

Improving Environmental Monitoring in the Black Sea (EMBLAS)

1st Progress Report

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- State Oceanographic Institute **(SOI)** – Russia ;
- P.P.Shirshov Institute of Oceanology Russian Academy of Sciences **(SIO-RAS)** - Russia;
- Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission **(BSC PS)** – international

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¹ Other Chapters of the EMBLAS Diagnostic are also ready in first draft, the only one which is not yet well developed is the Chapter on Data availability. And the Final Chapter on Conclusions/Recommendations needs to be compiled based on what was concluded and recommended in all chapters of the report in separate.

Abbreviations

ARENA	EC FP6 Project: A Regional Capacity Building and Networking Programme to Upgrade Monitoring and Forecasting Activity in the Black Sea
B2B	Baltic to Black (EC DG Env. Project, implemented by the BSC in cooperation with HELCOM)
BS	Black Sea
BSC	Black Sea Commission (Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution)
BSERP	UNDP-GEF Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project
BSGOOS	Black Sea Global Operational Observation Systems
BSIS	The Black Sea Information System
BSIMAP	Black Sea Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme
CBD	Conservation of Biodiversity
COCONET	Towards Coast to Coast NETworks of marine protected areas – from the shore to the high and deep sea, coupled with sea-based wind energy potential (EU FP project)
COST	European Cooperation in Science and technology
DEVOTES	EC FP7 Project: Development of innovative tools for understanding marine biodiversity and assessing good environmental status
DG	Directorate General
DoA	Description of action
DQC	Data Quality Control (Flagging)
EC	European Commission
EEA	European Environment Agency
EMODNET	European Marine Observation and Data Network project
ENPI	European Neighborhood Policy Instrument
EPIRB	Environmental Protection of International River Basins project
ESAS	Environment Safety Aspects of Shipping
EU	European Union
FOMLR	Fishery and Other Marine Living Resources
GE	Georgia
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GES	Good Environmental Status
HELCOM	Helsinki Commission (Baltic Sea Convention)
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
LBS	Land-based Sources (of pollution)
LoA	Letter of Agreement
LogFrame	Logical Framework
MISIS	MSFD Guiding Improvements in the Black Sea Integrated Monitoring System project
MONINFO	Monitoring and Information Systems for Reducing Oil Pollution (EU DG Env. Project, implemented by the BSC)
MSFD	EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MyOCEAN	EC FP7 Project: Ocean Monitoring and Forecasting
NAS	National Academy of Science
NFP	National Focal Point
QA/QC	Quality Assurance / Quality Control
PA	Project Activity
PCO	Project Coordination Office
PERSEUS	Policy-oriented marine environment research in the southern European Seas
PMA	Pollution Monitoring Assessment
PO	Partner Organizations

SC	Steering Committee
SeaDataNet	Pan-European Infrastructure for ocean and marine data management
SeasEra	EU FP7 Era-Net Project: Toward Integrated Marine Research Strategy and Programmes
SEIS	Towards a Shared Environmental Information System (EEA regional programme)
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
RU	Russian Federation
ToR	Terms of Reference
UA	Ukraine
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WISE	EEA Water Information System for Europe (Marine – for the Seas)
WFD	EU Water Framework Directive
WQ	Water Quality

Executive Summary

The EU-UNDP Project “Improving Environmental Monitoring in the Black Sea” (EMBLAS) is implemented by UNDP in cooperation with 10 partner organizations. The partner institutions are from the project beneficiary countries Georgia, Russia and Ukraine and Black Sea Commission Permanent Secretariat. The Project is co-financed by the European Union² and UNDP (EC Contribution Agreement no ENPI/2012/293-589), with total budget of 1,063,200 EUR. The Project started on 1st of January 2013 and will end on 31st of December 2014. The current report is covering the first year of the project implementation 1st January – 31st December 2013.

The overall objective of the project is to set up initiatives that will help improve the protection of the Black Sea environment. The project is addressing the overall need for support in protection and restoring the environmental quality and sustainability of the Black Sea. The specific objectives are as follows: i) Improve availability and quality of data on the chemical and biological status of the Black Sea, in line with expected MSFD and Black Sea Strategic Action Plan needs; ii) Improve partner countries' ability to perform marine environmental monitoring along MSFD principles, taking into account the Black Sea Diagnostic Report (http://www.blacksea-commission.org/_publ-BSDiagnosticReport2010.asp).

The following activities are carried out: PA1) Review of the national monitoring systems and methodological tools for assessing marine environmental data; PA2) Support to implementation of countries obligations under the Bucharest and other related Conventions and Agreements; PA3) Development of cost-effective and harmonised biological and chemical monitoring programmes in accordance with reporting obligations under multilateral environmental agreements, the WFD and the MSFD; PA4) An assessment of needs regarding laboratory infrastructure, equipment, and training ; PA5) Elaboration and implementation of a first training programme on monitoring methods and quality assurance adhering to ISO 17025 standard ; PA6) Prepare methodology for Joint Black Sea Surveys; PA7) Development of the web-based Black Sea Water Quality Database prototype.

The project works to strengthen capacities of the respective national authorities for biological and chemical monitoring of water quality in the Black Sea, in line with EU water related legislation (EU WFD and MSFD). Significant effort will be put into training and capacity building. In order to promote ownership, engagement of local experts and organizations is taking place. Relevant results and experiences of previous and ongoing projects are duly taken into account.

The inception period of the project was focused on more detailed planning of the project activities as well as various administrative arrangements necessary for operation of the project. The project team prepared a fine-tuned draft workplan (based on the Description of Action - DoA) and outlined the roles and responsibilities of the project partners and individual experts. The inception phase of the project was concluded with the Inception Workshop and 1st Meeting of the Steering Committee (June 2013). The workplan and the budget of 2013 were approved by the Steering Committee, where the representatives of the beneficiary countries, EC and UNDP participated.

Based on the DoA and the outcomes of the Inception Workshop, the cooperation with the partner organizations and their roles and tasks in the project have been agreed and formalized later through Letters of Agreement. Besides the partner organizations, a number of national individual experts are involved in the project activities. Detailed Terms of Reference were prepared and contracts signed with 16 national experts including National Focal Points.

All project activities started as per the agreed work plan. The main focus was on the preparation of the Black Sea Diagnostic Report. To collect necessary input information, specific Questionnaires on

² Decision N°: ENPI/2011/022-991; Budget line: B2011-19.080103.

the current status of the Black Sea monitoring/data collection/data management in Georgia, Russia and Ukraine were developed and distributed to various stakeholders involved in national monitoring. The Questionnaires require also from the stakeholders to submit information on infrastructure/vessels/equipment used in the Black Sea monitoring, as well as on training and harmonization needs to improve the BS monitoring. A short version of the Questionnaire was prepared for stakeholders collecting/managing Black Sea data, including international organizations. Prior distribution of the EMBLAS Questionnaires, Lists of Stakeholders were compiled for the Project beneficiary countries and relevant international organizations. There is a small delay in the EMBLAS Diagnostic Report preparation in comparison to the original work plan, since the response from the stakeholders has taken more time than initially expected. First draft of this Report will be ready by the end of January 2014. The review of Infrastructure/Vessels/Equipment under PA4 is already prepared. In PA3 regional biological guidelines (for zooplankton and macroalgae) are under development. Check-Lists of species are being updated. Under PA5, QA/QC and DQC Guidelines are in preparation to ensure delivery of quality data collected in the monitoring of the Black Sea. Under PA6 the Joint Black Sea Surveys Methodology was drafted and is under consultation and further development. Under PA7 the WQ database concept is under development, the concept for the Phytoplankton data base was prepared in first draft (in Russian).

Under PA8, activities related to the project visibility included preparation of the Project Dissemination Plan, development of the project web-site: www.emblasproject.org, logo and abbreviation and preparation of the project leaflet. The developments of the project abbreviation, logo and web-site were undertaken with involvement of all project partner organizations, which actively proposed and discussed different ideas related to the issues. This team work increased the project ownership and involved the partner organizations in the further development of the project visibility as highlighted in the report under the relevant sections.

The project has been promoted through a TV interview, press-release, and presentations during different international meetings. 20 minutes TV interview on the Black Sea environmental status, monitoring and EMBLAS project was broadcasted through the Ukrainian TRK channel. Project presentations were made at two international meetings (in Greece and in Georgia), as well as at other events where the project partners participated.

The first Project News Letter is prepared in draft. It will be distributed electronically via email to national stakeholder organizations and will be also available on the project website.

The awareness raising and communication activities are mainly planned in 2014, when the first results of the project will be available. Many of the national stakeholder organizations are already aware of the project, as they have been approached with the Questionnaires for the Diagnostic Report and they will be also invited to the National Stakeholders Workshops planned in each country to take place in 2014.

1. Activities and results

1.1 Project Activity 1: Review of the national monitoring systems and of the methodological tools for assessing marine environmental data

The overall aim of this PA is to analyse national and regional monitoring systems (legal and institutional framework of the different types, their design and implementation) and data management/assessment tools availability (including models and data bases existing at the national, regional and other levels), so that gaps are identified, and requirements and recommendations for improvements are clearly specified, taking into consideration the requirements of the ecosystem-based management of environment protection. The prepared review/report will also include information on data availability, progress in water quality classifications, QA/QC in monitoring and data management, etc.

