



## **BRIDGE-BS**

*Advancing Black Sea Research and Innovation to Co-Develop Blue Growth within Resilient Ecosystems*

### **PRESS RELEASE ON BRIDGE-BS KICK-OFF MEETING**

*(12-13th of July 2021)*

***BRIDGE-BS (Advancing Black Sea Research and Innovation to Co-Develop Blue Growth within Resilient Ecosystems) has been launched to develop predictive tools and capabilities necessary to understand and predict the impacts of climate-driven and anthropogenic multi-stressors on the ecosystem services of the Black Sea.***

**The kick-off meeting of BRIDGE-BS**, funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme and coordinated by METU-IMS of Turkey, took place online on 12-13 July 2021. In the plenary opening, the sister Horizon 2020 project DOORS (Developing Optimal and Open Research Support for the Black Sea) and the synergies between the two projects towards the Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda were also featured.

Over 200 distinct participants from academia, policy, blue economy sectors, and civil society came together to learn about the ambitious and future-looking research program of BRIDGEBS. The Kick-Off meeting started with a welcome speech of BRIDGE-BS coordinator Baris Salihoglu and opening remarks of METU Rector Mustafa Versan Kok. This two-hour public section continued with a policy plenary with the participation of Jocelyn Guitton from the European External Action Service and Patrizia Busolini from DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries moderated by Wendy BONNE from the DG Research and Innovation. Following the policy plenary, Sigi Gruber, senior advisory from DG Research and Innovation gave a keynote address on the Black Sea and the new projects. Ms. Gruber said *"What strikes me is the already high-level integration of BRIDGE Black Sea and DOORS; these twin projects are connected with many key stakeholders but also citizens around the Black Sea."* Sigi Gruber



The activities of the BRIDGE- BS Research and Innovation Action are funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 101000240.



*also added: “Science and policy are often seen as totally different worlds. But we have learned that if we can’t bridge these two worlds, it might prevent us to solve complex problems.”*

After a 2-hour public session, internal Work Package meetings to discuss the future plan and next steps for a healthy and better valued and understood Black Sea took place for one and a half-days.

The overall objective of BRIDGE-BS is to advance the Black Sea’s marine research and innovation to co-develop Blue Growth pathways under multi stressors for the sustainable utilization of the ecosystem services. To do so it will develop an ecosystem-based management framework to enable policy uptake and foster citizen engagement. Clustering around three main nodes including Service Dynamics, Blue Growth Incubators, and Empowered Citizens; BRIDGE-BS strives to achieve “a healthy, resilient and productive Black Sea by 2030” with awareness of the seriousness of the threat posed by the increasing human-induced pressures on the Black Sea. Although the Black Sea is still rich in terms of biodiversity, natural resources, and heritage, these ecosystem services are under threat by human-induced factors such as overfishing, hypoxia, and eutrophication as well as the effects of alien species and climate change. Hence, BRIDGE-BS puts to the forefront the overarching aim of assessing the current state of Black Sea ecosystems, their services, and resilience to the multi-stressors, and creating the necessary means to manage these ecosystems sustainably.

BRIDGE-BS brings 33 partner organisations from 7 Black Sea coastal countries, 8 European Union member states, and international entities together. Experts from leading marine research and European institutions will contribute to maximizing impact as well as developing cutting-edge scientific outputs in the next 4.5 years.

### **Contacts**

E-mail: [bridgebs@ims.metu.edu.tr](mailto:bridgebs@ims.metu.edu.tr)

Twitter: [@BRIDGE\\_BlackSea](https://twitter.com/BRIDGE_BlackSea)

Facebook: [@BRIDGEBlackSea](https://www.facebook.com/BRIDGEBlackSea)

YouTube: [BRIDGE Black Sea](https://www.youtube.com/BRIDGE_BlackSea)



The activities of the BRIDGE- BS Research and Innovation Action are funded by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 101000240.