBIT **No**
NGI **No**

Project Title
Implementing Ecosystem Based Management approaches in the Black Sea LME

Countries
Regional, Georgia, Turkey, Ukraine

Agency(ies)
UNDP

Other Executing Partner(s)
UNESCO-IOC

Executing Partner Type
Others

GEF Focal Area
International Waters

Taxonomy
International Waters, Focal Areas, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Influencing models, Beneficiaries, Stakeholders, Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Capacity Development, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Plan Preparation, Strategic Action Plan Implementation, Fisheries, Acquaculture, Marine Protected Area, Coastal, Learning, Pollution, Nutrient pollution from all sectors except wastewater, Nutrient pollution from Wastewater, Persistent toxic substances, Large Marine Ecosystems, Biodiversity, Species, Invasive Alien Species, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Demonstrate innovative approache, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Type of Engagement, Consultation, Participation, Partnership, Information Dissemination, Communications, Awareness Raising, Education, Public Campaigns, Behavior change, Private Sector, SMEs, Large corporations, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, Local Communities, Civil Society, Academia, Non-Governmental Organization, Community Based Organization, Gender-sensitive indicators, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender results areas, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Participation and leadership, Knowledge Exchange, Enabling Activities, Knowledge Generation, Innovation, Sustainable Development Goals

Rio Markers
Climate Change Mitigation
Climate Change Mitigation 0

Climate Change Adaptation
Climate Change Adaptation 1

Duration
48 In Months

Agency Fee($)
285,000.00

Submission Date
9/28/2020

A. Indicative Focal/Non-Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Amount($)	Co-Fin Amount($)
IW-1-1	GET	3,000,000.00	13,500,000.00
	Total Project Cost ($)	**3,000,000.00**	**13,500,000.00**

B. Indicative Project description summary

Project Objective

Enhancing Marine and Coastal Protected Area national and regional management and adoption of Blue Economy approaches in the Black Sea to support long-term sustainable livelihoods derived from ecosystem services

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount($)	Co-Fin Amount($)
Component 1: Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) of coastal and marine habitats Indicators/targets: Outcome: Increase in BE revenue (baseline to be established in PPG) target: > 5% growth by end of project Outputs: Output 1.1.1: Completed maps of MPA/MCPA in 3 countries with gap analysis Output 1.1.2: 3 counties agreeing BE strategies; Economic evaluation reports developed in 3 countries leading to at least 1 recommended policy reform per country Output 1.1.3: 3 updated national databases Output 1.1.4: 3 national strategies to address alien species	Technical Assistance	**Outcome 1.1:** Reduced threats to coastal states marine ecosystems and services to improve ecosystem status and community livelihoods	**Output 1.1.1:** Priority ecosystems sites and pressures mapped to guide MSPs, and to analyse gaps for MCPAs on priority habitat protection **Output 1.1.2:** Agreed **national** Blue Economy Strategies available to guide EBM policy reforms **Output 1.1.3:** Updated national databases to complement the Black Sea Information System (BSIS	GET	1,153,000.00	5,300,000.00

			output 3.1.4) with new components on biological and socio-economic aspects. **Output 1.1.4:** National action strategies developed/agreed to further co-operate with relevant IMO projects aimed at reducing threats to bioresources and ecosystems from specific invasive species with regional recommendations for BSC consideration and possible adoption.			
Component 2: Strengthening regional environmental governance and knowledge Indicators/targets: Outcome: 3 countries have recommendations to enhance governance /management capacity Outputs: Output 2.1.1: All countries have TDA/SAP updates presented to BSC Output 2.1.2 Developed/Updated Protocols plans and guidance documents presented to BSC Output 2.1.3: Regional indicator framework for EBM submitted to BSC	Technical Assistance	**Outcome 2.1**: Countries have strengthened political and legal commitments and capacity to	**Output 2.1.1:** Updated basin analysis (TDA) leading to revised BS SAP, proposed for adoption by BS Commission.	GET	1,002,640.00	4,500,000.00

		implement the Bucharest Convention and its Protocols with increased effectiveness of the Permanent Secretariat	**Output 2.1.2: Regional** Protocols, Plans and Guidance documents to harmonise approaches to MCPA, habitat protection, etc. submitted to BSC for adoption.			
			Output 2.1.3: Development and recommendation for adoption by BSC of regional indicator framework for EBM for annual reporting and relevant component of BSIS.			
Component 3: Regional Co-ordination of interventions Indicators/targets: Outcome: Independent assessments of regional projects identify benefits of improved co-ordination between projects. Outputs: Output 3.1.1: Established co-ordination mechanism Output 3.1.2: Capacity development delivered (F/M participants) Output 3.1.3: A series of interlinked national and regional strategies to raise awareness Output 3.1.4: BSIS updated	Technical Assistance	**Outcome 3.1**: Strengthened impacts from GEF and other partners and projects' activities	**Output 3.1.1:** Co-ordination mechanism established and functional with other projects in the Black Sea region, learning	GET	551,503.00	2,300,000.00

from other LME co-ordination mechanisms.

Output 3.1.2: Implementation of national/ regional capacity development programmes on EBM, building on best practices from e.g. Barcelona Convention.

Output 3.1.3: National and regional strategies (including possible covid-19 restriction) and programmes to share information and experiences.

Output 3.1.4: Updated and enhanced web-based Black Sea Information System (BSIS) to facilitate regional and national awareness

			raising (with new information from 1.1.3).			
Component 4: Knowledge Management, communication and Monitoring & Evualation Indicators/targets: Outcome: 4.1 Stakeholders (national, regional and global) accessing lessons and experiences Outputs: Output 4.1.1: Website established Output 4.1.2: Strategies (gender and stakeholders) implemented Output 4.1.3: 2 IW Conferences attended Output 4.1.3: At least 3 experience notes prepared	Technical Assistance	**Outcome 4.1** Stakeholders enabled with improved information (lessons and benefits of the project) to sustain and replicate actions **Outcome 4.2** M&E strategy guides project management to achive delivery of project outputs	**Output 4.1.1:** Established IW:LEARN compliant website within existing BSC website. **Output 4.1.2:** Project Stakeholder and gender strategies documented, implemented and shared across BS region **Output 4.1.3:** Participation in regional and global GEF /IW:LEARN activities. **Output 4.1.4:** Development of IW Experience Notes and other IW:LEARN related products and services. (1% of overall budget allocated to IW:LEARN related activities).	GET	150,000.00	685,714.00

		Output 4.2.1: Participatory monitoring and evaluation developed and implemented to facilitate adaptive project management.		
		Sub Total ($)	**2,857,143.00**	**12,785,714.00**
Project Management Cost (PMC)				
		GET	142,857.00	714,286.00
		Sub Total($)	**142,857.00**	**714,286.00**
		Total Project Cost($)	**3,000,000.00**	**13,500,000.00**

C. Indicative sources of Co-financing for the Project by name and by type

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount($)
Recipient Country Government	Georgia	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,500,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Turkey	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ukraine	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3,000,000.00
Donor Agency	European Union	Other	Investment mobilized	2,200,000.00
Donor Agency	UNESCO-IOC	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,500,000.00
GEF Agency	UNDP	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	300,000.00
			Total Project Cost($)	**13,500,000.00**

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

All “investment mobilized” were identified in consultation with the governments, and others. Related co-financing letters will be provided during the PPG phase. * The EU co-financing will be provided via the EU/UNDP EMBLAS project.

D. Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount($)	Fee($)	Total($)
UNDP	GET	Regional	International Waters	International Waters	3,000,000	285,000	3,285,000.00
				Total GEF Resources($)	**3,000,000.00**	**285,000.00**	**3,285,000.00**

E. Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

PPG Required **true**

PPG Amount ($)	PPG Agency Fee ($)
150,000	14,250

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount($)	Fee($)	Total($)
UNDP	GET	Regional	International Waters	International Waters	150,000	14,250	**164,250.00**
				Total Project Costs($)	**150,000.00**	**14,250.00**	**164,250.00**

Please provide justification

Agency request to increase the PPG from $100K to $150K is based on the necessity to organize close consultations with the other two GEF agencies – World Bank and FAO in order to agree on the joint actions, establishment of the coordination mechanism in the Black Sea region between the three GEF projects and extensive consultations between a number of stakeholders in the Black Sea.

Core Indicators

Indicator 2 Marine protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
418,243.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 2.1 Marine Protected Areas Newly created

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 2.2 Marine Protected Areas Under improved management effectiveness

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
418,243.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
GE - Kolkheti			15,743.00						
UA – NW shelf			402,500.00						

Indicator 7 Number of shared water ecosystems (fresh or marine) under new or improved cooperative management

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Shared water Ecosystem	Black Sea			
Count	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Indicator 7.1 Level of Transboundary Diagonostic Analysis and Strategic Action Program (TDA/SAP) formulation and implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Black Sea	4			

Indicator 7.2 Level of Regional Legal Agreements and Regional management institution(s) (RMI) to support its implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Black Sea	3			

Indicator 7.3 Level of National/Local reforms and active participation of Inter-Ministeral Committees (IMC; scale 1 to 4; See Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Black Sea	3			

Indicator 7.4 Level of engagement in IWLEARN throgh participation and delivery of key products(scale 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Black Sea	1			

Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	5,000			
Male	5,000			
Total	10000	0	0	0

Provide additional explanation on targets, other methodologies used, and other focal area specifics (i.e., Aichi targets in BD) including justification where core indicator targets are not provided

*Notes: The current MPAs in the 3 beneficiary countries are: Georgia – (Kolkheti) 15,743ha Turkey – no current designated MPAs Ukraine – 402,500 ha The project will strengthen at least. 418 k ha of MPA. During the PPG phase, the MPAs in Bulgaria, Romania and Russian Federation will be investigated to identify their likelihood at adopting recommendations delivered by the project and endorsed by the BSC.

Part II. Project Justification

1a. Project Description

Background

The Black Sea LME is a semi enclosed sea, connected to the world ocean only through narrow Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits, and to the shallow Sea of Azov by the Kerch Strait in the north. The LME covers a surface area of about 460,150 km^2, including the Sea of Azov, of which 2.21% is protected. The north-western part of the Black Sea is shallow but in other places its waters reach a depth of more than 2,200 m. The Black Sea catchment area entirely or partly extends over 18 countries: Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine -- about one third of the area of continental Europe and containing in excess of 160 million people. Every year, Europe's largest rivers, (the Danube, Dnieper and Don) carry about 350 km^3 of river water into the Black Sea. As a consequence of its almost landlocked nature and lack of circulation in its deep waters, the LME is particularly vulnerable to environmental stresses originating from human activities in the catchment area.

A strong density stratification, which effectively inhibits vertical mixing, results in permanent anoxia within almost 90% of the Black Sea's volume (below 200 m), making this LME the largest anoxic basin of the global ocean. The deep anoxic layer, with its high hydrogen sulphide content, is a 'dead' zone. Marine life is confined to the upper layer, while the bottom is void of invertebrates and fish in most parts of the Black Sea. The structure of the Black Sea ecosystem differs from that of the neighbouring Mediterranean Sea in that species variety is lower and the dominant groups are different. However, the abundance, total biomass and productivity of the Black Sea are much higher than in the Mediterranean Sea.

The Black Sea has undertaken assessments of the transboundary problems and their causes (through a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis - a TDA) leading to Strategic Action Programme (SAP) in 1996 and 2009. Subsequently the countries of the Black Sea with the support of the Black Sea Commission (BSC) have prepared a State of the Environment Report (2009 - 2015)[1]. This SoE report will be updated for the period 2015- 2020 and the results will be further assessed for the revision of the Black Sea SAP through a reassessment of the transboundary problems and their causes.

This Black Sea SoE Report is the third assessment prepared by the BSC), were supported by various international projects, such as SESAME, PERSEUS, KnowSeas, PEGASO, MISIS, EMBLAS (I and II), EMODNet etc., and national initiatives. It also refers to and utilizes relevant publications prepared for the Black Sea by various experts working in the Black Sea basin and beyond.

The report was prepared in accordance with outline of the report which incorporated both existing approaches to ocean assessment - UN World Ocean Assessment approach (also called Regular Process) and European approach reflecting provisions of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).

An important approach to address key issues identified is through the strengthening of designated Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). It is well known that the reproduction of most living marine natural resources takes place in the coastal zones[2] because of the edge effect in which physicochemical and biological interactions are most intense at the interface between land and water. This zone suffers the highest human pressure because of urban expansion, transport, infrastructure development, exploitation of living and non-living resources and impacts from recreation areas. Around 15 million people live in the 2 km wide coastal zone of the Black Sea, 6 million of them in Ukraine[3].

Conflict between economic activities and the need to maintain living resources has led to the establishment of MPAs. One of the first Black Sea MPAs, the Black Sea Biosphere Reserve, was established in Ukraine as early as 14 July 1927 to protect coastal and marine communities near the Dnieper River delta.

It is difficult to determine the precise extent of the existing Black Sea MPA network due to:

- Almost all the MPAs comprise not only marine waters but also terrestrial areas, which are generally larger.
- Parts of the aquatic area are lagoons or closed limans, isolated from the sea, which cannot be included with the Black Sea by definition.
- The definition and classification of protected areas in the Black Sea countries differ to a greater or lesser degree from the IUCN classification[4]. For example, where the IUCN has seven categories of protected area, Bulgaria has five, Romania has ten[5], and Ukraine has 11; in addition, their classification criteria are different.

Another difficulty in determining the total area of MPAs in different countries is that their areas often include sites with multiple designations. For example, the transnational Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve in Romania and the Danube Biosphere Reserve in Ukraine also include wetlands in the Ramsar list. The Natura 2000 protected area 'Ropotamo' (Ropotamo wetland complex) in Bulgaria contains four natural reserves, several Ramsar wetlands and the Blato Alepu nature monument. A recent publication on Black Sea MPAs says that there are no protected areas in Turkey apart from Ramsar wetlands in the Kizilirmak River delta (Begun *et al.*, 2012).

