# EUSAIR Action Plan revision

# Thematic consultation questionnaire for Pillar 1 TSG- **GATHERED RESULTS of: Greece, Italy, Montenegro, N. Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia**

Thematic consultation questionnaire was developed by the EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner in cooperation with external experts as a starting point for thematic consultation on EUSAIR Action Plan revision in TSGs and with relevant policy owners in the EUSAIR countries. It was intended to be used with the Initial policy paper for thematic consultation and to collect feedback from country policy owners.

The overall process and context in which these documents are used is described in the Background document with Roadmap on the EUSAIR Action Plan revision v5, approved through Governing Board Written Procedure in December 2022.

The questionnaire was addressed to blue economy governance structures. TSG members gathered all relevant inputs from their country in the period from December 2022 till 30 January 2023 so that only one questionnaire was submitted from one country. As described in the Background document each country has had the national consultation organised differently, involving different sectors and governance levels.

Pillar Coordinators have forwarded all received questionnaires to the Facility Point Lead Partner that merged information from all countries in one document. No consolidation was made at this point yet. In cooperation with Pillar thematic experts proposals for Pillar/Topic reformulations/additions were gathered by the Facility Point Lead Partner and will be presented to the Revision Working Group.

The Pillar Coordinators, Pillar thematic experts supported by Facility point LP with external experts will organise the gathered information and prepare proposals to be discussed at the next TSG meeting planned for March/April. At the TSG meeting agreements on contents of most Action Plan chapters (e.g. objectives, challenges, policies, key stakeholders, actions, indicators, targets) will be sought, using the received inputs as the basis. This will be a moderated discussion. After the meeting results will be written down, sent first to Pillar Coordinators and then to TSG members. After fine-tuning they will be included in the first draft of the Action Plan for further commenting from the strategic level (National Coordinators, EC...) and for another round of public consultation. The consolidation process will therefore happen entirely in the TSG.

## Topic 1: Marine and green & digital maritime technologies and blue biotechnologies **(**The concept of blue biotechnology is already absorbed in this broader proposed title)

### Challenges

* + 1. **Please prioritise the challenges/opportunities provided in the initial policy paper to reflect how relevant they are as regards the added value of being tackled by EUSAIR.**

I*n the Adriatic Ionian Region it is noted:*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Question/ Given answers: how many times the answer was marked*** | ***1***  ***(most important)*** | ***2*** | ***3*** | ***4***  ***(least important)*** |
| *Increasing disparities in innovation performance between EU and non-EU countries* | *1x (GR)* | *2x (IT,MN)* | *2X (SER,NM)* |  |
| *Capitalising on EUSAIR regions, which are EU fastest growing innovation performers* |  | *1x (GR)* | *2x (IT,MN)* | *2X (SER,NM)* |
| *Lagging regions underrepresented in competitive programmes such as Horizon* |  | *2X (SER,NM)* |  | *3x (IT,GR,MN)* |
| *Collaboration of lagging regions with more developed regions can improve and facilitate knowledge transfer, technological upgrading and entrepreneurship* | *4x (SER,IT,NM,MN)* |  | *1x (GR)* |  |

* + 1. **Are there any suggestions for reformulation/specification of the challenges provided in the initial policy paper to reflect how important you find them for your country’s cooperation in EUSAIR?**

NORTH MACEDONIA: Possibilities to link biotechnologies with landlocked countries, and to link with scientific activities in such countries.

ITALY: We suggest to slightly revise the challenge: Capitalising on EUSAIR regions, which are EU fastest growing innovation performers- , as follow: Capitalising on EUSAIR regions, which are among the EU fastest growing innovation performers.

SERBIA: Better synergies between with landlocked countries and countries with access to the sea , in the area of biotechnologies and linkage of the researchers.

* + 1. **Is there another challenge concerning the thematic field of *Topic 1:* *Marine technologies and blue biotechnologies*, for which you see an added value of being addressed at EUSAIR level? The challenge should be specific to the EUSAIR territory and scope.**

NORTH MACEDONIA: It is a challenge to create proper link with landlocked and countries with access to the sea

MONTENEGRO: Some additional challenges could be below listed (Please take them in consideration if you think they are not included in the already offered challenges):

* Lack/insufficient support in terms of funding and marketing operations, lack of specific national policies and/or legislation under which blue technologies could be developed, fragmentation of the sector, lack of established blue biotech value chains, potentially lack of collaboration between science-industry-policy makers and Potential ecological risks for the development of the blue technologies sector.
* For Non-EU countries there is situation on very few research groups and networks active in the sector, and they usually are not specialized in Blue Technologies.
* Limited interest for development Blue Technologies in some land -locked AI countries or counties with limited access to the sea.