Responsible partner/s: Odessa University; Ukraine; MHI, Sevastopol, Ukraine; UNDP

Note: For some of the Chapters of the report, the responsibility is distributed to the following organizations: IBSS, Ukraine (Infrastructure/vessels/equipment); UkrSCES, Ukraine (Training needs)

According to the EMBLAS [Logical Framework](#) and [Inception Report/Workplan](#), expected results, sub-activities and deliverables under PA1 are the following:

Expected results

- 1.1: Review of status of monitoring systems and data management/assessment (DMA) tools, gap analysis for each country
- 1.2: Recommendations for the further development of monitoring systems and DMA tools for each country (as part of the Diagnostic Report)

Planned sub-activities

- Activity 1.1: Preparation of special Questionnaire (Part I for monitoring (incl. operational), data management tools, QA/QC and Part II – data availability, assessments)
- Activity 1.2: Compilation of List of Stakeholders, communication with them and collation of information (through the Questionnaire), review of available documents
- Activity 1.3: Gap analysis and preparation of a Report on the findings and Recommendations for revision of national and regional monitoring systems and for further development of tools of management and assessment of data/information (Diagnostic Report II)
- Activity 1.4: Dissemination of the Diagnostic Report, work toward alignment of national funding with the needs identified in monitoring and data management
 - Dissemination/promotion of the findings of the Gap Analysis (Part I and II) and of the recommendations for harmonization at the level of relevant authorities, BSC PMA AG and other stakeholders (by e-mail and during relevant meetings)

Planned deliverables

Months 7, 8	Questionnaire (Part I and II)
Month 8	List of Stakeholders (GE, RU, UA)
Month 11	Diagnostic Report/Part I (on monitoring and data management tools)
Months 12	Diagnostic Report/Part II (including assessment of operational monitoring cost-effectiveness and options for its sustainable development based on regional cooperation)

Delivered results

To implement PA 1 in accordance to LF / IR the following activities were undertaken:

A 1.1: During June – August 2013 the Questionnaire for the preparation of the Diagnostic Report has been developed and discussed with Project Partners (POs) and National Focal Points (NFPs). The EMBLAS Questionnaire includes two parts. The purpose of the Part I of the questionnaire is to identify organizations' observational and informational capacity in the area of Black Sea-related monitoring (drivers, pressures, state, impacts, vulnerability/sensitivity, response, and recovery), data/information collection and their management, and consequent assessments (see Annex 1). Part II of the Questionnaire deals with Black Sea data availability, infrastructure/vessels/equipment needs and priorities in harmonization. (Annex 2)

Beside this, taking into account that key stakeholders involved in the Black Sea monitoring process belong to two different categories: first - conduct monitoring in the field (e.g. different laboratories, protected areas etc.), second - only collect statistic information, but do not conduct real monitoring (e.g. regional administrations), for the second category a simplified combined version of Questionnaire Part I +II was prepared (Annex 3). For the international organizations collecting Black Sea-related data, the simplified Questionnaire was accordingly adjusted.

On the recommendations of the POs and NFPs, to facilitate filling up the Questionnaire by stakeholders, both parts of it were prepared in two languages - English and Russian. The Ministries of Environment in the beneficiary countries were requested to provide EMBLAS with a Letter of Support to ensure the contacted stakeholders will promptly respond to the Questionnaire. Unfortunately, such Letters did not arrive. UNDP prepared a Letter to explain to the stakeholders the importance of the exercise with the Questionnaire instead.

A 1.2: In July – September 2013, the National Focal Points of Georgia, Russian Federation and Ukraine, with the support of the national Partner Organizations, have prepared for their countries List of stakeholders as related to Black Sea monitoring issues (Annex 4). Some delay with the preparation of the list was observed in Russia.

A 1.3: The methodological approach for preparation of the EMBLAS Diagnostic Report is presented in the Figure below.

Gap Analysis of Monitoring and Data Management&Identification of Needs (Infrastructure/Vessels/Equipment, Training and Harmonization)

MSFD element	Topics of the Report	Input sources (not limited)
Overarching Aim: To produce recommendations for the revision of monitoring programmes in support of adaptive management of the Black Sea, improvements in data collection and management, for capacity building and efficient use of infrastructures/vessels/equipment. The Report investigates also the practices of WQ/GES classification and the needs in harmonization.		
Monitoring (Art. 11)	Legal/policy and Institutional Frameworks Programmes Coverage Methodology Infrastructure/Vessels/Equipment Reporting	Legal/Policy documents Response to the Questionnaires BSC Annual and 5-yearly Reports BSC and MISIS Diagnostic Reports Other Projects Report
Data collection/availability and management (linked to all MSFD Descriptors and Annex III)	Data availability Data storage and QC Data products Data access Assessments	Response to the Questionnaire BSC Reports, BSIS NFPs Reports on statistics collection PERSEUS Reports
GES (Art. 9)/Env. Targets&Indicators (Art 10)	Available classifications and indicators used Standards, thresholds Needs in harmonization	Legal experts Reports Response to the Questionnaire BSC Documents, BSIMAP
Stakeholders Consultation		

In September – October 2013, the NFPs distributed the Questionnaire Part I and Part II among stakeholders (with the lag of 1 month). In October 2013 the NFPs and the Project Management Team evaluated the responsiveness of stakeholders and found it rather low and insufficient to prepare the Diagnostic Report. To improve the situation the NFPs and the Project Manager contacted again major stakeholders via e-mail and phone, explaining the importance of the exercise and asking them to fill in the Questionnaire. This personal communication had some positive feedback, but in general, the number of respondents was still not high enough. Detailed information on the response of stakeholders in the project beneficiary countries is presented in the Diagnostic Report. Short information is provided here in Table 1. The submission of filled in Questionnaires is still ongoing, especially in Russia.

Table 1. Overview of the stakeholders response to the EMBLAS Questionnaire

Country	Number of stakeholders contacted	Number of feedbacks		
		Part I	Part II	Short version (Part I and II)
Georgia	33	9	6	4
Russian Federation	74	8	8	1
Ukraine	70	15	9	6*
International organizations	14	N/A	N/A	3

***Note:** The organizations did not fill in the Quest but responded with letters explaining that they do not monitor and do not have a specific collection of BS data. The Figures in the Table include the EMBLAS project partner organizations, as they are among the major organizations involved in the monitoring activities of the Black Sea.

Apart from the Questionnaire, to compile additional data/information for the Diagnostic Report, the NFPs of GE and UA have prepared reports on the national statistics as related to the Black Sea monitoring. Also, three national legal experts were contracted to overview the Georgian, Russian Federation and Ukrainian legislation/policy on Black Sea monitoring and prepare gap analysis. The reports of GE and RU are already submitted. For the legal experts a special ToR was developed (Annex 13).

In terms of lessons learnt from previous and ongoing projects, the Partner organizations and the Project management team collected relevant reports, which were digested. These projects are: SeasEra, Arena, BSERP, MyOcean, PEGASSO, MONINFO, MISIS, B2B, and EPIRB.

On the request of the Partner Organizations which lead the preparation of the Diagnostic Report, the Project Manager asked the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission to provide EMBLAS with the national reports of Georgia, Russian Federation and Ukraine under the Bucharest Convention for the period 2010 – 2012 (LBS, PMA, CBD, ESAS, FOMLR, and ICZM). The reports were obtained in November and are one of the important information sources for the Diagnostic Report. These reports are posted in the Intranet of EMBLAS, as well as the stakeholders responses to the EMBLAS Questionnaire to facilitate the work of the team working on the preparation of the Diagnostic Report (see: <http://emblasproject.org/intranet/index.php/apps/files>). Other materials collected are also stored in the EMBLAS Intranet for easy access of all experts involved in the preparation of the Diagnostic Report.

The template/outline for the Diagnostic Reports was drafted by the Project management Team and further developed in consultation with ONU and MHI (Annex 5). The Diagnostic Report is being prepared with the participation of all partner organizations. They filled in the EMBLAS Questionnaire as well. Inputs from the individual project experts on physical, chemical, biological, satellite, drifters and platforms monitoring and data management of monitoring results have been also obtained. Though not yet ready for dissemination, the EMBLAS Diagnostic Report is being already promoted. For instance, it has been extensively discussed during the German-Ukrainian research cruise to the Black Sea from November 10 to December 04, 2013 (http://www.ifm.zmaw.de/fileadmin/files/leitstelle/merian/MSM32_35/MSM33_SCR.pdf). The IRIS-SES, MISIS, HotBlackSea and other projects are awaiting for the EMBLAS Diagnostic Report to advance their activities.

Dissemination of the Diagnostic Report will be accomplished through various channels. The document will be posted at the EMBLAS webpage and the link to it will be widely announced. EMBLAS has many partners and they also have the responsibility to disseminate project results. Besides, EMBLAS has long Lists of Stakeholders. The Diagnostic Report will be shared

with all of them, no matter that some of the stakeholders have not responded to the EMBLAS Questionnaire. Additionally, the EMBLAS SC includes representatives of Ministries. They will be kindly invited to disseminate the Report through their channels. Among partners of EMBLAS, the BSC PS has a regional network of many organizations involved in the work under the Bucharest Convention. All of them will receive the Diagnostic Report as well. And last but not least – EMBLAS cooperates with different projects. They will be also asked to distribute the Diagnostic Report through their channels.

Due to the initial low level of the stakeholders' response to the EMBLAS Questionnaire and in mobilizing of other sources of information, the schedule of the Diagnostic Report was slightly changed. Instead of November 2013, the Diagnostic Report Part I will be ready by the end of January 2014 with the information available until now. However the Part II of this Report is being prepared almost in parallel (Note: Initially a couple of months was given in between the two Parts of the Report). The collection of the stakeholder's response and additional information will continue and the EMBLAS Diagnostic Report will be a living document. Until the end of the project, any new information will be incorporated and the Diagnostic Report will create a solid basis for the next phase of the project - EMBLAS II.