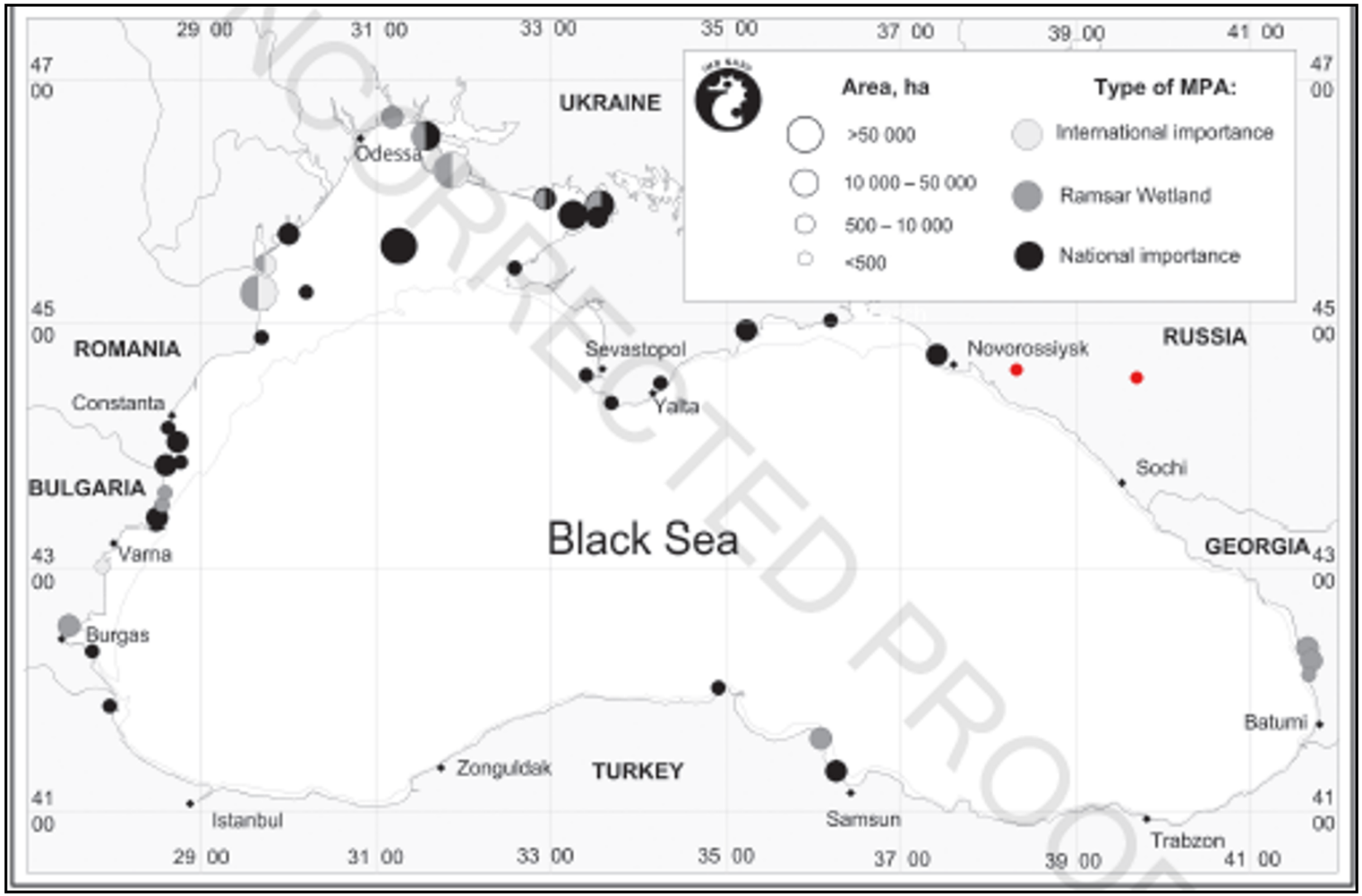
MPCA, MPA, MSP and EBM: A note on terminology:

This project makes frequent reference to Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) recognising the designation of MPAs but acknowledging the importance (indicated in the title of this project) of **marine and coastal zones** on related ecosystems. These approaches are supportive of Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) and the development of Marine Spatial Plans (MSPs) designed to provide an integrated management of marine and coastal protected areas.

There are 92 protected sites with a total area of 16,940 ha, 48 sites of Nature 2000 with a total area of 5,300 ha, and 31 marine protected areas of 302, 200 ha in Bulgaria. Kolkheti National Park (area 45,447 ha as of 2013) includes both a terrestrial part of 29,704 ha and a marine part of 15,743. Romania has eight sites of Nature 2000 with the area of 138,700 ha and two marine protected areas with a total area of 108,000 ha. Russia reported increase of the total protected area. There is only one marine protected area (Utrish) in Russia with total area 9,848 ha. It includes 9,065 ha of forest land and 783 ha of the sea area. There are 11 natural reserves with a total area of 38,000 ha in Turkey.

Figure 1 - The Black Sea MPAs of international and national importance[6]

Figure 1 - The Black Sea MPAs of international and national importance[6]



The main protected area site is the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve in Romania, 193,900 ha of which (or about 50% of the total area) is marine. The Black Sea's MPAs vary in size from tiny scientific reserves of 1 ha up to the newly designated Zernov's Phyllophora Field in the northwest shelf of Ukraine (402,500 ha). The role of Ukraine in the Black Sea biodiversity conservation is crucial. The largest area of the continental shelf of the Black Sea, the most unique bottom communities (phyllophora "fields"), as well as the main feeding aquatic areas of fishes and dolphins are allocated within Ukrainian exclusive economic

zone. Ukraine has included a number of plant and animal species of the Black Sea to the national red list (The Red Book of Ukraine), launched the population monitoring of threatened species (in particular, the annual counts of dolphins), and established the first marine protected areas in the Black Sea (Zmiiinyj Island, Zernov Phyllophora Field, and Small Phyllophora Field wildlife refuges).

The Black Sea region is under impact of global climate change tendencies. The global average temperature is estimated to have risen by 0.6°C over the course of the 20th century, and there are few scenarios of following development. Globally, 2010 is estimated to be the warmest year ever recorded since modern measurement began, closely followed by 2005. No single year since 1985 has recorded a below-average mean. The 2001-2010 decade was also the warmest ever recorded for each continent. Europe and Asia recorded the largest average temperature anomaly for the decade (+0.97°C). Climate processes have some specifics in the Black Sea region: Short-term periods of increased temperature in summer, increased number of extraordinary meteorological phenomena, warmer in general winter seasons are typical features of the climate change consequences in the Black Sea region.

Global Environmental Problem

During the second half of the 20th century the Black Sea suffered catastrophic ecological collapse mainly due to directly or indirectly impacting it human activities, leading ultimately (and quite rapidly) to the destruction of fisheries on which coastal communities largely depended for their economic well-being generated by the 'Blue Economy' from the Black Sea.

In addition, the impacts of pollution (nutrients, oil, hazardous substances, etc.) and invasive species had a detrimental effect on the biodiversity of the Black Sea. Pollution had been made worse through significant coastal developments designed to increase tourism.

The 2009 Black Sea SAP identified the transboundary problems that contribute to Global Environmental Problems as:

1. Eutrophication/nutrient enrichment;
2. Changes in marine living resources;
3. Chemical pollution (including oil); and
4. Biodiversity/habitat changes, including alien species introduction

The Black Sea SoE report identified the *consequences of environmental change* as including:

- Decline in the Black Sea fisheries was irreversible. According to the modern estimation, about 85 percent of the Black Sea stocks are fished at biologically unsustainable levels;
- Natural habitats, notably wetlands and shelf areas, supporting important biotic resources are still under anthropogenic impact (polluted waters discharged; littering of coastal and marine environment etc.), leading to developing tourism, recreation and health sectors having worse quality of ecosystem services;
- Some progress was achieved in the field of the protection of coastal biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes, in 2008-2014 several new national parks and natural reserves were established in the Ukrainian part of the Black Sea coastal zone However, these optimistic steps were not supported by strong management and appropriate resources;
- Dynamic quality of coastal water impacted by pollution from multiple coastal sources and offshore installations and activities is an issue for rapidly developing touristic sector in all Black Sea countries;

Causes of the Environmental Problems

The Black Sea is exposed to many threats that need to be addressed urgently. Overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, pernicious discarding practices, ghost fishing, marine pollution, uneven development of aquaculture and invasive species are the most important threats. The main causes of the environmental problems in the Black Sea impacting the ecosystem status and services (including the overall impacts on the blue economy) include:

· Eutrophication. Nutrient over-enrichment and resultant eutrophication result from contributing problems in the Black Sea's watershed, including point and diffuse sources of effluent from livestock farms, diffuse pollution from fertilizers, ground/soil water discharges (containing elevated levels of fertilizers) to surface waters, discharge of untreated industrial effluents and atmospheric emission/deposition of pollutants (principally nitrogen) onto land/directly into the sea. All of the above are immediate causes of nutrient-enrichment, which leads to increased primary productivity (increased growth of plants, including phytoplankton), and thus increased food availability to promote growth of all commercially important marine living resources. Thus nutrient-enrichment can be viewed in a positive light with regard to marine living resources, but the resulting changes in trophic status result in some native species being favoured over others and the ensuing ecological imbalance allows opportunistic non-native species to become established and in extreme cases to dominate whole trophic levels.

· Habitat Destruction. These changes also result in a reduced area of seabed occupied by key macroalgal (seaweed) species – taxa which provide critical nursery areas for many fish species. For example, the Phyllophora field on the Northwest Shelf sustains more than 40 fish species. In the last 30 years, its area has decreased more than 20 times.

· Invasive species. The discharge of untreated ballast waters, and along with it, the introduction of alien species, about one quarter of which is regarded as either moderately or highly invasive has historically caused tremendous changes to commercial marine living resources. A jellyfish-like species (Mnemiopsis leidyi), which was accidentally introduced in 1982 from North Atlantic in the ballast water of a ship, invaded the Black Sea, contributing later to the collapse of fishery (its diet includes fish larvae and eggs). It is estimated that the comb jelly reduced the profits available in the Black Sea anchovy fishery from over $17 million per year to under $300,000 per year (a decline of 98%).

· Hazardous Substance pollution acts through a host of biochemical pathways, with many pollutants being accumulated up through the food chain to levels which are orders of magnitude higher than those found in the marine environment itself. When accumulated to such levels they depress the growth rate and health of marine biota (especially fauna), can alter the ability of some species to reproduce, and at high concentrations can ultimately result in localised extinctions of some species or more general localised mass mortalities in the event of toxic spills/illegal dumping. The recognised sources of these chemicals include: diffuse pollution from pesticides, ground/soil water discharges (containing elevated levels of pesticides) to surface waters, discharge of untreated industrial effluents, oil spills and dumping/discharge of wastes.

· Overfishing/By-Catch. Intense and unregulated fishing pressure (including illegal fishing) in the 1960s-1970s led to severe overexploitation of most of the LME's major fish stocks. This has been exacerbated by destructive fishing practices such as catching of under-sized fish. Of important value is the turbot fishery, where overfishing has brought the stocks to an unsustainable historical low. In this fishery, performed by gillnet fleets, the by-catch of cetaceans create a major problem threatening the biodiversity of the ecosystem. The problem of perceived over-fishing deserves special attention, since this has been a particularly important cause of major changes in commercial marine living resources in the past. The total catch is once again showing an increasing trend, but this still only about half of the level caught in the 1980s. However, selective fishing for rare and high value species, such as dogfish, turbot, etc. is undoubtedly damaging/preventing the recovery of these species, as are by-catches of these species when other species are targeted. Under-reporting of actual catches is also likely to be problem, due to high taxes (in some countries) and the fact that fish markets are unevenly distributed along the coast. Since

fisheries data collection systems are not effective and cannot provide the information for robust fisheries management. There is a need for more institutional strengthening and targeted capacity-building to ensure that fisheries management plans are effectively institutionalized. This may also require reform or adaptation of existing measures to combat illegal fishing, since this is one of the key issues that may undermine effective management.

· **Fishing fleet over-capacity** is a continuing problem in the Black Sea, though the fleet size has declined in line with a reduction in fish stocks. The trend is therefore a problem, since if fishing vessel operators can only make a meagre income, the tendency is for them to spend longer and longer at sea, resulting in unsustainably higher catches. Despite bottom trawling being prohibited in most areas, and fishing for the largest fish resource – the anchovy, mainly conducted by purse seiners (which allegedly does not create bottom impact), some pelagic trawlers use quite heavy ground gear, which indicate frequent contact with the sea floor. Also ghost fishing by lost gillnets from the large turbot fleets, has raised considerable concern in terms of unaccounted fish mortality and threats to marine biodiversity. There are also large differences in the economic and technical structure of the fleets exploiting the fishery resources of the Black Sea among the countries, though small-scale fisheries form the majority, as well as in the development of aquaculture. This makes regional cooperation a more demanding exercise.

Barriers

The main barriers to addressing the causes of the environmental problems impacting the Black Sea include:

1. **Lack of national capacity on EBM, MSP and Coastal management** with insufficient capacity to support monitoring of biodiversity, both in terms of protected areas and threats via alien invasive species. Capacity for the monitoring of biodiversity ranges from good to poor throughout the region. Facilities and infrastructure can sometimes be poor and human capital while mostly skilled, can often be lacking. Capacity for biodiversity monitoring is particularly low in Ukraine, which has significantly degraded administrative and technical services capable of marine research and conservation. A threat for the biodiversity of the Black Sea Northwest region has emerged due to the Ukraine's inability to perform sufficient monitoring and protection activities.

2. **Insufficient regional guidance and ecosystem information to inform EBM and MPA management including:**

· **Poor coordinating mechanisms to address governance, policy development and knowledge sharing** for environmental concerns. Stakeholder appreciation of the practical implications of ecosystem-based management is somewhat lacking in the region. Stakeholders in this case include both Governments and also the community-level. This can affect the will to implement in practice any measures developed or improve the enforceability of new laws. The Black Sea countries have different socio-economic and political structures, and they participate in diverse regional and international organizations and instruments.

· **Fragmented information and data sharing networks for oceanographic and environmental monitoring**. The overall extent of environmental impact of fishing activities and gear, and of aquaculture development activities is not well known.

