

Stakeholder ESF Webinar

CONSULTATIONS ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF BLUEING THE BLACK SEA GEF REGIONAL PROJECT - A REGIONAL INITIATIVE TO TACKLE MARINE POLLUTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SUPPORT OF THE COMMON MARITIME AGENDA FOR THE BLACK SEA

27 October 2021

Summary

I. What was discussed?

The Blueing the Black Sea (BBSEA) Stakeholder ESF Webinar aimed to consult on the anticipated environmental and social aspects of the Project with all interested stakeholders focusing on the investment component of the planned BBSEA Project and expected positive and potential negative impacts and risks, requirements of the World Bank Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) and the tools and mechanisms to address the environmental and social risks and impacts.

Following an official opening and introduction of the BBSEA GEF Regional Project by key speakers, the webinar continued with the session focusing on the following environmental and social aspects of the Project:

- expected positive and potential negative impacts and risks
- the requirements of the World Bank Environmental and Social Standards (ESS), and
- the tools and mechanisms to address the environmental and social risks and impacts, including the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Stakeholder Engagement Framework/Plan (SEF/P), Labour Management Plan/Procedure (LMP)
- the means and to engage with various groups of stakeholders throughout the project cycle

The webinar was highly interactive and engaged with the audience through a live (Mentimeter) survey and through questions and answers with the environmental and social experts.

II. Who was present?

The webinar was opened by H.E. Amb. Lazăr COMĂNESCU, Secretary General, Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS), Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and introduction of the Project was done by Ms Rositsa STOEVA, Executive Manager, BSEC PERMIS.

The webinar was held via Zoom and was well attended by 85 people at the peak from the public, private, academia, and civil society sectors participating. There were some international experts, such as representatives of the World Bank, UNDP, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions and the Black Sea Assistance Mechanism for the Common

Maritime Agenda. Participants represented national and regional authorities, academia, business and civil society. A complete stakeholder list of institutions represented is provided in Annex I.

III. How was the webinar structured?

As indicated in the webinar agenda, the official opening and introduction of the BBSEA GEF Regional Project by key speakers were followed by presentations on;

- expected positive and potential negative impacts and risks
- the requirements of the World Bank Environmental and Social Standards (ESS), and
- the tools and mechanisms to address the environmental and social risks and impacts, including the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Stakeholder Engagement Framework/Plan (SEF/P), Labour Management Plan/Procedure (LMP)
- the means and to engage with various groups of stakeholders throughout the project cycle

A questions and answers session followed the presentation where participants can ask questions, make comments through writing to the Q&A and chat box of the Zoom or by directly taking the stage. A key part of the consultation webinar was the live (Mentimeter) survey through which information from participants and their perceptions regarding the Project and the presented environmental and social aspects were collected.

This virtual public event was held via Zoom in English and simultaneous translation was available in four languages (Ukrainian, Turkish, Romanian, and Georgian).

IV. Summary of Discussions

In the Welcoming Address *BSEC PERMIS Secretary General*, H.E. Amb. Lazăr Comănescu provided very brief summary of the development of the BBSEA GEF Regional Project and indicated that Project is coming to the implementation stage. He mentioned that the fight against marine pollution in the Black Sea have to be given at regional scale and encouraged active participation and input of all related parties. He highlighted the fact that the BSEC Secretariat supports BSEC Member States in addressing this challenge and the Project will be catalysing the blue economy in the Region and contributes for closing the gap of financing for managing marine pollution in the Black Sea.

A presentation for introducing the Project was made by *Ms Rositsa STOEVA, Executive Manager, BSEC PERMIS*. She emphasized that Project aims to address the pollution in the Black Sea and this is a regional problem to be solved by all countries in the region. She summarized the key facts about the project including; financing (6.6 million dollars from GEF International Water Window, executing body (BSEC PERMIS), long term objectives (improving the health of the Black Sea and increase social and economic benefits for the population living in the region) and timeline (preparation stage is on-going and implementation of the Project would cover a period of 4 years). The indicative Project activities at national/regional level and implementation arrangements were provided. Progress of Project preparation was presented.

