

**Athens Workshop on**  
**“Black Sea Knowledge Institutions Turn Green”**

TITANIA Hotel  
*Athens, 16 October 2012*

Dear Honourable Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Firstly I would like to thank all of you, for your presence here and welcome you to our Workshop on “Black Sea Knowledge Institutions Turn Green” in the framework of our project **“Green Cluster of Knowledge Institutions of Black Sea: A Roadmap on Renewable Energy Sources and Energy Efficiency for Research and Academic Institutions”**, which is co-funded by the BSEC-Hellenic Development Fund and coordinated by the ICBSS.

The other 2 partners of the project are of course the TUBITAK Marmara Research Center from Turkey and the National Research University – Higher School of Economics (HSE) from Russia.

I would like to say a few words concerning the relevance of ICBSS with the project and shortly mention its main objectives.

Since 2010 the ICBSS has oriented its focus towards the adoption of a new model for sustainable development. It was decided that in an era of global economic crisis and serious pressures on the environment, the traditional approaches for development are obsolete. The new emerging priorities and driving forces for the Black Sea area lie in Sustainable Development, Greening Innovation and Governance. Therefore, the new primary target of ICBSS ever since, is to “Turn the Black Sea Green” adapting to the challenges of the contemporary international context. This new model of action focuses on three main aspects:

1. The sustainable use of natural resources with specific emphasis on energy resources, which are considered crucial for the Black Sea countries
2. The active involvement and enhancement of human capital in knowledge networks, promoting good governance through the dynamic participation of civil society actors, NGOs, scientists, researchers and government representatives
3. The establishment of a target-oriented framework aiming at the region's sustainable development, mainly emphasizing on trans-regional cooperation and the incorporation of environmental dimension into all sectoral policies (e.g. transport, trade, energy).

The ICBSS' shift towards a "Green Black Sea" is characterized by a multidisciplinary approach including economic prosperity, social cohesion, development and culture, while the environmental perspective runs horizontally through all these aspects.

Energy is of paramount importance in the Black Sea region and ICBSS' activities are instrumental towards enhancing cooperation in this field. In line with the menace of climate change and the imperative need for incremental dependence on renewable energy sources, the Centre pursues concrete actions and constructive dialogue to respond to key challenges.

In this context, the BSEC-HDF research project focused on the development of a **Roadmap** for the promotion of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency in research and academic institutions of the Black Sea area, that can act as paradigmatic innovative examples for other organizations and institutions of the public sector in these countries.

The main goal of our project was the establishment of a *Green Cluster of Knowledge Institutions*, with a view to supporting a regional partnership of academic and research institutions of the Black Sea countries, able to address the key energy challenges, disseminate the project's outcomes and promote the use of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency practices in the Black Sea area.

The Green Cluster depends of course on the **active participation** of its members. Based on their activities it will develop a platform to strengthen integration of sustainable development in higher education, research and society and possibilities of transferring knowledge and know-how. I believe that I speak in the name of all project partners, saying that our **long-term goal** is to expand this cluster to as many countries as possible, in order to develop an **innovative example for Black Sea** countries in their efforts to implement soft green practices related to energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources.

Following the project's final conference in Istanbul last July that was organised by our partners in TUBITAK, this **workshop aims** at:

- further supporting our regional partnership of academic and research institutions of the Black Sea countries, able to address the key energy challenges
- further disseminate the project's outcomes to as many recipients as possible focusing on the importance of Renewable Energy Sources (RES) and Energy Efficiency (EE) in the Black Sea area
- bringing together representatives from the academic and research communities and the public and private sector.

In this framework, I would like to mention the possibility provided by our **ICBSS web platform** to continue and further develop our interactive dialogue through a web Forum that was especially developed for this purpose. You can join our ICBSS community, get access to the forum and add topics for discussion, comment on other people's views and upload relevant material.

In the end, I would like to **thank** the BSEC-HDF and the Permanent International Secretariat for their support during this year of implementing the project and I am certain that we will have them **on our side** in our effort to strengthen the potential of our Green Cluster.

And now, I would like to give the floor to Mr. Zaimis, the BSEC-HDF Manager to say a few words.