3. **Inadequate regional co-ordination between national and regional interventions in the Black Sea basin**. Over the last 30 years there have been multiple nationally and internationally (e.g. EU, GEF, etc.) funded programmes to address the historic problems impacting the Black Sea region, with attempts made to improve the information and knowledge sharing of the results of the projects (e.g. DABLAS - Danube and Black Sea Task Force), but there is a need for further co-ordination and information sharing capabilities to ensure the lessons and experiences delivered are made available to a wide range of national and regional stakeholders.

COVID-19, and the restrictions imposed in the countries in the Black Sea Region, will add to the barriers in the significant short to medium term. There will be a necessity to develop and implement measures that respect national restrictions and adopt more social-distance means of holding meetings and participating in training sessions. These approaches, which are being adopted world-wide, will need to be agreed in the inception phase of the proposed project.

II.1a.2 Baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects,

Introduction

International programmes have been working in the Black Sea Region for 30 years. The current project builds on a historic legacy of achievements and information provided by national actions, the ratification of the Bucharest Convention, the establishment of the Black Sea Commission, international and international donors and partners (e.g. GEF, EU, etc.). Summarised below are the key elements that the project will build upon together with the current/planned national and regional enabling initiatives in the Black Sea region.

The Black Sea Convention

The Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (the Bucharest Convention) was signed in 1992 and ratified in 1994. The basic objective of the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution or so called Bucharest Convention is: "*to substantiate the general obligation of the Contracting Parties to prevent, reduce and control the pollution in the Black Sea in order to protect and preserve the marine environment and to provide legal framework for co-operation and concerted actions to fulfil this obligation*".

Established to implement the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution, the Commission (BSC) acts to:

1. Promote the implementation of the Convention and inform the Contracting Parties of its work,
2. Make recommendations on measures necessary for achieving the aims of the Convention,
3. Consider questions relating to the implementation of the Convention and recommend such amendments to the Convention and to the Protocols as may be required, including amendments to Annexes of this Convention and the Protocols,
4. Elaborate criteria pertaining to the prevention, reduction and control of pollution of the marine environment of the Black Sea and to the elimination of the effects of pollution, as well as recommendations on measures to this effect,
5. Promote the adoption by the Contracting Parties of additional measures needed to protect the marine environment of the Black Sea, and to that end receive, process and disseminate to the Contracting Parties relevant scientific, technical and statistical information and promote scientific and technical research;
6. Cooperate with competent international organizations, especially with a view to developing appropriate programs or obtaining assistance in order to achieve the purposes of the Convention.

Together with Bucharest Convention the four thematic Protocols were signed:

1. Protocol on the Protection of the Black Sea Marine Environment Against Pollution from the Land Based Sources (LBS Protocol);
2. Protocol on the Protection of the Black Sea Marine Environment Against Pollution by Dumping (Dumping Protocol);
3. Protocol on Cooperation in Combating Pollution of the Black Sea Marine Environment by Oil and Other Harmful Substances in Emergency Situations (Emergency Protocol);

4. The Black Sea Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation Protocol (CBD Protocol) (BSC,2014).

The Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission (BSC PS) was established in 2000 to assist the Black Sea Commission on implementation of provisions of the Convention and the Black Sea Strategic Action Plan (BS SAP). The areas of concern of the Black Sea Commission are, *inter alia*, to monitor and assess pollution, control pollution from land-based sources, ensure conservation of biological diversity, address environmental safety aspects of shipping, address environmental aspects of management of fisheries and other marine living resources and promote integrated coastal zone management and maritime policy.

The BSC PS coordinates activities of six Advisory Groups to the Black Sea Commission, which are its main source of expertise, information and support. There are six Advisory Groups to the Black Sea Commission on:

- Pollution Monitoring and Assessment;
- Control of Pollution from Land Based Sources;
- Conservation of Biological Diversity;
- Environmental Aspects of the Management of Fisheries and other Marine Living Resources;
- Environmental Safety Aspects of Shipping;
- Development of Common Methodologies for Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).

European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive). This Directive enshrines in a legislative framework the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities having an impact on the marine environment, integrating the concepts of environmental protection and sustainable use. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive *aims to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) of the EU's marine waters by 2020* and to protect the resource base upon which marine-related economic and social activities depend. It is the first EU legislative instrument related to the protection of marine biodiversity, as it contains the explicit regulatory objective that "biodiversity is maintained by 2020", as the cornerstone for achieving GES. The Marine Directive complements the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC, the Habitat and Wild Birds Directives in coastal waters and introduces new approaches to research and protection of marine environment

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) consists of 23 Member countries along with the European Union, the GFCM's objectives are to promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean, Black Sea and connecting waters. Membership is open to both Mediterranean coastal states and regional economic organizations as well as to United Nations member states whose vessels engage in fishing in Mediterranean waters.

Black Sea Economic Commission (BSEC). The Black Sea Economic Cooperation came into existence as a unique and promising model of multilateral political and economic initiative with the signing of the Istanbul Summit Declaration and the Bosphorus Statement by the Heads of State and Government of the countries in the region, on 25 June 1992. With the entry into force of its Charter on 1 May 1999, BSEC acquired international legal identity and was

transformed into a full-fledged regional economic organization - the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. The BSEC is expected to be the Executing Agency for the recently approved GEF/World Bank project (Blueing the Black Sea – see below).

Burgas Vision Paper: A Blue Growth Initiative for Research and Innovation in the Black Sea declared that 'in cooperation with marine experts from leading European marine institutes and organisations, and with the support of the European Commission, aim to advance a shared vision for a productive, healthy, resilient, sustainable and better valued Black Sea by 2030'. We believe that through our work we will help to deeper connect Black Sea societies through a bridge of new knowledge, technologies and services. We aim to foster human and infrastructures capacity building in coastal, marine and maritime sectors in view of unlocking unique opportunities for a sustainable and environmentally friendly blue growth in the Black Sea.

Previous Projects contributing to baseline understanding

The project builds on 30 years of work to address the problems facing from the environmental problems impacting the blue economy activities in the Black Sea. The Black Sea countries have been involved in a range of key activities completed in the last 10 years include:

· EU-FP7 project - PERSEUS (2012 -2015) and on-going bilateral initiatives among the Black Sea littoral states on joint stock assessment will form the basis for development of a broader and more coordinated regional cooperation under the project. Its purpose is to build and demonstrate an EU maritime surveillance system integrating existing national and communitarian installations and enhancing them with innovative technologies. PERSEUS is therefore a key project in delivering comprehensive maritime surveillance from coastal regions to high seas through a collaboration across Member States. The project's proposed work on joint stock assessments will leverage in part the work of PERSEUS.

· Southern European Seas: Assessing and Modelling Ecosystem Changes -SESAME (2006 -2011) was an EC project designed to assess changes in the South European Seas ecosystems over the last 50 years, and to assess the current status of the SES ecosystems through analysis of existing and newly collected data at basin scale and through model simulations. SESAME aimed to predict changes in the SES ecosystems, using existing and new observations at a regional and basin scale, in order to construct scenarios of the ecosystem responses to likely changes in climate and anthropogenic forcing during the next five decades. SESAME will identify the ecosystem functions (observed and predictable from model simulations) pertinent to these goods and services as well as their changes during the last decades.

· Options for Delivering Ecosystem-Based Management (ODEMM) project, (2010 - 2014)coordinated by the University of Liverpool, aims to develop a set of fully-costed ecosystem management options that would deliver the objectives of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Habitats Directive, the European Commission Blue Book and the Guidelines for the Integrated Approach to Maritime Policy. The key objective is to produce scientifically based operational procedures that allow for a step by step transition from the current fragmented system to fully integrated management. It is expected to contribute to the project by supporting coastal states to incorporate ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries. The project will also take advantage of certain socio-economic investigations conceived in the ODEMM project undertaken in relation to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive in Bulgaria and Romania.

· EU- Towards Integrated Marine Research Strategy and Programmes (SEAS-ERA) project (2010 - 2014) aimed at embracing marine and maritime research in its entirety, overarching the previous initiatives which only targeted a given area or basin and, therefore constituting a stable and durable structure for empowering and strengthening marine research all across Europe. The SEAS-ERA initiative had an impact in terms of a coherent trans-national strategy to ensure excellence in European marine research, with enhanced added value and cost-effectiveness.

· **Guiding Improvements in the Black Sea Integrated Monitoring System (MISIS)** project (2012 -2014) is to support efforts to protect and restore the environmental quality and sustainability of the Black Sea. The project also seeks to improve availability and quality of chemical and biological data, to provide for integrated assessments of the Black Sea state of environment, including pressures and impacts, to increase number and size of protected areas in the Black Sea as well as to increase their degree of protection and to enhance stakeholders participation and public awareness on environmental issues. This project will take advantage of MISIS recommendations on capacity building.

· Additional completed projects include:

o FP6 Upgrade BS-SCENE (Upgrade Black Sea Scientific Network), in 2008-2011,

o FP7 CREAM (Coordinated Research in support to application of Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and management advice in the Mediterranean and Black Seas in 2011-2013,

o EMODNet (European Marine Observation and Data Network) having different components of interest to the Black Sea scientific community (chemistry, physics, biology, etc.) from 2008 and ongoing still,

o FP7 PEGASO (People for Ecosystem Based Governance in Assessing Sustainable Development of Ocean and Coast) in 2010-2013),

o FP7 CoCoNET (Towards Coast to Coast NETwork of marine protected areas (from the shore to high and deep sea), coupled with sea-based wind energy potential) in 2012-2015,

o DG-ENV IRIS-SES (Integrated *R*egional monitoring Implementation Strategy in the South-European Seas) in 2013-2015,

Current Regional projects planned/underway

· **BS-CBC ANEMONE (**Assessing the vulnerability of the Black Sea marine ecosystem to human pressures) in 2018-2021,

· **H2020 COASTAL (Collaborative and sea integration platform)** in 2018-2022, just an example of continuous marine research and monitoring, training activities and scientific conferences organisation, that may contribute to the implementation of BSIMAP, although no national funds are directly involved.

· **Improving Environmental Monitoring in the Black Sea (EMBLAS)** (2013 - 2020) is an EU-UNDP regional initiative for Georgia, Russia and Ukraine, which helps strengthen the capacities of the three countries for biological and chemical monitoring of water quality in the Black Sea. The project improved availability and quality of data on the chemical and biological status of the Black Sea in line with the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and Black Sea Strategic Action Plan needs. It enhances partner countries' ability to perform marine environmental monitoring along MSFD principles, taking into account abovementioned Black Sea Diagnostic Report. This project will leverage EMBLAS work on data collection and monitoring as well as recommendations on specific capacity-building. The Black Sea SoE report (2009 - 2015) was prepared with financial support from the EU/UNDP EMBLAS Project.

· **UNDP,** with **EU** support, is planning a follow-on project to EMBLAS anticipating funding of 2.2 M USD from the EU with an additional 105 k USD from USD as co-financing. The overall objective of the project is to help improve protection of the Black Sea environment. This objective will be pursued through further technical assistance focused establishing modern systems and facilities for environmental monitoring with primary focus on Georgia and Ukraine, capacity

building, assessment of environmental status in line with EU MSFD/WFD and public awareness raising on the Black Sea environmental issues. The key involved actors are research / scientific and educational institutions involved in the Black Sea monitoring.

· **The EU has launched a call for 'Strategic Research and Innovation action' (SRIA)** proposals 'Towards a productive, healthy, resilient, sustainable and highly-valued Black Sea' (2019). This call responds to a vision paper that identifies a series of challenges for the Black Sea basin, which are driven by a range of human-induced and natural drivers, such as pollution, maritime transport, eutrophication, climate change, and coastal hazards. The abundance of gas hydrates is a particular asset of the Black Sea that represents both opportunities and risks. Fish stocks and species diversity are under severe stress, common surveys and monitoring can provide a base for better assessment, management and prevention. The area's marine heritage and its ecosystem services are also at risk. Black Sea societies can be more deeply connected through a bridge of knowledge, technologies, services and innovations. The EU is committed to supporting the development of solutions to solve these issues. This work will support several policies and international agreements such as the EU Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP), the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the EU Neighbourhood Policy, and the Bucharest Convention. Projects will initiated in the Black Sea region that will further support this proposed GEF project further strengthen marine management and Blue Economy actions in the countries.

o **The H2020 Black Sea CONNECT CSA project** (2019 – 2023) aims to carry out the development of the Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda and implementation plan both at national and regional level. Fourteen organizations from nine countries are involved in the project; the Black Sea coastal countries, namely the Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey, Ukraine as well as Republic of Moldova and European Union countries Germany and France. The overall objective of the Black Sea CONNECT is to coordinate the development of the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA), based on the defined principles in the Burgas Vision Paper and support the development of the Blue Growth in the Black Sea. The SRIA and its Implementation Plan will guide stakeholders from academia, funding agencies, industry, policy and society to address together the fundamental Black Sea challenges, to promote blue growth and economic prosperity of the Black Sea region, to build critical support systems and innovative research infrastructure and to improve education and capacity building.

· The recently approved **GEF/World Banks project, 'Blueing the Black Sea'**, is designed to incentivize public and private investments for pollution reduction in target countries. The long-term objective of the project would be to improve environmental health of the Black Sea and increase social and economic benefits for the population. This will be achieved by promoting Blue Economy approaches to help address pollution (sewage, oil, toxic substances, etc.) and their economic impacts under changing climate conditions.

· Also recently approved is **the GEF/FAO project, 'Fisheries and Ecosystem Based Management for the Black Sea'** with the objective to reverse the overexploitation of select commercial living marine resources by enhancing the capacity of Black Sea countries to manage fisheries, including through the application of ecosystem-based management tools. This will be achieved through capacity development, enhancing monitoring and surveillance of IUU fishing and further application of specific EBM tools.

This proposed UNDP project will enhance regional and national management of MCPAs and will support the co-ordination of the three GEF projects to deliver a comprehensive support to the region to address the many environmental and related socio-economic consequences of the historic pollution and over exploitation of natural resources. The co-ordination provided by the UNDP project will ensure synergies and lack of duplication between plan activities on Blue Economy (with GEF/World Bank) and EBM (with GEF/FAO). During the project formulation, the three GEF Agencies (FAO, World Bank and UNDP) held extensive discussions held on the current GEF initiatives on the Black Sea to ensure close co-ordination and complementarity.