Instead of re-sending the EMBLAS Questionnaire to the stakeholders as a kind of reminder that their input is still expected, the Project Management team decided to communicate with major organizations via Skype, telephone and e-mail posting directly questions. The response of the stakeholders was better when contacted personally with specific questions and explanations what the exercise targeted. The stakeholders will be also invited to the national meetings, and will be kept informed on the EMBLAS Progress all the time. This will possibly increase their interest in EMBLAS and understanding of the project importance.

Indicators of achievement

N	Indicator	Indicator quantification or Notes
1	Number of relevant documents overviewed	174
2	Number of organizations contacted	191
3	Number of institutions which responded to the Questionnaire	46
4	Diagnostic Report produced	Ongoing
5	Number of meetings/workshops at which the findings/recommendations are communicated	Pending
6	Number of organizations aware of the preparation of the Diagnostic Report II and of the recommendations to be produced	More than 200 (for the coming report)
7	Number of comments received	To be collected
8	Number of organizations positively reacting to the report and its recommendations	Pending

1.2 Project Activity 2: Support to the implementation of countries obligations under the Bucharest and other related Conventions and Agreements

The aim of this PA is to help improving the indicator-based reporting of the BSC and facilitate the harmonization process at the regional level toward common understanding of water quality and good environmental status (GES).

Responsible partner/s: BSC PS, Int

According to the EMBLAS [Logical Framework](#) and [Inception Report/Workplan](#), expected results, sub-activities and deliverables under PA2 are the following:

Expected results

2.1: Indicator based reporting scheme further developed

2.2: Support provided to the countries in harmonization of national policies with focus on common understanding of water quality/GES

Planned sub-activities

- Activity 2.1: Facilitating the development of an indicator-based reporting on compliance within the Black Sea countries' obligations under the Bucharest Conventions
- Further development of compliance indicators and related indicator-based reporting in cooperation with the BSC Advisory Groups, promotion of newly-proposed indicators at the level of the BSC;
- Activity 2.2: Support to the harmonization of national policies, including common understanding of water quality/GES, promotion
- Consultation with experts on the needs in harmonization, organization of a workshop (Water Quality/GES Workshop back to back with a BSC PMA AG meeting, discuss the WQ Methodology and the Revised Monitoring Programmes, prepared under Project Activity 3
 - Elaboration of Regional Water Quality (WQ)/GES Classification Methodology and testing in cooperation with the PMA AG and PMA AC;

Note: Originally, the Project DoA has foreseen a presentation of the WQ/GES Methodology at a BSC meeting for adoption. However, such methodology first has to go through the level of the BSC Advisory Groups and when the groups discuss it and approve it (usually it takes minimum two rounds of consultations), and recommend it for presentation to the BSC, then the document can be included in the Agenda of a BSC meeting. EMBLAS II has the objective to pass through consultations also, as EMBLAS I will hardly finalise them at all levels.

Of course, the consultation process will be started in EMBLAS I, there will be a WQ/GES workshop in early October 2014. It will be conducted in cooperation with the CBD and PMA AGs of the BSC. Later in October the WQ/GES Methodology will be presented by the BSC PS at the meetings of the FOMLR and LBS AGs inviting them to contribute. Until the end of EMBLAS I, the Methodology is expected to become a good document. Then it could go through a second round of consultations at the level of the BSC AGs, and when they agree with it, the document will go to the level of the BSC (most probably in 2015).

Planned deliverables

Months 12-24	List of compliance indicators
Month 16	Minutes of the harmonization workshop (working on the WQ/GES classification)
Month 22	Water Quality/GES Classification Methodology

Delivered results

A 2.1: According to the EMBLAS Workplan first draft of the List of compliance indicators should be finalized in January 2014. At this stage, necessary experts and organizations are contracted, and drafting of the List has started. The work is ongoing, all partner organizations are involved. The BSC PS is the leading organization of the process. Draft List is already prepared

A 2.2: The Water Quality/GES Classification Methodology is planned for finalization in October 2014, with a first draft in April 2014 ready for consultations. Necessary experts and organizations were contracted, and the elaboration of the Methodology is ongoing (review of documents, collation of information on existing practices in the project beneficiary countries, best available practices, etc.). Background information on WQ/GES classifications in the beneficiary countries is incorporated in the EMBLAS Diagnostic Report.

The harmonization workshop is tentatively planned in September-October 2014, to be organized by the BSC PS. Tentative schedule of the project events is in the Chapter 3.2.

Indicators of achievement

N	Indicator	Indicator quantification or Notes
1	Number of stakeholders involved in consultations	So far partner organizations
2	Number of compliance indicators developed	Pending
3	Harmonization workshop organised	Pending
4	Regional Methodology 'Water quality/GES classification' developed and promoted for adoption at the level of the BSC	Under development
5	Number of organizations aware of the Methodology	Pending

1.3 Project Activity 3: Development of cost-effective and harmonised biological and chemical monitoring programmes in accordance with reporting obligations under multilateral environmental agreements, the WFD and the MSFD

The overall aim of this PA is to support the revision of the national (in GE, RU and UA) and regional monitoring programmes. More specifically, the activity envisages:

- Updating (or establishing, where appropriate) the list of characteristics (physical, chemical, biological, other), pressures, impacts and parameters to be measured;
- Formulating proposals for extending the current biological monitoring system (both parameters and frequency) and relevant capacity building by means of trainings;
- Reviewing the current monitoring network and putting forward proposals for new monitoring locations and/or possible relocation of existing stations;
- Developing operational monitoring programmes, including cost-effectiveness assessment and proposals on economic instruments and funding mechanisms.

The discussions on the monitoring programmes revision shall be carried out with the participation of the relevant BSC Advisory Groups.

Responsible partner/s: SOI, Moscow, Russia; IBSS, Odessa and Sevastopol branches, Ukraine; SIO RAS, Moscow, Russia

According to the EMBLAS Logical Framework and Inception Report/Work plan, expected results, sub-activities and deliverables under PA3 are the following:

Expected results

3.1: Recommendations for revision & extension of national monitoring programs, including new parameters, network of reference sites, etc.

3.2: Guidelines for biological monitoring developed

Planned sub-activities

Activity 3.1: Revision of National and Regional Monitoring Programs (based on the reporting needs, promotion of operational monitoring, cost-effectiveness, etc.)

- Compilation of relevant documents (BEPs and BATs), analysis of needs in harmonization, clarification of the status of operational monitoring (the latter is coordinated with PA1, and relevant questions are included in the Questionnaire of PA1)
- Assessment of the cost-efficiency of operational monitoring, recommendations on sustainable operational monitoring as integral part of the National programs and BSIMAP (part of the Revised Monitoring Programs)
- Revision/extension of the monitoring programmes (new parameters, development of network of reference stations, etc.), proposal on inclusion of operational monitoring
- Promotion of the revised monitoring programmes and of operational monitoring inclusion into them

Planned deliverables

- Month 18 Draft revised monitoring programmes (*Note: Final Programmes can be produced after approval at governmental level and at the level of the BSC, therefore it may not happen in the lifetime of the EMBLAS Project*)
- Month 17 Minutes of the workshop on guidelines for biological monitoring, incl. relevant Checklists
- Month 22 Electronic publication of regional guidelines (biological monitoring) on the webpage of the project and if possible on the BSC webpage as well (*Note: Which guidelines exactly will be attended is to be decided by the Project Partners*)

Delivered results

Recommendations for revision & extension of national monitoring programs (**3.1**), further development of biological monitoring guidelines (**3.2**), and promotion of operational monitoring and of the biological monitoring guidelines (**3.3, 3.4**) are mainly planned for 2014. In line with the Workplan, in 2013 necessary experts and organizations were contracted. Information on National and Regional Monitoring Programs has been collected; their revision will be based on the findings of the EMBLAS Diagnostic Report. Realistic and optimistic scenarios will be developed by March 2014. The revision of monitoring programmes will go through extensive stakeholders consultation.

Analysis of the needs in revision of the BS biological guidelines has started. Two major guidelines are attended for further development – on zooplankton and macroalgae in this first phase of the project. Other types of biological guidelines will be attended in the 2nd phase - EMBLAS II.

Background information on the status of BS operational monitoring is provided in the EMBLAS Diagnostic Report. Cost-efficiency assessment is ongoing. The assessment includes review of recommended types of operational monitoring, their cost and feasibility of integrating operational monitoring into the revised Monitoring Programmes. Lessons learnt from other projects are being digested (MyOcean, Arena, B2B, MONINFO, BSGOOS, etc.).

Indicators of achievement

N	Indicator	Indicator quantification or Notes
1	Number of relevant documents reviewed	Ongoing
2	Number of stakeholders involved in consultations	So far partner organizations
3	Revised national and regional monitoring programs drafted	Pending
4	Number of Regional Biological Monitoring Guidelines finalised and published	2 under development (Macroalgae and Zooplankton)
5	Number of organizations informed about the revised Guidelines	So far partner organizations
6	Cost-efficiency of operational monitoring (OM) in the Black Sea region evaluated, vision for sustainable OM developed	Ongoing
7	Number of organizations informed about the revision of the national and regional monitoring programs and number of feedbacks	Pending

1.4 Project Activity 4: An assessment of needs regarding laboratory infrastructure, equipment, and training

The overall aim of this PA is to enhance the efficient use of infrastructure/equipment in the region (knowing the existing capacities) and to find out what kind of trainings are generally needed to improve the performance in monitoring.

