European Commission

Improving Environmental Monitoring in the Black Sea

The EMBLAS project

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EMBLAS: the problems it aims to tackle

Sources of environmental degradation in the Bleack Sea:

- Trans-boundary problems: eutrophication/nutrient enrichment; changes in marine living resources (stocks and types); chemical pollution; and biodiversity/habitat changes, including alien species introduction

- Underlying root causes: industrial activities, agriculture, domestic wastewater, sea transport (oil spills, ballast water), coastal zone degradation (urbanisation, tourism)

EMBLAS: the problems it aims to tackle

Institutional weaknesses and monitoring of environmental problems

- Limited use of **marine environmental monitoring** for policy-making and natural resources management although its development is considered to be a priority

  ↳ Attempts at developing national and regional marine env programmes along MSFD and IWRM have so far not achieved the expected results

- **Main weaknesses**
  - Lack of extensive coordination in policies and legislation among countries (regional perspective)
  - Lack of regulatory requirements with regard to the contents of marine monitoring programmes, their implementation strategies, responsibilities and quality control
  - QA/QC requirements for laboratories involved in marine monitoring not extensively defined
  - Quality of monitoring data
  - Lack of a harmonised terminology between types of monitoring
  - Biological quality component not included to a full extent into marine monitoring programmes
  - Monitoring in open sea rarely conducted - observations mainly carried out close to coastal areas

EMBLAS: project objectives

The overall objective

- to set up initiatives that will help improve the protection of the Black Sea environment

The specific objectives

- to improve partner countries' *ability to perform* marine environmental monitoring along the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) principles, considering the Black Sea Diagnostic Report findings (BSC)
- to improve *availability and quality of the data* on the chemical and biological status of the Black Sea, in line with expected MSFD and Black Sea regional SAP needs;

EMBLAS: basic facts

- **Two phases**: a preparatory phase (2013-14) + large scale project (2014-2017)
- **Budget**: EUR 3.7 million (EU contribution = EUR 3.1 million)
- **Beneficiary countries**: Georgia, Russian Federation, Ukraine
- **Implementing partners**: UNDP-led consortium with 14 organisations
- **Partnership approach** with national governments, national scientific and research institutions, the Black Sea Commission, int'l donors, NGOs and other stakeholders.

EMBLAS: expected outcomes

- Increased capacities of the relevant national authorities to carry out marine environmental monitoring in the Black Sea along MSFD principles

  ↳ A coordinated regional marine environment monitoring programme in line with MSFD and the BS SAP 2009 is established, tested and implemented

- QA/QC procedures in laboratories systematically implemented

  ↳ Environmental data management capacities improved and data QC enhanced

- BS Water Quality Database (BSIS) further developed and data products in support of informed decision-making in Black Sea environmental protection provided

  ↳ Sharing of marine environmental information between Black Sea countries facilitated

- Public awareness about the need of high quality marine environmental data increased

EMBLAS: summary of activities

During the preparatory phase:

- Review of the national monitoring systems and the methodological tools for assessing marine environmental data
- Assessment of needs regarding laboratory infrastructure, equipment and training

EMBLAS: summary of activities

Throughout the whole project:

- Development and implementation of cost-effective and harmonised programmes for marine environmental monitoring (biological and chemical) in accordance with reporting obligations under multilateral environmental agreements and MSFD
- Elaboration and implementation of training programmes on monitoring methods and quality assurance adhering to the ISO 17025 standard
- Prepare methodology and implement Joint Field Surveys and environmental assessment of the Black Sea along the lines of the MSFD and the WFD
- Develop and operate the web-based Black Sea Water Quality Database
- Dissemination of knowledge and best practices, public awareness and visibility of the project

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Thank you for your attention!

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EMBLAS: first results

1 year into implementation

- Black Sea Diagnostic report II about to be finalised (end of January)
  - However more cooperation by stakeholders needed in gathering infos
- Assessment of needs regarding laboratory infrastructure, equipment and training completed
- QA/QC Guidelines to ensure delivery of quality data collected in the monitoring of the Black Sea under preparation
- First drafts of regional guidelines for biological monitoring (zooplankton and macroalgae) ready to be circulated
- Joint Field Surveys methodology ready for consultation with countries
- Concept for the web-based Black Sea Water Quality Database under development