RESPONSE

Building Response Frameworks under existing & new Marine Pollution Challenges in the Black Sea

Deliverable D4.5

Report on networking and transferability activities

Co-funded by the European Union

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Project background and context

The RESPONSE, supported by the European Union EMFAF, under Grant Agreement no 101124661 has duration of 36 months, starting from 01.10.2023. The project consortium involves six partners from five different countries: Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine and Georgia. Five of the participants are based in countries bordering on the Black Sea, and the lead beneficiary, the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), has a long history of working with the region and with members of the consortium. The partnership includes one university, two research institutes and three environmental NGOs: the Black Sea NGO Network (BSNN) regional NGO network based in Varna, Bulgaria; the National Institute of Marine Research and Development (NIMRD), based in Constanta, Romania, leading research institute for the Black Sea; the Institute of Market and Economic & Ecological Researches of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (SO IMEER NASU), Odesa, a public institution, part of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine; the Black Sea Branch of Ukrainian Environmental Academy of Sciences (BSBUEAS) is Odesa-based NGO with a team of professional researchers; and the Greens Movement of Georgia / Friends of the Earth (GMG/FoE) – Georgia, an NGO, part of the international environmental network. All three beneficiaries from EU Member States have extensive experience in marine pollution projects under the Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe programmes.

RESPONSE aims to identify and promote the development and establishment of new-generation advanced training schemes and curricula to support early warning, region-wide mechanisms for monitoring natural and man-made disasters. Various training programs, platforms and curriculum have been implemented to monitor marine pollution and ensure knowledge integration and dissemination. Still, training material, best practices, standards and protocols often differ among platforms and programs, hindering progress towards implementing an integrated, transdisciplinary and multidisciplinary marine pollution training system. Peculiar events, such as armed conflicts, create new environmental and societal challenges that call for international, coordinated responses.

RESPONSE acknowledges the importance of deeper understanding of marine ecosystems and river-delta-sea connections, the need for development of harmonized procedures, standards and methodologies in marine monitoring across the Black Sea countries to support healthy and resilient seas and foster integrated marine governance. The sustainable changes that are required for the establishment of efficient, advanced training schemes that would be integrated with the challenges, goals and specificities of the scientific and social context and make the most of the untapped capacity of stakeholders to promote regional awareness in the field.

In view of the background and context described above, the four overarching objectives of RESPONSE are: 1) IDENTIFY and UNDERSTAND the institutional and societal gaps and needs for effective, integrated, transdisciplinary and multidisciplinary marine pollution training systems; 2) DEVELOP effective training programs by assembling, integrating, and improving the most promising approaches and results into a comprehensive framework that consists of a set of methodological training tools, databases, policy recommendations, and background information; 3) SUPPORT the implementation of the EU and Regional Strategies, by developing operational guidelines for effective application, updating, monitoring and management of training programs on marine pollution; 4) EMPOWER marine pollution training, monitoring and mitigation by involving, inspiring and influencing stakeholders through a broader vision of co-design, co-creation, co-

establishment, co-implementation and co-assessment of the training programs.

Executive Summary

The present document represents results of the Task 4.2, Deliverable 4.5 – "Report on Networking and Transferability Activities" of the project "Building Response Frameworks under Existing and New Marine Pollution Challenges in the Black Sea" (RESPONSE), funded by the European Union through the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) under Grant Agreement No. 101124661.

The report summarizes the networking actions and transferability initiatives implemented within Task 4.2 – Building Networks and Transferability Potential, coordinated by SO IMEER NASU with the active participation of all project partners throughout the project duration. The objective of this task is to strengthen cooperation and knowledge exchange among institutions, experts, and stakeholders involved in marine pollution preparedness and response in the Black Sea region, while facilitating the wider applicability of RESPONSE results beyond the project consortium and geographical area.

The networking activities aim to enhance collaboration among Black Sea countries and European institutions, particularly fostering connections between EU Member States (Greece, Bulgaria, Romania) and associated or candidate countries of the region (Ukraine and Georgia). Through these interactions, RESPONSE contributes to strengthening regional cooperation, improving knowledge exchange, and supporting the alignment of marine environmental management practices with European standards and initiatives.

An important component of the networking activities involves establishing links with relevant EU-funded projects and networks of excellence working in related thematic areas. In this context, RESPONSE has engaged with several ongoing or recently completed initiatives focusing on marine environmental monitoring, marine spatial planning, biodiversity protection, and sustainable management of marine ecosystems. Such interactions aim to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experiences, methodologies, and best practices, while also ensuring the visibility and complementarity of RESPONSE outputs within the broader European research and policy landscape.

In addition, the networking efforts include engagement with European agencies and international organizations active in marine environmental protection and maritime safety, such as relevant European platforms, regional bodies, and scientific networks. Through coordination meetings, information exchange, and participation in joint activities, the project contributes to the development of stronger institutional linkages and collaborative frameworks addressing marine pollution challenges in the Black Sea basin.

A further objective of Task 4.2 is to enhance the transferability potential of the project results, ensuring that the knowledge, methodologies, and training schemes developed within RESPONSE can be applied beyond the immediate project area. Particular emphasis is placed on promoting the uptake of project outputs by stakeholders in other Black Sea countries not directly involved in the consortium, through knowledge-sharing activities and small-scale training visits. These initiatives aim to create multiplier effects, broaden the community of practice in marine pollution response, and strengthen the network of experts and institutions working on environmental protection in the region.

Overall, the networking and transferability activities described in this report contribute to positioning

RESPONSE as a regional platform for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and capacity building in the field of marine pollution preparedness and response. By fostering stronger connections among institutions, projects, and stakeholders, the project supports the development of coordinated regional approaches to addressing emerging marine pollution challenges in the Black Sea, including those related to environmental pressures associated with armed conflicts.

The report presents the implemented networking activities, the stakeholders and organizations engaged, the cooperation established with relevant European initiatives, and the opportunities for extending the project's results to broader geographical and institutional contexts. Through these efforts, RESPONSE aims to ensure the sustainability and long-term impact of its outcomes beyond the project lifecycle.

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Aim of the Deliverable 4.5 (Task 4.2)

This deliverable's aim is to provide the strengthening of networking and cooperation, knowledge exchange, and capacity building among institutions and stakeholders involved in marine pollution preparedness and response in the Black Sea region due to the results and outputs gained within the RESPONSE project.

The deliverable provides actions that allow RESPONSE project to become a vehicle of networking activities carried out during the implementation of the project, highlighting the efforts made to establish and expand cooperation between organizations, research institutions, public authorities, and other stakeholders from both European Union Member States and non-EU Black Sea countries. In particular, the deliverable focuses on enhancing collaboration between EU Member States of the Black Sea basin (Greece, Bulgaria, Romania) and countries that are currently in the process of European integration or association (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Turkey). Through these interactions, the project contributes to strengthening of regional cooperation and facilitating the exchange of expertise, knowledge, and best practices in the field of marine pollution monitoring, management, and response.

A further objective of this deliverable is to demonstrate how RESPONSE has established links with relevant European initiatives, platforms, and organizations, including cooperation with European agencies and regional institutions active in marine environmental protection and maritime safety. The networking activities also include establishing connections with other EU-funded projects addressing marine environmental challenges, such as initiatives related to marine ecosystem monitoring, marine spatial planning, and biodiversity protection. These interactions contribute to increasing the visibility of RESPONSE within the broader European research and policy landscape, while fostering synergies and complementarity with related projects and networks of excellence.

The deliverable also addresses the transferability potential of the project outputs, examining how the training schemes, knowledge, and methodologies developed within RESPONSE can be applied beyond the immediate geographical scope of the project. Particular emphasis is placed on extending the benefits of the project to the wider Black Sea region, including coastal countries that are not directly represented in the project consortium. In this context, stakeholder engagement and knowledge-sharing activities were conducted with representatives from additional Black Sea countries, including Turkey and Moldova, contributing to the dissemination of project objectives and results and encouraging broader regional participation.

Furthermore, the deliverable documents the efforts undertaken to promote knowledge transfer through targeted networking events, coordination meetings, and training-related exchanges, aimed at strengthening cooperation among experts, institutions, and organizations working on marine environmental protection. Such activities support the development of a broader community of practice and enhance the potential for the adoption and replication of RESPONSE training approaches and methodologies in other regional contexts.

Overall, this deliverable aims to demonstrate how the networking and transferability activities implemented within Task 4.2 contribute to positioning RESPONSE as a regional platform for collaboration and knowledge exchange, supporting the development of coordinated responses to emerging marine pollution challenges in the Black Sea and facilitating the wider uptake of project outcomes across the region and beyond.

CONTRIBUTORS

Table 1. Names and roles of contributors to this deliverable

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Introduction

This introduction sets the context for the progress report on Deliverable 4.5 "Report on networking and transferability" and on activities implemented under the Task 4.2 – Building Networks and Transferability Potential within the RESPONSE project. The task focuses on strengthening cooperation, knowledge exchange, and institutional collaboration among stakeholders involved in marine pollution monitoring, preparedness, and response in the Black Sea region, while also ensuring the wider applicability of the project's outputs.

The RESPONSE project recognizes that effective management of marine pollution challenges requires strong cooperation between research institutions, public authorities, environmental agencies, maritime organizations, and international initiatives. For this reason, the project places significant emphasis on networking activities aimed at connecting partners from the Black Sea region with relevant European platforms, projects, and institutions working in related thematic areas.

Within this framework, Task 4.2 supports the development of institutional and professional networks that facilitate the exchange of expertise, best practices, and operational experience among stakeholders from both EU Member States and non-EU Black Sea countries. These networking activities contribute to strengthening regional cooperation between countries already integrated into European frameworks (such as Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania) and countries progressing toward closer integration and cooperation with the European Union (such as Ukraine and Georgia). Also the stakeholders from the "no-consortium" BS countries are to be engaged into the Response networking and transferability activities (namely: Moldova and Turkey).

In addition, the task aims to enhance the transferability of the RESPONSE project results, ensuring that the methodologies, training schemes, and knowledge developed within the project can be applied beyond the consortium and potentially adapted to other regional contexts. To achieve this objective, the project actively establishes links with other EU-funded initiatives, networks of excellence, and international organizations involved in marine environmental protection and maritime safety.

Through targeted outreach activities, coordination meetings, and knowledge-sharing initiatives, the consortium partners contribute to increasing the visibility of RESPONSE within the broader European research and policy landscape. Particular attention is also given to engaging stakeholders from non-consortium Black Sea countries, supporting the dissemination of project objectives and fostering the development of a broader regional community of practice in marine pollution preparedness and response.

Overall, Task 4.2 plays an important role in ensuring that the knowledge generated within the RESPONSE project is effectively shared, adapted, and utilized by a wide range of stakeholders, thereby supporting the long-term sustainability, regional relevance, and broader impact of the project outcomes.

At this project-prefinalizing stage (Month 30), Deliverable D4.5 compiles the **achievements and outputs** of these activities. It provides a structured account of how each communication and dissemination, networking activities has been utilized, **quantitative metrics** of reach (e.g. number of Links established with other EU projects, Links established with networks of excellence, Links with

other ongoing EU projects, small-scale training visits conducted) and **qualitative insights** on engagement (e.g. stakeholder feedback or interest generated).

The introduction also explains how this report was assembled. **Project partners contributed data** on their building networks and transferability activities using a standardized format to ensure consistency. Each partner's inputs – description of building networks and transferability activities in context of interaction and co-creation processes with stakeholders – have been collected, summarized and represented by the Task4.2 leader.

Overall project coordination, including for the D 4.5 (Building networks and transferability potential) component, is provided by the Lead Partner AUTH – Aristotle University of Thessaloniki – Greece. Partner BSNN – Black Sea NGO Network – Bulgaria is the WP4 leader, Partner SO IMEER NASU – is the Task 4.2 and Deliverable 4.5 leader, and all RESPONSE partners are required to contribute in the progress report with their Building networks and transferability potential activities. The Task 4.2 and production of the Deliverable D4.5 is the responsibility of the partner SO IMEER NASU – State Organization "Institute of Market and Economic&Ecological Research of the NAS of Ukraine" – Ukraine.

1. Building networks in broadening the transferability of project outputs

Building strong professional and institutional networks represents a key component of the RESPONSE project and an essential mechanism for ensuring the wider dissemination and practical uptake of its results. Within the framework of Task 4.2 – Building Networks and Transferability Potential, particular emphasis has been placed on establishing collaborative links among institutions, experts, and stakeholders involved in marine environmental protection and marine pollution response across the Black Sea region and the European Union.

The networking activities implemented in RESPONSE aim to create a sustainable platform for knowledge exchange, coordination, and cooperation among research institutions, public authorities, maritime administrations, environmental agencies, and other relevant stakeholders. By bringing together organizations from both EU Member States (Greece, Bulgaria, Romania) and non-EU Black Sea countries (Ukraine and Georgia), the project contributes to strengthening regional dialogue and facilitating the exchange of expertise, methodologies, and best practices related to marine pollution monitoring, preparedness, and response.

A central objective of these networking efforts is to enhance the transferability of project outputs, including training schemes, methodological approaches, and operational frameworks developed within RESPONSE. Through structured cooperation with regional stakeholders and institutions, the project promotes the wider adoption and application of these outputs beyond the immediate project consortium. In this context, networking serves as an enabling mechanism for disseminating project knowledge, encouraging stakeholder engagement, and supporting the integration of RESPONSE results into existing national and regional practices.

In addition to strengthening cooperation within the consortium countries, the networking activities have been designed to expand engagement with a broader range of stakeholders across the Black Sea basin. This includes outreach to institutions and experts from other coastal countries of the region that are not formally part of the project consortium. In particular, stakeholders from Turkey and Moldova were involved in information exchange and awareness activities related to the project objectives and training initiatives. Such engagement contributes to increasing the visibility of the project, promoting dialogue among regional actors, and creating opportunities for future collaboration.

The networking process also supports the establishment of connections between RESPONSE and relevant European initiatives, projects, and institutional platforms working in the field of marine environmental protection and maritime safety. These interactions help to situate the project within the broader European landscape of marine environmental governance and research, ensuring that its results contribute to on-going efforts addressing marine pollution challenges.

Overall, the development of these networks plays a crucial role in ensuring that the knowledge and tools developed within RESPONSE are not limited to the project partners but can be shared, adapted, and applied more widely across the Black Sea region and beyond. By fostering collaboration among experts, institutions, and policy actors, the networking activities contribute to strengthening regional capacity for addressing existing and emerging marine pollution threats and support the long-term sustainability and impact of the project outcomes.

Every Partner from the Response Project consortium provided activities on the networking and transferability, for instance cooperation within the networks for marine ecosystems research, protection from pollution.

For providing this type of activities partners used data (about stakeholders in order to build networks for marine ecosystems research, protection from pollution) collected during national co-creation workshops, T3.2 workshops, presentations of the Digital toolkit to the stakeholders, preparing of Milestone 9, Milestone 10, Communication, Dissemination and Stakeholder Empowerment (CDSE) Plan. Stakeholders from non-consortium BSB-countries were engaged into the activities, namely, from Turkey and Moldova, in order to be involved into the process of creating networking and transferability solutions.