The environmental and social (E&S) aspects of the Project were presented by the environmental and social experts/consultants taking part in the preparation and appraisal stage of the Project in three parts.

First part provided a summary of the Project Components and E&S aspects of the Project, emphasizing that mostly positive impacts are expected. The tools and mechanisms developed to address potential E&S risks and impacts of the Project activities were introduced, which include; Terms of Reference (ToR) for Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Stakeholder Engagement Framework/Plan (SEF/SEP) and Labour Management Plan/Procedure (LMP).

In the second part, the ESMF was presented including; the ESMF development process, environmental and social requirements of the World Bank (ESF and ESSs), expected positive E&S impacts, potential adverse E&S impacts and risks, and related mitigation measures, institutional arrangements and implementation process, and, finally, monitoring and reporting.

The third part concentrated on the SEP. The presentation covered the purpose and principles of stakeholder engagement, steps of SEP development process, execution of SEP, development of country specific SEPs, main stakeholder engagement activities, involvement of vulnerable groups, grievance mechanism, and monitoring and reporting.

The presentations were followed by the Q&A session (through the chat box and direct questions), which included comments and suggestions. These remarks/comments/questions could be listed in summary as follows:

- For bluing the Black Sea, we should keep in mind the integrated nature of the issues and need for a forward looking approach.
- The language differences to be considered are mainly between sectors and stakeholders, rather than countries and regions.
- If the two grievance redress mechanisms are both managed by BSEC, why is there a need for two separate mechanisms?
- For preventing the pollution in the Black Sea cooperation in maritime education on all levels - school, university, non-formal – is needed.
- There is also an initiative by the OECD in the area covering the Black Sea countries, and on Green Action Plan.
- The announcement and invitation for the Regional Webinar on the Greening the Maritime Transport and Preparedness for Marine Pollution Prevention in the Black Sea Region was made by the representative of Turkish Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure.

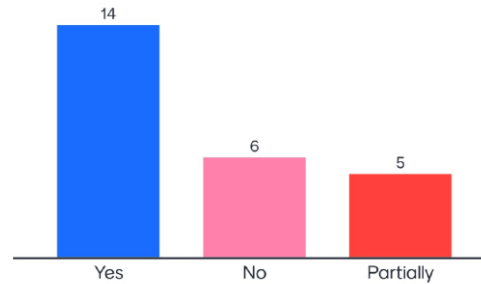
All of the above mentioned remarks and questions were addressed/answered by the environmental and social consultants in the webinar. The Q&A session was followed by a live survey through which information and perceptions regarding the Project and the presented environmental and social aspects were collected. The link to the Mentimeter survey would be kept open for anyone who could not join the webinar or would like to give additional feedback.

Ms Rositsa STOEVA, Executive Manager, BSEC PERMIS, who closed the webinar, thanked the audience for their contribution and added that all the shared ideas are very important. She also announced that the presentations and all relevant information are available at the following website: <http://www.bsec-bsvkc.org/Forms/BlueingTheBlackSeaProject>. In addition, there would be country specific discussions on the eco-innovation challenge including the E&S aspects. It was also emphasized that BSEC and the World Bank sees the stakeholder engagement as a very important and continuous process as was one of the major feedbacks obtained from the Mentimeter survey results.

V. What feedbacks were received from the survey?

During the webinar, the participants were also invited to take part in a live survey and provide input on the Blueing the Black Sea (BBSEA) GEF Regional Project and managing the environmental and social aspects of the Project. The results of the survey are summarized below.

Q1- Most of the survey participants (about 80%) were already informed about the BBSEA to some extent before the consultation meeting.

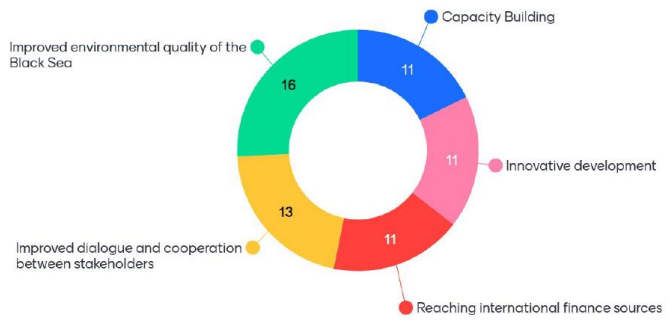


Q2- The expectations of the survey participants for their own country from the BBSEA Project were rather various. They could be mainly categorized as; reduction and prevention of water and sea pollution, enhanced national/institutional capacities in terms of legislation and water pollution, increased awareness, and new opportunities for regional development projects.