SLOVENIA:

There are many business opportunities and challenges to identify the common interest. In general, we could address the business idea to underpin the circular economy: Examples:

* a lot of waste products, materials... which could be re-used by entering in the production process as raw materials (e.g. waste in ballast water, conversion of jellyfish into collagen, etc). If all such waste were to be appropriately disposed of, re-used and recycled, we would save spending a lot of money on raw materials.
* Initiative to establish a marine laboratory as an international centre for marine research for healthy and sustainable oceans located in the Adriatic-Ionian Sea region.
* the use of new technologies of underwater robotics to increase productivity in various sub-sectors of the blue economy (for green shipping, ecological biodegradable coatings, greening of vessels, the blue biotech, analysis of how to do it on small boats...).

GREECE:

* Of interest are challenges that include activities from more than one pillar, e.g. tourism activities in fishing or aquaculture activities or in protected areas or areas of special environmental value.
* Challenges regarding the cooperation between research centers and Marine technology enterprises. A common use of resources for developing certain products with common standards.
* Easier access to finance for innovative companies and startups for marine technologies and blue biotechnology.
* Knowledge transfer: alignment of national, regional, and local EU initiatives in the macroregion, to enhance sustainable economic growth/business creation based on blue technologies. One-stop-shop operation for SMEs support (which means improving brain circulation among research and business communities, and their capacity to network at all levels: national, regional, and local).

ITALY: Reformulating Topic 1: “Topic 1: Marine and green & digital maritime technologies”

* Lack of synergies among initiatives/projects relevant for Topic 1 running in the EUSAIR territory.
* Establishing competitive macroregional platforms for an enhanced collaborative ecosystem for innovation, research, SMEs making the existing R&I cooperation in the different technology fields to evolve into strategic and complementary actions with stronger impact and more scalable results;
* The answers to the threats related to the impact of climate change (salt water intrusion, subsidence, coastal erosion, etc) should also take advantage of innovation in the blue economy sectors.

SERBIA: Difficulties in connection of landlocked countries and countries with access to the sea, and finding of common goals.

### Objectives

The **objective** of the 2014 Action Plan was updated in the initial policy paper:

*To promote research, innovation and business opportunities in marine technologies and blue biotechnology, by strengthening quadruple helix ties in the region.*

* + 1. **Are there any suggestions for its reformulation/specification? Please, consider also the different trends in blue growth/blue economy policy accompanying the main objective.**

NORTH MACEDONIA: Blue biotechnologies throughout the region

SLOVENIA: The rapidly evolving nature of the maritime sector requires a unified approach at EUSAIR level. To promote research, innovation and business opportunities in marine technologies and blue biotechnology, by strengthening quadruple helix ties in the region, there is a need to strengthen cooperation between Member States and accession countries in the region.

GREECE: The objective as formulated presents particular possibilities since it is oriented towards supporting modern areas of interest such as the preservation of biodiversity, the monitoring or even the reversal of factors that lead to climate change, etc. and they make the best use of the main advantage of regional development which is the cooperation.

Regarding the suggestions:

• Fostering quadruple helix ties regarding Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in the fields of marine technologies and Blue biotechnologies (for advancing innovation, business development/adaptation in Blue bio-economy).

• To establish/improve governance, by enhancing administrative and institutional capacities in the area of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) governance and services.

ITALY: In order to take in due account the holistic and systemic approach expressed by the European Commission in the COM(2021) 240 final which focuses on the industries and sectors related to oceans, seas and coasts for a new sustainable blue economy and according to the need of synergies (see our proposal in the challenges) we would suggest to rephrase and integrate as follows:

*“To promote research, innovation and business opportunities in* ***sustainable blue economy sectors****, by strengthening quadruple helix ties* ***and synergies among ongoing initiatives and projects*** *in the region”*

SERBIA: Blue biotechnologies all over EUSAIR

* + 1. **See proposed additional challenges under point 1.1.3. Additional objectives can be added accordingly.**

GREECE:

* To promote access to finance for innovative companies and start-ups
* Increased networking between research institutions, and the private sector’s enterprises of marine technologies, and blue biotechnology

### Key stakeholders

* + 1. **Which are the most relevant national/regional (e.g. national/regional institutions, agencies, others) and international (e.g. networks, associations, organisations, partnerships) stakeholders to be involved in order to reach most efficiently the objectives of the Topic 1. (objectives provided in point 1.2.1)?**

MONTENEGRO: Line Ministries (Ministry of Science and Technological Development); Universities, Institutes, Scientific organisations; Non-governmental organisations in respective fields; Chamber of Commerce.

