

Unleashing Youth Power in Transnational Innovation or a Thriving Blue Economy

Project Number: BSB00580

SEAQUEST continues to empower young people as key actors in the Blue Economy of the Black Sea Basin. With each phase, we deepen our understanding of regional challenges, youth engagement gaps, and policy landscapes to develop effective strategies for sustainable maritime development.

In this issue, we present three major deliverables that form the foundation for SEAQUEST's next steps.

Activity 1.1: Baseline Assessment & Stakeholder Mapping

Activity 1.2: Youth Needs Assessment & Regional Gap Analysis

Activity 1.3: Review of Existing Frameworks in the Black Sea Basin

These findings will guide upcoming actions, including youth training programs, stakeholder collaboration, and policy recommendations aimed at enhancing transnational cooperation in the Blue Economy.

ACTIVITY 1.1 | Baseline Assessment & Stakeholder Mapping

Analyzing the current landscape of the Blue Economy in the Black Sea Basin

The first phase of SEAQUEST focused on understanding the key actors and economic, environmental, and technological realities shaping the Blue Economy in Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey.

Key Findings:

The Blue Economy has significant untapped potential for economic growth in the Black Sea Basin.

Limited coordination between stakeholders weakens the impact of regional initiatives.

Technological innovations in marine industries remain underutilized.

Major stakeholders include enterprises, industry associations, youth organizations, regional authorities, and research institutions.

Sustainability challenges, such as pollution and overfishing, require immediate intervention.

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ACTIVITY 1.2 | Youth Needs Assessment & Regional Gap Analysis

Identifying the barriers and opportunities for youth in the Blue Economy

SEAQUEST conducted a regional youth survey and focus groups across Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey to assess young people's awareness, aspirations, and access to Blue Economy careers.

Key Insights:

Low awareness of career pathways in key maritime sectors (marine energy, fisheries, aquaculture, maritime transport).

Barriers include financial constraints, limited access to education, and weak policy support. Youth are eager to engage in sustainability efforts, but lack access to structured programs.

Regional disparities: Greece has strong maritime education, Bulgaria excels in marine conservation, and Turkey leads in aquaculture.

ACTIVITY 1.3 | Review of Existing Frameworks in the Black Sea Basin

Analyzing policies and governance structures shaping the region's maritime economy

This study evaluates transnational agreements, governance structures, and policy mechanisms that influence the sustainability and growth of the Blue Economy.

Key Insights:

Fragmented governance creates barriers to policy implementation.

Environmental risks—pollution, habitat degradation, and climate change—remain largely unaddressed.

Opportunities exist for innovation through digital transformation, marine renewable energy, and sustainable fisheries.

More structured international cooperation is needed to streamline regulations and funding mechanisms.

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SEAQUEST's mission is to bridge the gap between youth aspirations and real opportunities in the Black Sea Basin's maritime industries. With growing challenges in sustainability and employment, young people must be at the forefront of shaping the future of the Blue Economy.

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Together, let's shape a greener, more inclusive Blue Economy!

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