The main achievements of the Response Project Partners in the aspect of building networks in broadening the transferability of project outputs are represented on Table 2

Table 2. Description of the networking and transferability due to cooperation with the long-time functioning European platforms and initiatives

The long-time functioning European platforms and initiative	Description of interaction in context of networking and transferability
UKRAINE	
EU research infrastructure EMSO ERIC The European Multidisciplinary Seafloor and water column Observatory	The European Multidisciplinary Seafloor and water column Observatory (EMSO) participated by 8 Member States (Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Ireland, Norway, Greece, and Romania) is a unique marine multidisciplinary, distributed Research Infrastructure, with the goal to explore, monitor and better understand the phenomena happening within and below the oceans and their critical impact on the Earth. https://emso.eu/what-is-emso/ SO IMEER NASU has concluded a Memorandum of understanding and cooperation with EU research infrastructure EMSO ERIC (The European Multidisciplinary Seafloor and water column Observatory). https://impeer.org.ua/2025/03/17/ду-інститут-ринку-і-економіко-еколог-2/). This opens up new opportunities for cooperation in marine research, data exchange, and blue economy development, contributing to Ukraine's integration into the European research infrastructure. And it gives opportunities for the networking and transferability of the results gained by our consortium in the Response project. For instance we represent our project results and findings on Black Sea marine pollution quick response in aspect of military actions influence as a part of improved training programmes for the wider audience of professionals in the sphere of Seafloor and water column research. This serves as a vehicle for dissemination and sustainability of the results of the Response project, and their promotion in the sphere of EU marine researches. It creates prospects for the involvement of wide range of the marine-researchers (as Experts, Stakeholders etc.) to the activities concerned with co-creation and implementation of the New training courses on Black Sea pollution quick readiness to mitigation
Joint European Research Infrastructure network for Coastal Observatory (JERICO-RI)	JERICO-RI is an integrated pan-European multidisciplinary and multi-platform research infrastructure dedicated to a holistic appraisal of coastal marine system changes. https://www.jerico-ri.eu/ The memorandum with JERICO-RI gives opportunities to SO IMEER NASU as Response Project Partner to operate within a structured network of coastal observatories that harmonize environmental data collection, quality control, and service delivery across European shelf and coastal zones. JERICO□RI, as a coordinated research infrastructure, extends beyond individual monitoring stations to encompass interoperable systems that support high□quality data provision, access to research facilities, and platforms for scientific cooperation in coastal environments.

The long-time functioning European platforms and initiative	Description of interaction in context of networking and transferability
	https://impeer.org.ua/2025/03/03/ду-інститут-ринку-і-економіко-еколог/ The cooperation with JERICO-RI (https://www.jerico-ri.eu/) gives more opportunities for common networking, common activities and workshops organizing, and further involvement in activities concerned with sustainability of the Response Project results and the promotion of the project outputs. (more information on the networking due to cooperation with JERICO RI please find in Annex 2)
Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea (CMA for BS)	Representatives of the State Organization "Institute of Market and Economic&Ecological Researches of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine" and Black Sea branch of Environmental Academy of Science of Ukraine and the Project Partners from other BSB-countries keep permanent contacts and cooperation with the CMA for BS Black Sea Maritime agenda. Due to this cooperation the dissemination of information about the Response Project results was provided during the annual CMA-event on October 2025
BULGARIA	
Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Black Sea Commission)	Black Sea NGO Network (BSNN) is observer at the Black Sea Commission (BSC) https://www.blackseacommission.org/Institutions/Permanent%20Secretariat/. Contacts with the BSC Pollution Monitoring and Assessment Officer, Permanent Secretariat have resulted in participation in regional activities and workshops, and further involvement is envisaged in the endorsement of the Regional Action Plan and the promotion of project outputs.
Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea (CMA for BS)	Black Sea NGO Network (BSNN) maintains contacts with the Secretariat of the CMA for BS black-sea-maritime-agenda.ec.europa.eu Project partners from all Black Sea countries communicate regularly with the Secretariat of CMA BS coordinator. Coordination on national level with the respective contacts from national administrations are also maintained. Contacts will be further developed with DG Mare, DG Environment, Intergroups at EU Parliament, etc. Further involvement is envisaged in the endorsement of the Regional Action Plan and the promotion of project outputs.
Marine Litter Watch Programme at the European Environment Agency (EEA)	Black Sea NGO Network (BSNN) is member and contributor to the citizen science community and maintains contacts with is coordinator volved in promotion of RESPONSE outputs, involvement in Digital Toolkit promotion, synergies with the Updated European Beach Litter Assessment on WISE Marine portal etc. Marine Litter Watch | Other marine-policies data and tools | WISE Marine Marine Information System for Europe Further involvement is envisaged in the endorsement of the Regional Action Plan and the promotion of project outputs.
Black Sea Assistance Mechanism (BSAM)	Black Sea NGO Network (BSNN) communicates with the Black Sea Assistance Mechanism (BSAM) – regional basin instrument – through the national focal point https://www.marinecluster.com/en/een-form/ and the Secretariat of the CMA for BS. Further involvement is envisaged in the endorsement of the Regional Action Plan and the promotion of project outputs.
ROMANIA	
European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)	The National Institute for Marine Research and Development "Grigore Antipa" (NIMRD) – has actively contributed to strengthening networking and enhancing the transferability of project results. For instance, key component of this process has been the consolidation of institutional and operational links with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). This cooperation was

The long-time functioning European platforms and initiative	Description of interaction in context of networking and transferability
	developed in the context of national co-creation workshops, T3.2 training activities, and presentations of the RESPONSE Digital Toolkit to stakeholders. These interactions enabled the integration of best practices and tools promoted at European level, including satellite-based monitoring services and operational frameworks for pollution detection and response. As a result, the RESPONSE methodologies have been aligned with European standards, while the project outputs—such as the rapid response framework and training modules—have demonstrated strong potential for uptake within EMSA-related activities, including training programmes and regional preparedness exercises. (more information on the networking due to cooperation with European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) please find in Annex 2)
Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea (CMA)	NIMRD has maintained active engagement with the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea (CMA), contributing to the broader regional policy dialogue. Through dissemination activities foreseen in the Communication, Dissemination and Stakeholder Empowerment (CDSE) Plan, as well as stakeholder workshops and targeted meetings, the RESPONSE project results have been promoted as practical tools supporting the implementation of CMA objectives
European Environment Agency (EEA)	European Environment Agency (EEA), particularly in the context of environmental monitoring and data sharing. The methodologies and tools developed within RESPONSE can contribute to improving marine pollution datasets in the Black Sea region and support their integration into European information systems such as WISE Marine. This alignment enhances the relevance of project outputs in the context of EU environmental policies, including the zero-pollution ambition
Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution	At the regional level, engagement with the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution has provided an important platform for disseminating project results and fostering dialogue among Black Sea countries. Through participation in workshops and interaction with the Permanent Secretariat, NIMRD has supported the promotion of RESPONSE outputs in the context of regional action planning and policy development. This interaction contributes to the harmonisation of approaches to marine pollution monitoring and response, as well as to the development of a shared community of practice across the region
GEORGIA	
Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Black Sea Commission)	Georgia's RESPONSE activities are aligned with regional Black Sea cooperation mechanisms and with the institutional framework represented by the Black Sea Commission (BSC). Georgian stakeholders engaged through RESPONSE - including authorities responsible for monitoring, marine protection and response - work in a policy environment shaped by the Bucharest Convention and related regional coordination. It is worth also noting, that the GMG/FoE-GE team member (Mamuka Gvilava) serves in this network as the BSC ICZM Advisory Group Member in the capacity of the ICZM National Focal Point for Georgia, contributing to RESPONSE networking with the BSC via its Permanent Secretariat. It should be mentioned, that Batumi co-creation process helped translate these regional commitments into practical discussion

The long-time functioning European platforms and initiative	Description of interaction in context of networking and transferability
	on training curricula, data exchange, monitoring, and response preparedness. https://www.blackseacommission.org
European Environment Agency tools / Marine Litter Watch / WISE Marine	Georgia-side networking and transferability also benefit from European open tools and public information systems used in awareness and training contexts, especially for marine litter and beach litter monitoring. Existing Georgian practice already points to the relevance of Marine Litter Watch and related WISE Marine resources for citizen-oriented monitoring, awareness raising, and future adaptation of RESPONSE materials for public-facing and educational use. This supports transferability of RESPONSE results beyond the immediate institutional users of the project. https://marine-litterwatch.discomap.eea.europa.eu
Black Sea Assistance Mechanism (BSAM) / Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea (CMA for BS)	In Georgia, RESPONSE networking has been linked with the Black Sea Assistance Mechanism and the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea through the national stakeholder community and the National Hub of Georgia. These interfaces are useful for connecting Georgian authorities, academia and NGOs with wider Black Sea policy and project processes. Through CMA/BSAM-related exchanges and stakeholder events, RESPONSE objectives, Georgia's training needs, and possibilities for transfer of the future Digital Toolkit and Regional Action Plan have been communicated to a broader basin-wide audience. https://black-sea-maritime-agenda.ec.europa.eu

The cooperation established within the RESPONSE project with long-standing European platforms and initiatives provides a strong foundation for the effective transferability, scalability, and sustainability of its results.

A significant contribution to the development of networking and transferability has been made by project partners from Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, and Georgia, whose coordinated efforts ensured active engagement across **more than 10 major European and regional initiatives**. These include research infrastructures, policy frameworks, EU agencies, and regional coordination mechanisms, demonstrating the broad institutional coverage and strategic positioning of the project.

Through engagement with European research infrastructures, the project ensures alignment with EU scientific standards and methodologies, enhancing the credibility and applicability of its outputs in marine pollution monitoring and response. Interaction with regional policy platforms in the Black Sea basin further supports the institutional embedding of project results, contributing to policy dialogue, regional coordination, and the development of joint action frameworks.

In addition, collaboration with European agencies and data systems strengthens the technical robustness and interoperability of project tools, including training programmes, digital toolkits, and rapid response mechanisms.

Importantly, the networking activities extended beyond the core consortium, involving stakeholders from other Black Sea countries, including Turkey and Moldova, particularly through co-creation processes, workshops, and regional events. This broader engagement enhances the outreach and practical relevance of project results across the entire Black Sea region.

Overall, this multi-level and multi-country cooperation (in BSB) significantly enhances:

- the transferability of project outcomes across national and institutional contexts,
- the dissemination of results through established European and regional networks,
- and the long-term sustainability and uptake of project impacts.

Thus, the RESPONSE project contributes to the development of scalable and replicable solutions for marine pollution management in the Black Sea region, particularly in the context of emerging challenges such as armed conflict-related environmental risks.

This task of the development of networking and transferability have enhanced RESPONSE project in order to become a "**vehicle of networking**" between BS countries that are already part of the EU or not (Ukraine, Georgia, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Moldova) and with long-time functioning European platforms and initiatives (EMSA, CMA for BS, BSAM, EMSO-ERIC, JERICO-RI, EEA and other).

2. Stakeholders' engagement in networking and transferability activities (including stakeholders from non-consortium BS countries)

An important component of the networking activities implemented within the RESPONSE project is the engagement of stakeholders from Black Sea countries that are not formally part of the project consortium. Considering that the Black Sea represents a shared marine basin with interconnected environmental challenges, the effective management of marine pollution requires the participation and cooperation of all coastal states. Therefore, expanding the dialogue beyond the consortium partners was identified as a key mechanism for strengthening the regional dimension and transferability potential of the project outcomes.

In this context, RESPONSE partners implemented targeted outreach activities aimed at informing and involving institutions, experts, and organizations from other countries of the Black Sea region. Particular attention was given to establishing communication with stakeholders from Turkey and Moldova, representing important actors in the regional environmental governance landscape. These stakeholders include representatives from public authorities, research institutions, environmental organizations, maritime administrations, and other actors involved in marine environmental protection and pollution response.

The engagement activities included the presentation of the project objectives, methodologies, and expected results, as well as the exchange of information regarding national experiences and practices related to marine pollution monitoring, response preparedness, and ecosystem protection. Through meetings, consultations, and knowledge-sharing activities, stakeholders from non-consortium countries were introduced to the RESPONSE training concepts and the broader framework being developed for strengthening regional preparedness and response capacity.

Such engagement contributes to enhancing the regional relevance and inclusiveness of the project, ensuring that its outputs and training approaches are visible and accessible to a broader community of practitioners and decision-makers across the Black Sea basin. Furthermore, the involvement of stakeholders from non-consortium countries creates opportunities for future cooperation, knowledge exchange, and the potential replication of RESPONSE methodologies and training schemes in additional national contexts.

By expanding the network of participating institutions and experts, RESPONSE supports the development of a broader regional community of practice addressing marine pollution challenges. This approach contributes to strengthening cross-border cooperation, improving information exchange, and promoting coordinated responses to environmental threats affecting the Black Sea ecosystem.

Due to conducting of 2 small-scale training visits to a BS non-consortium of RESPONSE countries (Turkey and Moldova) the information about the main outputs of the project is shared among the stakeholders from these countries. These visits have been organized on February 27, 2026 and March 20, 2026 (on-line) and provided a multiplier effect on the project's outputs, because of bringing together of experts and stakeholders across the EU and BS countries.

Every Partner has provided activities on the networking and transferability in aspect of interaction with key stakeholders.

Also Experts, Stakeholders from non-consortium countries (from Turkey and Moldova) were involved in networking and transferabilities of the Response Project due to small-scale training visits and due to other contacts and cooperation activities of the project partners with Experts/Stakeholders from Turkey and Moldova.

The main achievements of the Response Project Partners in the aspect of building networks in broadening the transferability of project outputs are represented on Table 3

Table 3. Description of interaction with key Stakeholders/Experts in context of networking and transferability

Stakeholders' type and name	Description of interaction in context of networking and transferability
1. POLICY MAKERS AND DECISION-MAKERS ON LOCAL, NATIONAL, BLACK SEA REGIONAL AND EU LEVEL 1.1 Ukraine	
Department of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Odessa Regional State Administration	Within the framework of the RESPONSE project, interaction with the Department of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Odessa Regional State Administration is being formed as a systemic institutional partnership focused on integrating scientifically sound approaches into the practice of regional environmental policy, while forming a feedback loop, in which management priorities, regulatory constraints and applied needs of the region adjust the directions of scientific research and their methodological framework. A key element of interaction is the joint development and implementation of projects aimed at minimizing the consequences of pollution of the Black Sea, including military impacts and oil spills. Operational interaction is implemented through interagency working groups and round tables, which serve as tools for continuous bilateral knowledge exchange between scientists and civil servants. Such cooperation contributes not only to the coordination of strategic approaches to natural resource management, but also forms the basis for the transfer of knowledge to the applied level. The practical experience of the Department's specialists plays a decisive role in the development of training programs, as it allows adapting their content to real management procedures, regulatory restrictions and typical situations of responding to environmental incidents. Such deepening of institutional interaction and data exchange ensures the conversion of scientific results into specific management tools - in particular, protocols for responding to marine pollution and mechanisms for increasing the effectiveness of environmental policy at the regional level. https://ecology.od.gov.ua/
State Environmental Inspectorate of the South-Western District (Mykolaiv and Odesa regions)	State Environmental Inspectorate of the South-Western District (Mykolaiv and Odesa regions), Ukraine – https://sw.dei.gov.ua/ regional environmental authority; direct project partner-level engagement through continuous communication and cooperation within RESPONSE; actively involved in face-to-face interviews, participation in project meetings, and co-creation of training programmes; contribution focused on practical input to monitoring and rapid response mechanisms for marine pollution; further involvement is envisaged in testing, validation, and implementation of training modules and project outputs at regional level.
1.2. BULGARIA	
Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (the Black Sea	BSC via its Permanent Secretariat – Istanbul, Turkey - https://www.blackseacommission.org/ email: secretariat@blackseacommission.org; regional policy entity; project contact - Pollution Monitoring and Assessment Officer, involved in regional co-creation workshop and supporting other related projects. Further

Stakeholders' type and name	Description of interaction in context of networking and transferability
Commission or BSC)	involvement is envisaged in the endorsement of the Regional Action Plan and the promotion of project outputs.
Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) for the Black Sea	CMA BS EU sea basin initiative – https://black-sea-maritime-agenda.ec.europa.eu/# - Secretariat of the CMA, Coordinator maintains contacts with teams from Black Sea countries. Future involvement is envisaged in the endorsement of the Regional Action Plan and the promotion of project outputs.
Black Sea Assistance Mechanism (BSAM)	Black Sea Assistance Mechanism (BSAM) – regional basin instrument - contacts through focal point and Secretariat of the CMA - https://black-sea-maritime-agenda.ec.europa.eu/about/bsam Future involvement is envisaged in the endorsement of the Regional Action Plan and the promotion of project outputs.
European Commission DG MARE	European Commission – Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) - The policy directorate responsible for the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) - https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/index_en Future involvement is envisaged in the endorsement of the Regional Action Plan and the promotion of project outputs.
European Commission – Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO / ERCC)	European Commission – Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO / ERCC) - The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) under DG ECHO coordinates the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which can be activated for major marine pollution incidents - https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/emergency-response-coordination-centre-ercc_en Future involvement is envisaged in the endorsement of the Regional Action Plan and the promotion of project outputs.
Executive Agency "Maritime Administration" Sofia, Varna	Ministry of Transport and Communications, Bulgaria - bma@marad.bg, www.marad.bg – Executive Agency "Maritime Administration" Sofia, Executive director. Participation in the co-creation and pilot training activities. Further involvement is envisaged in the endorsement of the Regional Action Plan and the promotion of project outputs.
Bulgarian Port Infrastructure Company Sofia, Varna	Ministry of Transport and Communication, Bulgaria, Bulgarian Port Infrastructure Company, Sofia - governing body of Bulgarian ports for public transport - http://www.bgports.bg/bg/ - Strategic Development, Port Services and Ecology Directorate, Director. Participation in the co-creation and pilot training activities. The PICo future involvement is envisaged in the promotion of project outputs
1.3. Romania	

