



PRESS RELEASE

Athens, 12 June 2025

Participation of ICBSS Director General at the launch meeting of the “Blueing the Black Sea - BBSEA” project

On 11 June 2025, the ICBSS Director General, Mr. Georgios MITRAKOS, participated at the launch meeting of the “**Blueing the Black Sea (BBSEA) GEF Regional Project**”, co-organised by the **World Bank** and the **United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)** and hosted by the **Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)** in Istanbul, Türkiye.

Over the course of its three-year duration (2025-2028), the **Blueing the Black Sea (BBSEA) Project** will engage national and regional stakeholders in providing technical assistance, facilitating knowledge exchange and developing investment opportunities to reduce pollution, with the aim to tackle marine pollution and promote regional cooperation in order to reverse the environmental decline in the Black Sea.

On behalf of the ICBSS, Director General Mr. Georgios MITRAKOS was invited as panellist at the moderated round-table discussion “**Opportunities for Building Synergies**”. Mr. Mitrakos noted the BBSEA project’s timely launch at the completion of the regional flagship EU-funded project BRIDGE-BS that will facilitate knowledge exchange and allow the BBSEA to build on established cooperation networks and important knowledge outputs. ICBSS Director General highlighted the BRIDGE-BS key document “**2030 Blue Roadmap for the Black Sea**”, the result of a five-year collaborative process with national and regional stakeholders, which proposes a series of actions and measures to support the Blue Economy in the Black Sea building on BRIDGE-BS results. Mr. Mitrakos emphasised also the **Black Sea Accelerator**, the **Blue Economy Observatory** and the first of its kind **Digital Twin of the Black Sea (DTO)**, all developed under the BRIDGE-BS project, that will feed the works of the newly launched BBSEA project.

The event provided an opportunity for BBSEA partners -the World Bank, UNOPS and BSEC-, to exchange with representatives from national governments and other regional stakeholders ensuring that the BBSEA is aligned with broader environmental and blue economy objectives in the Black Sea region.

This working visit is in line with ICBSS’s commitment to fostering dialogue, sharing knowledge, and building partnerships to encourage sustainable development in the wider Black Sea region and beyond.

For more information about the BBSEA GEF project, please visit

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eca/brief/blueing-the-black-sea-program-bbsea>

For more information about the BRIDGE-BS project, please visit <https://bridgeblacksea.org/>

For more information about the ICBSS, please visit <https://icbss.org/>

About the ICBSS: The International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) was founded in 1998 as a non-profit organisation. It has since fulfilled a dual function. On the one hand, it is an independent research and training institution focusing on the wider Black Sea region. On the other hand, it is a related body of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), and its think-tank. Thus, the ICBSS pursues applied, policy-oriented research, promotes knowledge on the Black Sea region both within and outside its boundaries, and offers policy advice with the aim of fostering multilateral cooperation among the BSEC member states as well as with their international partners.