Responsible partner/s: IBSS, Sevastopol, Ukraine; SIO-RAS, Moscow, Russia, TSU, Tbilisi, Georgia

According to the EMBLAS Logical Framework and Inception Report, expected results, sub-activities and deliverables under PA4 are the following:

Expected results

4.1: Analysis report on available infrastructure/vessels/equipment and needs and training necessities

4.2: Recommendations to improve the efficient use of equipment and database on equipment availability

Planned sub-activities

Activity 4.1: Preparation of Questionnaire, dissemination to relevant stakeholders, collation of information (as a part of questionnaire for PA1)

Activity 4.2: Assessment of the availability and needs, elaboration of recommendations for sharing of infrastructure /equipment /vessels and trainings (Chapters of the Diagnostic Report)

- Assessment of the needs in infrastructure/vessels/equipment, recommendations for sharing (efficient use of capacities), terms of sharing
- Assessment of the needs in training (general, in order to further develop monitoring) (Chapter in the Diagnostic Report II and input to PA5)

Activity 4.3: Promotion of the findings on options for sharing and trainings

Planned deliverables

Month 12 Chapters in the Diagnostic Report on Infrastructure/equipment/vessels (availability and needs) and needs in training

Months 12,18, 24 Chapters on the activities undertaken in the Project Reports (including evaluations of trainings and laboratories performance)

Delivered results

A 4.1 Questionnaire Part II, which deals with Black Sea data availability, infrastructure/vessels/equipment needs and priorities in harmonization, and capacity building (training) was prepared in accordance to the Work plan and disseminated by the National Focal Points to relevant stakeholders. Due to the low level of stakeholders' activity (see also A 1.3), filled in Questionnaires are still coming, collation and analysis of information are ongoing in parallel. Relevant reports from other projects were examined (SeasEra, ARENA, B2B, MONINFO).

A 4.2 First draft of the Review on Infrastructures/Vessels/Equipment is ready. The recommendations on the efficient use of capacities will be prepared by the end of January 2014. The training needs are under evaluation, will be summarized by the end of January 2014. List of BS experts in all different fields of BS studies was developed in cooperation with the MISIS Project.

Indicators of achievement

N	Indicator	Indicator quantification or Notes
1	Number of institutions which responded to the questionnaire	43 out of 191
2	Comprehensive report on available equipment and needs and training necessities with recommendations to improve the efficient use of capacities	First draft prepared for infrastructure/vessels/equipment
3	Number of laboratories informed about the capacities (equipment, infrastructure, experts) available in the region.	Pending

1.5 Project Activity 5: Elaboration and implementation of a first training programme round on monitoring methods and quality assurance adhering to ISO 17025 standard

The overall aim of this PA is to produce a Training Program and ensure its initial implementation (with input from PA4 and further analysis conducted specifically for monitoring methods and QA/QC). The activity also addresses the needs to agree on standard operational procedures adhering to ISO 17025, QA/QC and DQC (data quality control).

Responsible partner/s: UkrSCES, Odessa, Ukraine

According to the EMBLAS [Logical Framework](#) and [Inception Report](#), expected results, sub-activities and deliverables under PA5 are the following:

Expected results

5.1: Training programme & material prepared, SOPs and QA/QC manuals

5.2: Trainings organized and capacities of Laboratories strengthened

Planned sub-activities

Activity 5.1: Analysis of the needs (specifically for monitoring methods and QA/QC), preparation of program

Activity 5.2: Preparation of materials, revision/elaboration of guidelines, organization of trainings/workshops

- Preparation of training materials
- Development/adoption of SOPs and QA/QC, revision of the UBSS project DQC Manuals (Note: Which DCQ Guidelines will be attended is to be decided by the partners), promotion at regional level and publication on the project website and if possible on the BSC website as well
- Initial implementation of the Training Program (organization of one training, participation in the trainings of other projects, working visits to accredited laboratories)
- Organization of one workshop on harmonization of chemical methods (priority parameters - e.g. pesticides, detergents, TPHs and PAHs, etc., to be decided by the Partners)

Planned deliverables

Month 12	Training Program
Months 13	Materials for trainings (as per training conducted if more than one training is organized)
Month 23	Set of SOPs, QA/QC and DQC Guidelines
Month 18, 23	Trainings evaluations (Annexes to the Project Reports)
Month 20	Minutes of the harmonization workshops

Note: Adjustment of the initial plan (as per DoA) has been done during the inception phase and it is reflected also in the Inception Report. One training will take place in April or early May. The dates are specified in the Plan of Meetings_Workshops_Training (Chapter 3.2). Besides, the partners will be encouraged to take part in the trainings of other projects. Therefore, the final evaluation of trainings is planned for the end of 2014, when it will be known how many trainings were attended, on which topics during the year, and what the trainings were useful for.

Delivered results

A 5.1 The training needs are under evaluation (see also A4.1) based on the stakeholders' responses to the EMBLAS Questionnaire and additional information collected by the project experts (e.g. relevant reports from other projects). The training programme in first draft is under development and will be finalized in January 2014, with a month delay against the planned schedule. ***The Programme will be a living document evolving in parallel with the revision of monitoring programmes.***

A 5.2 Preparation of training materials will start when the priorities in capacity building are identified (Chapter in the Diagnostic Report). The revision/elaboration of QA/QC and DQC guidelines is ongoing, for instance, the Guideline on QA/QC of Chemical Oceanographic Data Collection is ready in a good draft. EMBLAS will organize one training and one harmonization workshop for chemical methods in 2014. The partners are encouraged to participate in the trainings of other projects, information on them is provided in due time. EMBLAS will also organize one workshop on harmonization of biological methods, where the regional guidelines on Zooplankton and Macroalgae will be further developed (see the Plan of EMBLAS meetings in Chapter 3.2).

Indicators of achievement

N	Indicator	Indicator quantification or Notes
1	Comprehensive training program developed and implementation initiated	Pending
2	Number of organizations taking part in the training programme	Pending
3	Number of trainings organised	1 training is planned, project partners participate in relevant trainings of other projects
4	Number of laboratories ready to apply QC/QA based on the proposed regional guidelines	Pending
5	Number of methods harmonised	1 harmonization workshop is planned for chemical methods and 1 for biological methods
6	Number of organizations involved in harmonization of methods	Pending
7	Number of laboratories ready to apply the recommended methods	Pending

1.6 Project Activity 6: Prepare the methodology for Joint Black Sea Surveys

The overall aim of this PA is to promote the idea on the need of BS Joint Surveys and propose methodology for them.

Responsible partner/s: SIO RAS, Moscow, Russia; Tbilisi University, Odessa University

According to the EMBLAS [Logical Framework](#) and [Inception Report](#), expected results, sub-activities and deliverables under PA6 are the following:

Expected results

6.1: Methodology for Black Sea survey developed (including the list of parameters, sites), and technical support to joint surveys planned under other EU projects provided

Planned sub-activities

- Activity 6.1: Survey methodology (based on the results of revision of monitoring programs)
- Consultations with experts, communication with the project managers of MISIS, PERSEUS, COCONET
 - Development of the Joint Surveys Methodology and promotion
- Activity 6.2: Technical support to survey's (field work) organization planned under the projects MISIS, PERSEUS and/or COCONET
- General cooperation with the projects MISIS, PERSEUS and COCONET

Planned deliverables

- Month 12 Methodology for Joint Surveys (design of the JS, incl. screening for new pollutants and evaluation of inter-comparisons) – first outline
- Month 20 Final version of the Methodology

Delivered results

A 6.1 First draft of the Joint cruise Methodology is prepared (see Annex 6) and is under consultation with the partner organizations. The Methodology will be further developed in line with the revision of monitoring programmes.

A 6.2 Technical support to surveys organization under MISIS and COCONET was provided. The MISIS Joint Cruise Programme was elaborated in consultation with EMBLAS. The MISIS surveys in the proposed first transboundary protected area in the BS – Strandzha-Igneada (btw Bulgaria and Turkey) were designed with the help of EMBLAS as well. In Coconet, EMBLAS helped in planning field work (in GE, RU and UA) and a joint cruise in the Zernov Field. However, the latter did not take place, as the UA authorities did not allow the planned Romanian vessel (Mare Nigrum) for this cruise to enter UA waters of the BS.

Indicators of achievement

N	Indicator	Indicator quantification or Notes
1	Methodology developed	Yes (first draft)
2	Number of pollutants proposed for screening	Under consultation
3	Inter-calibration exercises considered	Yes

1.7 Project Activity 7: Development of the web-based Black Sea Water Quality Database prototype

The overall aim of this PA is to support the further development of Black Sea regional databases (components of BSIS) – Water Quality, *Mnemiopsis* and Phytoplankton and enhancing of their compatibility/interoperability with WISE-MARINE and SEIS.

Responsible partner/s: UkrSCES, Odessa, Ukraine; IBSS, Sevastopol, Ukraine; MHI, Sevastopol, Ukraine; BSC PS Int.

According to the EMBLAS Logical Framework and Inception Report, expected results, sub-activities and deliverables under PA7 are the following:

Expected results

- 7.1: Concept for Web-Based Database agreed, programming and web portal tested/
- 7.2: Guidelines for the database use and data upload, concept for the long-term maintenance

Planned sub-activities

- Activity 7.1: Further development of BSIS components and functionalities as web services
- Scope analysis, designing improvements for the WQ, *Mnemiopsis* and Phytoplankton components of BSIS
 - Development and testing the components and the integrated system, preparation of guidance document (manual for use and nourishing of the database)
 - Designing and developing the web portal, supported by an online CMS and style sheets
- Activity 7.2: Investigating the possibilities for interaction between the central Black Sea Water Quality (WQ) Database and other Black Sea regional data management infrastructures (e.g. created under EmodNET, SeaDataNet, MONINFO), as well as the interoperability with the WISE-Marine (EEA) and SEIS

Planned deliverables

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Month 13 | Position paper/Concept on the proposed developments of the WQ, <i>Mnemiopsis</i> and Phytoplankton components of BSIS, functional and technical specifications |
| Month 16 | Designing and developing the webportal of BSIS (on the BSC webpage) |
| Month 23 | Web-based WQ system prototype, further developed <i>Mnemiopsis</i> and Phytoplankton data bases |
| Month 23 | Manual (Guidance document) on the WQ database use and data upload |
| Month 24 | Concept for the long-term maintenance of BSIS (in the Project Final Report) and experts opinions on the possibilities for interaction between the central BS Water Quality Database and other BS regional data management infrastructures (under EmodNET, SeaDataNet), as well as the interoperability with the WISE-Marine (EEA) and SEIS |

Delivered results

All activities under PA7 are planned for 2014. The WQ database Concept is under development. The Concept on the phytoplankton database is prepared in first draft (in RU).