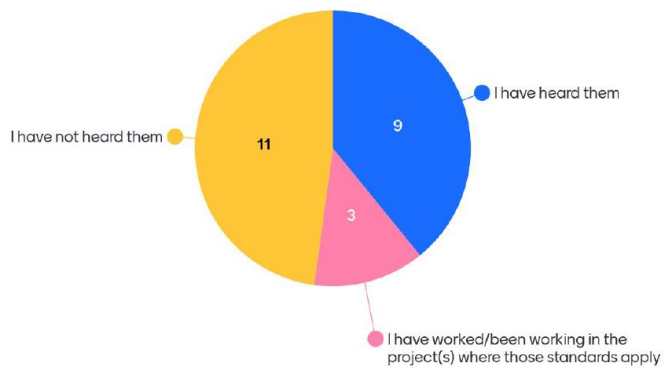
Enhanced national capacities	Pollution prevention	reduction of pollution in the context of protection and sustainable use of water resources
supporting full water treatment plants recycling industry	Recommendations for a Clear and understandable legal framework on the issue	Higher awareness of the issues and taking responsibility for reducing pollution loads
improved environment, pollution reduced	reducing the level of pollution and popularizing the issues of environmental preservation in Ukraine.	New possibility for regional development projects
Decreasing water pollution in the country	reduction of pollution	responsiveness on behalf of the gov agencies
help resolve key issues that inhibit blueing improve biodiversity and ecosystem based activities such as recreational angling economy, prevent pollution	Tangible decrease of impact on the Black Sea environment	It may motivate industries to maintain more sustainable productions on both national and international scale
mitigation deep sea domestic waste charging"	the strengthening the capacity to implement EU legislation	Rehabilitate rivers
reduction of pollution	Joint sustainable action in the region on litter pollution	Reduction of sea pollution and sustainable aquatic life

Q3- The major benefits of the BBSEA Project for the institutions of survey participants were concentrated under 5 headings (from the highest to lowest votes);

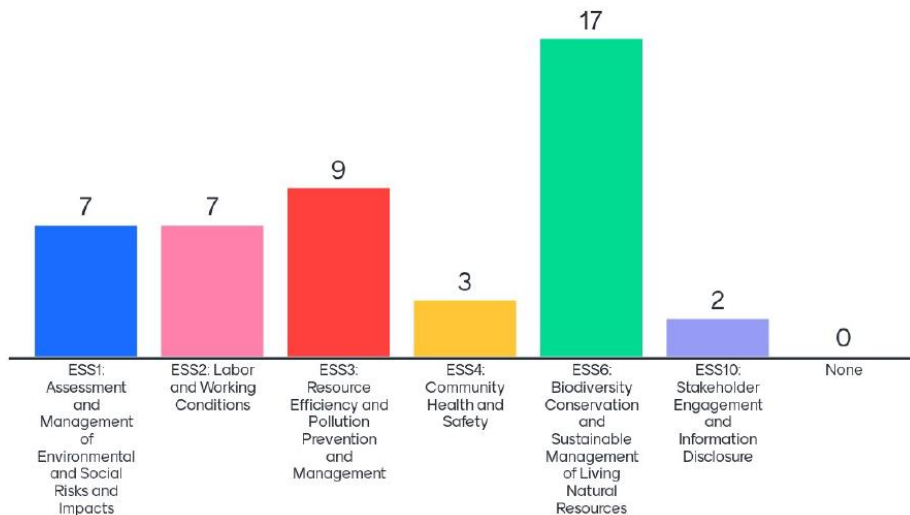
- improved environmental quality of the Black Sea,
- Improved dialogue and cooperation between stakeholders
- Capacity building
- Innovative development
- Reaching international finance sources