Black Sea Commission on-going activities

The **Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Black Sea Commission or BSC)** and its Permanent Secretariat (BSC PS) implement the provisions of the Bucharest Convention and the Strategic Action Plan for the Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea. All the Black Sea countries are Parties to the Bucharest Convention, which provides a framework for cooperation between them as well as four legally binding Protocols: on Land-Based Sources of Pollution, Emergency Responses, Conservation of Biodiversity and Dumping at Sea, implemented through national legislation. While the Bucharest Convention itself however does stipulate any environmental targets or regulatory mechanisms for exploitation or development of marine natural resources, the Commission officially addresses the following policy areas:

- **Pollution reduction from land-based sources and rivers**, vessels; regulatory and legal tools
- **Conservation of biological diversity**, expansion of protected areas, promotion of responsible fisheries
- **Introduction of ICZM**, promotion of EIA environmental audit, ecologically sound technologies, public involvement in environmental decision making, green tourism and sustainable livelihood

BSC PS will facilitate the exchange of relevant information and knowledge through its respective networks, may also become member of project' Advisory Board and act as end-user of the deliverables produced.

Jointly the following documents could be elaborated:

- assistance in drafting the recommendations for next BS SAP, *inter alia*, to introduce Blue Growth as a concept;
- Implementation and reporting on BSIMAP 2017-2022 and assistance in drafting the recommendations to next BSIMAP 2023-2028;
- Implementation of Annex 9 of BSIMAP ("Priority thematic studies to be implemented in 2017-2022. Subjects for international and national research projects");
- Updates to Annual reporting templates;
- Drafting the new Black Sea State of Environment (BS SoE for 2015-2020);
- Populating with data the Black Sea Information System (BSIS);
- Implementation and reporting on the Black Sea Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter;
- Implementation and reporting on the Black Sea ICZM Guidelines;
- Joint guidelines, manuals, publications etc.;
- Activities undertaken by BSC that will support this project include:
    - Back-to-back meetings (Advisory Groups meetings, thematic meetings) etc.;
    - Support to Regional Activity Centers (RACs);
    - Public awareness campaigns;

- Mass media and social networking etc.

IOC/UNESCO will provide support to the project through its Marine Policy and Regional Coordination section, and in particular dedicated programme on Integrated Coastal Area Management. This inter-governmentally endorsed programme aims to:

- Develop and promote the use of science-based management tools such as Integrated Coastal Area Management, Marine Spatial Planning, Ecosystem-Based Management, and the Large Marine Ecosystem Approach;
- Develop Member States' capacity in the application of ecosystem-based management tools; and
- Support the delivery of scientifically-founded information for the development of the sustainable ocean economy;
- Promote the integration of climate change adaptation and coastal hazards preparedness through the use of area- based management approaches.

The work of IOC/UNESCO in the field of Marine Spatial Planning will support the project through the

cooperation framework established under the Joint Roadmap to accelerate Maritime/Marine Spatial Planning processes worldwide[7], endorsed by IOC and the European Commission (DG Mare). As a result of this fruitful partnership and funding from the EC, the International MSP Forum[8] and the MSPglobal[9] Initiative were established in 2018. MSPglobal addresses the following priority actions of the MSP Roadmap: 1) Transboundary MSP; 2) Sustainable Blue Economy; 3) Ecosystem-based MSP; and 4) Capacity building.

Other IOC activities/programmes relevant to the implementation to the project include:

- Ocean Science Section work programme coordinating and catalyzing research on ocean acidification, de-oxygenation, biogeochemistry, and contaminants, identifying ecosystem indicators and tipping points and the impacts of multiple stressors on marine biodiversity and ecosystem functioning;
- The Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) aimed at improving and augmenting sustained global and regional observations of essential biological, biogeochemical, and ecosystem variables as part of GOOS to support management;
- The International Ocean Data Exchange programme, providing a global network of data and information centres including OBIS, with an emphasis on the development of data and information products and services contributing to the continuous monitoring of identified indicators of ecosystem state;
- Projects focused on capacity development and transfer of marine technology such the Global Ocean Teacher Academy (2020-2024), and Ocean InfoHub, both funded by the Government of Flanders/Belgium.

II.1a.3 Proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project;

Introduction

The formulation of this GEF project has been guided by discussions within the BSC meetings at multiple levels over several years as indicated in section 2 (below).

Background

The importance of conservation and the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources in the Black Sea is crucial to enhance a sustainable development of the sea basin and encouraged provision of assistance to countries in creating adequate coastal and marine governance frameworks, hence by implementing the ecosystem-based approach principles. The intensification of coastal and maritime activities in the Black Sea requires an integrated planning, effective decision-making and additional efforts at the regional scale, including transboundary coordination to achieve sustainability and improved management. Additionally, the large marine ecosystem is facing increasingly significant stress from climate change, habitat destruction and overexploitation; thus, the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience threatens to undermine the economic activities that rely upon these resources.

Traditional maritime activities such as local fishing and tourism are increasingly in conflict with new activities such as aquaculture, the development of maritime energy initiatives or the expansion of maritime transportation's logistics and services among others. Marine Spatial Planning[10] (MSP) is playing a key role in supporting the development of sectors that have a high potential for sustaining jobs and economic growth linked with maritime activities, the blue growth and the blue economy[11]. Sustainable and integrated blue economy also requires greater knowledge about living resources, analyzing the value of these ecosystems for the regional economy and improving stakeholder and citizen access to marine data and information.

At the **national level**, the project will identify conflicts and compatibilities amongst human uses and in between human uses and the environment to as part of the preplanning process of marine spatial planning in each beneficiary country. In parallel, national analysis will identify the status and potential of maritime activities to define a national strategy on sustainable blue economy and the opportunity to be implemented at the regional scale attending to optional scenarios. In the context of biodiversity protection and conservation, the project will continue the work on habitats classification and mapping to facilitate the designation of MPAs sites (and will include already designated Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas - EBSA - sites and adopted by the Convention on Biodiversity) in the region, pursue development or related pilot projects and the need for regionally agreed methodological guidelines for identification, designation and management of MPAs. These efforts may facilitate the designation of national and transboundary (building on the work undertaken by the MISIS Project on the Bulgaria - Turkey transboundary MPA Igneada-Rezovo) MPAs to promote ecologically functional and interconnected ecosystems in the Black Sea.

This project will also support beneficiary countries to reduce specific threats to bioresources and ecosystems from invasive species, in line with the existing regional guidelines and policy actions on the conservation of the Black Sea Biodiversity and Habitats, in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization. The Glofouling Initiative led by GEF-UNDP-IMO facilitates the harmonization of practices in biodiversity assessments and provides information

on the environmental threats and socio-economic impacts of invasive species may have to priority maritime activities putting in risk marine spatial plans and sustainable blue economy strategies.

This project will strengthen institutional capacities in beneficiary countries to define the best mechanisms to implement ecosystem-based management solutions in the region.

At the regional level, the project will update inventories and maps of important biological and ecological areas and current human activities to develop cumulative impact mapping in support of decision making for the adoption of regional guidelines on marine protected areas and marine spatial planning. Working groups and networks of marine protected area managers and national competent authorities on marine spatial planning will be created to define principles, goals and objectives of the proposed planning exercises.

The conservation aspects and the sustainable blue economy actions became an opportunity to help beneficiary countries to integrate the regional environmental policies and strategies into their national legal frameworks and cope with Black Sea transboundary environment problems. The Black Sea Biodiversity Protocol (BCBLP) can be fundamental for the national plans or programmes for the conservation of biological and landscape diversity and for the sustainable use of marine and coastal living resources in each contracting party to the Bucharest Convention.

The project will update the key findings of the 2007 TDA (e.g. transboundary problems, causal chain analysis, climate change impacts, economic valuation of ecosystems etc,) through the recent SoE report to enable the update of the Black Sea SAP to guide the next ten years of SAP implementation. Through the development of national and regional plans/strategies in components 1 and 2, the project will support further development and elaboration of National Action Plans (NAPs) in-line with the SAP updates.

Discussions revealed a strong need to strengthen the scientific knowledge base as the solutions to improve understanding and common knowledge base on marine living resources in the region, and availability of good quality data. This project will provide expertise and recommendations for updating the BS SAP 2009 and elaboration of next Black Sea State of Environment Report (SoE) 2015-2020, improve the understanding and the common knowledge base on marine living resources in the regions with direct data inputs and information to the Black Sea Information System and the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (BSIMAP 2017-2022) to support the sustainable use of commercial fish stocks and other marine living resources through planning and strategic actions. The work of the GFCM and the GEF/FAO fisheries project will also benefit from the availability of updated regional information. This work on BSIS will also directly support the EBM objectives of the GEF/FAO fisheries project under preparation through the UNDP's project strengthening of planning tools (MCPA/MPA and the use of MSP). Where appropriate, the project will investigate previous GEF projects that have developed tools (models, knowledge products etc.) to assist policy makers and planners to strengthen the governance of coastal ecosystems (e.g. GEF ID 4690).

During the development of the detailed Project Document, other regional initiatives (including the EU Green Deal) will be investigated to examine synergies and reduce any potential duplication on actions related to the SAP update for subsequent implementation. For example, Ukraine has committed to join the EU Green Deal and this high-level political commitment will strengthen the overall objective of this project in the Black Sea region and demonstrate strong country ownership of the approaches promoted.

The green agenda is being considered by Ukraine and Georgia largely through their interest in the EU Green Deal, publicly availed in December 2019. Mainstreaming of these issues in the project countries is being ensured through the current update of the EU association agreements (started in February 2021), and the Eastern Partenrship (stated in June 2020, to be planned in details in the upcoming summit in spring 2021). Ukraine announced aligning its commitment to join the EU Green Deal in January 2020. Such strong political commitments strengthen the project aim and objectives; moreover, authorities' interest in this topic (other than environment and water ones) is highly relevant and important, as it contributes to ensuring an even stronger country ownership of the Project results.

The European Green Deal, as a new growth strategy for the EU, is an ambitious plan to become climate neutral by 2050 and make EU's economy sustainable and turning climate and environmental challenges into opportunities, as well as making the transition just and inclusive for all. With the EU Green Deal, the EU is establishing a model for how to upgrade the quality of infrastructure, products, and standards in climate neutral way and setting an example for all countries in the world, including Georgia.

Since the main goal of the Green Deal is a carbon-neutral Europe by 2050, it will therefore have the greatest impact on national environmental and climate change policies in Eastern European countries, including in Georgia. It will also affect the strategies of the industrial sector – envisaging the transition to a circular economy, the elimination of pollution, and the efficient use of natural resources.

Being an EaP country, the Green Deal is particularly important for Georgia to align its greenhouse gas emission goals with EU requirements. Georgia has number of commitments and obligations towards fulfillment of several international and EU agreements such as, EU Association Agenda, Energy Community membership, Paris Agreement /NDCs. Georgia strives to ensure harmonization with the EU directives in a wide variety of areas, including in the climate and environment protection, energy, waste and other sectors.

Georgia receives significant technical assistance from EU, and in some areas from UNDP, on its way to reach all of the above requirements and meet NDC declared targets, improve climate policies to enable low-emission and resilient development. EU-funded projects are aimed at supporting main goals and principles of the Green Deal in Georgia, focusing on modernisation of the Georgian environment and climate sectors. These will help accelerate reforms and invest in sustainable infrastructure which will better protect the environment and improve the quality of life and health of Georgian citizens.

In the meantime, Georgia has adopted new Laws that would support application of its commitments, especially in environmental and energy sectors. For example, the Law on Biodiversity, the Law on Environmental Responsibility, Law on Energy Efficiency, reports on air quality aspects, and management and monitoring plans for the protected areas. Georgia also continues working on a climate change adaptation plan, energy and climate plan, climate action plan and a long-term low-emissions development strategy. These processes will assist Georgia in analyzing its readiness to progress towards EU Green Deal.

The effects of COVID-19 will further encourage all countries to establish a similar programme to assist all sectors to promote green recovery plans.

These actions will facilitate the valuation of ecosystem services in the region and more importantly, the inclusion of ecosystem valuation studies as an integral part in decision models for specific marine management decisions at the national scale, especially those linked with the implementation of the integrated coastal zone management principles and implementation of ICZM Guidelines in the Black Sea, marine spatial planning and sustainable blue economy.

The project has been designed to facilitate the co-ordination of the current GEF projects led by FAO and the World Bank in the Black Sea region to ensure that these three initiatives collectively deliver actions that strengthen the regional livelihoods through sustainably utilisation of the blue economy resources for the population while ensuring enhanced ecosystem protection of the living resources. When and where necessary, the project will utilise appropriate covid-19 lessons and experiences to enable co-ordination, technical exchanges and capacity development to continue with relevant social distancing and travel restrictions.

The project will be executed by UNESCO IOC – Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the leader in marine global agenda. UNESCO IOC has several decades of successful work in the Black Sea supporting the countries on different aspects of marine management data centers support and executing several international projects in the region.

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC/UNESCO) is the only intergovernmental organization with a core mandate in marine science. It serves as liaison within the UN system between the marine scientific community and the governments of its 150 Member States. More specifically, through international cooperation, IOC aspires to help its Member States to collectively achieve the following high-level objectives, with particular attention to ensuring that all Member States have the capacity to meet them:

· Healthy ocean ecosystems and sustained ecosystem services;

· Effective early warning systems and preparedness for tsunamis and other ocean-related hazards;

· Increased resiliency to climate change and variability and enhanced safety, efficiency and effectiveness of all ocean-based activities through scientifically-founded services, adaptation and mitigation strategies;

· Enhanced knowledge of emerging ocean science issues.

Since the early nineties the IOC has promoted the Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) approach both from a conceptual and scientific point of view as well as on the ground by contributing to the formulation of GEF international waters LME projects in various regions, and the development of a wide network of LME experts. The GEF-supported LME approach provides tools for enabling ecosystem-based management and a collaborative approach to management of marine resources within ecologically bounded transnational areas. The approach serves as the scientific and management basis for the funding of dozens of GEF-funded marine and coastal projects.

