EVENT SUMMARY FOR PROJECT PARTNERS

BlueDial Transnational Online Event

Successful Strategic Approaches to Blue Economy Governance

DATE	TIME	FORMAT	PROJECT
10 September 2026	13:00-15:00 CET	Online, in English	BlueDial - BSB01288

1. Overview

The event brought together Blue Economy stakeholders from administration, academia and research, industry, policymakers, institutions and the NGO sector to exchange experiences on strategic approaches to Blue Economy governance. Its purpose was to share lessons learned from other sea basins that can foster dialogue, cooperation and coordinated Blue Economy governance in the Black Sea region.

The programme combined a baseline diagnosis of the Black Sea Blue Economy, the method BlueDial uses to identify good practices, and three international case studies from Estonia, Québec (Canada) and Italy. The organisers stressed that the aim is not to identify one "best" model, but to examine elements that can be transferred to the Black Sea context.

2. Project context

Ortahisar Municipality (Lead Partner, Türkiye) - BlueDial project team

The Lead Partner opened the event with an introduction to BlueDial: an 18-month project (27 February 2026 - 26 August 2027) run by Ortahisar Municipality with Marine Cluster Bulgaria, Ecological NGO Mare Nostrum (Romania) and the Tourism Institute (Georgia). Its overall objective is to empower a continuous public dialogue at all scales in the context of the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA), assess gaps in bridging national and subnational maritime strategies with CMA priorities, and elicit policy recommendations for coordinated action in each Black Sea country.

The project is delivered through five activities: mapping and analysis (1.1), identifying good practices (1.2), capacity building and experience exchange (1.3), the joint solution BlackBlueNET (1.4) and Blue Economy policy recommendations (1.5).

3. The Black Sea Blue Economy: state of the art

Angelica Paiu - Ecological NGO Mare Nostrum (Project Partner, Romania)

Mare Nostrum presented the strategic diagnostics from BlueDial's mapping across Romania, Bulgaria, Türkiye and Georgia.

- **The "silo effect" is the main bottleneck.** 56.7% of regional stakeholders rate institutional coordination as poor. Governance is dispersed across overlapping line ministries, and there is a steep drop-off at subnational level, where municipalities lack the administrative capacity and spatial planning tools to execute national visions.
- **A dual transition is under way.** Traditional sectors (maritime transport and ports, shipbuilding, coastal tourism, fisheries) generate most value and jobs but must decarbonise and digitalise, while emerging sectors (offshore renewables, blue biotechnology, digital ocean monitoring, sustainable aquaculture) need to be scaled up.
- **Three pillars to move from grant dependency to bankability:** integrated governance (national Blue Economy roadmaps and permanent cross-ministerial task forces), blended finance (using guarantees such as InvestEU to de-risk projects and attract private capital), and blue skills and data integration (project preparation desks for municipalities and basin-wide data feeding the European Digital Twin of the Ocean).

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4. Identifying Blue Economy good practices

Marine Cluster Bulgaria (Project Partner, Bulgaria)

Marine Cluster Bulgaria explained how the project identifies and assesses good practices. More than 50 strategic approaches from different countries and sea basins were reviewed against four criteria:

- **B1 - Strategic framework:** formal status of an integrated maritime or Blue Economy framework, including strategic documents.
- **B2 - Governance and coordination:** a mechanism or body assigned to coordinate the strategic process.
- **B3 - Implementation:** action plans, concrete measures and funding mechanisms.
- **B4 - Monitoring and evaluation.** Stakeholder involvement across target groups adds value under every criterion.

The examples presented at the event were selected for relevance, implementation experience, diversity of governance models and transferability to the Black Sea, covering national and subnational levels: Estonia's Maritime Policy White Paper, Québec's Avantage Saint-Laurent, Portugal's National Ocean Strategy and Italy's Blue Economy strategic framework.