Stakeholders' type and name	Description of interaction in context of networking and transferability
National Administration Romanian Waters, Dobrogea Litoral	**National Administration "Romanian Waters",** strategic responsibility in water resource management, contributing essential expertise for integrating project results into water-related risk prevention and response measures.
Agency for Savin g Human Life at Sea (ARSVOM)	**Romanian Agency for Saving Human Life at Sea (ARSVOM)**, recognized for its operational capacity in maritime search and rescue, providing critical input for improving emergency response effectiveness in marine environments within the RESPONSE project.
1.4. Georgia	
Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA)	MEPA is a key national policy stakeholder for the transferability of RESPONSE outputs in Georgia. Through surveys, consultations and the Batumi co-creation workshop, the Ministry and its relevant departments were engaged on needs related to marine pollution monitoring, emergency response, broader contingency planning beyond oil spills, and stronger inter-agency coordination. This interaction supports the future uptake of the RESPONSE training curricula, Digital Toolkit and Regional Action Plan within national environmental governance and policy practice. MEPA designates Black Sea Commission Member (Commissioner) from Georgia and members of BSC all subsidiary bodies, including on pollution monitoring, assessment and response.
LEPL Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia / Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC)	The Maritime Transport Agency and its MRCC are among the most important operational stakeholders for networking and transferability in Georgia. They were invited and involved in the national co-creation process, where practical experience from oil-spill contingency planning and search-and-rescue/oil-spill exercises informed the discussion on curriculum design. Their involvement creates a direct pathway for transfer of RESPONSE outputs into operational drills, staff training and future pilot implementation.
2. Relevant marine and environmental protection departments and agencies 2.1. UKRAINE	
Ukrainian Sea Ports Authority: USPA	Co-creation of improved training programs, their common implementation. Discussing of prospects for future certifying of the training results and specialists. Ukrainian Sea Ports Authority: USPA supports our activities on dissemination of the Response project results, using public-private, international partnership and cooperation. According to our scientific findings implements the best practices in order to improve environmental and sea-protection policy implementation and to increase readiness for marine pollution reaction, monitoring and protection. Provides networking activities and coordinates activities of sea ports of Ukraine. https://www.uspa.gov.ua/en/homepage-en
2.2. BULGARIA	
Maritime Administration Directorate – Varna, Bulgaria	Black Sea NGO Network (BSNN) communicated with Maritime Administration Directorate – Varna, Bulgaria - hm_vn@marad.bg – director and experts on environmental policies involved in networking. Further the MA officers will be involved in networking activities and promotion of project results.
Bulgarian Port Infrastructure	Black Sea NGO Network (BSNN) communicated with Bulgarian Port Infrastructure Company, Varna, Bulgaria - http://www.bgports.bg/bg/ - Strategic Development, Port Services and Ecology Directorate, Director. The

Stakeholders' type and name	Description of interaction in context of networking and transferability
Company Varna, Bulgaria	training exercises of the company will be supported by the promotion of project outputs.
Naval authorities headquarters in Varna	BSNN involved in communication the Naval authorities – Headquarters in Varna, Bulgaria - https://navy.mod.bg/ - Liaison officer and experts contacted and involved. The navy will be involved in dissemination of project outputs.
Ministry of the Interior – Fire Safety and Civil Protection, Border Police	BSNN involved units of the Ministry of Interior Regional Directorates "Fire Safety and Civil Protection" and "Border Police" – Varna and Burgas, Bulgaria - fire-varna@mvr.bg, rdgp-burgas@mvr.bg – inspectors, experts. The future involvement will continue through promotion of the project outputs.
Black Sea Basin Directorate (BSBD)	BSNN provided information about the project to the Black Sea Basin Directorate (BSBD) – Varna, Bulgaria - https://www.bsbd.bg/ - director, experts. The future involvement will continue through promotion of the project outputs.
2.3. ROMANIA	
Department for Emergency Situations (ISU) Dobrogea	**Department for Emergency Situations (ISU) Dobrogea, has a** central role in coordinating regional emergency response and disaster management, ensuring the practical relevance of the project outcomes in crisis situations.
Romanian Naval Authority	**Romanian Naval Authority** – regulatory and supervisory role in maritime navigation and safety, contributing to the alignment of RESPONSE project outcomes with national maritime policies and operational frameworks.
2.4. GEORGIA	
National Environmental Agency (NEA/MEPA)	The National Environmental Agency is a central stakeholder for monitoring-related transferability. During the Georgia co-creation process, NEA representatives stressed the need for stronger data handling, reporting, GIS-based analysis and a centralized marine information system. The dialogue around RESPONSE therefore supported exchange on how future curricula can integrate monitoring practice, FAIR-type data use and links to regional tools such as the DOORS Black Sea System of Systems and/or BRIDGE-BS DTO, increasing the operational value of the project outputs.
Emergency Management Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia	The Emergency Management Service is relevant for transferring RESPONSE results into multi-agency incident management practice. Its inclusion in the national stakeholder outreach and workshop process helped anchor the curricula discussion in the realities of emergency command, coordination and preparedness. This interaction is important for adapting project outputs to marine and the wider civil-security context in Georgia.
Kolkheti National Park Administration	Kolkheti National Park and associated coastal wetland and marine protected-area interests were identified as important stakeholders for the transferability of monitoring and response-related training. Workshop discussions highlighted the value of using protected and sensitive coastal areas as living laboratories for training on pollution monitoring, habitat impact assessment, and nature-based restoration concepts. This creates an additional application field for RESPONSE outputs in protected-area management.
3. Broader scientific community institutions and academic entities 3.1. GREECE	
University of Aegean –	The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh) research team maintained consistent communication and consultation with experts from the University of the Aegean's Department of Marine Sciences.

Stakeholders' type and name	Description of interaction in context of networking and transferability
Department of Marine Sciences	These discussions focused on various types of marine pollution, their impacts on marine biodiversity and habitats, and effective strategies for mitigation. The teams explored innovative tools and methodologies, evaluating their application in real-world scenarios to integrate them into preparedness and response training frameworks. Additionally, AUTh presented the RESPONSE methodological approach, highlighting its achievements, developed materials, and the RESPONSE Digital Toolkit. These resources garnered significant interest from the Aegean experts, who explored opportunities to contribute to or benefit from these tools. The AUTh team continues to maintain an open line of communication with the University of the Aegean to facilitate ongoing knowledge exchange and technical follow-ups.
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens – School of Science – Department of Biology	The AUTh research team established a strategic collaboration with experts from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) – School of Science, Department of Biology. Given the department's renowned expertise in marine ecology, the consultations focused primarily on the phenomenon of eutrophication and its cascading effects on marine ecosystems. The exchange centered on NKUA's extensive experience in field studies and sample collection, providing the RESPONSE project with input on nutrient loading and its biological consequences. By analyzing the specialized sampling methodologies used, the teams discussed how to better integrate biological monitoring into the RESPONSE training frameworks, ensuring that preparedness strategies account for long-term ecological shifts as well as immediate pollution events. Furthermore, the AUTh team presented the RESPONSE Digital Toolkit and the project's overarching methodological approach. The NKUA biologists expressed strong interest in utilizing these tools to translate their field findings into actionable response protocols. This partnership remains active through an open line of communication, fostering a continuous exchange of scientific expertise and technical follow-ups to refine the project's environmental mitigation strategies.
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki – School of Biology	The AUTh research team leveraged its position as the largest academic institution in Greece to conduct extensive internal consultations and validation of the RESPONSE project. The team collaborated closely with a wide array of specialists within the School of Biology where numerous researchers and laboratories offer diverse expertise in marine biodiversity and pollution mitigation. The sessions focused on presenting the RESPONSE methodology, achievements, and developed materials to fellow experts to facilitate a high-level exchange of opinions and technical consultation. A primary objective was to explore the potential for adopting and incorporating these tools into other ongoing national and European projects managed by the university. Furthermore, the project's methodology and the RESPONSE Digital Toolkit were presented to undergraduate and postgraduate students. These discussions allowed the next generation of scientists to engage with real-world case studies on preparedness and response for marine pollution incidents.
3.2. UKRAINE	
Ukrainian Scientific Center	Ukrainian Scientific Center of Ecology of the Sea (UkrSCES), Ukraine – https://sea.gov.ua/?lang=en - national marine research and monitoring

Stakeholders' type and name	Description of interaction in context of networking and transferability
of Ecology of the Sea (UkrSCES)	institution; direct communication and active cooperation within the RESPONSE project; participation in project meetings and expert discussions, as well as involvement in the co-creation of training programmes; contribution focused on scientific expertise in marine environmental monitoring, data analysis, and assessment of pollution in the Black Sea; further involvement is envisaged in the validation and dissemination of training materials and the integration of project outputs into national monitoring and assessment practices.
Kherson State Maritime Academy (KSMA)	Kherson State Maritime Academy (KSMA), Ukraine – https://ksma.ks.ua/?page_id=284&lang=en - higher education and maritime training institution; direct communication and active cooperation within the RESPONSE project; involvement through face-to-face interviews, participation in project meetings, and contribution to the co-creation of training programmes; expertise provided in maritime education, training methodologies, and capacity building for pollution response preparedness; further involvement is envisaged in the implementation, piloting, and dissemination of training modules among maritime professionals and students.
Institute of Marine Biology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine,	Institute of Marine Biology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Ukraine – https://imb.odessa.ua/ - national marine research institution; direct communication and cooperation within the RESPONSE project; participation in project meetings and expert discussions; contribution focused on scientific input in marine biology, ecosystem assessment, and environmental monitoring of the Black Sea; further involvement is envisaged in supporting the scientific validation and dissemination of project results.
Odesa State Environmental University (part of the I.I. Mechnikov Odessa National University)	Odesa State Environmental University (part of the I.I. Mechnikov Odessa National University), Ukraine – https://universities.studyinukraine.gov.ua/en/minedu/university/109/contacts/ - higher education and environmental research institution; direct communication and cooperation within the RESPONSE project partnership; involvement through face-to-face interviews and expert consultations; contribution focused on academic expertise in environmental sciences, climate and marine-related studies, and support to training content development; further involvement is envisaged in the refinement and dissemination of training materials and integration of project outputs into educational processes.
3.3. BULGARIA	
Institute of Oceanology at the BAS Varna, Bulgaria	BSNN established close collaboration with the Institute of Oceanology at the BAS, Varna, Bulgaria - https://io-bas.bg – director, scientific secretary, researchers. IO BAS will be involved in the future promotion of project outputs.
Technical University – Varna, Bulgaria, Department of Ecology and Environmental Protection	BSNN established close collaboration with the Technical University – Varna, Bulgaria, Department of Ecology and Environmental Protection https://www.eoos.tu-varna.bg/ Head of the EEP Department. Based on ideas from this collaboration TU Varna, Department EEP set up and started a new training programme for emergency response to pollution of the Black Sea. The future networking and stakeholder empowerment process envisaged promotion of project outputs, especially the Digital Toolkit and support to the sustainability activities.
3.4. ROMANIA	

Stakeholders' type and name	Description of interaction in context of networking and transferability
NIMRD Grigore Antipa	National Institute for Marine Research and Development "Grigore Antipa" (NIMRD), supports the evidence-based development and transferability of the project outcomes.
Constanta Maritime University	Constanta Maritime University, its academic and training expertise in maritime fields, supports capacity building, knowledge transfer, and the dissemination of the project outcomes.
Mircea cel Batran Naval Academy	Mircea cel Bătrân" Naval Academy, with its role in higher education and professional training in naval and maritime domains, contributes to capacity building, skills development, and the transferability of the project results.
Romanian Maritime Training Center (CERONAV)	Romanian Maritime Training Center (CERONAV) with its expertise in maritime professional training and certification, contributes to capacity building, skills enhancement, and the practical uptake of RESPONSE project results.
Ovidius University of Constanta	Ovidius University of Constanta, with its multidisciplinary academic expertise, supporting research, innovation, and knowledge transfer relevant to the development and dissemination of RESPONSE project outcomes.
3.5. Georgia	
Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University (BSU) / CARE SEA project team	BSU, in synergy with the CARE SEA project team, co-organized and hosted the national co-creation workshop in Batumi. This cooperation broadened the stakeholder base, attracted academic and student participation, and connected RESPONSE with expertise on coastal resilience, shoreline processes, wetlands and habitat impacts. The partnership strengthens the transferability of RESPONSE training materials to university teaching, applied research and wider Black Sea coastal-resilience initiatives.
Batumi State Maritime Academy	Batumi State Maritime Academy is an important education and professional-training stakeholder for transferring RESPONSE outputs into the maritime sector. Workshop discussions indicated interest in integrating specialized modules on marine pollution preparedness and response into maritime education and continuing professional development. This provides a concrete pathway for institutional uptake of the future curricula in Georgia.
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University / Institute of Geophysics and related research groups	Research groups from Tbilisi, including those working on Black Sea dynamics and forecasting, contribute scientific knowledge that can be transferred into RESPONSE training modules on monitoring, modelling and interpretation of marine pollution risks. Their engagement in the wider stakeholder network increases the scientific depth and long-term reproducibility of project results in Georgia. As partners of BRIDGE-BS H2020 project engaged Georgian partner team member in the activities of this flagship project.
4. The general public and environmental NGOs 4.1. UKRAINE	
Black Sea Branch of Environmental Academy Science of Ukraine	Black Sea Branch of Environmental Academy Science of Ukraine, Ukraine – https://www.facebook.com/blackseabranch/ - national sea- and Common Maritime Agenda (CMA)-oriented NGO; project partner within RESPONSE with direct involvement in project implementation; engaged through continuous communication and cooperation across all project activities; active participation in meetings, stakeholder engagement processes, and co-creation of training programmes; contribution focused on regional networking, dissemination of project outputs, and liaison with Black Sea stakeholders; further involvement is envisaged in supporting the promotion, uptake, and sustainability of RESPONSE results within regional and CMA-related frameworks.
4.2. BULGARIA	

Stakeholders' type and name	Description of interaction in context of networking and transferability
Marine Cluster Bulgaria	BSNN contact, Marine Cluster Bulgaria - https://www.marinecluster.com/bg/ - national hub for CMA/BSAM for Bulgaria, to be involved in promotion of project outputs and sustainability activities by BSNN.
Mare Nostrum NGO	BSNN contact, Mare Nostrum NGO, Constanta, Romania – https://www.marenostrum.ro/en - national hub for CMA/BSAM for Romania
International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)	BSNN contact, International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) - Athens, Greece – https://icbss.org/ - think tank international policy NGO, to be involved in promotion of project outputs and sustainability activities.
Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO ECSDE)	BSNN contact, Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO ECSDE) – Athens, Greece – https://mio-ecsde.org/ expert environmental and policy support NGO, network, to be involved in promotion of project outputs and sustainability activities
4.3. ROMANIA	
SEOPMM Oceanic Club	**SEOPMM Oceanic Club, with** its practical experience and engagement in maritime and oceanic activities, supports networking, community involvement, and the transferability of the project results in local maritime contexts.
Mare Nostrum	**Mare Nostrum** – withits expertise in marine conservation and sustainable maritime practices, supports the integration, dissemination, and transferability of the project outcomes in coastal and marine environments.
4.4. GEORGIA	
Greens Movement of Georgia / Friends of the Earth - Georgia (GMG/FoE-GE)	GMG/FoE-GE acts not only as RESPONSE partner but also as an active interface with Georgian civil society, media and broader stakeholder networks. Through the online RESPONSE info-day on Black Sea Day, media work on the Kerch spill risks, and follow-up cooperation with CARE SEA-related events, the organization promoted the transferability of project findings beyond specialist institutions and into public awareness, advocacy and future community-oriented training use.
Georgian NGO and citizen-science community involved in litter monitoring and awareness activities	The wider Georgian NGO and public-awareness community is relevant for transfer of simpler RESPONSE outputs and training elements related to beach litter monitoring, awareness campaigns and citizen participation. Existing practices in Georgia already show interest in beach cleanup and monitoring actions, and European tools such as Marine Litter Watch can help adapt RESPONSE materials for broader civic use. This widens the audience and sustainability of the project outputs.