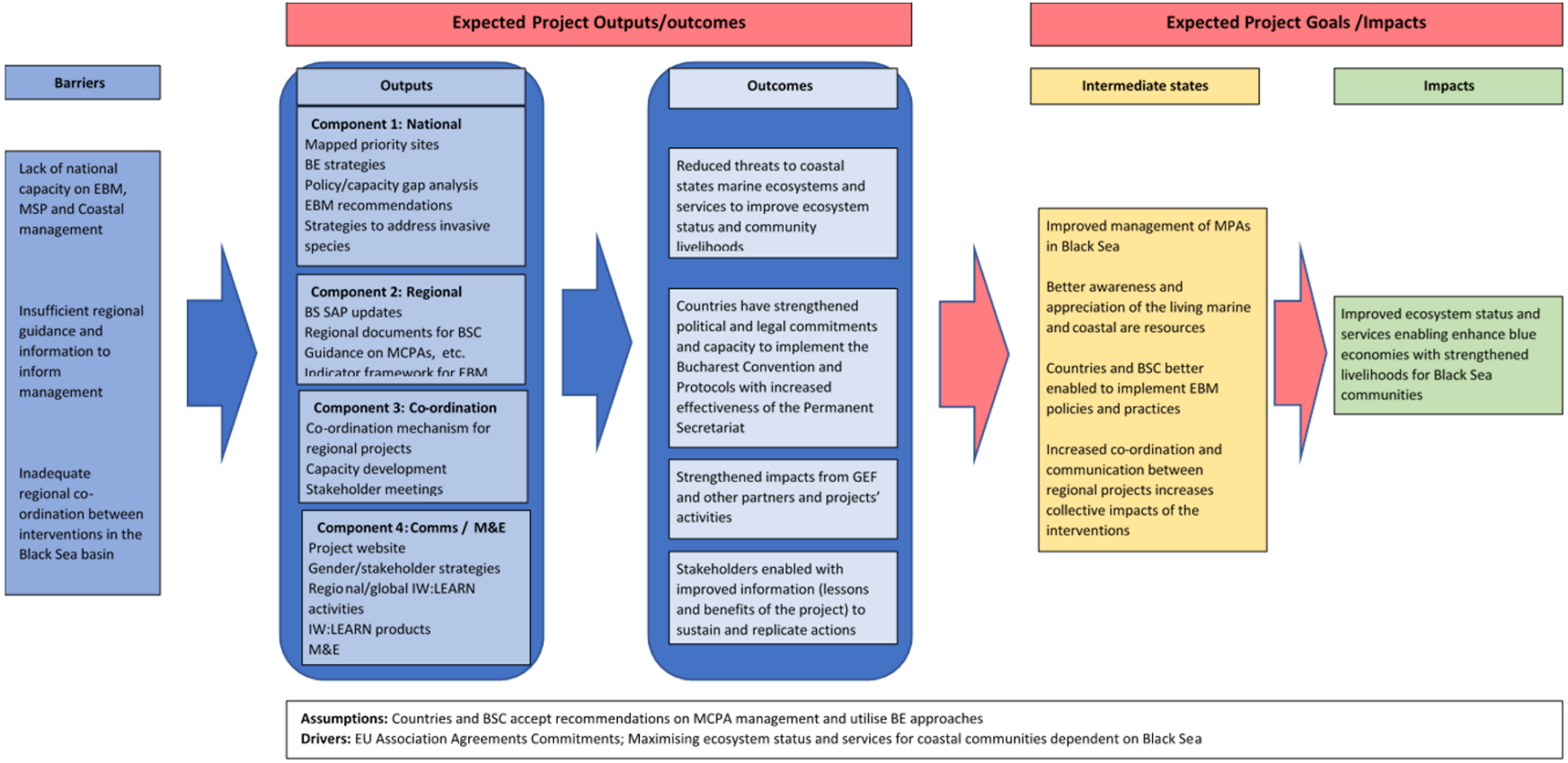
The IOC has served ably and successfully as executing agency for two large GEF international Waters projects, namely the UNDP-GEF "Strengthening Global Governance of Large Marine Ecosystems and Their Coasts through Enhanced Sharing and Application of LME/ICM/MPA Knowledge and Information Tools : LME:LEARN (GEFID: 4481), including its PPG phase, as well as the UNDP&UNEP-GEF International Waters: Learning Exchange and Resource Network (GEF IW:LEARN) (GEFID: 5337). IOC is the designated executing agency for the pending project UNDP&UNEP "GEF IW:LEARN 5: Supporting Portfolio Coordination Within and Beyond the International Waters Focal Area, particularly in Small Island Developing States, Through Knowledge Sharing, Information Management, Partnership Building and Programmatic Guidance Services" (GEFID: 6438). IOC has also led the Open Ocean and LME components of the UNEP GEF "Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme" project (GEFID: 4489). Finally, IOC is executing the PPG phase of the child project UNDP (Lead Agency: FAO)-GEF "Strengthening the stewardship of an economically and biologically significant high seas area – the Sargasso Sea" (GEFID: 10548).

Sustainability of project results will be einsured through the support of the BSC Secretary Activities Centers in the Black Sea countries that are within the national and regional frameworks and activities, The BSC Secretary will be actively involved in the project implementation, support will be directly provided to the work of the `BSC Secretary and effectiveness assured

The project will be focussed on three countries of the Black Sea, but other countries (Bulgaria, Romania and Russian Federation) will be invited to participate (at their own cost) in all activities.

A simplified Theory of Change (ToC) is shown below for this project intervention in the Black Sea.

Figure 2: Simplified Theory of Change



Component 1: Ecosystem Based Management of coastal and marine habitats

Component 1 will build on the work undertaken by the countries to establish MPAs and will strengthen the capacity to apply EBM approaches. This component will focus on specific national actions that will strengthen ecosystem protection whilst encouraging the development of targeted blue economy strategies with national authorities and relevant private sector organisations (in co-ordination with the approved GEF World Bank and FAO projects focused on the Black Sea).

Component 1 will deliver **Outcome 1.1:** *Reduced threats to coastal states marine ecosystems and services to improve ecosystem status and community livelihoods*

Component 1 will achieve this outcome through the completion of the following outputs.

- **Output 1.1.1: Priority ecosystems sites and pressures mapped to guide MSPs and to analyse gaps for MCPAs on priority habitat protection.**

This output will undertake specific and targeted actions to update information (including maps) on priority Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to facilitate the preparation of national marine Spatial Plans (MSPs) to ensure this information is made accessible for public and other stakeholders. This work, undertaken at the national level will support Component 2 (output 2.1.1) on the update of the 2009 endorsed Black Sea SAP. This output will also provide a rapid assessment (building on existing national assessments where available) on the gaps in institutions, policies and methodologies. Information from this output will also guide regional recommendations on best practices on Marine and Coastal Protected Area (MCPA) management towards priority habitat protection.

The activities undertaken in this output will include:

- Identification of gaps in EBM policies and proposals to address them?
- Habitat mapping and classification;
- Revision and adoption the regional guideline on MPAs;
- Development and adoption of MSP Plans;
- Creation of a Network of Marine Protected Area Managers;
- Identifications of organisations/ministries with responsibilities potentially impacting MCPAs;
- Identification of any overlaps on responsibilities and recommendations to reduce overlaps and gaps;
- Documenting national approaches for management and monitoring of MCPA;
- Preparing best practices and related recommendations for inclusion in regional guidance on MCPA (Component 2, Output 2.1.2).

- **Output 1.1.2:** Agreed national Blue Economy Strategies available to guide EBM policy reforms

The project will support the development of **national** Blue Economy Strategies, consistent with the ecosystem objectives of the established coastal management and MPAs established. The strategies will support national activities to undertake economic evaluations to be considered in the development of revised policies. Assessments will be undertaken in each country to assess approaches to EBM with respect to policies, responsible organisations and implementation to inform regional guidance on EBM implementation in the Black Sea. Assessment will also consider the perspectives from the different sectors utilising the ecosystem services in coastal waters (e.g. fishing, shipping, aquaculture, tourism, etc.) and the impacts of EBM on pollution management. In addition, the assessment will identify recommendations or reforms (e.g. the introduction of eco- standards) that could be implemented nationally that are consistent with regional guidance (Component 2, Output 2.1.2). This output will necessitate national authorities from differing branches of government to co-ordinate through, for example, inter-ministerial committees. The output will co-ordinate regional initiatives supported by the GEF through the World Bank's project on the Black Sea and utilise regional material prepared by the project.

Activities will include:

o National needs assessment for blue economy:

§ National assessment of current policies, institutions and governance arrangements relevant to Blue Economy;

§ Support to inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial meetings where required;

§ Recommendations for strategy

o Development and acceptance (PSC approval) of strategy to strengthen blue economy approaches

o Assessment of different sectors requirements for ecosystem services

o Recommendations of any regional policy reforms.

· **Output 1.1.3: Updated national databases to complement the BSIS with new components on biological and socio-economic aspects**

National databases to ensure compatible data flows in support of the Bucharest Convention will be upgraded in Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine. The regional database for pollution is maintained by the BSC (and enhanced through output 3.1.4). The Commission secretariat will guide the requirements and specifications for the database update that will be undertaken by the project. The updated national databases will support the regional work on MCPA/MPAs following EBM approaches, and will also benefit GFCM and the GEF/FAO fisheries project under preparation with co-ordination of available information led by the BSC and this project respectively.

· **Output 1.1.4: National action strategies developed/agreed to further co-operate with relevant IMO projects aimed at reducing threats to bioresources and ecosystems from specific invasive species with regional recommendations for BSC consideration and possible adoption.**

National action plans to address the problems of invasive species will be developed in co-operation with specific guidance from IMO (e.g. GloFouling) to reduce the threats to bioresources and ecosystems.

Component 2: Strengthening regional environmental governance and knowledge

Component 2 will build on a wealth of regional co-operative projects and programmes over the last 30 years. In addition, the BSC and the Permanent Secretariat. The project will assist with the regional guidance on EBM and management of MPAs and will also assist the Permanent Secretariat increase the effectiveness of the information available for stakeholder (including public) awareness raising. A key strength in the Black Sea region has been the adoption by the countries of the region of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) in 2009 based on a regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (2007). This project will undertake a rapid update of the TDA (based on SoE reports and available information) to lead to revised SAP recommendations and management actions that will reflect recent best-practices documented by GEF IW:LEARN and the wider IW community. This will include IW:LEARN guidance on incorporating EBM, climate change adaptation and economic valuation of ecosystems from Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) projects and planned work by the GEF/FAO fisheries

project on the Black Sea. Regional strategies and plans will be developed (outputs 2.1.2 and 2.1.4) that will assist with harmonising national approaches and contribute to the updates of national action plans (NAPs). The information within the update TDA will help inform a revised SAP for implementation over the next decade.

Component 2 will deliver **Outcome 2.1**: *Countries have strengthened political and legal commitments and capacity to implement the Bucharest Convention and its Protocols, with increased effectiveness of the Permanent Secretariat.*

- **Output 2.1.1: Updated basin analysis (TDA) leading to revised BS SAP, proposed for adoption by BS Commission.**

The Black Sea countries endorsed the previous SAP in 2009 with a TDA accepted in 2007. As a consequence, it is desirable to update both the assessment of the transboundary pressures and any changes in the last 10 years together with updating the ecosystem objectives and management actions for the coming 10 years. In addition, this update will be an opportunity to include recent GEF IW:LEARN best practices developed, in particular to include guidance prepared by GEF LME:LEARN on addressing issues specific to LMEs including utilising EBM approaches to managing the Black Sea. The updated TDA and BS SAP will also ensure that that the transboundary assessment and the management actions proposed undertake a targeted economic valuation of ecosystems, adopting the approach adopted by IW:LEARN. Finally, the Black Sea basin will benefit from a detailed gender assessment of the roles and responsibilities of personnel engaged in coastal and marine activities and management related to the blue economy. Specifically, the revised TDA leading to an updated BS SAP will include additional information on:

- Recent guidance on EBM approaches (including from GEF/FAO fisheries project on the Black Sea);
- Recommendations from the work of GEF LME:LEARN on large marine ecosystems;
- Following recommendations and best practices on the use of economic valuation of ecosystems tools in undertaking the assessment and for recommending management actions in the BS SAP;
- Recent climate change information and scenarios on potential impacts on ecosystems and services relevant to the blue economy;
- Gender assessments on roles and responsibilities in coastal and marine activities and management.

- **Output 2.1.2 Developed and/or updated Regional Protocols, Plans and Guidance documents to harmonise approaches to MCPA, habitat protection, etc. submitted to BSC for adoption.**

Article 4 of CBD Protocol requires that "*The Contracting Parties shall produce and commonly agree on the Strategic Action Plan for the Black Sea Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation Protocol within three years of the Protocol coming into force which shall be reviewed every five years.* On the basis of the Strategic Action Plan for the Black Sea Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation Protocol (ratified by Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine), the Contracting Parties shall adopt strategies, national plans and/or programmes for the conservation of biological and landscape diversity and the sustainable use of marine and coastal biological and landscape resources and shall integrate them into their national sectoral and intersectoral policies.

The project will co-ordinate closely with other ongoing and planned interventions in the Black Sea region. In particular, the project will work closely with activities under the EU SRIA (e.g. Black Sea Connect – see baseline projects above) and will ensure close alignment with the Common Marine Agenda (CMA) for the Black Sea.

In support of the BS SAP update, the project will prepare updated regional documents (protocols, plans and guidance). This will strengthen the BSC's Protocols e.g. on Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation, draft Cetaceans Conservation Plan etc). Regional Guidance Documents will be prepared to harmonise basin-wide approaches to MCPAs designation and management, habitat protection, etc. The full list of documents to be updated will be confirmed during the PPG phase with the BSC Permanent Secretariat. These will be drafted by the project with the involvement of the BSC and especially relevant BSC Advisory Groups. The draft Protocol updates, and other relevant documents, will be presented to the BSC for their consideration and possible adoption.

Activities will include:

- Agreeing with BSC which documents require updating or development;
- Updating the Black Sea Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation Protocol, draft Cetaceans Conservation Plan, relevant part of BSIMAP etc.
- Developing regional guidance documents on MCPA in the Black Sea for habitat protection
- Distributing documents for comment and national approval;
- Submission of the draft documents to BSC for adoption.

· Output 2.1.3: Development and recommendation for adoption by BSC of regional indicator framework for EBM for annual reporting and relevant component of BSIS.

