

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Project ID:	10563
Project Name:	Blueing the Black Sea (BBSEA)
Countr(ies):	Regional, Georgia, Moldova, Türkiye, Ukraine
Implementing Agency:	World Bank

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name

Blueing the Black Sea (BBSEA)

Country

Regional, Georgia, Moldova, Türkiye, Ukraine

GEF ID

10563

Implementing Agency

World Bank

Executing Entity

United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

PIR Submission

8/6/2025

Fiscal Year , PIR Number

FY 2025 , Less than 1 year Implementation

Objective

To strengthen the preparedness of governments and the private sector in the Project Focus Countries to take actions to reduce pollution in the Black Sea.

B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress

Satisfactory

Development Objective

Satisfactory

Overall risk

Moderate Risk

Project Financing

7,000,000.00

Cumulative Disbursement

947,664.00

C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

1/7/2023

Agency Approval

9/12/2024

Implementation Start

9/12/2024

First Disbursement

3/13/2025

Expected MTR	Actual MTR
Expected Completion 9/30/2028	Actual Completion

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Progress: Information on progress and outcomes of project implementation activities

Project Management Establishment Progress: The UNOPS PIU has been strengthened and is fully operational. Recruitment for key positions, including a Senior Programme Manager, has been completed. The recruitment process for the Project Officer position is currently in its advanced stages and is anticipated to be completed by the end of summer.

Regional Steering Committee (RSC) Meeting:

- The RSC has been formally established, with the four Project Focus Countries Governments (Georgia, Moldova, Türkiye and Ukraine) nominating BBSEA Focal Points. The first RSC meeting held in Istanbul (June 12, 2025)

established governance frameworks, approved the annual work plan, and launched project initiatives. Georgia was endorsed as the first country co-chair, with annual rotation agreed upon.

Eco-Innovation Challenge (EIC) Manual:

- Substantial progress has been made in refining the EIC manual, with priority items identified for finalization including eligibility criteria, focus topics, and implementation partners. Next steps include finalizing the manual, preparing calls for proposals, and developing guidance notes for applicants.

Consultancies under Component 1:

- The preparation of draft ToRs for key consultancies under Component 1 was agreed to be initiated (i.e., consultancy for an assessment of the current national policy and legal framework; consultancy for national investment recommendation) and will be developed over the next months in close coordination with the RSC.

B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities

As the project is just recently started, there are no challenges to report at this stage.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

The Projects' Launch Meeting was organized in Istanbul, on June 11, 2025. The meeting focused on understanding and tackling Black Sea pollution. Opening remarks were delivered by representatives of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Permanent International Secretariat (BSEC PERMIS), UNOPS, and the World Bank. This was followed by a technical session framing the challenge of the overall Blueing the Black Sea Program, followed by a session that provided an overview of the BBSEA GEF Regional Project and a presentation of the Eco-Innovation Challenge. The afternoon session included a panel discussion on opportunities for building synergies, featuring representatives from BSEC, the Black Sea Commission, and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS). Lastly, a facilitated roundtable discussion among all participants explored potential collaborations and outreach.

The first Regional Steering Committee (RSC) meeting for the project was held on June 12, 2025, in Istanbul. The meeting successfully established critical governance frameworks, approved the initial annual work plan, and launched discussions on major project initiatives. The meeting solidified the project's operational structure and charted a clear path forward for collaborative efforts to make the project a success. The RSC officially endorsed the Terms of Reference (TOR) for both the RSC and the Advisory Committee (AC). Key decision regarding governance included:

- **Decision-making process:** It was clarified that in the absence of consensus, decisions and endorsements by the RSC will be made through a vote of the participants that are present (either in-person or online) at the meeting.
- **RSC Country Co-Chair:** Georgia was endorsed as the first country co-chair, with an agreement for annual rotation; Türkiye has been proposed for Year 2 and will confirm its availability before the next RSC meeting.
- **Meeting frequency:** The RSC will meet in person at least annually, with the possibility of additional meetings by videoconference as needed.
- **Advisory Committee (AC) structure:** The AC will be chaired by the RSC country co-chair with the UNOPS Project Implementation Unit (PIU) acting as the AC Secretariat. The AC will comprise representatives of organizations named in the TOR as well as representatives from each focus country's private sector, academia, and civil society. With the endorsement of the AC TOR, the Secretariat will proceed to issue invitations to the organizations named in the TOR to nominate a representative to join the AC. BBSEA focal points agreed to nominate three representatives from their respective countries (private sector, academia, and civil society) by early July 2025.

D. Gender Equality

The communication strategy and action plan prepared by UNOPS PIU highlights that its approach includes targeted messaging for core audiences—including national authorities, civil society organizations, SMEs, regional institutions, and development partners—and relies on a mix of high-impact communication tools such as digital storytelling, social media campaigns, stakeholder events, and multimedia content production.

By applying a phased, inclusive, and country-sensitive communication model, the strategy ensures that outreach efforts are responsive to each project country's context while reinforcing shared regional goals. Particular attention is given to engaging youth, women, and innovators through accessible and inspiring narratives. The Action Plan details specific communication activities, timelines, channels, responsible parties, and monitoring indicators to ensure accountability, learning, and continuous improvement. In line with World Bank, GEF and UNOPS guidelines, the plan also embeds risk management measures and promotes proactive engagement across all project components and stakeholder groups. One specific communication objective is Support Stakeholder Engagement and Participation: (i) Facilitate informed and inclusive dialogue with key stakeholders, including government institutions, SMEs, academia, civil society, and local communities; (ii) ensure the views and feedback of vulnerable and underrepresented groups—such as youth, women, and rural populations—are integrated into communication and project activities.

E. Knowledge Management

The first Regional Steering Committee (RSC) meeting for the project was held on June 12, 2025, in Istanbul. The meeting successfully established critical governance frameworks, approved the initial annual work plan, and launched discussions on major project initiatives. The meeting solidified the project's operational structure and charted a clear path forward for collaborative efforts to make the project a success. The meeting addressed the development of a robust communication strategy and a comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan. The strategy will define problem statements, urgency, and potential threats (e.g., nutrient

pollution, climate trends) to inform policymakers. BBSEA focal points shared their current communication practices: Türkiye uses official letters and social media, while Georgia extensively uses Facebook and involves stakeholders in document preparation. Ukraine utilizes various channels including Facebook, LinkedIn, websites, and events, working with projects like EU4Emblas.

Website and temporary landing page: a project website is under full construction mode and is on-track to go live by end August 2025. For now, the following landing page is active: www.bbsea.project.unops.org, which includes a button for the grievance redress mechanism. This landing page is a place holder only to save the website address. It will be replaced by the fully populated website in late August.

III: Minor Amendments

CONTEXT	
Result Framework	
Components and Cost	
Institutional And Implementation Arrangements	
Financial Management	
Implementation Schedule	
Executing Entity	
Executing Entity Category	
Minor Project Objective Change	
Safeguards	
Risk Analysis	
Increase of GEF Financing up to 5%	
Co-Financing	
Location of Project Activity	
others	

IV: Geographic Coordinates of Project Activities

V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category

M and E Document

Title

10563-P173890-2025-ISR-PIR-WB-Regional