The stakeholder engagement within the RESPONSE project demonstrates a comprehensive, multi-level, and cross-sectoral approach to networking and transferability, involving policy-makers, operational authorities, scientific institutions, academia, and civil society across the Black Sea region.

Firstly, strong interaction with policy-makers and decision-makers at local, national, regional, and EU levels ensures that project outputs are institutionally embedded and policy-relevant. Continuous dialogue, co-creation workshops, trainings, and participation in strategic processes enable the alignment of RESPONSE results with regulatory frameworks, regional action planning, and EU maritime and environmental policies.

Secondly, the active involvement of operational agencies and environmental authorities (e.g., inspectorates, maritime administrations, emergency services, port authorities) guarantees the practical applicability and operational transferability of project outcomes. Their contributions—based on real-life experience in monitoring, emergency response, and risk management—ensure that training programmes and tools are adapted to real-world conditions and procedures.
Thirdly, extensive cooperation with the scientific community and academic institutions across participating countries significantly strengthens the scientific robustness, innovation capacity, and educational integration of the project. The co-development of methodologies, exchange of expertise, and incorporation of project outputs into curricula and training systems support long-term knowledge transfer and capacity building.

Finally, engagement of NGOs, civil society, and the broader public expands the outreach of the project, facilitating networking and transferability, social awareness-raising, and the adaptation of selected tools (e.g., citizen science, training materials) for wider use beyond institutional stakeholders.

Overall, the diversity and depth of stakeholder interaction within RESPONSE ensure:

- multi-level networking (from local to EU level),
- cross-sectoral knowledge exchange,
- high transferability of results into policy, practice, science, and society,
- strong sustainability potential through institutional uptake, training integration, and community engagement.

This integrated stakeholder ecosystem significantly enhances the impact of the RESPONSE project and supports the development of widely applicable and scalable solutions for marine pollution preparedness and response in the Black Sea region.

The activities of all Response-Project-Partners provided development of contacts with key persons of the most influencing stakeholders due to organizing joint coordination meetings, namely: from the beginning of the project, during face-to-face interviews since 2024, co-creation events during 2024-2025-2026 years, operational plans presentations and trainings with the advanced curricula on 2026, and small-scale trainings – on February and March 2026. i.e. more than 2 meetings per year, with key stakeholders were organized and conducted.

The transferability potential have being developed in terms of applying the project's outputs in areas other than the project area. Because influencing stakeholders were engaged from all the BS coastal countries not only in terms of building regional strategies or through networking, but also in trying to perform monitoring of training activities.

3. Links with other EU projects and networks of excellence

Establishing connections with other European Union-funded projects and networks of excellence represents a central element of the networking strategy implemented within Task 4.2 of the RESPONSE project. These interactions aim to ensure that the project benefits from existing knowledge and experiences while also contributing its results to the broader European research and policy landscape related to marine environmental protection and marine pollution response.

Within this framework, RESPONSE partners have actively sought to establish links with relevant EU-funded initiatives, including both recently completed and ongoing projects addressing marine ecosystem protection, marine pollution monitoring, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable marine governance. Particular attention has been given to projects operating in the Black Sea region or addressing similar thematic areas, such as FutureMARES, GES4SEAS, MARINEplan, DOORS-BS, and BRIDGE-BS. These projects provide valuable opportunities for knowledge exchange and for identifying synergies between different initiatives focusing on marine environmental challenges.

The networking activities included contacting key representatives and experts involved in these projects, exchanging information about ongoing activities, and exploring opportunities for collaboration. In addition, efforts were made to enhance the visibility of RESPONSE within the wider community of European marine research and policy initiatives. This was achieved through participation in meetings, information exchange, and the organization of joint coordination meetings, which facilitate dialogue among project teams and help identify complementary areas of work.

Beyond project-to-project collaboration, RESPONSE has also sought to establish links with European and regional organizations involved in marine environmental monitoring, maritime safety, and marine ecosystem management. These include organizations such as the European Environment Agency (EEA), the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, and the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Black Sea Commission). Cooperation with these institutions enhances the project's ability to align its activities with broader European environmental strategies and policy frameworks.

Through these networking efforts, RESPONSE contributes to the creation of a coordinated and collaborative environment among European and regional initiatives addressing marine pollution challenges. The establishment of such links supports the exchange of knowledge, methodologies, and best practices, while also strengthening the potential for the transfer and replication of RESPONSE outputs in other geographical areas and future projects.

Every Partner has provided activities on the networking and transferability in aspect of interaction with other EU projects and networks of excellence
The main achievements of the Response Project Partners in the aspect of interaction with other EU projects and networks of excellence in broadening the transferability of project outputs are represented on Table 4

Table 4. Description of interaction with other EU projects and networks of excellence

Stakeholders type and name	Description of interaction with other EU projects and networks of excellence
MARMAPS - EU NEXT Project - BSB00113	The interaction between the RESPONSE and MARMAPS projects is rooted in a shared commitment to enhancing the environmental resilience of the Black Sea through cross-border scientific cooperation. While MARMAPS focuses on the designation and management of Marine Protected Areas to conserve biodiversity,

Stakeholders type and name	Description of interaction with other EU projects and networks of excellence
	the RESPONSE project complements this by addressing the critical challenge of marine pollution preparedness and monitoring. Both initiatives utilize a multi-stakeholder approach, leveraging the scientific expertise of institutions like AUTH and regional NGOs such as BSNN and Mare Nostrum to bridge the gap between research and operational application. Data management serves as a primary point of convergence, where the environmental eFolio framework can be enriched by the specific pollution risk assessment data and monitoring protocols developed within the region. This collaborative structure ensures that knowledge regarding cumulative human pressures on ecosystems is harmonized, allowing for more effective implementation of the Common Maritime Agenda and other regional strategies. By integrating biodiversity conservation goals with active pollution response strategies, the two projects create a more comprehensive toolkit for local stakeholders to protect the unique natural heritage of the basin. Ultimately, this synergy facilitates the upscaling of results across the Black Sea, ensuring that scientific outputs are readily applicable to both EU Member States and Partner Countries. BSNN lead project of the Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme 2021–2027, MARMAPS – 'Open environmental eFolio for joint maritime spatial planning and conservation of the valuable Black Sea Basin marine ecosystems' focused on protection of the valuable marine ecosystems of the Black Sea through networks of marine protected areas. Networking activities were part of every regional project meeting. The MARMAPS events and especially regional meetings provided valuable networking opportunities. Discussions were held to explore the alignment of follow up and sustainability activities of the two projects, networking on regional policy issues related to protection of the Black Sea environment. https://marmaps.bsnn.org/
SturNet – Interreg Black Sea Basin – BSB00172	Synergy between RESPONSE and SturNet projects aimed at building an integrated resilience ecosystem for the Black Sea region. Their intersection lies in the areas of sustainable development, risk management, and improved preparedness for the consequences of crises, including armed conflicts. As RESPONSE focuses on the development and implementation of innovative training programs for monitoring, reporting, and managing marine pollution, particularly in post-conflict settings, the SturNet is building an infrastructure for interaction between stakeholders (scientific institutions, government agencies, and businesses), creating a foundation for the practical implementation of such knowledge and tools. RESPONSE training modules can be integrated into SturNet workshops for local communities, border services, and fishermen. This will provide stakeholders with a comprehensive understanding of maritime safety. This interaction enhances the impact of both projects, contributing to the development of a more resilient, prepared, and interconnected regional response to environmental and technological challenges.

Stakeholders type and name	Description of interaction with other EU projects and networks of excellence
	https://www.sturnet.eu/
FutureMARES	The AUTh research team engaged in discussions with the FutureMARES consortium to explore high-level synergies between the two initiatives. These consultations focused on leveraging FutureMARES' extensive expertise in climate-resilient marine spatial planning and nature-based solutions to enhance the operational frameworks of the RESPONSE project.
GES4SEAS	Discussions between the AUTh research team and the GES4SEAS project focused on identifying synergies to enhance the assessment of marine environmental health. A central objective of this collaboration is to leverage GES4SEAS' specialized expertise to deepen the collective understanding of how to identify and categorize diverse pressures and threats to marine ecosystems.
MARINEplan	Discussions were held to explore the alignment between the RESPONSE project and MARINEPLAN, focusing on the integration of incident preparedness into Marine Spatial Planning (MSP). The synergy centers on utilizing MARINEPLAN's expertise in optimizing the sustainable use of marine space to ensure that RESPONSE's training schemes are spatially informed and operationally relevant.
NEMO-Tools	The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh) research team explored significant synergies with the NEMOtools project, focusing on the integration of cutting-edge monitoring technologies into the RESPONSE training framework. NEMOtools offers a suite of innovative methods and hardware solutions designed for high-resolution marine environmental surveillance, which present a valuable opportunity for enhancing the technical depth of the RESPONSE curricula.
BRIDGE-BS Project (Advancing Black Sea Research and Innovation to Co-Develop Blue Growth within Resilient Ecosystems)	BSNN collaborated with IO – BAS in BRIDGE-BS Project – Advancing Black Sea Research and Innovation to Co-Develop Blue Growth with Resilient Ecosystems – EU Horizon 2020. BSNN was involved in living labs of the project and presented RESPONSE project progress and achievements to researchers. The project BRIDGE-BS provided training on non-invasive methods of monitoring of the marine environment. The BRIDGE-BS project is important source of transferable practice for Georgia. Existing Georgian inputs in RESPONSE identify BRIDGE as a source of knowledge exchange, living-lab style stakeholder interaction, and introductory exposure to newer monitoring approaches, including eDNA and regional data-sharing practice. These experiences can be used to enrich RESPONSE training content and strengthen the scientific and operational relevance of future curricula in Georgia. https://bridgeblacksea.org/
SOS-ZEROPOL2030	BSNN is partner in the SOS-ZEROPOL2030, Source to Seas — Zero Pollution 2030 — Horizon Europe which explores pollution types and is developing a holistic zero pollution framework to guide the process towards achieving zero pollution in European seas by 2030. Stakeholder empowerment and co-creation process of both projects provide valuable networking opportunities. The BSNN RESPONSE team aligned the co-creation process with SOS-ZEROPOL2030 experience in co-design, co-production, and co-

Stakeholders type and name	Description of interaction with other EU projects and networks of excellence
	delivery of a stakeholder lead European Seas zero-pollution framework that provides practical guidance from source to sea addressing shortcomings in marine pollution management and governance. SOS-ZEROPOL2030 helped BSNN develop knowledge and expertise on types and pollution and types of pollutants of the Black Sea.
SYROCO	RESPONSE and SYROCO-2025 – Interaction is established through knowledge exchange and technical alignment, leveraging SYROCO's operational platform for mine trajectory prediction to enhance RESPONSE's maritime risk assessment and recovery strategies, fostering collaboration between EU projects and networks of excellence.
DOORS (Developing Optimal and Open Research Support for the Black Sea)	In Georgia, the strongest project-level synergy has been with the Horizon 2020 DOORS project. DOORS provided both networking opportunities and practical transferability channels for RESPONSE: Georgian stakeholders participated in the DOORS Stakeholder Conference, and the DOORS Black Sea System of Systems was explicitly discussed in the national co-creation workshop as a possible backbone for a future Georgian marine data portal. DOORS also contributed relevant experience in FAIR-type data access, ocean literacy, and dissemination practices that can support uptake of RESPONSE outputs. https://www.doorsblacksea.eu/
CARE SEA and other projects under the Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme	A practical and documented synergy has been established with the CARE SEA project through Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University. The CARE SEA team co-organized and hosted the Batumi national co-creation workshop, which substantially strengthened the Georgian stakeholder process. In addition, a CARE SEA seminar in Batumi on macro- and microplastic pollution in the Chorokhi River Delta included a RESPONSE contribution on marine and beach litter monitoring tools and guidelines, directly supporting transfer of RESPONSE training material to a related Black Sea initiative. Other Interreg projects worth mentioning are ZEWSGES and its Environmental Education Program (EPP) and Marine Litter Watch (MLW) portal, as well as ILMM-BSE, that deserve mentioning as good resources for Black Sea pollution education. Especially important is to note that GMG/FoE-GE partner has just joined the newly launched BLACKBOX project implementing FerryBox in the Black Sea, contributing important sensor data towards the monitoring of the Black Sea. These projects can indeed contribute RESPONSE Toolkit education resources.
HERO Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme	The interaction between these projects creates a comprehensive "Monitoring-to-Restoration" loop. While the RESPONSE project identifies and monitors pollution hotspots and water quality degradation in the Black Sea, the HERO project provides nature-based solutions (artificial reefs) to mitigate environmental damage and enhance biodiversity. Together, they address the full cycle of the European Green Deal's "Zero Pollution" ambition and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 within the Black Sea Basin.

Stakeholders type and name	Description of interaction with other EU projects and networks of excellence
	HERO's research on reef-based ecosystem recovery can serve as a biological indicator for the water quality parameters tracked by RESPONSE. Data regarding the placement and success of reef options in HERO can be cross-referenced with the Black Sea Water Quality Database (utilized by RESPONSE) to assess how localized restoration efforts impact regional water health. Exchange of methodologies regarding marine spatial planning and the assessment of anthropogenic impacts on sub-sea structures. The involvement of the Ukrainian Association of Business Support Centers in HERO facilitates a bridge between RESPONSE's scientific research and the commercialization of environmental innovations. Joint participation in the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) for the Black Sea allows both projects to present a unified front to EU stakeholders during regional workshops and stakeholder meetings. For Ukraine, this interaction ensures that scientific efforts are not siloed. By linking the academic expertise of the National Academy of Sciences (via RESPONSE) with the business-oriented approach of the Ukrainian Association of Business Support Centers (via HERO), the projects foster a robust Regional Innovation System. This strengthens Ukraine's capacity to implement the Sustainable Blue Economy even under the challenging conditions of current regional security.
BLISS - Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme project "Black Sea Initiative for Sturgeon Sustainability"	The relationship between RESPONSE and BLISS is centered on Environmental Security and Bio-indication. The RESPONSE project's focus on monitoring chemical pollution and the impacts of armed conflict directly supports the BLISS mission; sturgeons are highly sensitive to water quality and habitat degradation. By aligning these projects, the partnership ensures that "Sturgeon Sustainability" is not viewed in isolation but as a direct outcome of successful "Pollution Preparedness and Response." Data from BLISS regarding sturgeon migration routes and river-mouth habitats (Danube and Yeşilırmak) can be integrated with RESPONSE's pollution mapping. This helps identify high-risk zones where accidental spills or conflict-related debris might intersect with critical migration paths. Chemical water quality data collected by RESPONSE can provide the necessary environmental context for the acoustic and satellite tagging data collected by BLISS, helping researchers understand if pollution levels are influencing sturgeon movement patterns. This centralized resource can host cross-referenced data points from both projects, creating a more holistic view of the Black Sea's ecological health. Both projects engage with the Ukrainian Association of Business Support Centers (UABSC). This shared partnership ensures a streamlined communication channel between the scientific objectives of RESPONSE and the community-outreach/policy-advocacy goals of BLISS.