Indicators of achievement

N	Indicator	Indicator quantification or Notes
1	Improved Water Quality Data Base	Concept under development
2	Sustained <i>Mnemiopsis</i> data base	Pending
3	Phytoplankton database development initiated and advanced	Yes, draft concept prepared
4	Number of new data products produced	Pending
5	Number of organizations using the new data base tools	Pending

1.8 Project Activity 8: Dissemination of Knowledge and Best Practices, Public Awareness and Visibility

The overall aim of this PA is to develop the Project ownership, visibility, widely disseminate results achieved/deliverables produced and to ensure the Project is not forgotten after it ends but will bring to generation of further activities (sustainability of the Project outcomes, in other words).

Responsible partner/s: UNDP; Odessa University, Ukraine; Tbilisi University, Georgia; SOI, Moscow, Russia

According to the EMBLAS Logical Framework and Inception Report, expected results, sub-activities and deliverables under PA8 are the following:

Expected results

- 8.1: Project ownership and visibility developed
- 8.2: Public awareness raised and public education at different levels increased;
- 8.3: Knowledge and information on project outcomes disseminated

Planned sub-activities

- Activity 8.1: Promotion of the project, visibility of EC support, ownership development
- Activity 8.2: Raising awareness
- Activity 8.3: Dissemination of Project results, visibility of Project efforts

Planned deliverables

- Months 9 Project Dissemination Plan
- Months 4-7 Project Webpage
- Months 4-8 Project Logo, banner, leaflet
- Months 8-24 Brochure, press releases, newsletters
- Months 6-24 Presentations (as per event)

Delivered results**A 8.1****8.1.1 Project Dissemination Plan**

Draft of the Dissemination Plan was prepared and sent to the Partner Organizations and members of the Steering Committee for comments in the beginning of June before the Inception Workshop and Steering Committee Meeting. The latest version of DP is presented in Annex 8. It is foreseen to update the dissemination plan with the list of events in 2014, as well as with the list of contacts from national stakeholders.

8.1.2 Project Webpage & Web-Site

The first EMBLAS project web-page has been created on the UNDP Ukraine web-site. This web-page contains brief information on the project as well as the EMBLAS Inception Report. The Link for the web-page on the UNDP web-site is:

http://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/operations/projects/environment_and_energy/project_sample121.html

In addition, an independent web-site of the EMBLAS project has been created, which provides with much more possibilities not only to present and disseminate project information (news, reports etc.), but it includes also Intranet to facilitate information exchange between Project Partners and preparation of project reports/publications. The EMBLAS web-site is at: <http://emblasproject.org/>

The MISIS project provided link to EMBLAS. All partner organizations were asked to also post information and links to EMBLAS on their webpages. So far such information appears at the webpage of the GE Ministry of Environment: http://moe.gov.ge/index.php?sec_id=119&lang_id=ENG&project_id=89. The BSC posted at: http://www.blacksea-commission.org/projects_observers_partners_EMBLAS.asp

In 2014 (when project products will be ready for wide dissemination) all environmental ministries of the beneficiary countries will be approached to post links to EMBLAS on their webpages.

8.1.3 TV interview

20 minutes TV interview with the EMBLAS Project Manager Dr. V.Kostiushyn on the Black Sea environmental status, monitoring and EMBLAS project was broadcasted through the Ukrainian TRK channel (28.08.2013): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDsTaopbZjk>. This first TV interview was organised with the support of the PR department of UNDP Ukraine. At least one more TV interview can be planned with their support to speak about the proposed revision of monitoring programmes and the importance of this in Black Sea environmental protection.

8.1.4 Project Abbreviation and Logo

The Project abbreviation - EMBLAS – was developed based on an extensive e-mail discussion with all project participants and voting. The project logo has been developed by a designer company Brandon (Odessa). At the first stage of the logo development the designer company has prepared 12 versions of logo prototype which were broadly discussed by the Management Team and all Partner Organizations. After selection of the most appropriate prototype version, final version of the logo was developed.

8.1.5 Project leaflet

First project leaflet, which includes basic EMBLAS project information – project rationale, main aim of it, sub-targets and activities, was prepared in English (Annex 9). It was printed in 200 copies, which will be widely distributed to the partner organizations, partner projects and other stakeholder. It will be also available at the project website.

8.1.6 Project newsletter

Preliminary structure and provisional content of the newsletter were developed and it will be finalized in the first quarter of 2014. It will include an overview of the project activities implementation and information on the results obtained. The newsletter will be distributed mostly in electronic form, via email and it will be also available on the project website. The second newsletter is planned by the end of the 1st phase of the project. The frequency of the newsletters will be increased during the 2nd phase of the project. A limited number of copies will be printed as needed.

Information on the project is posted in GE language at:

<http://meteo.gov.ge/index.php?pg=nw&id=114>

8.1.7 Press-release

Project press-release (Annex 10) was prepared to introduce EMBLAS to the public, and provide information on its Inception Workshop (June 2013). The press-release was disseminated among Ukrainian mass-media with the support of Mr. Y. Zelenko, Communication Officer of UNDP Ukraine. It is also planned to issue press releases within the stakeholders workshops which are planned in each beneficiary country as well as with the launch of the project activities in the 2nd phase of the project.

8.1.8 Project presentations

Project presentations were made in the reporting period at two international meetings, as well as at other events where the project partners participated:

- Coordination of FP7 Projects in the Med and the Black Sea regions, June 13-14 2013, Athens, Greece (Annex 11);
- EPIRB 2nd Regional Steering Committee Meeting, 18-19 September 2013, Tbilisi, Georgia (Annex 11)

A 8.2 Raising awareness and **A 8.3** Dissemination of Project results will be mostly attended in 2014. The strategy for them is described in the Dissemination Plan. So far, the project leaflet was used to raise awareness on the importance of the BS monitoring. The EMBLAS webpage is already used to disseminate materials of the project and others among partners and interested stakeholders.

The project visibility was widely developed through the EMBLAS Questionnaire, where major stakeholders were not only asked for certain information, but they were also informed about EMBLAS and its objectives.

Indicators of achievement

N	Indicator	Indicator quantification or Notes
1	Dissemination Plan produced	Yes
2	Project webpage regularly nourished	Yes
3	Project Logo, banner, leaflet produced	Yes
4	Number of presentations at different meetings prepared and presented (or Posters)	4
5	Number of press releases	1
6	Postings on web portals of networks and on the web pages of other projects regularly provided	Ongoing
7	Project newsletter at the end of each year produced and published electronically	Yes
8	Brochure on the project outcomes produced	Planned for the end of the Project

1.9 Project Activity 9: Management and coordination of the Action

The aim of this PA is to ensure smooth implementation of the project, production of quality deliverables, reports prepared according to the requirements of the Program (EuropeAid, ENPI East Regional Programme (Strategy Paper 2007-2013)) and submitted in due time, strong cooperation in between the partners and financial accountability of the project.

Responsible partner/s: UNDP

Under PA 9, according to the EMBLAS LogFrame and Inception Report/Work plan, the expected results, planned activities and deliverables are the following:

Planned sub-activities

Activity 9.1:	Organisation of Steering Committee + Partners Meetings
Activity 9.2:	Development and sustaining of the project web-site
Activity 9.3	Collaboration with on-going projects/activities /initiatives
Activity 9.4:	Preparation of Progress, Interim and Final reports
Activity 9.5:	Preparation of Financial reports

Planned deliverables

Month 6	Webpage
Months 6, 13, 24	Minutes of meetings (as per event)
Months 7, 13, 19, 24	Electronic publication of Progress, Interim and Final Reports
Months 12, 24	Financial reports

Delivered results

A 9.1 Inception workshop of the EU-UNDP Project "Improving Environmental Monitoring in the Black Sea (EMBLAS) was conducted on 10 June 2013 in Odessa, Ukraine. Among meeting participants were representatives of EC/Europe Aid, UNDP BRC, UNDP Ukraine, UNDP Georgia, Black Sea Commissioners from Georgia, Russia and Ukraine, Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission, 9 Partner Organizations from Georgia, Russia and Ukraine, as well as from partners projects – MISIS and EPIRB. The workshop included four sessions:

Session 1: Plans and strategies in the Black Sea Region

Session 2: Presenting the Project: *General Overview*

Session 3: Project Activities in detail:

Session 4: Cooperation and Coordination with Project Partners and other Initiatives

Project objectives and expected results, project management arrangements, organizational structure, deliverables, timeframe and role of the project partners were discussed during the meeting. More detail information is presented in the EMBLAS Inception Report, Annex 7: Minutes of the Inception Workshop, Agenda, and List of Participants (see Annex 12 to the current report or <http://emblasproject.org/portfolio/inception-workshop>).

