**BLUE ECONOMY IN THE BLACK SEA REGION:**

**POTENTIAL RESPONSE ACTIONS**

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**ABSTRACT**

In 2017, with the support of the iniative launched by the European Commission (EC), Black Sea countries are making good progress on maritime affairs and blue economy, with a particular focus on marine research and innovation, blue skills and careers and preservation of the marine environment. The Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea and the Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda represent the most recent achievements in maritime affairs and blue economy. This documents will provide the framework for voluntary, public, private, scientific and civil society implementation of national and regional blue economy projects and for attracting European funds and international investment in the Black Sea region.

Black Sea CONNECT Project is a key H2020 coordination and support action (CSA) which will scientifically, technically and logistically support the broader  Black Sea Blue Growth Initiative. Fourteen organizations (including universities, research institutions, intergovermental organisations, research & funding agencies and NGO’s) from nine countries are involved in the project; the Black Sea coastal countries: 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. Eight workshops were held by the experts joining the Blue Growth Initiative for Research and Innovation in the Black Sea with the support of the (EC).

Initially information, gaps and research and innovation opportunities together with the necessary justification and drivers from each Black Sea country on both national and international were collected and analysed. Futhermore the regional and national boundary and framework conditions for the Research and Innovation needs and opportunities for successful implementation of a Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) were identified.

The SRIA and its implementation plan will guide stakeholders from academia, funding agencies, industry, policy and society to address the fundamental Black Sea research 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.