Stakeholders type and name	Description of interaction with other EU projects and networks of excellence
	The interaction strengthens the link between academic institutions across the Black Sea Basin (including Bulgarian and Romanian partners), fostering a unified scientific response to the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) goals regarding "Healthy Marine Ecosystems." This interaction highlights Ukraine's role in protecting European biodiversity under extraordinary circumstances. By linking the restoration of sturgeon habitats with the monitoring of war-related environmental damage, Ukraine demonstrates a sophisticated approach to Environmental Reconstruction. It ensures that the "Blue Economy" in the Ukrainian sector of the Black Sea remains a priority, focusing on long-term ecological resilience and the preservation of natural heritage.
SUNDANSE Horizont-Europa project	The interaction follows a "Source-to-Sea" ecological continuum. While RESPONSE focuses on marine pollution preparedness and the impacts of conflict within the Black Sea, SUNDANSE monitors the hydrological and ecological health of the Danube River—the sea's largest tributary. By aligning these projects, the partnership can better predict how changes in the Danube (e.g., sediment transport, chemical runoff, or climate-driven flood risks) directly impact the water quality and maritime safety of the Black Sea Basin. The REXDAN research vessel, as the most advanced of its kind in Europe, provides high-resolution data that can be integrated into the broader monitoring frameworks used by RESPONSE. Data on contaminants and nutrient loads gathered by SUNDANSE from Vienna to the Black Sea allows RESPONSE to differentiate between land-based pollution sources and maritime/conflict-related pollution events. Joint analysis of how climate-induced changes in Danube dynamics (floods/low water levels) affect the dispersion of marine pollutants in the coastal waters of the North-Western Black Sea. The project coordinator for SUNDANSE, Dunărea de Jos University of Gala□i (UDJG), is a shared partner across these regional initiatives. This ensures a seamless flow of technical expertise and administrative coordination. The interaction facilitates potential joint missions or data-sharing agreements involving the REXDAN vessel, strengthening the network of European Research Infrastructures (RI) dedicated to the Green Deal. This interaction is vital for the monitoring of the Danube Delta, a sensitive ecological zone shared by Ukraine and Romania. By linking with SUNDANSE, Ukrainian researchers gain access to state-of-the-art data and methodologies from the REXDAN vessel. This integration supports Ukraine's alignment with the EU Water Framework Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, ensuring that the reconstruction of regional maritime and riverine systems is guided by the best available European science.
Interreg BSB BSB00450	The interaction between these projects creates a "Coast-to-Hinterland" Resilience Framework. While RESPONSE focuses on

Stakeholders type and name	Description of interaction with other EU projects and networks of excellence
SEEDGUARD	protecting the marine environment from pollution and conflict impacts, SEEDGUARD focuses on the preservation of agrobiodiversity and traditional plant genetic resources in the same coastal regions. Together, they address the holistic health of the Black Sea ecosystem—ensuring that both the water (marine life) and the land (traditional agrobiodiversity) are protected against environmental stressors and the loss of biodiversity. Data from RESPONSE regarding soil and water contamination in coastal areas (due to conflict or pollution) can inform the selection of "pilot territories" for SEEDGUARD's Community Seed Collections (CSCs). This ensures that seed banks are established in ecologically secure zones. Both projects share a goal of climate adaptation. The exchange of data on regional climate trends—such as increased salinity in coastal soils or changing precipitation patterns—helps SEEDGUARD identify which traditional vegetable varieties are most resilient for future reproduction. Collaborative monitoring of how environmental degradation affects local communities' ability to maintain traditional agricultural practices and ecosystem services. Both projects operate within the Black Sea Basin framework, allowing for joint participation in regional stakeholder workshops. This facilitates a multi-sectoral dialogue involving marine scientists, agronomists, and local government authorities. SEEDGUARD's model of local community involvement (CSCs and CSBs) provides a template for RESPONSE to engage coastal residents in citizen-science initiatives related to pollution monitoring and environmental "guardianship." For Ukraine, this interaction is essential for Post-Conflict Bio-Restoration. While RESPONSE provides the tools to monitor and mitigate the immediate environmental damage to the sea, SEEDGUARD ensures the survival of Ukraine's unique agricultural heritage. By integrating these efforts, Ukraine can develop a comprehensive "Green Recovery" plan that restores both its maritime resources and its traditional agrobiodiversity, strengthening national food security and regional economic-ecological stability.
Interreg BSB BSB00091 AlgaeRevive	The interaction between these projects creates a "Detection-to-Remediation" Technology Chain. The RESPONSE project provides the necessary monitoring and early-warning systems for marine pollution and water quality degradation. AlgaeRevive complements this by utilizing algae as a natural filtration system (bioremediation) to reduce nutrient loads and industrial pollutants. This alignment supports the EU Zero Pollution Action Plan by turning environmental threats into opportunities for "Blue Growth." There is significant potential for technical synergy between RESPONSE's data frameworks and the AlgaeSense AI-powered monitoring tool. Data from RESPONSE on pollution hotspots can help "train" the AlgaeSense AI to identify where algae cultivation would be most effective for environmental cleanup.

Stakeholders type and name	Description of interaction with other EU projects and networks of excellence
	This centralized platform can act as a specialized repository for research generated by RESPONSE regarding the impact of specific pollutants on marine flora, helping AlgaeRevive identify which species are most resilient to conflict-related environmental stress. Findings from RESPONSE on water quality parameters can be used to optimize the pilot actions for algae cultivation in the Black Sea Basin. Both projects are deeply rooted in the European Innovation Ecosystems framework. The interaction facilitates a bridge between high-level scientific research (National Academy of Sciences) and the industrial uptake of nature-based solutions. By coordinating through the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA), these projects provide a unified approach to "Smart Specialization" in the maritime sector, linking environmental safety with the commercialization of algae-based products (bio-fertilizers, bio-plastics, etc.). For Ukraine, this interaction is a catalyst for Sustainable Economic Reconstruction. By integrating RESPONSE's monitoring expertise with AlgaeRevive's focus on industrial uptake, Ukraine can develop new "Blue" business models that simultaneously clean the marine environment and create jobs. This strengthens the Regional Innovation System in Southern Ukraine, proving that environmental protection and economic growth can be mutually reinforcing even in a post-conflict context.
Interreg BSB BSB00193 EfxINNOs	This interaction focuses on Technological Convergence for Marine Safety. The RESPONSE project's monitoring objectives are physically realized and scaled through the EfxINNOs network of mobile and static platforms. By combining RESPONSE's focus on water quality and pollution preparedness with EfxINNOs' focus on benthic (seabed) ecosystems and autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs), the two projects create a multi-layered monitoring system—from the surface to the seafloor—supporting the transition to a Sustainable Blue Economy. Both projects utilize advanced digital tools. EfxINNOs' machine learning algorithms for creating benthic mosaics can be used to visualize the long-term physical impacts of pollution or conflict-related debris identified by RESPONSE. Real-time data from EfxINNOs' buoys and remotely-operated vehicles (ROVs) can be fed into the monitoring frameworks used by RESPONSE, providing high-resolution ground-truthing for satellite or shore-based observations. EfxINNOs' assessment of seagrass health serves as a critical biological baseline for RESPONSE, helping to determine if pollution events are causing irreversible damage to "blue carbon" sinks. The central output of EfxINNOs—the Transfer Network—serves as a primary conduit for the "socio-humanitarian innovations" and methodical support developed within RESPONSE. The link between the Black Sea and the North Aegean Sea established by EfxINNOs expands the geographic impact of RESPONSE's findings, facilitating a wider European dialogue on maritime security and environmental monitoring.

Stakeholders type and name	Description of interaction with other EU projects and networks of excellence
	As this project deals heavily with innovation and technology transfer, it aligns perfectly with the expertise of the NCP for the European Innovation Council (EIC), ensuring high-level policy support for the commercialization of these marine technologies. For Ukraine, this interaction is a major step toward Digital Maritime Sovereignty. By participating in an innovative marine technology transfer network, Ukrainian researchers and businesses gain access to cutting-edge robotics (AUVs/ROVs) and AI methodologies. This strengthens the Regional Innovation System in Southern Ukraine and provides the technical capacity needed to monitor and restore deep-water ecosystems that may have been impacted by recent naval activities, ensuring Ukraine's maritime recovery is both technologically advanced and ecologically sound.
Interreg BSB BSB00108 CAGOS	The interaction between these projects creates a "Coast-to-City" Climate Resilience Bridge. The RESPONSE project provides the macro-level scientific data on water quality and pollution threats in the Black Sea Basin. CAGOS translates this environmental awareness into micro-level urban action by building municipal capacity for climate change mitigation and the "Green Transition." Together, they ensure that the protection of the marine ecosystem (RESPONSE) is matched by the sustainable development of the "Green and Open Streets" (CAGOS) in the surrounding coastal regions. The findings from RESPONSE regarding maritime environmental security can serve as a primary evidence base for the "Green Transnational Region" strategic document being developed by CAGOS. This ensures that regional urban planning is informed by the latest maritime research. The curriculum developed by RESPONSE for marine pollution preparedness can be integrated into the municipal training activities of CAGOS. This provides local officials with a holistic understanding of how urban runoff and city management directly impact the health of the Black Sea. Both projects prioritize "environmental self-awareness." Joint communication campaigns can link the health of local "attractive parks" and green infrastructure (CAGOS) to the broader goal of a "Zero Pollution" Black Sea (RESPONSE). The interaction fosters a direct link between the academic expertise of the National Academy of Sciences (via RESPONSE) and local government authorities (via CAGOS). This strengthens the "Humanitarian Innovation" aspect of the Regional Innovation System. Data from RESPONSE on coastal vulnerability can help CAGOS partners prioritize where to invest in green infrastructure to best mitigate the impacts of coastal erosion or urban flooding. Added Value for Ukraine For Ukraine, this interaction is vital for the Post-Conflict Urban Recovery. By linking the RESPONSE project's focus on monitoring conflict-related environmental damage with CAGOS's focus on "Green and Open Streets," Ukrainian municipalities can rebuild using the New European Bauhaus principles. This ensures that the reconstruction of Southern

Stakeholders type and name	Description of interaction with other EU projects and networks of excellence
	Ukrainian cities is not just functional, but ecologically sustainable, climate-resilient, and deeply connected to the health of the Black Sea maritime environment.
Interreg BSB BSB00532 EcoYOU	The RESPONSE project generates high-level data on water quality, marine pollution, and environmental security. EcoYOU utilizes this knowledge to build "Clean and Green minds" by developing joint awareness actions, educational tools, and youth camps. Together, they bridge the gap between professional maritime monitoring and grassroots environmental behavior, ensuring that the scientific efforts of today are sustained by the eco-conscious citizens of tomorrow. Scientific insights from the RESPONSE training modules (on pollution preparedness and conflict impact) can be simplified and adapted into the EcoYOU educational tools. This ensures that young people are learning about real-world, current environmental challenges specific to their region. Data collection methods used by RESPONSE can be modified for youth participation in joint camps. This allows students to engage in "mini-monitoring" activities, helping them understand how data is used to protect the Black Sea. The sophisticated data visualizations produced by RESPONSE (such as maps of pollution hotspots) can be used as powerful storytelling tools in EcoYOU's awareness campaigns to illustrate the urgency of the "Zero Pollution" ambition. EcoYOU provides RESPONSE with a direct channel to engage with schools, universities, and youth NGOs across the Black Sea Basin. Both projects support the goals of the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) by fostering a "Blue Culture." By aligning their outreach efforts, they present a unified European vision for a healthy and resilient marine environment. As a project focused on social innovation and education, EcoYOU benefits from the strategic oversight of the National Contact Point (NCP), ensuring that youth-led environmental initiatives are recognized within the broader European Innovation Ecosystem. Added Value for Ukraine For Ukraine, this interaction is a critical investment in Human Capital for Reconstruction. By involving Ukrainian youth in the EcoYOU framework—informed by the rigorous scientific standards of the RESPONSE project—the country is training a new generation of environmental experts and advocates. This ensures that the future management of Ukraine's "Blue Economy" is led by individuals who are both technically informed about the impacts of the current crisis and deeply committed to an environmentally friendly, "Green" recovery for their coastal communities.
Interreg BSB BSB00164 BlackNETs	The interaction between these projects focuses on Comprehensive Marine Litter Management. While RESPONSE provides a strategic framework for pollution preparedness and monitoring the environmental impacts of conflict, BlackNETs offers a specialized "surgical" approach to identifying and removing abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG).

Stakeholders type and name	Description of interaction with other EU projects and networks of excellence
	Together, they address both the chemical (RESPONSE) and physical (BlackNETs) threats to the Black Sea's ecological health, effectively "exorcising" the silent killers of marine wildlife. Data generated by RESPONSE on maritime traffic and conflict zones can be cross-referenced with BlackNETs' mapping of derelict gear. This helps identify high-risk areas where ghost nets may be entangled with other forms of marine debris or wreckage. Research from BlackNETs regarding the socioeconomic effects of ghost gear on the fishing industry can be integrated into RESPONSE's broader assessment of regional maritime security and economic resilience. Findings from the underwater monitoring platforms (such as ROVs/AUVs mentioned in the EfxINNOs project) can be shared with BlackNETs to help quantify the density of abandoned gear in deep-water habitats that are otherwise difficult to survey. Both projects contribute to the goals of the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) and the EU Zero Pollution Action Plan. By collaborating, they can provide more robust recommendations to national governments regarding waste management at ports and the regulation of fishing gear. BlackNETs' strong connection to organizations like Mare Nostrum provides RESPONSE with a direct link to environmental NGOs and local fishing communities, facilitating a broader stakeholder dialogue on maritime safety. Added Value for Ukraine For Ukraine, this interaction is essential for Navigational and Ecological Safety. In the context of the current regional security situation, distinguishing between active military hazards and legacy "ghost gear" is vital for safe maritime operations. By integrating BlackNETs' methodologies, Ukraine can better address the "silent killers" in its territorial waters, ensuring that post-conflict recovery includes the removal of long-term physical threats to biodiversity and the restoration of safe, productive fishing grounds in the North-Western Black Sea.
ERASMUS 2024-1-TR01-KA220-HED-000251988 NIDA	The interaction between these projects creates a "Technical-to-Tactile" Learning Framework. The RESPONSE project provides the high-level scientific data and professional training modules for marine pollution preparedness. NIDA complements this by translating environmental science into social action. By using non-formal education methods (drama, workshops) to build awareness of aquatic fauna and nature conservation, NIDA ensures that the technical research from RESPONSE reaches a broader, diverse student population, fostering a "lifelong commitment" to protecting the Black Sea and Aegean ecosystems. Scientific findings from RESPONSE regarding the state of the aquatic environment can be used as "case studies" for NIDA's student workshops and drama-based learning. This grounds the students' creative work in real-world environmental data. University students engaged in NIDA can serve as a network for "Nature Volunteering" initiatives. They can be trained in basic citizen-science protocols developed by RESPONSE to report on coastal pollution or biodiversity sightings.

Stakeholders type and name	Description of interaction with other EU projects and networks of excellence
	NIDA's focus on "Nature Conservation" and "Aquatic Fauna" directly aligns with the bio-indicator research (e.g., sturgeon and algae) shared across the RESPONSE project network. NIDA involves universities in Turkey (TR), Romania (RO), and North Macedonia (MK), creating a strong bridge between the Erasmus+ academic network and the Interreg NEXT BSB research community. This interaction demonstrates how the NCP for the European Innovation Council (EIC) can facilitate the "Socio-Humanitarian Innovation" aspect of research—moving from laboratory findings to community-wide behavioral change. Joint "Thematic Days" can be organized where RESPONSE researchers present their findings to NIDA student volunteers, fostering a cross-generational dialogue on the future of the Sustainable Blue Economy. Added Value for Ukraine For Ukraine, this interaction is vital for Inclusive Scientific Diplomacy. By linking Ukrainian academic institutions with the NIDA network, the country ensures that its students remain integrated into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) despite the challenges of conflict. It provides Ukrainian students with tools for "Inclusion and Awareness," helping them lead the social and environmental reconstruction of their coastal communities. This interaction ensures that the "Blue Growth" of the future is not just technologically advanced, but socially inclusive and driven by a highly aware and active younger generation.

The interaction of RESPONSE partners with other EU projects and networks of excellence demonstrates a high level of integration within the European research and innovation ecosystem, significantly enhancing the project's networking capacity, knowledge exchange, and transferability of results.