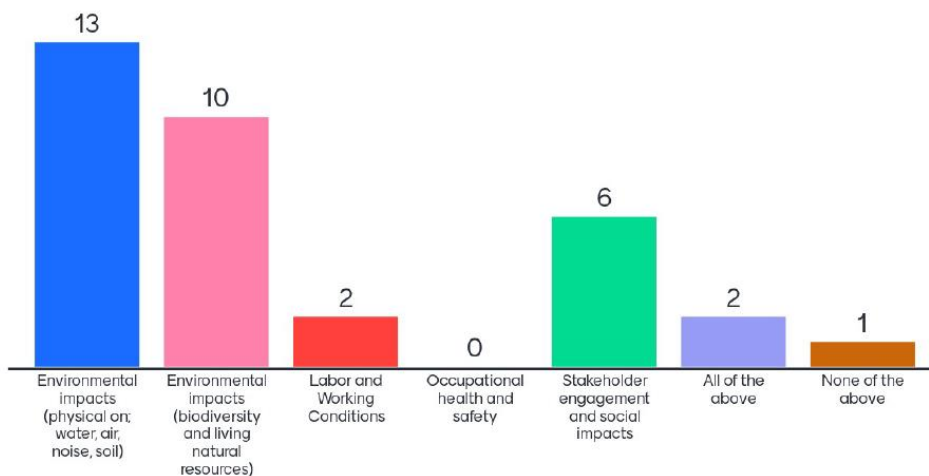
Q4- About half of the survey participants had not heard of the World Bank Environmental Social Standards (ESS) before the consultation meeting and about 40% only heard of them. Only about 15% of the participants stated that they have worked on the projects applying the ESSs.



Q5- Most of the survey participants think that among the World Bank ESSs applicable for the BBSEA ESS6 would be the most difficult to implement in their country or by their institution. In terms of difficulty in implementation ESS3, ESS1 and ESS2 follow ESS6.



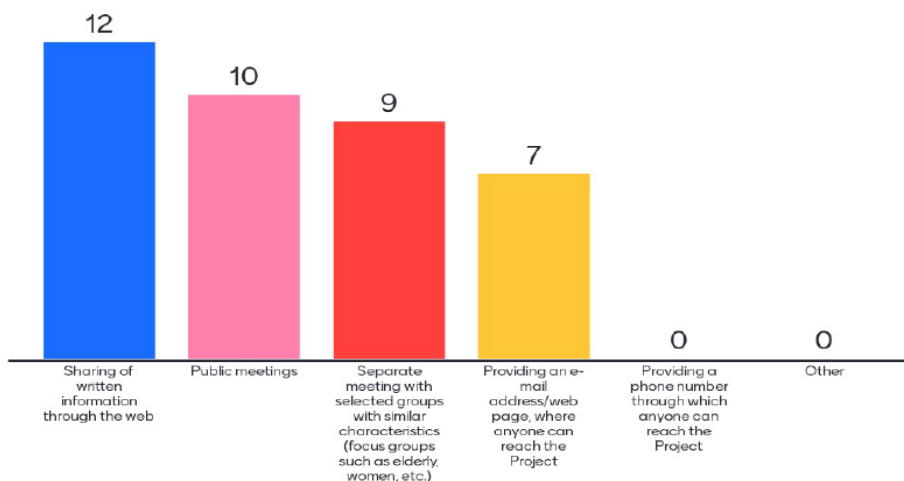
Q6- With regard to the major impacts expected in implementation of the Project activities (especially the physical ones), most of the survey participants indicated that environmental impacts (on physical and biological environment) would be of main concern. The next issue following these is stakeholder engagement and social impacts.



Q7- About 15% of the survey answers indicated that the institutions of the participants are not involved in any environmental and social monitoring, and reporting activities. In this context, social monitoring is comparatively lower than environmental monitoring.