1st Steering Committee meeting of the project was conducted on 11 June 2013 in Odessa, Ukraine back to back to the Inception Workshop. The SC meeting agreed on the Steering Committee composition and mandate (ToR), monitoring of project progress and evaluation, project Work Plan and budget. More detail information on this meeting is presented in the EMBLAS Inception Report Annex 8: Minutes of the First Steering Committee meeting, Agenda, List of Participants (see Annex 12 to the current report or <http://emblasproject.org/portfolio/inception-workshop>).

As it was agreed by the Project Steering Committee, the next meeting of the SC is planned in June 2014 in Odessa. In addition, a virtual SC meeting is considered to be organized by the end of January/beginning of February 2014.

A 9.2 As already mentioned above (section 8.1.2), the project website including intranet had been established. Further development and regular update is needed to make the site useful tool for information exchange and dissemination of information about the project activities. Active participation of the project partners in sustaining the EMBLAS webpage needs to be further encouraged.

A 9.3 Collaboration with other relevant on-going projects was discussed during the Inception Workshop, where the project managers of MISIS and EPIRB projects were present as observers. The EMBLAS project manager participated in meetings of projects to ensure coordination of joint activities.

A 9.4 and **A9.5** The present report is part of the annual reporting obligations as per the EMBLAS DoA and the UNDP project document and it includes also financial reporting. The next interim report is planned in the 2Q 2014. In addition, the project team is responsible for final editing of all documents developed by the project and keeping the uniform layout of all final publications.

Other project management activities

Staff. The core project team is composed of the Project Manager, Project Technical Advisor and Project Assistant. The team is supported by Water Programme Analyst and overall supervision is provided by Regional Technical Advisor for Intl. Waters (UNDP Bratislava)

Office/Equipment. In May 2013 temporary project office in Ukraine was hosted at UNDP Ukraine (Kiev, Klovskiy uzviz, 1). Later on EMBLAS project office was established in Odessa (Morskoi Business Centre, Bunina str., 10). Originally, the project office was planned in the Odessa Branch of the Institute of Southern Seas NAS Ukraine (OB-IBSS), however, due to administrative constraints the agreement between UNDP and OB-IBSS could not be concluded.

Contracts with Partner Organizations and Experts. Great efforts of the EMBLAS team were invested in the development of detail ToRs and contracts with all Partner Organizations and individual experts. (It was accomplished in several steps. As a first step, general planning of work has been completed during the inception phase, taking into account later the outcomes of the Inception Workshop as well. The work has been thoughtfully divided between partner organizations and individual experts, taking into consideration their expertise and capacities. The next step was preparation and consultations of the detail ToRs with partner organizations, including the negotiations on the formal legal text of agreements. The last step was the signature of the LoAs with all ten partner organizations. Additionally 16 national experts were contracted prior consulting them and reaching common understanding on the outcomes expected. The overview of deliverables of national experts as well as of partner organizations is in Annexes 13 and 14.

2. Emerging Challenges and Measures Taken

As mentioned above under PA1, there was certain delay in obtaining responses from the Black Sea monitoring stakeholders to the EMBLAS Questionnaire Part I and Part II. The level of stakeholders activity in filling in the EMBLAS Questionnaire was not very high due to the general busy schedule of each of them and lack of payment for the work required (Note: It was estimated that the Questionnaire needs 2 working days to be properly filled in).

To support the collection of information, letters from UNDP were sent to the national stakeholders and they have been also contacted by the National Focal Points and project team. Majority of responses were received in November-December 2013 and additional ones are expected by the end of January 2014. To fill the information gap, the project partners and experts contributed also to the questionnaires. The collection of data will continue and an updated version of the EMBLAS Diagnostic Report will be available for the 2nd phase of the project. The delay of 1.5 month in preparation of the report had an impact on re-scheduling the preparation of the Training program. However, in January 2014 significant progress has been made on preparation of the Diagnostic report and Training program and there will be no influence on the other project activities. In general, there were no changes or modification of agreed project activities.

One of the project deliverables will be the Draft revised monitoring programmes. It is worth mentioning, that the Final Programmes can be produced after approval at governmental level and at the level of the Black Sea Commission, therefore it may not happen in the lifetime of the EMBLAS I Project. This should not be seen as a risk, but as a normal procedure, which needs time for policy documents to go through levels of approval. Having in mind that none of the beneficiary countries has a Black Sea monitoring programme, even less a programme which would envisage integrated monitoring, the approval of such programmes will require a substantial change in the policy and institutional framework of monitoring. Moreover, no state monitoring programme exists on its own, it has to serve specific information needs. Therefore, the countries need to be convinced about such information needs and necessity to sustain the proposed programme. The development of the Draft monitoring programme is a first step in the process of monitoring programme approval, and the exercise takes into consideration both – the existing situation and the monitoring which have to be developed so that the EMBLAS beneficiary countries to comply with national and international obligations in the frames of the Black Sea ecosystem-based protection.

Meanwhile, the EMBLAS Project Management Team in cooperation with Mr. Nicola Di-Pietrantonio (EC DG DEVCO) has developed the 2nd phase of the project, which was internally approved at UNDP. Contribution agreement between EC and UNDP has been signed and the activities of EMBLAS II will start in April 2014, following the results of the 1st phase.

Surely, after the 1 year of the project implementation it is not yet possible to evaluate the impact of the EMBLAS I project. However, a lot of preparatory work has been accomplished to deliver good quality results in 2014 and to have a solid base for the 2nd phase of the project.

3. Planned Activities

Based on the EMBLAS Inception Report\Work plan and ToRs for partner organizations and experts, detail planning of the actions, deliverables, deadlines, responsible experts and organizations was done for 2013 – 2014. Detailed information on it is presented in the table below:

Table 2. Summary Table of Deliverables and detail distribution of responsibilities

PA	Deliverable		Time-frame of activity	Drafts/Date		Finals/Date	Status/Notes	Responsible		Major Contributors	
				1 st Draft	2 nd Draft			Experts	Organizations	Experts	Organizations
1.	Questionnaire (Part I and II) ³		Months 4-9. 2013	May 2013	July 2013	September 2013	Completed in August 2013, RU versions prepared in September		UNDP	NFPs, all experts	All other partners
	List of Stakeholders (GE, RU, UA)		Months 7-9.2013	July 2013	August 2013	September 2013	Completed	NFPs	UNDP	All experts	All other partners
	Diagnostic Report/Part I (on monitoring and data management tools)		Months 9.2013-1.2014 (adjusted)	Nov 2013	Dec 2013	Jan 2014	There are delays, the dates of deliverables are adjusted according to the current situation. Initially the report had to be ready by November 2013.	Konovalov, Medinets, Stanichniy	ONU , MHI, UNDP	All other experts	All other partners
	Diagnostic Report/Part II	Overall	Months 10.2013-2.2014 (adjusted)	30 Dec 2013	Jan 2014	Feb 2014	There are delays, the dates of deliverables are slightly adjusted according to the current situation. Initially the report had to be ready in first draft by December 2013.	Konovalov, Medinets	MHI , ONU, UNDP	All other experts	All other partners, especially UkrSCES for infrastructure/vessels/equipment
		Chapter on infrastructure/vessels/equipment						For RU: Shiganova, Mikaelyan For UA: Stanichniy	IBSS (overall) , OB-IBSS, TSU, NEA, UNDP		
		Chapter on Training						Denga	UkrSCES (overall) , IBSS, OB-IBSS, SIO, NEA, TSU, UNDP		

³ The Questionnaires is translated into Russian and partially distributed.

PA	Deliverable		Time-frame of activity	Drafts/Date		Finals/ Date	Status/Notes	Responsible		Major Contributors	
				1 st Draft	2 nd Draft			Experts	Organizations	Experts	Organizations
		Chapter on harmonization (overview of the needs)		30 Dec 2013	Jan 2014	Feb 2014			UNDP , BSC	Experts of the BSC	All partners
2.	List of compliance indicators		Months 11.2013-12.2014	Jan 2014	Process of consultations, incl. the BSC AGs	Dec 2014	This will hardly be a final document, as, the process will continue in EMBLAS II.	Experts identified by the BSC	BSC , NEA, OB-IBSS, SIO	Korshenko, Konovalov	SOI, UkrSCES
	Water Quality/GES Classification Methodology		Months 10.2013-11.2014	April 2014	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Hardly final, it is a living document, the work will continue in EMBLAS II	Denga	BSC, UkrSCES , OB-IBSS	Konovalov	SOI, SIO, NEA
3.	Optimistic and realistic scenarios of monitoring revision/GE		Months 1.2014-3.2014	March 2014		March 2014			NEA , TSU		
	Optimistic and realistic scenarios of monitoring revision/RU			Feb 2014		March 2014		Korshenko, Shiganova, Mikaelyan	SOI , SIO	Alautdinov	
	Optimistic and realistic scenarios of monitoring revision/UA			March 2014		March 2014		Konovalov	UkrSCES , IBSS, MHI, OB-IBSS, ONU	Denga	
	'Optimistic' and 'realistic' scenarios for the revision of BSIMAP		Months 4.2014-9.2014	May 2014		Sept 2014	The deadlines are amended, to be further negotiated with BSC		BSC		SOI, SIO, UkrSCES
	Assessment of operational monitoring cost-effectiveness and options for its sustainable development based on regional cooperation		Month 3.2014-4.2014			April 2014			MHI		SOI, SIO, TSU
	Draft revised monitoring programmes (Note: Final Programmes can be produced after approval at governmental level and at the level of the BSC, therefore it	National	Months 11.2013-10.2014 (adjusted to pass through	May 2014	August 2014	N/A (final draft Oct 2014)	There will be no Final, as the document should go through stakeholders consultations, and its development will	Korshenko, Alautdinov	SOI	Denga, Mikaelyan, Shiganova, Lisovsky	MHI, SIO, NEA, UkrSCES