Firstly, the project establishes strong thematic synergies with a wide range of EU-funded initiatives (Interreg, Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, Erasmus+), covering complementary domains such as marine pollution monitoring, biodiversity conservation, climate adaptation, marine spatial planning, environmental restoration, and zero-pollution strategies. These synergies enable RESPONSE to position its results within a broader "source-to-sea", "monitoring-to-restoration", and "science-to-policy-to-society" continuum.

Secondly, cooperation with these projects facilitates mutual enrichment of methodologies, data, and tools. RESPONSE benefits from advanced monitoring technologies, data-sharing platforms, modelling approaches, and nature-based solutions, while simultaneously contributing its expertise in pollution preparedness, rapid response mechanisms, and training systems. This two-way exchange significantly increases the scientific robustness and practical applicability of project outputs.

Thirdly, the interaction creates multiple pathways for transferability and upscaling, including:
- integration of RESPONSE training modules into other project activities and stakeholder workshops,
- use of shared data infrastructures and research platforms,
- cross-project dissemination and stakeholder engagement,
- alignment with major EU policy frameworks such as the Green Deal, Zero Pollution Action Plan and Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Moreover, these collaborations foster the development of a regional innovation ecosystem in the Black Sea basin, linking research institutions, public authorities, businesses, and civil society. This ecosystem approach ensures that project results are not isolated but embedded into ongoing European initiatives, innovation networks, and policy processes.

Finally, the interaction with EU projects contributes significantly to the long-term sustainability and impact of RESPONSE by:
- expanding its visibility and recognition at European level,
- enabling replication of its solutions in other contexts,
- supporting capacity building, education, and societal engagement, and strengthening resilience and preparedness in the Black Sea region, including in the context of current environmental and security challenges.

Overall, the extensive cooperation with EU projects and networks of excellence transforms RESPONSE into an integrated and scalable component of the European marine research and innovation landscape, ensuring that its results have lasting relevance and applicability beyond the project lifecycle.

4. Training courses in non-consortium Black Sea countries

Capacity building through education and practical training represents an essential component of strengthening regional preparedness and response to marine pollution incidents. Within the framework of the RESPONSE networking activities, particular attention was given to identifying and engaging training initiatives in Black Sea countries that are not members of the project consortium, especially Turkey and Moldova. These activities support the broader objective of promoting knowledge exchange and enhancing the transferability of RESPONSE training concepts across the entire Black Sea basin.

Turkey **has developed a relatively advanced system of training programs and operational exercises on marine pollution preparedness and response**, implemented under national legislation aligned with international maritime conventions. According to Turkish regulations on preparedness and response to pollution caused by oil and other harmful substances, personnel working in coastal facilities, ports, and maritime authorities are required to participate in training seminars and **emergency response drills organized under the supervision of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure**. These programs aim to strengthen operational readiness and ensure effective use of response equipment in the event of marine pollution incidents. Exercises are typically conducted on a regular basis, often every six months, in order to maintain a high level of preparedness among response teams.
http://mareclean.com/service/training-exercises/

Several institutions and training providers in Turkey organize specialized courses and **practical exercises on oil spill preparedness and response**. For example, OPRC (Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation) and HNS (Hazardous and Noxious Substances) training seminars are delivered by accredited organizations and include both theoretical modules and practical exercises. These programs generally cover topics such as oil spill behavior and environmental impacts, risk assessment and contingency planning, deployment of containment booms and skimmers, shoreline cleanup methods, environmental monitoring, and coordination of response operations. Participants completing these training seminars receive certification approved by national maritime authorities.
https://gh4t.com/oil-spill-amp-responses/1193393/special-courses/Trabzon.htm

In addition to national training schemes, Turkey regularly **hosts specialized professional courses on oil spill management and response**. For instance, training programs organized in coastal cities such as Trabzon provide multi-day courses aimed at emergency responders, environmental professionals, and government officials. These courses typically address the full cycle of oil spill management, including spill detection and assessment, containment and recovery techniques, environmental risk evaluation, wildlife protection, health and safety protocols, and post-incident monitoring and reporting. Practical exercises and simulations are often integrated into the training programs to strengthen operational coordination among response teams.
https://www.posow.org/documentation/Report_Training_CourseNPTCTURKEY1113october2016.pdf

Turkey has also participated in international and **EU-supported training initiatives**, such as the POSOW (Preparedness for Oil-Polluted Shoreline Cleanup and Oiled Wildlife Interventions) project. Within this framework, a national pilot training course was organized in Antalya for representatives of civil protection authorities and local administrations. The training focused on shoreline cleanup techniques, volunteer management in oil spill response, wildlife rescue, and waste management, and included a field exercise conducted in the port area.

In contrast, **Moldova does not have a direct maritime coastline**; however, it possesses strategic access to international maritime transport through the Danube River and the river-maritime port of Giurgiuleshti, which connects the country to the Black Sea. Due to this geographical position,

Moldova participates in regional environmental cooperation and capacity-building initiatives related to pollution prevention and emergency response in the Danube–Black Sea system.

Moldovan environmental authorities, **port operators, and emergency services engage in regional training activities, workshops**, and knowledge-exchange programs addressing environmental risk management, pollution monitoring, and response coordination within the wider Black Sea region. Within the RESPONSE project, stakeholders from Turkey and Moldova were invited to become acquainted with the project objectives and training framework through networking and information-sharing activities. These interactions contribute to strengthening regional knowledge exchange and capacity development, while also supporting the broader dissemination of RESPONSE training approaches and methodologies beyond the project consortium.

Overall, the inclusion of training initiatives and stakeholder engagement from non-consortium countries contributes to the creation of a broader regional community of practice in marine pollution preparedness and response. Such cooperation enhances the transferability of the RESPONSE project outputs and supports more coordinated and effective environmental protection efforts across the Black Sea basin.

Romania contributed to the capacity-building and knowledge transfer processes targeting non-consortium Black Sea countries by sharing its expertise in marine pollution monitoring, response preparedness, and professional training systems. Institutions such as the National Institute for Marine Research and Development "Grigore Antipa" (NIMRD) and the Romanian Maritime Training Centre (CERONAV) provided relevant input during co-creation workshops, T3.2 training activities, and Digital Toolkit presentations.

Through these interactions, Romanian experts supported the dissemination of practical knowledge related to environmental monitoring, risk assessment, and coordination of response actions, which are directly applicable to training systems in Turkey and Moldova. The Romanian experience in integrating scientific research with operational response frameworks contributed to enriching the RESPONSE training approach and enhancing its adaptability across different national contexts.

Furthermore, Romanian stakeholders participated in regional networking and knowledge-exchange activities involving representatives from non-consortium countries, including small-scale training visits and online meetings. These interactions facilitated the exchange of best practices and supported the promotion of the RESPONSE Digital Toolkit as a transferable training instrument.
Overall, Romania's contribution strengthened the regional dimension of capacity building and supported the uptake and adaptation of RESPONSE training methodologies beyond the project consortium, contributing to a more coordinated and resilient approach to marine pollution preparedness in the Black Sea region.

5. Transferability potential of the Response results and outputs

One of the key objectives of the RESPONSE project is to ensure that the knowledge, methodologies, and training schemes developed within the project are not limited to the participating institutions but can be effectively transferred and applied across the broader Black Sea region and beyond. Through networking activities and cooperation with regional and European stakeholders, RESPONSE aims to facilitate the exchange of expertise, strengthen institutional cooperation, and support the adaptation of project outputs to different geographical, institutional, and operational contexts.

The transferability potential of the project results is closely linked to the establishment of collaborative networks among experts, research institutions, public authorities, and operational agencies responsible for marine environmental protection and marine pollution response. These networks support the dissemination of knowledge and the adaptation of RESPONSE training methodologies to different national frameworks and operational environments.

5.1. Exchange of information and improvement of common knowledge about the institutional framework

An important aspect of networking activities within the RESPONSE project involves the exchange of information regarding the institutional and regulatory frameworks governing marine pollution prevention, monitoring, and response in Black Sea countries. Through meetings, consultations, and information-sharing activities, project partners and external stakeholders have improved their understanding of national governance structures, institutional responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms related to marine environmental protection.

This exchange of knowledge allows participating institutions to identify similarities and differences in national regulatory systems and operational practices, thereby supporting the development of more harmonized approaches to marine pollution preparedness and response across the region.

5.2. Consideration of Local Geographical Features

The Black Sea region is characterized by diverse coastal environments, including deltas, estuaries, wetlands, ports, and urban coastal areas. Networking activities within the RESPONSE project have emphasized the importance of taking into account local geographical and ecological conditions when applying project outputs and training methodologies.

The exchange of regional experiences has helped to identify specific environmental vulnerabilities and risk areas, such as coastal ecosystems, shipping corridors, and industrial zones. This knowledge contributes to the adaptation of RESPONSE training modules and operational recommendations to different geographical contexts within the Black Sea basin.

5.3. Information on the Main Types of Pollution

Networking activities have also facilitated the exchange of information regarding the main types and sources of marine pollution affecting the Black Sea region. These include oil pollution from maritime transport and port activities, pollution caused by hazardous and noxious substances, marine litter and plastics, nutrient pollution leading to eutrophication, and emerging contaminants.

The RESPONSE project places particular emphasis on pollution risks related to maritime incidents and potential environmental damage caused by armed conflicts. The sharing of knowledge and case studies among stakeholders contributes to a better understanding of pollution dynamics and supports the development of effective monitoring and response strategies.

5.4. Tasks and Functions of Monitoring the Marine Environment

Effective marine pollution response requires reliable and timely monitoring of the marine environment. Within the networking framework of the RESPONSE project, partners and stakeholders exchanged information on existing monitoring systems, institutional responsibilities, and technical capabilities for environmental observation in the Black Sea region.

This exchange has highlighted the importance of integrating different monitoring approaches, including satellite observations, coastal monitoring stations, vessel-based surveys, and laboratory analysis. Such cooperation contributes to improving the overall effectiveness of marine environmental monitoring and supports early detection of pollution incidents.

5.5. Rapid Response and Mitigation Functions

Another important area addressed through networking and knowledge exchange relates to rapid response mechanisms and operational countermeasures for marine pollution incidents. Discussions among project partners and external stakeholders focused on national contingency planning, response coordination mechanisms, and operational procedures used by maritime authorities and environmental agencies.

These exchanges support the development of improved response strategies, including better coordination between national authorities, emergency services, port operators, and environmental organizations involved in marine pollution response.

5.6. Provision of Necessary Equipment and Capabilities

The ability to respond effectively to marine pollution incidents depends on the availability of appropriate equipment, technical resources, and operational infrastructure. Through networking activities, stakeholders exchanged information on existing national capabilities, including oil spill response equipment, monitoring technologies, and specialized response vessels.

The exchange of information in this area contributes to identifying existing gaps and opportunities for improving operational readiness, while also supporting the transfer of technical knowledge and best practices in equipment deployment and management.

5.7. Peculiarities of Staff involvement for Training Process

Human resources and professional expertise represent another key component of effective marine pollution response systems. Networking activities have provided opportunities to exchange experiences regarding staffing structures, professional qualifications, and training requirements for personnel involved in marine environmental monitoring and emergency response.

Discussions among partners and stakeholders emphasized the importance of continuous training, interdisciplinary expertise, and cooperation between scientific institutions and operational agencies. These exchanges support the development of improved training frameworks and contribute to strengthening professional capacity in the region.

5.8. Peculiarities of Taking into Account the Challenges and Threats of Military Aggression

The RESPONSE project pays particular attention to the environmental challenges associated with armed conflicts and military activities, which can create new sources of marine pollution and

complicate response operations. Networking activities within the project have facilitated the exchange of knowledge and experiences related to environmental risks associated with military aggression, including damage to maritime infrastructure, fuel depots, pipelines, and coastal industrial facilities.

These discussions contribute to the development of training modules and response strategies that take into account the specific risks and operational challenges associated with conflict-related pollution incidents.

5.9. Peculiarities of Realizing the Potential of Scaling the Project's Achievements to Other Related Areas

A key objective of the networking activities within the RESPONSE project is to ensure that the knowledge, training methodologies, and operational approaches developed by the project can be scaled and applied beyond the immediate project context. The experience gained through the project can be transferred to other regional seas and environmental governance frameworks facing similar challenges related to marine pollution and environmental risk management.

The networking activities have helped to identify opportunities for applying the project's results in other marine regions, including the Mediterranean, Baltic, and other regional seas. By promoting cooperation with other EU projects, international organizations, and regional stakeholders, RESPONSE contributes to the broader dissemination and long-term sustainability of its outcomes.

Overall, the networking and transferability activities implemented within the RESPONSE project strengthen the regional capacity for addressing marine pollution challenges and support the development of coordinated and resilient environmental management frameworks across the Black Sea basin and beyond.

6. Small-scale training visits - Information meetings with non-consortium Black Sea countries Stakeholders/Experts

There were provided 2small-scale training visits - Information meetings with participation of the Stakeholders, Expets, Project Partners from countries of the Project consortium and wiith Stakeholders/Experts from non-consortium Black Sea countries (namely: Turkey and Moldova), by Task 4.2 responsable partner - State Organization „Institute of Market and Economic & Ecological Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine".

These events played a role of tools (means) for construction and advancing of the transferability potential of the project's outputs in areas other than the project area. Due to the conducting of 2 small-scale training visits by State Organization «Institute of Market and Economic & Ecological Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine» in cooperation with Black Sea Branch of the Ukrainian Environmental Academy of Sciences and with all the Project Consortium Partners, namely: Black Sea NGO Network – Bulgaria, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki – Greece, National Institute for Marine Research and Development "Grigore Antipa" – Romania, The Greens Movement of Georgia / Friends of the Earth – Georgia; involving stakeholders and experts from Ukraine, Turkey, Moldova and representatives of the The Black Sea Commission Permanent Secretariat.

Since the BS is a shared basin it was important to engage all the BS coastal countries, not only in terms of **building regional strategies or through networking**, but also in trying to **perform monitoring of training activities**. That is why trainings for representatives of the Stakeholders/Experts from Turkey and Moldova were performed during 2 small-scale meetings and monitoring, and analysis of training activities was provided. These training visits had a multiplier effect on the project's outputs, while will contributed to the establishment of an even stronger bringing together of experts across the EU and BS countries.

The 1st small-scale training vist was conducted On February 27, 2026. The Small-scale training event titled „Building Response Frameworks under existing&new Marine Pollution Challenges in the Black Sea RESPONSE project in regional context"was organised by the State Organization «Institute of Market and Economic & Ecological Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine» in cooperation with the Black Sea Branch of the Ukrainian Environmental Academy of Sciences, Black Sea NGO Network – Bulgaria and other partners, stakeholders, experts.

The seminar was opened with welcoming speech by the Director of the Institute, Academician Borys Burkynskyi, who emphasised the importance of building of readiness to respond to marine pollution in the Black Sea, taking into acount the local particularities and the conditions of military aggression and growing environmental risks for coastal ecosystems.

The event brought together representatives of governmental bodies, environmental authorities, scientific institutions, universities, and environmental organisations involved in marine environmental protection and emergency response in the Black Sea region (51 persons – according to the registration in the attendance lists, including representatives from Turkey, Moldova – the details are represented in the Annex 1 - Evidence of Activities - Events facts and results of small-scale training visits).

Key points of the event included trainings on the most relevant topics, oriented on the stakeholders/experts from Turkey and Moldova, namely:

- Representing of the RESPONSE project in a nutshell. Digital tool and E-folio structure;
- Training program structure discussion with colleagues from Turkey and Moldova;
- Introduction to the issues of research into pollution of marine ecosystems;
- Discussion of institutional frameworks and governance mechanisms for responding to marine pollution in the Black Sea region;
- Development and presentation of the structure of training programmes aimed at preparing specialists to respond to environmental emergencies in marine ecosystems under military actions influence;

Particular attention was paid to the environmental consequences of military activities in the Black Sea basin, including pollution caused by armed conflict, oil spills, and other anthropogenic impacts affecting marine ecosystems and biodiversity. Experts discussed the importance of integrating the challenges (military activities in the Black Sea basin, including pollution caused by armed conflict, oil spills, and other impacts) into training programmes. Prospects of common monitoring and emergency response were discussed.