To demonstrate to a range of stakeholders in the Black Sea region of the benefits of EBM, and the contributions made to this approach by the BSC and the project, a series of relevant indicators will be developed to report overall long-term progress to enhancing the ecosystem status and the services derived from the Black Sea. Particular attention will be given to ensuring that the BSC and countries have the means to collect and report the necessary datasets for an extended period. This data will also be of value to enable countries to report progress on addressing the problems of the Black Sea to multiple donors (including the GEF, EU, UNEP, FAO, ACCOBAMS, etc.). Indicators will also be selected with full involvement of national and regional stakeholders and will be designed to meet a wide range of reporting needs.

Component 3: Regional Co-ordination of interventions

This component will focus on the important issues of regional co-ordination between other GEF and EU projects in the region. There have been multiple projects on the Black Sea in the past and a key lesson has been the need to improve co-ordination to minimise overlap and to increase the interaction through sharing of information and results. The GEF will have three interlinked regional international waters projects in the region, and this project will engage

proactively with the initiatives led by FAO (on fisheries) and the World Bank (on blue economy aspects within the basin). There is also a need to co-ordinate and collaborate with other on-going and planned regional projects funded by, for example, the EU.

Component 3 will deliver Outcome 3.1: *Strengthened impacts from GEF and other partners and projects' activities*.

· **Output 3.1.1: Co-ordination mechanism established and functional with other projects in the Black Sea region, learning from other LME co-ordination mechanisms**

The multiple project underway or planned require adequate co-ordination to ensure good co-operation and information sharing. The three GEF projects (through FAO, World Bank and UNDP) on the Black Sea will be organised to have co-ordinated formal (e.g. PSC meetings) and informal (workshops, capacity building events, stakeholder dialogues, etc.) activities. In addition, regional and relevant national projects will be linked to the GEF funded projects. The establishment of a co-ordination mechanism will draw on experiences elsewhere (e.g. PEMSEA, CLME, Mediterranean, etc.)

· **Output 3.1.2: Implementation of national/regional capacity development programmes on EBM, building on best practices from e.g. Barcelona Convention**

The project will deliver capacity development programmes to strengthen the ability of various stakeholder groups (e.g. BSC PS, national authorities involved in Black Sea SAP implementation, CSOs/NGOs, private sector involved in the blue economy, MPA managers, etc.) to implement and manage MPAs. This output will link closely with, and complement the work of, the GEF/FAO fisheries project on EBM. The training will be focused on assisting stakeholders with the overall implementation of an EBM approach within the Black Sea region and highlighting the benefits to all sections of society of improved ecosystem services and livelihoods of citizens inhabiting the basin from this approach. The capacity development will continue to support strengthening the roles of women and girls within the basin at all levels of decision making and activities. The overall goal of the capacity development will be to further encourage the sustainable implementation of the regional updated SAP on the Black Sea. Activities to include:

- Identification of appropriate stakeholders and stakeholder groups
- Agreement on necessary capacity development information;
- Delivery of capacity development training to specific stakeholder groups;

· **Output 3.1.3: National and regional strategies (including possible covid-19 restrictions) and programmes to share information and experiences**

The project will engage at a national and regional level with a wide range of stakeholders. The project will develop a strategy (incorporating any necessary covid-19 restrictions and means to continue the work) and programme for national and regional information and awareness raising interventions that will be undertaken in Components 1 and 2 respectively. Output 3.1.3 will co-ordinate these activities and deliver specific awareness raising workshops (potentially held together with the GEF/FAO fisheries and World Bank/GEF projects under development) related to EBM, MPA and blue economy issues linked to these at national and regional meetings. All meetings will be subject to an attendee 'assessment' of the content, and sex disaggregated data will be collected for annual reports.

Activities to include:

o Developing regional and national strategies for sharing information (linked with the activities to enhance the BSIS – Output 3.1.4 and Project communication in Component 4);

o Developing of approaches to be adopted for working under covid-19 restrictions (subject to national regulations);

o Assisting regional organisations (BSC) and national bodies implement strategies where required.

· **Output 3.1.4: Updated and enhanced web-based BSIS to facilitate regional and national awareness raising**

The project will undertake a brief review of users' feedback on the current BSIS and their future requirements. Working closely with the PS-BSC and national data/information providers and users, the project will develop and implement a new system to incorporate all relevant information developed by the project (and provide a system for incorporation of information from other regional projects). Additional national data will be made regionally available through output 1.1.3. The update BSIS will further facilitate regional co-ordination and raising national awareness on the benefits to ecosystems and the blue economy from EBM approaches the strengthening of MPAs. This will be of benefit to the GCFM and the GEF/FAO fisheries project under preparation to further the implementation of EBM approaches.

Component 4: Project communications, outreach and M&E

This component will focus on ensuring that the lessons and experiences from the project from national activities as well as regional actions are disseminated widely, and that project M&E is implemented with results reported.. The project will also contribute 1% of the GEF budget to support the GEF IW:LEARN activities to share experiences within the IW community of projects through global and regional meetings, twinnings, and capacity development activities.

Component 4 will deliver **Outcome 4.1** *Stakeholders enabled with improved information (lessons and benefits of the project) to sustain and replicate actions; and* **Outcome 4.2** *M &E strategy guides project management to achieve delivery of project outputs*

· **Output 4.1.1: Established IW:LEARN compliant website within existing BSC website**

The project will establish an IW:LEARN compliant website following the guidance and best practices available. The website will link with other regional projects and partner organisations. This will be implemented within the inception phase of the project.

· **Output 4.1.2: Stakeholder and gender strategies documented, implemented and shared across the Black Sea region**

During the PPG phase draft stakeholder engagement (reflecting any likely covid-19 restrictions and means to continue engagement minimising travel and contact) and gender inclusion strategies (including M&E indicators and targets) will be prepared for submission with the Project Document for GEF CEO endorsement. The draft strategies will be revised during the inception phase and approved at the inception meeting/first PSC meeting. These strategies will

define the work of the project in dealing with differing stakeholder groups and ensuring that the project adopts an active role in encouraging the involvement of girls and women in ecosystem management within the Black Sea region.

- **Output 4.1.3: Participation in regional and global GEF /IW:LEARN activities**

The project will actively engage (in-person and remotely) with the GEF IW:LEARN project to participate in regional and global IW project exchanges and information sharing events. In addition, the project will participate in 2 GEF IW Conferences with the participation of national representatives from Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine in addition to project staff.

- **Output 4.1.4: Development of IW Experience Notes and other IW:LEARN related products and services.**

Following IW best practices, the project will prepare at least three GEF Experience Notes related to EBM, strengthening MPAs, etc. In addition, the project will engage with IW:LEARN to prepare relevant other material as required on the activities of the project to ensure that lessons are shared widely throughout the GEF IW and LME community of projects.

The project will allocate at least 1% of the overall GEF budget to involvement with IW:LEARN related activities.

- **Output 4.2.1: Participatory monitoring and evaluation developed and implemented to facilitate adaptive project management.**

A detailed M&E plan will be developed during the PPG phase and revalidated at the Project Inception/PSC meeting. The plan will detail the expected information to be gathered and specify the responsible project staff, for the routine monitoring and evaluation to meet GEF and UNDP requirements (e.g. PIRs, quarterly reports, etc.). The M&E plan will ensure that indicators and their targets presented in the Project Results Framework are collected at the required time. The plan will also provide an outline Terms of Reference for the independent Mid-Term Review (MTR) and Terminal Evaluations (TE) that will be conducted.

II.1a.4 Alignment with GEF focal area and/or Impact Program strategies;

The project is aligned with the GEF-7 Strategy for IW Objective 1 (*Strengthening National Blue Economy Opportunities*) in-line with Strategic Area 1 (*Sustainable healthy coastal and marine ecosystems)*. This will be achieved through strengthening the implementation of national marine protected areas in tandem to enhancing existing information and strategic programmes through updating the TDA and SAP for the Black Sea LME.

The project will also contribute to the GEF Biodiversity focal area through assisting with strengthening the governance of existing and new MPAs. In addition, enhancing MPAs will encourage further carbon sequestration with potential benefits to the Climate Change focal area (both in terms of mitigation and adaption (see GEBs below).

II.1a.5 Incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing;

The GEF grant of USD 3,000.000 is leveraging a co-financing contribution of USD 15,000,000 that will collectively contribute to the incremental activities adding to the historic and the current baseline. The experiences and lessons will be widely distributed throughout the Black Sea region and more widely through the GEF IW:LEARN/LME:LEARN projects and the on-going work of the countries of the Black Sea region, the BSC, UNESCO-IOC, and other partners. At this stage it has not been possible to estimate possible co-financing contributions from partner countries (including EU countries), but this will be sought during the PPG phase (e.g. linked to EU activities related to the Blue Economy) that are closely aligned to the work of this proposed project at the national level.

Without the GEF Grant - baseline scenario

The countries of the Black Sea region are participating in multiple regional initiatives (and indicated above in the baseline section) with national and donor resources that are providing direct actions in responses to the Black Sea SAP (2009). This work is conducted with close co-ordination with the Black Sea Commission who have the regional task of overseeing the overall implementation of the BS-SAP.

The baseline activities that are planned to be undertaken include:

· Countries participating in Black Sea Commission activities (e.g. meetings, workshops, surveys, etc.)

· Countries of the Black Sea region implementing the EU Marine Directive with Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine pursuing this under their respective Association Agreements with the EU.

· Participating in multiple regional projects (as described above).

However, there is currently limited focus on MCPA management and the utilisation of EBM approaches in the region.

With the GEF Grant - incremental reasoning

The GEF is funding interlinked projects in the region to provide key inputs to supporting regional blue economy approaches (through the World Bank), improving fisheries management (through FAO) and this project addressing EBM and providing additional co-ordination of these three GEF projects and between the GEF projects and other donor/national financed projects.

The GEF grant will assist with the application of economic valuation of ecosystems to be undertaken under the revised TDA to help increase the visibility of the MPAs nationally and regionally.

The project will undertake a rapid update of the TDA based on recent information to identify any changes to the key transboundary problems previously identified and to update the causal chain analysis. This will enable an updated SAP to be developed to establish agreed programmes of actions for the region for the coming decade. Information from the updated TDA will assist with the current SoE report (2015 - 2020) and to guide any additional information needs in preparation to the SoE 2021 - 2025 report.

The GEF/UNDP project is expected to contribute to a range of outputs that will contribute to enhancing understanding on:

- Enhanced MCPA management;
- Application of national/regional EBM approaches;
- National strategies for blue economy to enhance livelihoods of coastal communities dependent on ecosystem services;
- Improved regional guidance documents submitted for approval by the BSC;
- Support to national government's Association Agreement activities;
- Updated TDA and SAP that will guide the countries and the BSC for the next 10 years providing up-to-date information for decision makers
- Enhanced inter-project co-ordination, integrating results and lessons more effectively

During the PPG phase additional links will be made with interventions ongoing in the Black Sea Region to identify additional co-financing (e.g. activities undertaken with EU financing through SRIA projects indicated in the baseline above).

II.1a.6 Global environmental benefits (GEFTF) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF);

The project implementation will contribute to global environmental benefits and assist regional socio-economic benefits dependent on ecosystem services to grow. Through the multiple outputs from this project the GEBs will be:

· Long-term positive contributions to biodiversity (e.g. through adoption of EBM approaches, strengthening the management of MCPAs, reduced invasive species issues, etc.);

· The updated TDA and SAP will provide a detailed baseline of the current ecosystem status and the pressures on the environment and a road-map to address the key transboundary pressures for the countries (with the support of the BSC) over the next 10 years. Through the updated TDA and SAP the region will benefit through a better understanding of the economic valuation of ecosystem tools developed by GEF IW:LEARN.

· Benefits accruing from enhanced co-ordination between three GEF projects and other donors' activities.

The project will also contribute to national targets associated with SDG 14 in the Black Sea region.

In addition, it is noted that well-managed marine reserves may help marine ecosystems and people adapt to prominent impacts of climate change: acidification, sea-level rise, intensification of storms, shifts in species distribution, and decreased productivity and oxygen availability, as well as their cumulative effects[12]. The role of managed ecosystems in mitigating climate change by promoting carbon sequestration and storage and by buffering against uncertainty in management, environmental fluctuations, directional change, and extreme events will also be highlighted in the TDA/SAP process.

The project's strategies (to be outlined during the PPG phase) will describe approaches that will be followed if covid-19 restrictions limit travel and/or meetings. This will build on the regional experiences to-date and will facilitate the execution of the planned project as described to deliver the above GEBs.

II.1a.7 Innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up

Innovation: The project will build on the approaches gained from the previous GEF and other donor initiatives in the Black Sea and the on-going work of the BSC, including the implementation of the 2009 SAP. The updating of this SAP (utilising the assessments of the SoE report in 2015) will be a key innovative and pragmatic means of ensuring that SAPs are supported by the latest findings. The project will promote an innovative approach to adopting EBM approaches within MCPA management that will also deliver the first key national strategies on Blue Economy' considerations. The project's innovation will also include the outputs designed to improve the co-ordination (and consequentially, to maximise the benefits) from the parallel GEF IW projects on the Black Sea (and interventions from other donors, e.g. EU).

Sustainability: The actions under this project will be designed with sustainability as a core component. Sustainability of the actions will be supported by:

· The central role of the Black Sea Commission in seeking an update to the 2009 SAP with the commitment from all the countries of the region;

· Enhancing the marine and coastal environment is key to the European Union's Water Framework Directive (WFD) and Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). These are important elements to the EU's Association Agreements with Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine. These directives have common environmental objectives with the Black Sea SAP.

· The project will be developing strategy documents that will benefit the region and countries to harmonise approaches under the Bucharest Convention and provide compatible data for long-term information sharing. National Strategies promoting blue economy approaches will be drafted for countries to support livelihoods derived from the Black Sea's ecosystem services.

Potential for scaling-up: The key elements that could be appropriate for upscaling to other LMEs include:

· National experiences of adopting EMB approaches to marine and coastal management;

· Promoting the experiences of the active role of the BSC and its Permanent Secretariat;

- Use of regional SoE reports to support the updating of agreed regional SAPs
- Benefits of enhanced regional co-ordination between multiple initiatives;

Experience and lesson sharing between LMEs (Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea).