PA	Deliverable		Time-frame of activity	Drafts/Date		Finals/ Date	Status/Notes	Responsible		Major Contributors	
				1 st Draft	2 nd Draft			Experts	Organizations	Experts	Organizations
	may not happen in the lifetime of the Project)	BSIMAP	wider consultations)				continue in EMBLAS II				
	Electronic publication of regional guidelines (biological monitoring) on the webpage of the project and if possible on the BSC webpage as well (Note: Macroalgae and Zooplankton Manuals will be attended)	Macroalgae	Months 10.2013-9.2014	Apr 2014		Sept 2014		Experts from IBSS and OB-IBSS	OB-IBSS, IBSS, BSC		SIO, NEA
		Zooplankton						Korshenko, Shiganova			SOI, SIO, NEA
4.	Report on Infrastructure/equipment/vessels (availability and needs) and needs in training to further develop monitoring (Chapters in the Diagnostic Report)		Note: This is mentioned above under PA1/Diagnostic Report-Part II, as no separate report will be prepared but Chapters of the Diagnostic.								
5.	Training Program (monitoring methods and quality assurance adhering to ISO 17025 standard)		Months 11.2013-8.2014	Dec 2013		Aug 2014	The Program will be not exactly final, as it will evolve depending on the revision of monitoring programmes.	Denga, Godin	UkrSCES, MHI		SOI, SIO, NEA, ONU
	Materials for trainings		Months 12.2013-open	Jan 2013			Additional training materials will be elaborated when the trainings are organised.	Denga	UkrSCES	Godin	MHI, ONU
	Set of SOPs, QA/QC and DQC Guidelines		Months 11.2013-11.2014	Dec 2013	August 2014	Nov 2014		Denga, Khaliulin, Korshenko, Lisovsky,	UkrSCES, SOI	Konovalov	NEA, MHI
	Reports on organised trainings and Trainings evaluations		Months 6.2014, 11.2014			Oct 2014		Denga	UkrSCES		BSC

PA	Deliverable	Time-frame of activity	Drafts/Date		Finals/Date	Status/Notes	Responsible		Major Contributors	
			1 st Draft	2 nd Draft			Experts	Organizations	Experts	Organizations
6.	Methodology for Joint Surveys (design of the JS, incl. screening for new pollutants and evaluation of inter-comparisons, financial aspects and viability of a survey assessed and a cost-effective approach for carrying out several rounds of joint surveys proposed)	Months 12.2013-8.2014	Dec 2013	July 2014	August 2014	The JS Methodology remains open for further development	Mikaelyan, Shiganova, Godin	SIO-RAS	Korshenko, Denga,	SOI, MHI, UkrSCES, TSU, ONU
7.	Position paper/Concept on the proposed developments of the WQ component of BSIS, functional and technical specifications	Months 11.2013-1.2014	Dec 2013		Jan 2014		Lisovsky, Khaliulin, Godin	UkrSCES , MHI	Alautdinov, Denga	SOI
	Designing and developing the webportal of BSIS (on the BSC webpage)	Months 1.2014-11.2014	Apr 2014		Nov 2014			BSC		UkrSCES, MHI
	Web-based prototype WQ system	Months 1.2014-11.2014			Nov 2014		Lisovsky, Khaliulin, Godin,	UkrSCES , MHI		
	Overview of the testing results of the new components of BSIS (Water Quality), recommendations on improvements	Months 10.2014-11.2014			Nov 2014		Lisovsky, Khaliulin, Godin, Alautdinov, Denga	UkrSCES , MHI, SOI, OB-IBSS, ONU, TSU, BSC		IBSS, NEA, SIO,
	Position papers on the proposed developments of the data bases	<i>Mnemiopsis</i>	Jan 2014		Sept 2014	The papers will need wide consultation with experts outside of the EMBLAS Consortium	Shiganova,	IBSS		ONU, OB-IBSS, NEA
		Phytoplankton					Mikaelyan			
	Overview of activities to sustain the <i>Mnemiopsis</i> data base	Months 10.2014-12.2014	Nov 2014		Dec 2014		Shiganova	IBSS , SIO		OB-IBSS
	Manual (Guidance document) on the WQ database and possible data upload	Months 9.2014 – 11.2014			Nov 2014		Lisovsky, Khaliulin, Godin	UkrSCES , MHI		
	Further developed <i>Mnemiopsis</i> data base and Phytoplankton data base Prototype	Months 2.2014-11.2014			Nov 2014	For the Phytoplankton data base Prototype the deadline for IBSS is		IBSS	Mikaelyan, Shiganova	SIO, OB-IBSS, ONU, NEA

PA	Deliverable	Time-frame of activity	Drafts/Date		Finals/ Date	Status/Notes	Responsible		Major Contributors	
			1 st Draft	2 nd Draft			Experts	Organizations	Experts	Organizations
						Oct 2014				
	Phytoplankton manual (incl. calculation of bio-volumes, common misidentifications, checklist, etc.)	Months 1.2014-12.2014	Oct 2014		Dec 2014			IBSS		UNDP
	Concept for the long-term maintenance of BSIS, including experts opinions on the possibilities for interaction between the central BS Water Quality Database and other BS regional data management infrastructures (under EmodNET, SeaDataNet), as well as the interoperability with the WISE-Marine (EEA) and SEIS ⁴	Months 9.2014-11.2014	Oct 2014		Dec 2014		Lisovsky, Godin	UkrSCES, MHI, BSC	Khaliulin, Alautdinov	SOI, SIO, NEA, ONU, TSU, IBSS, OB-IBSS
8.	Project Dissemination Plan	Months 5.2013-7.2013				Completed		UNDP		All partners
	Materials for the webpage, newsletter, leaflets, press-releases, etc.	Note: All project duration						UNDP	Godin, Lisovsky, Korshenko, Denga	All partners, especially MHI, SIO, UkrSCES, NEA
9.	Project Interim, Progress and Final Reports +Exit Strategy	Each 6 months				For the Exit Strategy the BSC is expected to specifically contribute		UNDP		All partners

⁴ EmodNET, SeaDataNet, SEIS - these are abbreviations of Projects, which have created or are in process of creating databases. Wise-Marine is the database of the European Environment Agency (EEA). SEIS is also Project of EEA.

3.1 Workplan 2014

Table 3: Time frame of the project activities

Action Plan														
Year 2	Semester 1						Semester 2						Implementing Body	
Activity/ Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
PA1. Review of the national monitoring systems and of the methodological tools for assessing marine environmental data														
Activity 1.1: Review of the national monitoring systems and data/information management tools for assessing data obtained from monitoring activities with particular focus on biological quality/biodiversity components in marine environment monitoring (Ref: MSFD, Annex I and III)	X												UNDP/All partners participate	
Preparation Activity 1.1: Preparation of Questionnaire, communication with relevant organizations, review of documents, collation of information, and of lessons learned from previous projects, gap analysis														
Execution activity 1.1: Preparation of Report on gap analysis and recommendations (Diagnostic Report II/Part I)	X													
Activity 1.2: Review of data availability, analysis of the gaps in the assessments, including pressures, recommendations for measures to improve data availability and assessments (versus the needs of the MSFD, WFD and reporting obligations to the BSC)	X													
Preparation Activity 1.2: Collation of information on data availability, analysis of gaps in the assessments														
Execution activity 1.2a: Preparation of Report on gap analysis and recommendations (Diagnostic Report II/Part II)	X													
Execution activity 1.2b: Promotion of the findings of the Gap Analysis (Part I and II), and recommendations for harmonization at the level of relevant authorities (by e-mail and during relevant meetings)	X	X	X	X	X	X								
PA2: Support to the implementation of countries obligations under the Bucharest and other related Conventions and Agreements														
Activity 2.1: Facilitating the development of an indicator-based reporting on compliance within the Black Sea countries' obligations under the Bucharest Conventions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	BSC/All partners	
Preparation activity 2.1:Communication with relevant organizations, review of documents, collation of information	X	X	X	X	X	X								
Execution activity: 2.1: Further development of compliance indicators and indicator-based reporting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Activity 2.2. Harmonization of policies, including common understanding of water quality/GES, promotion	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Preparation activity 2.2: Consultation with experts, organization of workshops	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				

Action Plan														
Year 2	Semester 1						Semester 2						Implementing Body	
Activity/ Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
Executive activity 2.2a: Elaboration of Water Quality/GES Classification Methodology, promotion	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Execution activity 2.2b:Report on the activities undertaken										X	X	X		
PA3: Development of cost-effective and harmonised biological and chemical monitoring programmes in accordance with reporting obligations under multilateral environmental agreements, the WFD and the MSFD														
Activity 3.1: Revision of National and Regional Monitoring Programs (based on the reporting needs, promotion of operational monitoring, cost-effectiveness, etc.)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	SOI/ IBSS / SIO RAS/ All partners	
Preparation Activity 3.1: Compilation of relevant documents (BEPs and BATs), needs in harmonization, clarification of the usefulness and cost-effectiveness of operational monitoring	X	X	X											
Execution activity 3.1a: Revision of the monitoring programmes, proposals on inclusion of operational monitoring	X	X	X	X	X	X								
Execution activity 3.1b: Promotion of the revised monitoring programmes						X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Activity 3.2. Further development of relevant guidelines	X	X	X	X	X	X								
Preparation activity 3.2: Analysis of the needs														
Execution activity 3.2: Revision of guidelines,	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
PA 4: An assessment of needs regarding laboratory infrastructure, equipment, and training														
Preparation Activity 4.1: Collation of information													MHI/BSC PS/ All partners	
Execution activity 4.1a: Assessment of the needs, recommendations for sharing (Part of the Diagnostic Report II)														
Execution activity 4.1b: Promotion of the findings, and options for sharing and trainings	X	X	X	X	X	X	X							
PA 5: Elaboration and implementation of a first training programme on monitoring methods and quality assurance adhering to ISO 17025 standard														
Preparation Activity 5.1: Analysis of the needs, preparation of program													All partners	
Execution activity 5.1: Preparation of materials, revision/elaboration of guidelines, organization of trainings/workshops	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
PA 6: Prepare the methodology for Joint Black Sea Surveys														
Activity 6.1: Survey methodology (based on the results of revision of monitoring programs), technical support to survey's organization under the projects MISIS, PERSEUS and/or COCONET	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	SIO-RAS /All partners	
Preparation activity 6.1: Consultations with experts, communication with the project managers of MISIS, PERSEUS and COCONET	X													
Execution activity 6.1: Development of the Joint Surveys Methodology, technical support to the survey's organization under the projects MISIS, PERSEUS and/or COCONET)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
PA7. Development of the web-based Black Sea Water Quality Database prototype														