Participants discussed the structure of the training programme, the key challenges associated with research into marine pollution, and the environmental characteristics of the Black Sea that must be considered when developing response mechanisms. The discussions highlighted the importance of international cooperation and knowledge exchange between scientific institutions, governmental authorities, and civil society organisations in order to strengthen regional preparedness for marine pollution incidents.

Overall, the events contributed to further development of training programmes and institutional frameworks aimed at improving readiness to respond to marine pollution and environmental emergencies in the Black Sea region.

The Stakeholders and Experts from Turkey actively participated in networking and discussion on training process for creation readiness to response on the modern pollution challenges for BSB marine ecosystems. Special attention was paid to the Digital toolkit (namely, by: prof. Salih Kaya and by prof. Tanay Sidki)

The details are represented in the Annex 1 - Evidence of Activities - Events facts and results of small-scale training visits.

The photo facts on the 1st small-scale training vist are available at: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18DxWcNHyWZrpq1GomYXEkFQYl6D7E8qS?usp=sharing

The video on the 1st small-scale training vist is available at: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1y4MT6k43FzQcZEncfIfQXDEu5LiZw2Xb?usp=sharing

Agenda and attendance of the 1st small-scale training visit and is represented in Annex 1.

News about the 1st small-scale training vist are published on official web site of the State Organization «Institute of Market and Economic & Ecological Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine» https://en.impeer.org.ua/2026/03/02/sturnet-bsb00172-synergy-for-the-black-sea-ecosystems-protection/

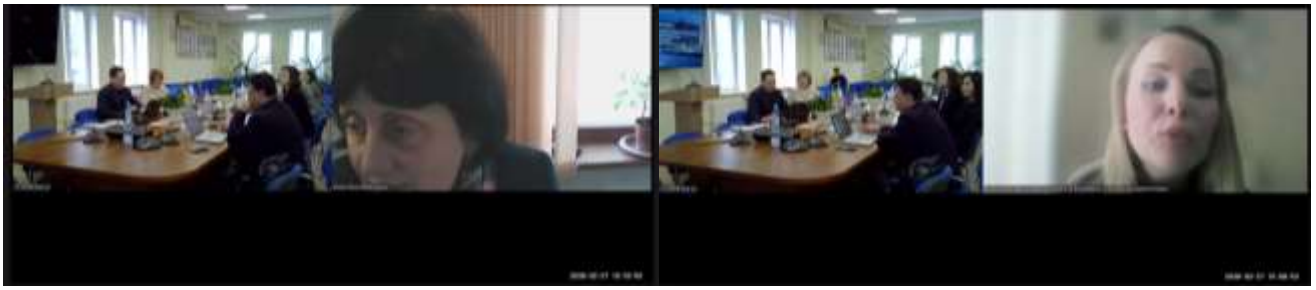
The 2nd small-scale training vist was conducted On March 20, 2026. The Small-scale training event titled „- Information meeting with Black Sea countries Stakeholders/Experts"was organised by the State Organization «Institute of Market and Economic & Ecological Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine» in cooperation with the Black Sea Branch of the Ukrainian Environmental Academy of Sciences, Black Sea NGO Network – Bulgaria and other partners, stakeholders, experts.

On March 20, 2026, the State Institution "Institute of Market and Economic-Ecological Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine" hosted another training and information workshop dedicated to the development of updated training programs for responding to marine pollution challenges in the Black Sea ecosystems.

The event brought together representatives of scientific institutions, environmental organizations, local government authorities, port businesses, and international partner structures from Ukraine, Moldova, Turkey, Romania, Georgia, and Bulgaria.

The workshop opened with welcoming remarks from the Institute's administration, represented by Doctor of Economics, Professor Oleksandr Laiko, who emphasized the importance of marine ecosystem protection and the potential of network cooperation under the impact of military actions.

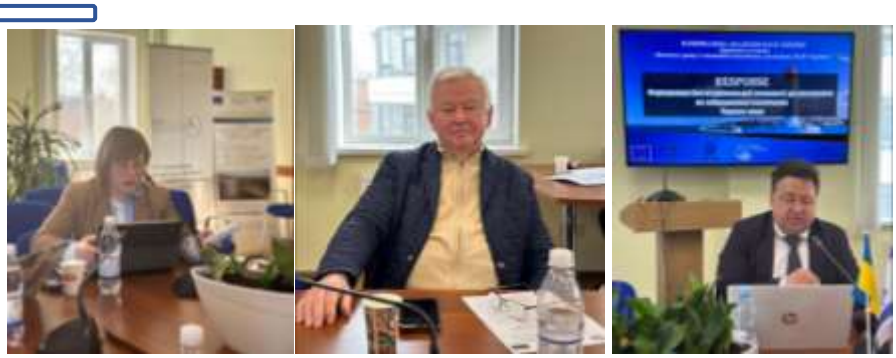
International coordinators and project partners joined the welcoming remarks, including Professor Antonios Mazaris from Greece, Emma Gileva from Bulgaria, and Mamuka Gvilava from Georgia. They emphasized the urgency of developing unified approaches to training specialists capable of effectively countering environmental risks in the Black Sea basin.



An important part of the opening session were the presentations by Kristina Korotkih, Director of the Municipal Establishment "Sustainable Development Agency of Vyzyrka Rural Territorial Community," and Natalia Beznoshchenko, the Agency's Project Manager. They emphasized the urgency of developing unified approaches to specialist training at the local level and the necessity of adapting educational tools to new environmental security conditions.

Special attention during the event was paid to engaging the youth sector in addressing the region's environmental issues. Anastasiia Hlan, a representative of the Youth Council of the Vyzyrka Rural Territorial Community, joined the event, and her participation highlighted the active role of youth in shaping sustainable environmental policy.

The main part of the event was dedicated to a detailed analysis of the types and sources of Black Sea pollution and their impact on the state of ecosystems.



Participants discussed the role of research infrastructures as a foundation for emergency response, as well as contemporary approaches to the monitoring and assessment of the marine environment.

Special interest was raised by the issues of modernizing the oil spill response training system in Ukraine and the practical aspects of engaging volunteers in activities during environmental incidents.

The event concluded with an open discussion, during which international experts and local stakeholders-including representatives of the Vyzyrka Rural Territorial Community and the largest port operators-discussed the prospects for further cooperation.

The joint efforts allowed for the alignment of strategic approaches to improving training modules and adapting educational tools to the new environmental security conditions in the region. The workshop became an important platform for deepening professional dialogue and enhancing readiness to overcome the consequences of anthropogenic and military impacts on the Black Sea.

The Stakeholders and Experts from Turkey and Moldova took active in networking and discussion on training process for creation readiness to response on the modern pollution challenges for BSB marine ecosystems. Namely, prof. Tanay Sidki proposed to organize mutual trainings on response readiness in aspect of military influence.

The photo facts on the 2nd small-scale training vist are available at:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1OTEnchAdeft8pS2bnQ3pfYYBKQgZtoYA?usp=sharing

The video on the 1st small-scale training vist is available at:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RygcxUqPaQ8w0w7G1gz3m6ew538hUkQn/view?usp=sharing

Agenda and attendance of the 2nd small-scale training visit and is represented in Annex 1.

News about the 2nd small-scale training visit are published on official web site of the State Organization «Institute of Market and Economic & Ecological Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine» https://en.impeer.org.ua/2026/03/23/sturnet-bsb00172-synergy-for-the-black-sea-ecosystems-protection-2/

Conclusions and key takeaways

The implementation of Task 4.2 has successfully established RESPONSE as a robust regional platform for networking, knowledge exchange, and transferability in the field of marine pollution preparedness and response in the Black Sea region.

Firstly, the project activities on Task 4.2 (Del.4.5) have effectively built and strengthened multi-level networks connecting EU Member States (Greece, Bulgaria, Romania) with associated and non-EU Black Sea countries (Ukraine, Georgia), while also extending engagement to non-consortium countries such as Turkey and Moldova. This has contributed to enhanced regional cooperation, mutual understanding of institutional frameworks, and the development of a shared community of practice.

Secondly, RESPONSE has demonstrated a high level of stakeholder engagement, involving policy-makers, operational authorities, research institutions, academia, NGOs, and civil society. Through continuous interaction— including co-creation workshops, face-to-face interviews, trainings, and coordination meetings (more than two per year)—the project ensured that its outputs are policy-relevant, operationally applicable, and scientifically grounded.

Thirdly, strong links have been established with other EU-funded projects and networks of excellence, exceeding the initial expectations of the task. These interactions enabled knowledge exchange, methodological alignment, and identification of synergies in areas such as marine monitoring, biodiversity, spatial planning, and pollution management. As a result, RESPONSE outputs are positioned within a broader European research and policy landscape, enhancing their visibility and relevance.

Furthermore, the project has successfully promoted the transferability of its results beyond the consortium and geographical scope, including through:

- targeted stakeholder engagement across all Black Sea coastal countries,

- small-scale training visits and knowledge-sharing activities,

- dissemination and testing of training programmes and the Digital Toolkit ,

- establishing of cooperative initiatives with non-consortium BSB-stakeholders (Turkey, Moldova) concerning common trainings and monitoring of training activities.

These actions created multiplier effects, supporting the uptake and adaptation of project outputs in diverse institutional and geographical contexts.

The networking activities have also contributed to:

- harmonisation of approaches to marine pollution monitoring and response,

- improved understanding of regional environmental challenges and risks (including conflict-related impacts),

- strengthening of institutional and operational capacities across the region.

Overall, Deliverable 4.5 demonstrates that due to achievement of the Task 4.2 activities of the RESPONSE project, the Partners together with the Stakeholders and Experts have successfully achieved and exceeded the networking objectives, created sustainable cross-border and cross-sectoral partnerships, ensured high transferability and long-term impact of the RESPONSE project results.

By integrating scientific knowledge, operational expertise, and stakeholders' inputs, the RESPONSE has provided scalable, adaptable, and widely applicable solutions, reinforcing regional resilience and supporting coordinated responses to current and emerging marine pollution challenges in the Black Sea and beyond.

RESPONSE has successfully established a multi-country networking platform linking EU Member States (Greece, Bulgaria, Romania) with associated and non-EU Black Sea countries (Ukraine, Georgia), while extending engagement to additional countries such as Turkey and Moldova.

The project has achieved broad and structured stakeholder engagement, involving public authorities, operational agencies, research institutions, academia, NGOs, and civil society, ensuring relevance across policy, science, and practice.

Strong synergies were created with other EU projects (21other projects) and networks of excellence, with 13 policy- and decision-makers, 11 relevant marine and environmental agencies, 17 research institutions and academic entities, 9 NGOs, exceeding the initial targets and enhancing knowledge exchange, methodological alignment, and visibility of project outputs.

Regular coordination and interaction mechanisms (meetings, workshops, co-creation processes) ensured continuous knowledge flow and effective collaboration among partners and external stakeholders.

RESPONSE outputs (training programmes, Digital Toolkit, rapid response approaches) demonstrate high transferability and adaptability across different institutional and geographical contexts.

Transferability beyond the consortium was actively promoted, including engagement of all Black Sea coastal countries and targeted knowledge-sharing activities.

More than 7 representatives of stakeholders and experts from non-consortium countries of Turkey and Moldova have been engaged into the training, testing and monitoring of the training results activities.

Small-scale training and stakeholder outreach actions created multiplier effects, supporting wider uptake and replication of project results.

The project contributed to the harmonisation of approaches to marine pollution monitoring and response across the Black Sea region.

Networking activities strengthened institutional capacities and regional cooperation, particularly in addressing emerging challenges such as conflict-related environmental risks.

Overall, Deliverable 4.5 confirms that RESPONSE achieved a high level of sustainability, scalability, and long-term impact, positioning it as a key platform for continued cooperation in the Black Sea region.

Key Takeaways

- ✓ RESPONSE successfully established a multi-country networking platform linking EU Member States (Greece, Bulgaria, Romania) with associated and non-EU Black Sea countries (Ukraine, Georgia), while extending engagement to additional countries such as Turkey and Moldova.
- ✓ The project achieved broad and structured stakeholder engagement, involving public authorities, operational agencies, research institutions, academia, NGOs, and civil society, ensuring relevance across policy, science, and practice.
- ✓ Strong synergies were created with EU projects and networks of excellence, exceeding initial targets and enhancing knowledge exchange, methodological alignment, and visibility of project outputs.

- ✓ Regular coordination and interaction mechanisms (meetings, workshops, co-creation processes) ensured continuous knowledge flow and effective collaboration among partners and external stakeholders.
- ✓ RESPONSE outputs (training programmes, Digital Toolkit, rapid response approaches) demonstrate high transferability and adaptability across different institutional and geographical contexts.
- ✓ Transferability beyond the consortium was actively promoted, including engagement of all Black Sea coastal countries and targeted knowledge-sharing activities.
- ✓ Small-scale training and stakeholder outreach actions created multiplier effects, supporting wider uptake and replication of project results.
- ✓ The project contributed to the harmonisation of approaches to marine pollution monitoring and response across the Black Sea region.
- ✓ Networking activities strengthened institutional capacities and regional cooperation, particularly in addressing emerging challenges such as conflict-related environmental risks.

Overall, Deliverable 4.5 confirms that RESPONSE achieved a high level of sustainability, scalability, and long-term impact, positioning it as a key platform for continued cooperation in the Black Sea region.

Annex 1 Evidence of Activities - Events facts and results of small-scale training visits

State Organization "Institute of Market and Economic&Ecological Researches of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine"

Building Response Frameworks under existing
& new Marine Pollution Challenges in the Black Sea

RESPONSE project in regional context

Small-scale training visit - Information meeting with non-consortium Black Sea countries Stakeholders/Experts

AGENDA

27 - February 2026, 15:00 Ukraine, Moldova, Turkey, Ukraine Time ONLINE,

Zoom link https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7457905225

15:00 – 15:20	**Opening Addresses: Borys Burkynskyi**, State Organization "Institute of Market and Economic&Ecological Researches of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine", Ukraine **Irina Makarenko**, The Black Sea Commission Permanent Secretariat **Viktor Komorin,** Ukrainian Scientific Centre of Sea Ecologogy **Emma Gileva**, Black Sea NGO Network, Bulgaria
15:20 - 15:40	**RESPONSE project in a nutshell. E-folio structure** – Dr. Oleksandr LAIKO, State Organization "Institute of Market and Economic&Ecological Researches of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine", Ukraine
15:40 - 16:00	**Training program structure. Introduction to the issues of research into pollution of marine ecosystems,** Julia KOTELNIKOVA, Black Sea branch of Environmental Academy of Science of Ukraine
16:00 - 16:20	**Training program structure. Geography and characteristics of the Black Sea, pollution and its impact on marine ecosystems,** Oleg RUBEL, Black Sea branch of Environmental Academy of Science of Ukraine
16:20 – 16:30	**Open discussion.** Moldova and Turkey participants.