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[1] Black Sea Commission 2019, http://www.blacksea-commission.org/SoE2009-2014/SoE2009-2014.pdf

[2] Zaitsev, Y. (2006) Littoral concentration of life in the Black Sea area. *Journal of the Black Sea/Mediterranean Environment*, **12**, 113–128.

[3] Panchenko, T. (2009) *Guidelines on Territorial Planning in Coastal Zone. Version 2*. Environmental Collaboration for the Black Sea Project (ECBSea). EuropeAid/120117/C/SV/Multi.

[4] Lausche, B. (2011) *Guidelines for Protected Areas Legislation*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. xxvi + 370 pp.

[5] Begun, T., Velikova, V., Muresan, M. *et al*. (2012) *Conservation and Protection of the Black Sea Biodiversity: Review of the existing and planned protected areas in the Black Sea (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey) with a special focus on possible deficiencies regarding law enforcement and*

implementation of management plans. Report for Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) Guiding Improvements in the Black Sea Integrated Monitoring System (MISIS). http://www.misisproject.eu/

[6] Alexandrov, B., Minicheva, G. and Zitsev, Y. *Black Sea Network of Marine Protected Areas: European Approaches and Adaption to Expansion and Monitoring in Ukraine.* in *Management of Marine Protected Areas: A new Perspective, Goriup P (ed) 2017*

[7] Joint Roadmap to accelerate Maritime/Marine Spatial Planning processes worldwide

[8] http://www.mspglobal2030.org/msp-forum/

[9] http://www.mspglobal2030.org/msp-global/

[10] Marine Spatial Planning is considered as a public analysis and allocation process for the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives that have usually been specified through a political process bringing together the different users of the ocean in order to address multiple objectives and make coordinated decisions.

[11] Blue economy considers all maritime activities that are marine-based or marine-related

[12] Roberts, C., *et al.* Marine reserves can mitigate and promote adaptation to climate change., PNAS | June 13, 2017 | vol. 114 | no. 24 | 6167–6175. https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/114/24/6167.full.pdf

1b. Project Map and Coordinates

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.

A map, including regional co-ordinates is shown in Figure 1 along with a description of the environmental problem

2. Stakeholders

Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities No

Civil Society Organizations Yes

Private Sector Entities Yes

If none of the above, please explain why:

In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement

The following stakeholders have been involved in discussions on the development of this project through BSC meetings. Final roles, responsibilities and national lead executing partners to be selected during the PPG phase from the GEF eligible countries (Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine). The tentative lead partners are in **bold.**

Stakeholders	Responsibility and role in the project
GEF Eligible Countries	
Georgia	
Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA), National Environmental Agency (NEA) GeoGraphic Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia LEPL Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia	All stakeholders have participated at BSC meetings and have been involved in the discussions on the development of the PIF. Their role will be to guide the overall project and ensure close links and alignment with BSC activities. The tentative lead organisation has overall ministerial responsibility for water (marine and freshwater) with responsibilities for implementing the EU WFD and MSFD. The lead executing partner will also have formal oversight of the national actions proposed and will be permanent member of the PSC.
Turkey	
Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock,	All stakeholders have participated at BSC meetings and have been involved in the discussions on the development of the PIF. Their role will be to guide the overall project and ensure close links and alignment with BSC activities. The tentative lead organisation has overall mini

Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications,	sterial responsibility for water (marine and freshwater) with responsibilities for implementing the EU WFD and MSFD. The lead executing partner will also have formal oversight of the national actions proposed and will be permanent member of the PSC
Ukraine	
Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine Ukrainian Scientific Center of Ecology of Seas Ukrainian Hydrometeorological Institute of the State Service of Ukraine on Emergencies National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine Secretariat to the Parliament of Ukraine State Ecological Inspection of the Black Sea Protection Odessa Branch, Institute of Biology of Southern Seas, NASU Institute of Fisheries and Marine Ecology (IFME), State Agency of Fisheries of Ukraine National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy State Enterprise "Ukrainian Sea Port Authority	All stakeholders have participated at BSC meetings and have been involved in the discussions on the development of the PIF. Their role will be to guide the overall project and ensure close links and alignment with BSC activities. The tentative lead organisation has overall ministerial responsibility for water (marine and freshwater) with responsibilities for implementing the EU WFD and MSFD. The lead executing partner will also have formal oversight of the national actions proposed and will be permanent member of the PSC
Partner Countries	
Bulgaria	
Ministry of Environment and Water Black Sea Basin Directorate (BSBD) Institute of Oceanology – BAS IO-BAS, Department "Marine biology and ecology" Institute for Ecological Modernization Bulgarian Maritime Administration	These stakeholders are all engaged in the regular meetings of the BSC and have participated in the discussions leading to this PIF. As partners to this project, and active members of the BSC, they will assist in ensuring that the regional activities of this project meet the expectations of all Black Sea countries. Through both project meetings and BSC meetings these stakeholders will assist in guiding the project to meet the needs of the BSC

Bulgarian Maritime Administration Bulgarian Maritime Administration	that will promote the long-term sustainability of the pro ject interventions.
Romania	
Ministry of Environment and Climate Changes, Depart ment on Water, Forest and Fisheries National Institute for Marine Research and Developme nt Romanian Naval Authority	These stakeholders are all engaged in the regular meet ings of the BSC and have participated in the discussion s leading to this PIF. As partners to this project, and act ive members of the BSC, they will assist in ensuring tha t the regional activities of this project meet the expecta tions of all Black Sea countries. Through both project meetings and BSC meetings these stakeholders will as sist in guiding the project to meet the needs of the BSC that will promote the long-term sustainability of the pro ject interventions.
Russian Federation	
State Oceanographic Institute of Federal Service for H ydrometeorology and Environment Monitoring Branch of State Oceanographic Institute of Federal Se rvice for Hydrometeorology and Environment Monitori ng ICZM Center State Hydrochemical Institute of Federal Service for H ydrometeorology and Environment Monitoring State Oceanological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences Ministry of Agriculture YugNIRO – Branch of Azov Scientific Research Institut e of Fisheries Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, K uban Basin Water Directorate Kuban Basin Water Directorate Institute of Applied Ecology	These stakeholders are all engaged in the regular meet ings of the BSC and have participated in the discussion s leading to this PIF. As partners to this project, and act ive members of the BSC, they will assist in ensuring tha t the regional activities of this project meet the expecta tions of all Black Sea countries. Through both project meetings and BSC meetings these stakeholders will as sist in guiding the project to meet the needs of the BSC that will promote the long-term sustainability of the pro ject interventions.

Institute of Applied Ecology Marine Rescue Service of Rosmorrechflot Federal Budgetary State Institution "Black Sea Maritime Ports Administration"	
Private sector, projects, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations	
Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Permanent International Secretariat; Eurasia Business Unit Chevron International Ltd; OSPRI, Oil Spill Preparedness Regional Initiative (Caspian Sea – Black Sea – Central Eurasia); Forecast Technology Ltd.	These organisations (government, institutes, CSOs, NGOs, private sector) have been involved at BSC meetings and participated in discussions that led to this PIF. They will continue to be involved in BSC meetings and will participate in detailed project design meetings, where appropriate.
EU/UNDP EMBLAS – Plus EU SRIA initiatives Istanbul University Journal of the Black Sea/Mediterranean Environment	These stakeholders will assist with ensuring that the project will link with and not overlap with other initiatives, including the recently approved GEF project concepts implemented by FAO and the World Bank.
Green Balkans NGO WWF-Turkey PAGEV (Plastics) ACCOBAMS Agreement European Environmental Agency (EEA) European Commission FAO GFCM NGO Mare Nostrum GEF/World Bank Blueing the Black Sea GEF project GEF/FAO Fisheries and Ecosystem Based Management for the Black Sea - (FishEBM BS)	The recently approved GEF/World Bank and GEF/FAO projects will work closely with the proposed UNDP project to ensure co-ordination and minimise duplication specifically on the Blue Economy and EBM approaches. These projects will be invited to participate in the UNDP project's PSC and the three projects will endeveour to combine appropriate national and regional capacity development activities.

The above organisations (government, institutes, CSOs, NGOs, private sector) will continue to be involved in BSC meetings and will participate in detailed project design meetings, where appropriate.

3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and any plans to address gender in project design (e.g. gender analysis).

In order to improve the understanding of the role women and men in coastal and MPA governance will be assessed during the PPG, including the development of a robust gender baseline within the prarticipating countries. A gender action plan, based on the information gathered during the PPG phase will be elaborated in the CEO Endoresement Document, and will be approved during the project inception to guide execution.

The proposed project will build during the PPG phase on the analyses performed by recent studies that assessed the role of women the fisheries and aquaculture sector the Black Sea[1] to identify the distinct roles that women play in the fisheries sector. The study was expected to contribute to the Regional Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (RPOA-SSF) launched in Malta via a High-Level Conference in September 2018. This study sheds a light on women's presence in catching, aquaculture, processing, and fisheries-related activities which had not been well documented so far, particularly in the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins. In addition, the project will utilise analysis performed by the BlackSea4Fish project[2] that was collecting sex disaggregated data. Lastly the PPG phase will interact with the Black Sea Women's Club (BSWC)[3] that is a regional network working on the rivers flowing to the Black Sea and based in the Ukraine. BSWC promotes protection of water resources, eco-system approaches, and gender balance in sustainable development of the Black Sea region.

This information will be used to ensure gender equality and empowerment of women throughout the project execution phase. Based on the GEF-7 Core Gender Indicators listed in the Gender Equality Action Plan. Advancement of gender mainstreaming within policy and capacity building in support of all the components, especially in the interventions, will be of key significance. The proposed activities will create the enabling environment and facilitate the implementation of gender considerations into policy and the legislative provisions that are conducive to the needs of all stakeholders. The proposed project will also ensure alignment with the GEF Policy on Gender (GEF Secretariat, 2017). All data relating to meetings, training events, dissemination uptake (indicated in above in the project outputs)will be collected and presented against sex disaggregated targets developed in the Project Results Framework. This will help to achieve an acceptably high number of women in participation (decision-making and implementation) it could be needed to apply affirmative action as it would help to compensate for past "discrimination" and/or to address existing inequalities. Affirmative action is a policy in which an inequitable situation (in this case gender inequality) is taken into account to increase opportunities provided to an underrepresented part of society (in this case women).

Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment? Yes

closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources; Yes

improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or Yes

generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.

Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

4. Private sector engagement

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

Please briefly explain the rationale behind your answer.

Private sector organisations have been involved during the project concept design stage as indicated above (stakeholders) through meetings of the BSC. In addition to the private sector organisations involved in the development of this project concept (indicated in Stakeholder section above), private sector organisations impacting and/or dependent on coastal ecosystems (e.g. fishing, aquaculture, tourism, etc.) will be key partners at the country level for this project and the specific organisations and their roles will be confirmed in detailed discussions with national authorities during the PPG phase. This proposed project will interact closely with the GEF FAO and WB initiatives in the Black Sea and ensure that their activities aimed at the private sector are circulated with this project as part of this project's co-ordination action of all current GEF activities.These detailed discussions will also increase the likelihood of sustainability of the project's actions.

Private sector organisations will be involved in all components and in key meetings (observers at PSC meetings, participants in workshops, etc.) of the project, including:

- Component 1: Engagement of private sector organisations in the development of national private sector strategies;
- Component 2 – Input and engagement in the updating of the TDA and SAP; Key stakeholder comments on guidance documents prepared with BSC;
- Component 3 – Stakeholder meetings (briefing and active input to guide project); Capacity development to assist with national blue economy development and to better appreciate the value of MCPA management; contributing to national and regional information for dissemination to coastal communities.

5. Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the Project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the Project design (table format acceptable)

Risk	Likelihood (H, M , L)	Mitigation measures
National authorities fail to co-ordinate on coastal management and management of MCPAs	L	The Project will support increasing inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral co-ordination through component 1 (output 1.2) where necessary.
Climate change / increased extreme weather impacts on MCPAs	M	Within the updated TDA/SAP (Component 2, output 2.1.1) the project will assist with updating the potential climate change scenarios and, where necessary, make recommendation on resilient measures that can be incorporated.
Pollution events impacting MCPAs	M	Within the updated TDA/SAP (Component 2, output 2.1.1) the project will assist with updating the potential pollution risks (land-based and shipping) on MCPAs and, where necessary, recommend management or structural measures that will minimise impacts of a pollution incident.
Lack of support from private sector or civil society for enhancing MCPAs management	L	Components 1 and 3 will work with national stakeholders to ensure that awareness of the importance and benefits of MCPA for ecosystem services (livelihoods) is appreciated.
Difficulties with non-GEF countries in region supporting project activities impacting regional endorsement of SAP	L	The updating of the SAP has been promoted by the BSC and the project will work closely with the BSC-PS to ensure that the non-eligible countries are encouraged to contribute to the updating of the TDA and SAP and to participate in capacity development workshops.

Co-ordination with regional projects does not function effectively	L	The project, with the support of the BSC-PS will actively encourage enhanced co-operation and co-ordination between GEF and other donors' projects. Component 3 (Output 3.1.1) will establish a process to enable routine information and lesson sharing together with participation at relevant meetings/workshops.
Covid-19 restrictions limit travel and in-person meetings	M	COVID-19 poses a short-medium term risk to the project execution and the the project will develop a stakeholder and communication strategy that will describe alternative methods of communications and meetings (e.g. internet) when travel/social contact is not permitted. The project will also assess the longer-term impacts of any on-going COVID restrictions on e.g. sustainability or changes in working practice during project implementation.

6. Coordination

Outline the institutional structure of the project including monitoring and evaluation coordination at the project level. Describe possible coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.

The proposed project will be implemented through the UNDP and executed UNESCO-IOC with the support of the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission. national and local government agencies and institutes. The BSC currently has a lack of available capacity to implement this project. UNESCO-IOC have long experience of LME GEF activities and they will work closely to transfer experiences from elsewhere with the BSC.

The project will coordinate with planned and ongoing projects and activities (GEF and non-GEF) in the region and where relevant, world-wide. Through the development of appropriate mechanisms (described below in Section 8 - Knowledge Management and in Component 3 activities) the results of this project will be shared widely. The dissemination of results will be guided by a communication strategy that will be drafted during the PPG phase and updated within the first few months of project execution. The UNESCO-IOC will establish a project management unit (PMU) to coordinate all day to day activities based in Istanbul (TBC).