5. International case studies

Estonia - Maritime Policy White Paper

Kristjan Truu - Deputy Secretary General for Maritime and Water Affairs, Ministry of Climate, Estonia

- **Starting point:** a significant but institutionally fragmented blue economy - more than 2,000 companies, over 22,000 jobs and around 4% of GDP, spread across many ministries and agencies.
- **Participatory design:** stakeholders helped define the problem and the 2035 vision before the policy was fixed - 174 proposals were received and 5 co-creation workshops held.
- **Five linked priorities:** competitive business; green, safe and secure seas; an enabling public sector; skills, research and innovation; and thriving coastal communities.
- **Governance cycle:** one lead ministry coordinates, ministries implement within their mandates, an annual implementation overview is submitted by 1 April and a maritime committee reviews it. The White Paper sets direction; sector programmes and budgets finance delivery.
- **Next step:** because fragmentation persists, Estonia launched Blue Economy Governance 2027+, which will propose an updated governance model by August 2027.

Québec (Canada) - Avantage Saint-Laurent

Claude Sirois - Strategic Advisor in Maritime Transport, Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility, Québec (presented at the invitation of Marine Cluster Bulgaria)

- **25 years of maritime strategy,** with successive strategies in 2001, 2015-2020 and 2020-2025, supported by a strategic network of commercial ports along the St. Lawrence.
- **Scale:** the latest five-year action plan (expired March 2025) had 12 measures, CAD 1.3 billion in commitments and CAD 8 billion in projects - covering port infrastructure, industrial port zones, shipbuilding modernisation, intelligent transport systems and ecosystem protection.
- **Political ownership:** the strategy started from the Prime Minister's initiative, with a dedicated minister, a regional tour, a public call for briefs, consultation of Indigenous communities and a permanent Government-Industry forum.
- **Whole-of-government delivery:** four ministries, led by Transport, with a mix of financing instruments - subsidies for infrastructure, loans for industrial port zones and equity investment in shipbuilding. A four-step renewal process has been under way since 2023.

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Italy - Friuli Venezia Giulia and the national framework

Carlo Kraskovic - Deputy Cluster Manager, M.A.R.E. Technology Cluster FVG

- **Cluster as implementation body:** M.A.R.E. FVG, a public-private consortium of around 90 members covering the full maritime value chain, is recognised by the regional administration as the reference body for implementing the smart specialisation strategy in maritime technologies.
- **Regional strategy:** the S4 strategy for 2021-2027 has 5 specialisation areas and 24 development trajectories and steers ERDF and ESF+ funds for research, innovation and skills, built through an entrepreneurial discovery process with businesses, universities and clusters.
- **National alignment:** the National Smart Specialisation Strategy (including Blue Growth), the Piano del Mare 2023-2025 - Italy's first unified maritime planning instrument, with 16 strategic directions - and the National Research Plan. Italy's Blue Economy generates over EUR 216 billion in value added, more than 11% of the national total.

6. Key takeaways for the Black Sea

Common threads across the presentations, set against the Black Sea baseline:

- **Give coordination a clear owner.** Estonia and Québec both rely on one lead institution with distributed implementation - a direct answer to the silo effect behind the 56.7% "poor coordination" rating.
- **Engage stakeholders before the solution is fixed.** Estonia's 174 proposals and Québec's permanent Government-Industry forum show that early participation builds better evidence and stronger ownership.
- **Link strategy to money.** Strategies set direction, while programmes, budgets and blended instruments deliver it - echoing Mare Nostrum's call to move from grant dependency to bankability.
- **Treat strategy as a living framework.** Annual reporting, periodic renewal and governance reform (Estonia 2027+, Québec's renewal cycle) keep a strategy relevant after adoption.
- **Use intermediary bodies.** Clusters such as M.A.R.E. FVG and Marine Cluster Bulgaria can connect industry, research and public authorities and carry implementation at regional level.

7. Next steps: BlueDial national events

National events will evaluate and select the Blue Economy strategic approaches most relevant to each national context:

Country	Date
Romania	13 October 2026
Türkiye	Second week of October 2026
Georgia	Second week of October 2026
Bulgaria	22 October 2026

The speakers' presentations are available on request from the BlueDial project team. Contact: ortahisarproje@gmail.com

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