Co-funded by the European Union

State Organization "Institute of Market and Economic&Ecological Researches of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine"

Building Response Frameworks under existing
& new Marine Pollution Challenges in the Black Sea

RESPONSE project in regional context

The 2nd training visit - Information meeting with Black Sea countries Stakeholders/Experts

AGENDA

20 - March 2026, 10:00 Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Ukraine Time ONLINE,

(Turkey UTC+3, national time 11:00)

(Georgia UTC+4, national time 12:00)

Zoom link https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7457905225

9.30 – 10:00	**Registration, opening coffee**
10:00 – 10:30	**Opening Addresses: Borys Burkynskyi**, Academician of the NAS of Ukraine, Director of the State Organization "Institute of Market and Economic&Ecological Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine", Ukraine **Antonios Mazariz,** Prof., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece – Response project Coordinator **Emma Gileva**, Black Sea NGO Network, Bulgaria, WP4-leader, Response project **Presentation of participants:** **Viktor Komorin,** Ukrainian Scientific Centre of Sea Ecologogy **Razvan Mateescu,** Dr, National Institute for Marine Research and Development (NIMRD)

	Mamuka Gvilava Greens Movement of Georgia / Friends of the Eart, GMG/FoE, Georgia **Petrusenko Vytalyi**, Head of the Association of local communities "Municipalities of Sea Territories" **Kristina Korotkih,** Director of Municipal Establishment "Sustainable Development Agency of Vyzyrka Rurar territorial community" **Oleksandr Chebruchan**, Managing director of the TIS-RUDA – the largest Port operator in Ukraine **Natalia Beznoshchenko**, Project manager of the Municipal Establishment "Sustainable Development Agency of Vyzyrka Rurar territorial community" **Anastasia Hlan**, Representative of the Youth Council of Vyzyrka municipal community **Stakeholders/Experts from Turkey and Moldova**
10:30 - 10:45	**RESPONSE project: Main goals and networking potential under military influence**– Dr. Oleksandr LAIKO, State Organization "Institute of Market and Economic&Ecological Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine", Ukraine
10:45 - 11:00	**Types and sources of pollution, the impact of pollution on the state of the ecosystems of the Black Sea Basin (BSB) -** Dr. Oleg RUBEL, Black Sea branch of Ukrainian Environmental Academy of Science
11:00 - 11:15	**Research Infrastructures as a Foundation for Emergency Response**, -Dr. Olga IERMAKOVA, State Organization "Institute of Market and Economic&Ecological Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine"
11:15 - 11:30	**Pollution Monitoring and Assessment, -** Julia KOTELNIKOVA PhD, Black Sea branch of Ukrainian Environmental Academy of Science
11:30 - 11:45	**Modernization of the Training System for Responding to Oil Spills in Ukraine** - Iryna Tsynalievska PhD, State Organization "Institute of Market and Economic&Ecological Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine"
11:45 – 12:00	**Volunteers Actions in Response to Oil Spills** - Vladyslav Mykhailenko PhD, State Organization "Institute of Market and Economic&Ecological Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine"
12.00 – 12.30	**Open discussion.** Moldova and Turkey participants.
12.30 – 12.50	**Conclusion and closing the event**

Annex 2 Extended materials on Building networks in broadening the transferability of project outputs

Ukraine

Since 2024, the State Organization "Institute of Market and Economic&Ecological Researches of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (SO IMEER NASU) has advanced its institutional cooperation with major European research infrastructures in the marine sciences, culminating in the signing of formal memoranda of cooperation with the European Multidisciplinary Seafloor and Water-column Observatory (EMSO ERIC) and with the Joint European Research Infrastructure network for Coastal Observatory (JERICO-RI). These legal frameworks commit SO IMEER NASU, as part of a broader national and regional marine research community, to sustained scientific and operational cooperation with internationally recognized platforms that structure and coordinate long-term ocean observations, coastal monitoring, and data integration across Europe's marine environments. This cooperation demonstrates a concrete step in aligning Ukrainian scientific institutions with European research infrastructures, and it creates tangible synergy with the activities and goals of the EU-funded RESPONSE – Building Response Frameworks under Existing and New Marine Pollution Challenges in the Black Sea project, particularly in the areas of networking, knowledge exchange, and transferability of research results.

The Memorandum of cooperation signed between SO IMEER NASU and EMSO ERIC articulates mutual commitments to strengthen scientific dialogue, coordinate joint monitoring initiatives, and pursue integrated marine environmental research agendas that bridge the Black Sea with the wider European seas. EMSO ERIC, as a European Research Infrastructure Consortium, operates a distributed network of fixed and mobile oceanographic observatories that provide high-frequency, long-term environmental data from multiple basins including those of strategic scientific importance for understanding ecosystem change, baseline variability, and responses to anthropogenic pressures. By aligning its institutional agenda with EMSO ERIC, SO IMEER NASU places its own research capacities into the continuum of European observation systems, ensuring that data and methodological developments emerging from Ukraine's Black Sea research can interact meaningfully with pan-European environmental monitoring frameworks.

In parallel, the memorandum with JERICO-RI commits SO IMEER NASU to engage with a structured network of coastal observatories that harmonize environmental data collection, quality control, and service delivery across European shelf and coastal zones. JERICO-RI, as a coordinated research infrastructure, extends beyond individual monitoring stations to encompass interoperable systems that support high-quality data provision, access to research facilities, and platforms for scientific cooperation in coastal environments. For SO IMEER NASU, cooperation with JERICO-RI enhances its institutional ability to integrate Black Sea coastal observations with European coastal datasets, adopt standardized methodologies for environmental assessments, and contribute to collaborative research agendas addressing coastal vulnerability, pollution pressures, and responses to evolving climate and socio-economic drivers.

The timing and nature of these memoranda have particular relevance for the RESPONSE project's objectives under Task 4.2 – "Building Networks and Transferability Potential". RESPONSE aims to strengthen cooperation and knowledge exchange among institutions and stakeholders involved in marine pollution preparedness and response in the Black Sea region, while facilitating the wider applicability of project results beyond the consortium's immediate geographic and institutional boundaries. The cooperation of SO IMEER NASU with EMSO ERIC and JERICO-RI directly enhances the networking infrastructure of RESPONSE by connecting project activities with well-established European marine research infrastructures, thereby amplifying the reach of the project's outputs into broader scientific and operational communities. The memoranda function as formal bridges between the RESPONSE consortium and ongoing European observation and monitoring systems,

ensuring that methodologies, data products, and capacity-building approaches developed under RESPONSE can be shared with, and enriched by, a larger community of practice active across European seas.

From the perspective of RESPONSE, the cooperation with EMSO ERIC enables opportunities to align the project's environmental monitoring components with long-term time series and quality standards used in Europe's multidisciplinary observatory networks. This alignment supports the transferability of RESPONSE's tools and procedures for marine pollution assessment into European-wide data contexts, making it feasible for stakeholders in other regions to adopt, compare, and apply these tools within their own environmental monitoring frameworks. Likewise, engagement with JERICO-RI enhances the potential for RESPONSE methodologies — particularly those developed for integrated coastal monitoring, pollution detection, and environmental reporting — to contribute to the design and implementation of interoperable coastal observation strategies that are consistent with established European practices. In both cases, the cooperation agreements substantiate pathways for data interoperability, shared analytical standards, and mutual capacity building that extend the utility of RESPONSE outputs beyond the project's direct partnerships.

The synergistic effects of this cooperation manifest across several dimensions of the RESPONSE project's aims. First, they create avenues for institutional linkage between Black Sea research institutions and pan-European research infrastructures, which enhances the institutional visibility of RESPONSE and embeds its outputs within the larger European marine research ecosystem. This broadens the network of actors engaged with RESPONSE, connecting local scientists and practitioners to internationally recognized platforms and collaborative opportunities. Second, the agreements with EMSO ERIC and JERICO-RI support knowledge exchange and methodological harmonization, whereby Ukrainian scientists involved in RESPONSE gain access to best practice standards, data protocols, and observational frameworks that have been developed and refined across Europe, and which can be adapted for environmental monitoring and response planning throughout the Black Sea region. Third, the memoranda reinforce the transferability potential of RESPONSE deliverables, because integration with research infrastructures enhances the relevance, adaptability, and interoperability of the project's tools, data products, and instructional resources in contexts beyond the immediate project consortium. By anchoring RESPONSE within recognized European research systems, these cooperative frameworks increase the likelihood that the project's innovations will be sustained, adopted, and built upon through extended international collaboration.

Importantly, the signing of memoranda with EMSO ERIC and JERICO-RI reflects a broader strategic orientation on the part of SO IMEER NASU toward strengthening Ukraine's participation in European marine research structures. The cooperation agreements are part of a continuum of institutional efforts aimed at advancing integration with European scientific communities, participating in joint applications for competitive research funding (such as Horizon Europe), and contributing to strategic research agendas that include Ukraine's role on the European Research Infrastructure roadmap. This long-term perspective aligns with RESPONSE's emphasis on sustainable impact and ongoing regional cooperation, and it positions the outputs of RESPONSE not as isolated project products, but as components of a living network of research, monitoring, and scientific exchange that connects the Black Sea with European environmental observation systems.

Through these cooperative frameworks, SO IMEER NASU has actively demonstrated that institutional linkages with EMSO ERIC and JERICO-RI are not merely symbolic gestures, but practical and substantive partnerships that enhance the scientific foundation for environmental management, monitoring harmonization, and policy support. The integration of RESPONSE outputs with the broader services and communities facilitated by these research infrastructures enables stakeholders across the Black Sea and Europe to access, interpret, and apply research insights in coordinated ways. In doing so, it supports the sustainability of RESPONSE results beyond the project's

lifecycle, fosters the development of a broader community of practice in marine pollution response, and creates pathways for stakeholders — including national agencies, academic institutions, and international partners — to adopt and adapt tools, methods, and knowledge generated within RESPONSE into their own operational contexts.

Romania

Within the framework of the RESPONSE project, the Romanian partner – the National Institute for Marine Research and Development "Grigore Antipa" (NIMRD) – has actively contributed to strengthening networking and enhancing the transferability of project results through structured engagement with long-standing European platforms and regional initiatives relevant to marine environmental protection and maritime safety.

A key component of this process has been the consolidation of institutional and operational links with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). This cooperation was developed in the context of national co-creation workshops, T3.2 training activities, and presentations of the RESPONSE Digital Toolkit to stakeholders. These interactions enabled the integration of best practices and tools promoted at European level, including satellite-based monitoring services and operational frameworks for pollution detection and response. As a result, the RESPONSE methodologies have been aligned with European standards, while the project outputs—such as the rapid response framework and training modules—have demonstrated strong potential for uptake within EMSA-related activities, including training programmes and regional preparedness exercises.

In parallel, NIMRD has maintained active engagement with the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea (CMA), contributing to the broader regional policy dialogue. Through dissemination activities foreseen in the Communication, Dissemination and Stakeholder Empowerment (CDSE) Plan, as well as stakeholder workshops and targeted meetings, the RESPONSE project results have been promoted as practical tools supporting the implementation of CMA objectives. The integration of RESPONSE concepts related to marine pollution preparedness and response into regional discussions has facilitated the creation of synergies with complementary mechanisms such as the Black Sea Assistance Mechanism (BSAM), further reinforcing the role of the project as a catalyst for regional cooperation.

Moreover, the project has established connections with the European Environment Agency (EEA), particularly in the context of environmental monitoring and data sharing. The methodologies and tools developed within RESPONSE can contribute to improving marine pollution datasets in the Black Sea region and support their integration into European information systems such as WISE Marine. This alignment enhances the relevance of project outputs in the context of EU environmental policies, including the zero-pollution ambition.

At the regional level, engagement with the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution has provided an important platform for disseminating project results and fostering dialogue among Black Sea countries. Through participation in workshops and interaction with the Permanent Secretariat, NIMRD has supported the promotion of RESPONSE outputs in the context of regional action planning and policy development. This interaction contributes to the harmonisation of approaches to marine pollution monitoring and response, as well as to the development of a shared community of practice across the region.

The networking activities carried out in Romania, supported by data collected during national co-creation workshops, T3.2 activities, Milestone 9 and Milestone 10, and the CDSE Plan, demonstrate that the RESPONSE project effectively functions as a regional networking platform. By facilitating exchanges between EU Member States and non-EU Black Sea countries, the project enhances knowledge transfer, promotes the alignment of methodologies, and strengthens institutional cooperation.

Furthermore, the involvement of key national stakeholders—including maritime authorities, emergency response institutions, academic organizations, and environmental NGOs—has ensured that the RESPONSE results are grounded in real operational contexts. This multi-level engagement not only increases the practical relevance of the project outputs but also significantly enhances their transferability and long-term sustainability. In this respect, RESPONSE serves as a vehicle for building lasting partnerships and fostering a coordinated regional approach to addressing marine pollution challenges in the Black Sea basin.

Romania – Stakeholders' engagement in networking and transferability activities (including stakeholders from non-consortium Black Sea countries)

Within the RESPONSE project, stakeholder engagement in Romania has played a central role in strengthening networking activities and enhancing the transferability of project results. This process was supported by data and interactions generated during national co-creation workshops, T3.2 activities, presentations of the Digital Toolkit, as well as Milestone 9, Milestone 10, and the Communication, Dissemination and Stakeholder Empowerment (CDSE) Plan.

At national level, a wide range of stakeholders representing public authorities, operational agencies, academic institutions, and civil society organizations were actively involved. Key institutional stakeholders include the National Administration "Romanian Waters" – Dobrogea Litoral, the Romanian Naval Authority, and the Romanian Agency for Saving Human Life at Sea (ARSVOM), all of which contributed operational expertise related to marine environmental monitoring, maritime safety, and emergency response. Their involvement ensured that the RESPONSE methodologies and training modules are aligned with real operational needs and national regulatory frameworks.

In addition, emergency response structures such as the Department for Emergency Situations (ISU Dobrogea) contributed to validating the practical applicability of RESPONSE outputs in crisis management scenarios. Their participation in discussions and knowledge exchange activities enhanced the relevance of the project's rapid response framework and supported its integration into existing emergency preparedness systems.

The academic and research sector has also played a significant role in stakeholder engagement. Institutions such as the National Institute for Marine Research and Development "Grigore Antipa" (NIMRD), Constanta Maritime University, "Mircea cel Bătrân" Naval Academy, Ovidius University of Constanta, and the Romanian Maritime Training Centre (CERONAV) contributed to capacity building, knowledge transfer, and the dissemination of project results. These institutions supported the adaptation of RESPONSE training materials to educational and professional training contexts, thus enhancing their long-term transferability. urthermore, civil society organizations and NGOs, including Mare Nostrum and SEOPMM Oceanic Club, contributed to the promotion and dissemination of project results at local and regional levels. Their involvement ensured outreach to broader audiences and supported the integration of RESPONSE outcomes into community-based environmental initiatives.

The engagement of stakeholders has been further strengthened through the presentation of the RESPONSE Digital Toolkit, which facilitated interactive exchanges and the collection of feedback used to refine project outputs. These interactions contributed to improving the usability and applicability of the developed tools and methodologies.

Although direct interaction with stakeholders from non-consortium countries (Turkey and Moldova) was primarily coordinated by Ukrainian partners, Romanian stakeholders participated in regional knowledge exchange activities, including small-scale training visits and online meetings. These

interactions contributed to extending the visibility of RESPONSE results and fostering regional cooperation beyond the project consortium.

Overall, stakeholder engagement activities in Romania have significantly contributed to the development of a collaborative environment, supporting both the practical implementation and the wider transferability of RESPONSE project outputs across the Black Sea region.

How RESPONSE Project Results Support Networking in the Black Sea Region?

The achievements of the RESPONSE project play a significant role in facilitating networking and strengthening cooperation among Black Sea countries by providing a common framework for knowledge exchange, capacity building, and coordinated action in the field of marine pollution preparedness and response. Through the development of standardized training modules, methodological approaches, and the RESPONSE Digital Toolkit, the project creates a shared platform that can be easily adopted and adapted by institutions across the region, regardless of their level of integration within the European Union.

The implementation of co-creation workshops, T3.2 training activities, and stakeholder engagement processes has enabled continuous interaction among experts, public authorities, and organizations from both EU Member States and non-EU countries. These activities foster mutual understanding of national practices, institutional frameworks, and operational challenges, thereby supporting the harmonisation of approaches to marine pollution monitoring and response.

Furthermore, the RESPONSE project facilitates networking by promoting direct exchanges between stakeholders during regional meetings, training sessions, and small-scale visits, including those involving non-consortium countries such as Turkey and Moldova. These interactions contribute to building trust, establishing professional connections, and encouraging the formation of long-term partnerships across the Black Sea basin.

The Digital Toolkit, in particular, acts as a practical instrument for networking, as it provides a common reference point for training, decision-making, and operational planning. Its use in presentations and stakeholder consultations encourages dialogue and collaboration, while also supporting the transfer of knowledge and best practices between countries.

By integrating scientific expertise, operational experience, and stakeholder input, the RESPONSE project effectively functions as a regional networking vehicle, bridging gaps between institutions and countries, enhancing cooperation, and supporting the development of coordinated and resilient responses to marine pollution challenges in the Black Sea region.