Action Plan													
Year 2	Semester 1						Semester 2						Implementing Body
Activity/ Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Activity 7.1: Further development of BSIS components and functionalities as web services	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	UkrSCES / All partners
Preparation activity 7.1: Designing improvements for the Water Quality, Mnemiopsis and Phytoplankton components of BSIS	X				X								
Execution activity 7.1: Development and testing the components, preparation of guidance, loading data sets	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Activity 7.2: Investigating the possibilities for interaction between the central Black Sea Water Quality Database and other Black Sea regional data management infrastructures (e.g. created under Emodnet, SeaDataNet, MONINFO), as well as the interoperability with the WISE-Marine (EEA) and SEIS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Preparation activity 7.2: Compilation of experts opinions	X	X	X	X	X	X							
Execution Activity 7.2: Report on the activity											X	X	
PA 8: Dissemination of Knowledge and Best Practices, Public Awareness and Visibility													
Activity 8.1: Promotion of the project, visibility of EC support, ownership development	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	UNDP/All partners
Preparation Activity 8.1: Preparation of materials, communication with stakeholders, webpage	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Execution Activity 8.1: Organization of meetings with stakeholders											X		
Activity 8.2: Raising awareness				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Preparation Activity 8.2: Dissemination Plan; End-User Core Group													
Execution activity 8.2a Project Logo, banner, leaflet, brochures, press releases, newsletters, etc.							X						
Execution Activity 8.2b Regular preparation of friendly information for the web portals of the partners networks, and organization of joint events back to back with Black Sea Day, World Water Day and others. Project web page maintenance.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Activity 8.3: Dissemination of Project results, visibility of Project efforts				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
PA 9: Management and coordination of the Actions													
Activity 9.1: Organisation of Kick-off, Steering Committee, Partners and Working Groups Meetings		X				X					X		UNDP
Preparation Activity 9.1: Preparation of three Steering Committee and Partners Meetings	X				X					X	X		
Execution Activity 9.1: Organisation of three Steering Committee and Partners Meetings		X				X					X		
Activity 9.2: Project Reports	X												UNDP/All partners
Preparation Activity 9.2: Preparation of reports	X				X	X					X	X	
Execution Activity 9.2: Electronic publication of reports						X						X	

3.2 Draft schedule of project events

PA nr.	Name of event	Place	Tentative date	Meeting objective	Target group
5.1	Training on chemical monitoring methods and QA/QC	Odessa	April-early May 2014	Training on selected methods and related quality assurance aiming at adhering to ISO 17025 standards	Relevant experts, working in the field (sample, process samples), and better young people who especially need such training
8	Technical Meeting of EMBLAS I Partners	Batumi	22-24 May 2014	Discuss major deliverables of the project and agree on controversial issues: Revision of Monitoring Programmes; Joint Survey Methodology; Set of SoPs and Guidelines; Concept of the WQ Database; Training Programme; WQ/GES Classification Methodology, and in general the Harmonization Process to further follow (as priorities)	All experts working in EMBLAS (not only contact persons)
3.2	Workshop on guidelines for biological monitoring (Zooplankton and Phytobenthos)	Odessa	Early-Mid June 2014	To facilitate revision/finalization of guidelines for biological monitoring (Note: only Zooplankton and Phytobenthos will be attended)	Relevant experts, who work in the field (apply the methodologies and trace their development and can contribute to the Check-Lists development). The experts will work in groups to deliver good drafts of the Guidelines by the end of the workshop
8	EMBLAS I Second Steering Committee Meeting and EMBLAS II Inception Workshop	Odessa	Early - mid Sept 2014	Inception Workshop of EMBLAS II - do discuss with all partners the project implementation and distribution of responsibilities/funds. SSC - to discuss the EMBLAS I implementation and agree on the proposed workplan and budget for EMBLAS II	Inception of EMBLAS II - the contact persons of partner organizations/SC/Representatives of relevant projects
5.2	Workshop on harmonization of chemical methods of monitoring (selected priority parameters)	Possibly in Istanbul (back to back with the WQ/GES workshop)	Early Oct 2014	To work on harmonization of selected parameters sampling and processing (to be decided by the partners in May in Batumi)	Experts in marine chemistry

PA nr.	Name of event	Place	Tentative date	Meeting objective	Target group
8.1	National Workshop with Ukrainian stakeholders	Odessa	Sept 2014	Discuss with stakeholders the proposed revision of Black Sea monitoring, present other major EMBLAS I results, increase the project visibility, develop project ownership	Attended by nationals only, project partners in the country and Project management staff
8.1	National Workshop with Georgian stakeholders	Tbilisi	Oct 2014	Discuss with stakeholders the proposed revision of Black Sea monitoring, present other major EMBLAS I results, increase the project visibility, develop project ownership	Attended by nationals only, project partners in the country and Project management staff
2.2	Harmonization workshop on Water Quality/GES Classification Methodology	Istanbul/back to back with BSC PMA and CBD AGs meeting	Early Oct 2014	To facilitate elaboration of Regional Water Quality (WQ)/GES Classification Methodology and as a follow-up its testing in cooperation with the PMA AG and PMA AC	Marine chemistry experts, marine biologists, ecosystem analysts, experts with experience in indicators development
8.1	National Workshop with Russian stakeholders	Moscow/possibly Sochi	Nov 2014	Discuss with stakeholders the proposed revision of Black Sea monitoring, present other major EMBLAS I results, increase the project visibility, develop project ownership	Attended by nationals only, project partners in the country and Project management staff

4. Cooperation with other partners and projects

Day by day collaboration with 10 partner organizations of EMBLAS project and as well as with National Focal Points is based on the contracts, signed with each of them.

The EMBLAS cooperates with several international projects like MISIS, EPIRB, SEIS and participates in information exchange with FP7 projects in Med and Black Sea regions.

The MISIS project manager L. Boicenکو has participated in the EMBLAS Inception Workshop and made presentation on the project and possible ways of collaboration. The EMBLAS project manager V.Kostiushyn has attended the Coordination meeting of FP7 Projects in the Med and the Black Sea regions, June 13-14 2013, Athens, Greece and the EPIRB 2nd Regional Steering Committee Meeting, 18-19 September 2013, Tbilisi, Georgia, and made presentations on EMBLAS at both meetings.

In the framework of cooperation with the Perseus project, the EMBLAS partner organization Odessa National University (ONU) representative participated in the 17-20 December PERSEUS Pollution Monitoring meeting (Toulon, France).

Contacts with the EEA SIES project - Towards a Shared Environmental Information System in the European Neighbourhood – were established. EMBLAS and SEIS exchanged reports.

As a result of the Coordination meeting of FP7 Projects in Athens, mentioned above, a common brochure with information on the projects was printed. Joint project proposal, led by the Project Manager of DEVOTES, was developed under the EC Programme COST (IEBAM: Integrated Ecosystem-based Assessment Methods to support sustainable use and governance of marine systems; *unfortunately it was not supported by the donor*). Additionally, as a follow-up of the Athens meeting, a common blog for the ongoing projects in the Med and Black Seas was established at: <http://medseacimatechange.wordpress.com/about/>, "[Mediterranean Sea climate and environmental change](#)", as well as a common Drop Box for exchange of files was created.

The EMBLAS Management Team and Partner organizations have supported some activities of MISIS. Thus, in October 2013 on the request of MISIS all EMBLAS Partner Organizations have participated in updating the lists of the Black Sea experts in microbiology, phytoplankton, macroalgae, zooplankton, zoobenthos, fish, etc.

According to the agreement between MISIS and EMBLAS Partner organizations, ONU, during the MISIS Black Sea Cruise (23-25 July 2013) carried out synchronic observation in the Zmiinyi Island area. Exchange of data and technical reports was agreed in advance and accomplished for the mutual benefit of MISIS and EMBLAS.

In case of necessity of support, the EMBLAS project Management Team was contacting the members of the Project Steering Committee that are also Commissioners in the Black Sea Commission. They are as well representatives of the project beneficiaries countries Ministries of Environment and helped significantly the preparation of the EMBLAS II. The Commissioners of GE, RU and UA in the BSC provided comments on EMBLAS II and supported its approval at the national level in GE, RU and UA respectively.

5. Visibility actions

Activities related to project visibility are described in the chapter 1.8, under **A 8.1** of this report and include the preparation of the Project Dissemination Plan (Annex 8), Project web-site (www.emblasproject.org), TV interview, development of project abbreviation and logo, preparation of the Project leaflet (Annex 9), press-release (Annex 10), presentations, and attendance of different international meetings.



Photo front page: Yuriy Denga, UkrSCES, Odessa, Ukraine
Photo back page: Alexander Vershinin, SIO-RAS, Moscow, Russia