Project coordination: The PMU will be supervised by a Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting annually to ensure the delivery and quality of activities and outputs and to approve budget; the PSC will include relevant countries (city and national representative), GEF Agency, partners (including private sectors, civil society, academia etc.) etc. The GEF Agency will be responsible for contracting independent evaluators for undertaking the mid- and terminal evaluations. The PMU will be responsible for undertaking routine M&E activities to provide quantifiable evidence on the performance of the project in achieving the expected outputs and outcomes and for reporting this information to the PSC and assist the GEF Agency prepare annual PIR submissions to the GEF.

Co-ordination with regional bodies

The project will co-operate closely with the Black Sea Commission through its Permanent Secretariat based in Istanbul. The project will also co-operate and co-ordinate through MoUs established by the BSC with:

- International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)
- The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)
- Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS)
- UNEP/MAP (Mediterranean Action Plan) and where relevant other Regional Seas

Coordination with other GEF projects: The project will work closely with IW:LEARN/LME:LEARN to participate in regional and global workshops to ensure that the results of this project are available to the wider IW community of projects.

The recently approved GEF/World Bank and GEF/FAO projects will work closely with the proposed UNDP project to ensure co-ordination and minimise duplication specifically on the Blue Economy and EBM approaches. These projects will be invited to participate in the UNDP project's PSC and the three projects will endeveour to combine appropriate national and regional capacity development activities.

Coordination with non-GEF initiatives:

The project will also co-ordinate with the multiple EU projects being undertaken in the region as indicated in the Baseline presented in this document (Section 1a.2)

7. Consistency with National Priorities

Is the Project consistent with the National Strategies and plans or reports and assesments under relevant conventions?

Yes

If yes, which ones and how: NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, INDCs, etc

The project will support national priorities within Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine through:

· Contribute to SDG 14 goals, targets and reporting

· Contribute to the objectives of the Bucharest Convention and the joint work co-ordinated by the BSC

· Support objectives of the Association Agreements between EU and Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine (specifically the Marine framework directive)

· Strengthening the blue economy through improved MPA management

· Supporting national and regional contributions to CBD Aichi goals and targets that are linked to MPAs and the reduction of alien species introductions to the Black Sea region. In addition, Article 4 of CBD Protocol requires that *"The Contracting Parties shall produce and commonly agree on the Strategic Action Plan for the Black Sea Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation Protocol within three years of the Protocol coming into force which shall be reviewed every five years.* On the basis of the Strategic Action Plan for the Black Sea Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation Protocol, the Contracting Parties shall adopt strategies, national plans and/or programmes for the conservation of biological and landscape diversity and the sustainable use of marine and coastal biological and landscape resources and shall integrate them into their national sectoral and intersectoral policies.

· The Project will contribute to Aichi **Strategic Goal C (To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity). Target 11: (***By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes*).

· The project will also be aligned with and contribute to national strategies and policies with gender mainstreaming through responsible ministries.

8. Knowledge Management

Outline the knowledge management approach for the Project, including, if any, plans for the Project to learn from other relevant Projects and initiatives, to assess and document in a user-friendly form, and share these experiences and expertise with relevant stakeholders.

Knowledge management is recognized to be a critical element of the project and has been incorporated into project design. Component 3 will implement an IW:LEARN compliant website, a communication strategy and multiple capacity development activities to different stakeholder groups. The project will develop a communication and knowledge management strategy during the PPG phase to guide *all* project implementation activities. The project will also undertake a gender assessment and prepare a strategy (see above Section 3- Gender) to guide the overall implementation of the project. These strategies will also identify the required M&E indicators to be reported and will ensure that participant data is collected in a sex disaggregated format to ensure relevant information is available on websites and in management reports. These strategies will be revised/updated within the first three months of project execution.

The project will benefit from the many lessons and experiences derived from earlier regional projects in the Black Sea and will also gather appropriate lessons from on-going projects through the co-ordination mechanisms delivered in Component 3 (output 3.1.1).

The project will rely heavily on the management, dissemination, and scaling-up of knowledge, experiences, and results in order to achieve the overall project objective and ensure long-term sustainability of the ecosystem approaches in the Black Sea region that will also facilitate global up-scaling of the approaches.

The knowledge management and communications strategies will be tailored to specific stakeholder groups that have been identified in (section 2 - Stakeholders) including:

- National authorities (ministries, institutes, etc.) to ensure information on management approaches for MPAs and coastal management are accessible in each language and all countries have relevant information on ecosystem status, services and their valuation;
- Private sector - information will be collected as relevant to the different needs of the various private sector partners and other stakeholders
- Civil society will be provided with information to inform communities that are dependent on the blue economy;
- International organisations involved in activities supported by this project within the Black Sea region;
- GEF IW community of projects: Results from the project will be disseminated within and beyond the Black Sea region through the GEF IW:LEARN and LME:LEARN projects. The project will allocate at least one percent of the total GEF project financing for a suite of IW: LEARN activities to share lessons learned and results from the project to the broader GEF IW community, as well as actively participate in IW:LEARN capacity building workshops, forums, and biannual GEF IW Conferences. The project's website will meet the specifications suggested by the GEF IW:LEARN for International Waters projects.
- International meetings: The project will also look for other opportunities within the region and globally to share project results and other knowledge gained with the international community.

Regional Seas: The project will collaborate (where necessary) with the Mediterranean Regional Seas and will share information globally with other regional seas through sharing information and experiences on project web and participating at LME events.

9. Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

Provide information on the identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project/program based on your organization's ESS systems and procedures

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification*

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Medium/Moderate			

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

Provide preliminary information on the types and levels of risk classifications/ratings of any identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project (considering the GEF ESS Minimum Standards) and describe measures to address these risks during the project design.

Project Information

Project Information	
1. Project Title	Implementing Ecosystem Based Management approaches in the Black Sea LME (PIF stage)
2. Project Number	6590
3. Location (Global/Region/Country)	Black Sea Region (Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine)

Part A. Integrating Overarching Principles to Strengthen Social and Environmental Sustainability

QUESTION 1: How Does the Project Integrate the Overarching Principles in order to Strengthen Social and Environmental Sustainability?
Briefly describe in the space below how the Project mainstreams the human-rights based approach
The project will work closely with the countries, the Black Sea Commission and the European Union to continue to promote human rights approaches. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea embraces various human rights concepts that relate to the activities of this project. These include the right of innocent passage; freedom of the high seas; the common heritage of mankind which includes the requirement that all activities be carried out for the benefit of mankind as a whole. Recognizing the significant contribution of sustainable fisheries to global food security, income, wealth and poverty alleviation for present and future generations, there is an urgent need for action at all levels to ensure the long-term sustainable use and management of fisheries resources through the wider application of the precautionary approach and through the mitigation of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing noting that such IUU may give rise to safety and security concerns for individuals on vessels engaged in such activities. The project's main focus on strengthening the capacities and approaches to enhance the management of protected areas (marine and coastal) that will enhance the ecosystem resources they can deliver. These ecosystem services will benefit communities dependent on these for their lives and livelihoods.
Briefly describe in the space below how the Project is likely to improve gender equality and women's empowerment
The Project will benefits from gender experts and gender analysis and will apply a meaningful participatory process for engaging women's voices. In addition the results framework will include indicators to address gender inequality issues. Strategies to enhance improving roles and livelihoods for women will be drafted during the PPG phase and endorsed by the first PSC during inception. The Project Results Framework will contain relevant indicators and targets that will be developed following IW:LEARN's guidance (prepared by UNESCO WWAP) for collection and analysis of sex disaggregated data. The Project Team will seek to achieve gender balanced PCU. The project is likely to score 2 on the ATLAS Gender Marker when the concept is developed in the Project Document.
Briefly describe in the space below how the Project mainstreams environmental sustainability
The project Objective is '*Enhancing Marine and Coastal Protected Area national and regional management and adoption of Blue Economy approaches in the Black Sea to support long-term sustainable livelihoods derived from ecosystem services*'. The project will achieve this through capacity development of key stakeholder groups and by improving access and availability of environmental information. The project is being formulated in close co-operation with experts from the region and representatives of the Black Sea Commission. A key output of the project will be an updated SAP (based on the 2009 endorsed SAP) that will be the guiding plan for the BSC and the countries of the region for the next 10 years and will be used to seek post project financing by the countries. The project will actively seek co-operation with community, government and other interested stakeholders who will participate in the project's activities and capacity building exercises.

An exit strategy to focus national and regional attention on the achievements will also be developed to promote sustainability.

This project will be executed in close co-operation with the Black Sea Commission as the secretariat to the Bucharest Convention endorsed by the six B lack Sea Countries.

Part B. Identifying and Managing Social and Environmental Risks

QUESTION 2: What are the Potential Social and Environmental Risks? *Note: Describe briefly potential social and environmental risks identified in Attachment 1 – Risk Screening Checklist (based on any "Yes" responses). If no risks have been identified in Attachment 1 then note "No Risks Identified" and skip to Question 4 and Select "Low Risk". Questions 5 and 6 not required for Low Risk Projects.*	QUESTION 3: What is the level of significance of the potential social and environmental risks? *Note: Respond to Questions 4 and 5 below before proceeding to Question 6*			QUESTION 6: What social and environmental assessment and management measures have been conducted and/or are required to address potential risks (for Risks with Moderate and High Significance)?
Risk Description	***Impact and Probability (1-5)***	***Significance*** ***(Low, Moderate, High)***	***Comments***	***Description of assessment and management measures as reflected in the Project design. If ESIA or SESA is required note that the assessment should consider all potential impacts and risks.***
Risk1: (Principle 1, q3, 4, 5 and Principle 3, Standard 5, q5.2 and 5.3) The implementation of additional regulations and restrictions on fishers in MPAs and communities in coastal areas could reduce their access to resources and cause economic displacement.	I = 4 P = 2	**M**		During the PPG a detailed stakeholder analysis will be undertaken and a comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan prepared (and updated during the project's inception phase, as needed). The assessment will consider stakeholder access to MPCA and the economic consequences of changes of access/use; based on the findings, the PPG will determine whether a Livelihood Action Plan is required (which would then be developed as part of project activities, during implementation).

Risk 2: (Principle 2, q 4, 2; Principle 1, Standard 5) Women are more negatively impacted by protected area status in marine and coastal areas from restricted access.	I = 3 P = 2	M		During the PPG gender analysis will consider the role of women and men utilizing the MCPAs and the ecosystem resources they provide and the impact of likely restrictions on current practices. This will be lead to a gender action plan, which will be further refined during the project inception phase as needed.
Risk 3: (Principle 3, Standard 1, q 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.7 and 1.10) Failure to manage MPCAs effectively could have a negative effect on habitats with potential national and transboundary impacts.	I = 3 P = 2	M		The ecosystem impacts of the projects will be assessed during the PPG phase and confirmed with all interested parties (UNDP, EU, BSC, national stakeholders, etc.). The need for safeguards measures in the project's design and/or in stand-alone management plan(s) will be confirmed based on those PPG-stage assessments, and reflected in the ProDoc.
Risk 4: (Principle 3, Standard 2, q 2.2 and 2.3) The MCPA are vulnerable to climate change that could impact the ecosystem services they provide.	I = 4 P = 2	M		Likely climate change scenarios will be examined during the PPG phase and any likely impacts on the MCPAs will be discussed with regional stakeholders and projects. The design of project activities will be based on the 'no regrets' principles, and follow SES requirements as further risks are identified.
Risk 5: (Principle 3, Standard 3, q 3.7) The improved management of MPAs could lead to increased ecosystem resources that may lead to increasing numbers of fishers and the risks associated with this hazardous occupation.	I = 3 P = 2	M		During the PPG phase the likely increase in ecosystem services will be reviewed to understand the potential increase in the number of fishers. Through the stakeholder analysis and discussions with fishers, fishers associations and national authorities recommendations will be made to improve safety procedures where required.
Risk 6: (Principle 3, Standard 3, q3.6) The project is anticipating meetings, workshops and other events that bring stakeholders together and could increase the spread of COVID-19	I = 3 P = 4	M		The possible on-going impacts of COVID-19 will be elaborated during the PPG phase. At this stage it is expected that at the very least, strategies will be adopted (with respect to limited travel, social distancing, etc.) to enable the project to meet its objective. During the project implementation the PM will be guided by national, regional and UN information on COVID-19 and precautions that are required (for project staff, consultants and national stakeholders).

Risk 7: (Principles 1, 2; Standards 1, 3, 5) National strategies and policy reforms (output 1.1.2), the revised Black Sea TDA/SAP (output 2.1.1), and other upstream activities could have unintended social and/or environmental impacts on the ground, if not designed or implemented well.	I = 4 P = 2	**M**		The project will be designed to apply the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) approach for the development of the SAP and all strategies/policies, to avoid or manage this risk in line with the requirements of the SES.

	QUESTION 4: What is the overall Project risk categorization?		
	Select one (see SESP for guidance)		Comments
	Low Risk		
	Moderate Risk	X	
	High Risk	☐	

	QUESTION 5: Based on the identified risks and risk categorization, what requirements of the SES are relevant?		
	Check all that apply		Comments
	Principle 1: Human Rights	X	
	Principle 2: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	X	
	1. Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Resource Management	X	
	2. Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation	X	
	3. Community Health, Safety and Working Conditions	X	
	4. Cultural Heritage	☐	
	5. Displacement and Resettlement	X	
	6. Indigenous Peoples	☐	

	7. Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency	☐	

Supporting Documents

Upload available ESS supporting documents.

Title	Submitted
6590 SESP template_Black Sea_25Sept2020_final	

Part III: Approval/Endorsement By GEF Operational Focal Point(S) And GEF Agency(ies)

A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S): (Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter with this template).

Name	Position	Ministry	Date
Mrs. Nino Tkhilava	Head of Department	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia	10/21/2020
Mr. Akif Ozkaldi	Undersecretary	The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Turkey	10/30/2020
Mrs. Olena Miskun	Director of the Department on Strategic Planning and International Cooperation	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine	12/4/2022

ANNEX A: Project Map and Geographic Coordinates

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project intervention takes place

Figure 1 - The Black Sea MPAs of international and national importance[6]