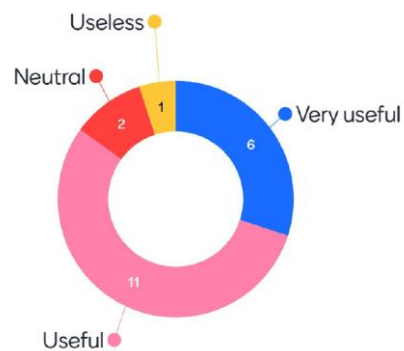
Q8- The answers of survey participants revealed that the most effective way of information disclosure and public consultation method for the BBSEA Project would be sharing of written information through the web. This option was followed by conducting public meetings and meetings with selected groups with similar characteristics (focus groups such as elderly, women, etc.).



Q9- The survey results revealed that transparency and stakeholder engagement are seen as the most important parameters for effectiveness and success of the Project.



Q10- Most of the survey participants voted that they found the meeting at useful or very useful. Among the 20 votes, there is only 1 vote indicating that the meeting was useless and there are 2 votes being neutral.



Annex I. Participating Organisations

1. Agency Forestry of Ajara, Georgia
2. Agricola Odessa (NGO), Ukraine
3. Aici pentru Tine Association
4. Ambiente s.p.a., Italy
5. Ankara University, Turkey
6. Aqseptence Group GmbH, Ukraine
7. Association of Ukrainian Regions of the Danube Strategy, Ukraine
8. Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University
9. Black Sea Basin Directorate Varna, Bulgaria
10. Black Sea Institute Association, Bulgaria
11. Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
12. Bulgarian Maritime Administration
13. Burgas Municipality, Bulgaria
14. Center for Problems of Marine Geology, Geoecology and Sedimentary Ore Formation of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine
15. Civitas Georgica, Georgia
16. Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), Belgium
17. Danube Logistics, Republic of Moldova
18. Ecological Counseling Center Cahul, Republic of Moldova
19. Ecological Society BIOTICA, Republic of Moldova
20. Eco-Spectrum Ltd, Georgia
21. European Environment Agency, Denmark
22. Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Bulgaria
23. FLAG Pomorie, Bulgaria
24. General Directorate of ILBANK, Turkey
25. General Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Turkey
26. General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean – Black Sea
27. Geological Institute of Romania
28. GMT Holding llc, Georgia
29. ICZM NFP, Georgia
30. Institute of Market Problems and Economic-ecological Research, National Academy of Science, Ukraine
31. Karadeniz Technical University, Turkey
32. Marine Administration Executive Agency of Bulgaria
33. Marine Cluster Bulgaria
34. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry of Romania
35. Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration of Romania
36. Ministry of Education and Science, Georgia
37. Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of Turkey
38. Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova
39. Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia
40. Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Moldova
41. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
42. Ministry of Industry and Technology of Turkey
43. Ministry of Regional Development and Public works of Bulgaria
44. Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure of Turkey
45. My World (NGO), Bulgaria
46. National Environment Center, Republic of Moldova
47. National Environmental Agency, Georgia
48. Odesa Polytechnic State University, Ukraine
49. Ovidius University of Constanta, Romania
50. Regional Development Agency, Gagauzia, Republic of Moldova

51. Regional Development Agency, South, Republic of Moldova
52. Regional Training Center, Budjak, Ukraine
53. Research and Production Centre, Ukraine
54. Resource and Analysis Center - Society and Environment (think-tank non-profit organization)
55. Sariyer Municipality, Turkey
56. State Agency of Melioration and Fisheries of Ukraine
57. State Hydrometeorological Service, Republic of Moldova
58. State Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Moldova
59. Strategies Mer et Littoral SAS, France
60. Tbilisi State University, Georgia
61. Technical University of Varna, Bulgaria
62. The Greens Movement of Georgia
63. The World Bank
64. Tiraspol State University, Republic of Moldova
65. TUBITAK, Turkey
66. Turkish Development Bank, Turkey
67. Turkish Environmental Education Association (NGO)
68. Ukrainian Sea Ports Authority
69. UNDP, Water Programme
70. University of Waikato, New Zealand
71. Via Pontica Foundation, Bulgaria
72. Water Basin Management Authority, USA
73. Women's Association for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development, Republic of Moldova