NORTH MACEDONIA: Scientific institutions(scientist)

SLOVENIA: Universities, research and scientific organisations, educational institutions, institutes, institutes, non-governmental organisations in the field of resource protection, environment, chambers, SRIPI, technology parks, Local Actions Groups.

GREECE: Regarding Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP): Planning Authorities and relevant sectoral Ministries, Regional and Local authorities, economic stakeholder organizations, professional champers, civil society, and Research Institutions:

• HCMR Hellenic Centre for Marine Research

• FRI (Fisheries Research Institute)

• Universities

• General Secretariat for Research and Innovation (GSRI), National Centre For Scientific Research “DEMOKRITOS”

ITALY:

It should be created the conditions for ensuring more synergies between EUSAIR partners/actors with the ones from the same Adriatic Ionian macroregion joining the:

a) BLUEMED initiative:

b) WESTMED initiative;

c) the CSAs and other projects funded by the Horizon EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and waters by 2030”

d) the new PPP sustainable blue economy co-founded by the EU Commission with cluster 6 of Horizon EU.

Moreover we suggest the following typologies of SHs:

• National/Regional Public Authorities

• Enterprises and Regional/National Maritime/Blue Growth Clusters

• University

• Research and Scientific Institution

• Innovation Agency and Technological Parks

• Port Authorities and Marinas

• Associations-NGos

• Civil Society

SERBIA: Competent authorities in each country

### Relevant policies

* + 1. **The following policies, regulations, directives, initiatives etc. were identified as relevant for the** ***Topic 1:* *Marine technologies and blue biotechnologies*. Please also think about the funding opportunities related to these policies. Which are the most relevant?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Most relevant*** | ***Ranking*** | ***Some countries ranked policies, regulations, directives, initiatives etc by importance, some only marked the ones deemed most relevant*** |
| *4x (SER,GR,NM,MN)* | *1 (IT)* | *New approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future* |
| *4x (SER,GR,NM,MN)* | *3 (IT)* | *Circular Economy Action Plan* |
| *2x (GR,MN)* | *4 (IT)* | *European Cluster Partnerships* |
| *2x (GR,MN)* | *2 (IT)* | *Smart Specialisation Strategy* |
| *4x (SER,GR,NM,MN)* | *5 (IT)* | *Green Agenda for the Western Balkans Action Plan* |
| *2x (GR,MN)* | *7 (IT)* | *European Research Area* |
| *2x (MN,GR)* | *6 (IT)* | *Digitising European Industry and Digital Innovation Hubs* |

* + 1. **Is there another policy, or initiative, to be mentioned?**

ITALY:

* The updated European Bioeconomy Strategy (2018);
* the Biodiversity Strategy;
* the Farm to Fork strategy;
* BlueMed Initiative;
* EU Mission: Restore our Oceans and Waters (Horizon Europe);
* Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (Horizon Europe);
* Zero Emission Waterborne Platform Partnership (Horizon Europe);
* REPowerEU Plan

### Actions

There are three Actions foreseen in the initial policy paper:

***Action 1.1: Building AIR innovation ecosystem in marine and green & digital maritime technologies and blue biotechnologies:***

* *Building AIR Innovation communities (EIT) (increasing participation in EU competitive programmes, possibilities for innovation up-scalling, better match of innovative sustainable services and products with demand…)*
* *Building and/or strengthening Interregional RIS cooperation (Thematic partnerships, I3 match-making partnerships, mapping RIS matching potentials, cooperation between regional RIS platforms…)*
* *Building value chains (value chain mapping, needs/gaps identification, networking, match-making opportunities)*

***Action 1.2: AIR blue (bio)technologies research and science networks:***

* *cooperation of science and research policies to create a common research and innovation area*
* *promotion of researchers’ mobility,*
* *initiatives for sharing research infrastructure for common projects i.e. shared (bio)technology testing facilities*

***Action 1.3: Marine and maritime Digital innovation and rollout*** *(not just linked to blue technologies – to be moved somewhere else?)*

* *Development (in countries/regions where they do not yet exist and mutual learning and exchange leading to better service in countries/regions where they already exist) & cooperation between digital innovation hubs– DIH network of national/regional hubs functioning as a junction of research/academia, industry, policy actors and civil society.*
  + 1. **Please prioritise the actions provided in the initial policy paper to reflect how important you find them for your country's cooperation in EUSAIR.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Ranking*** | | | | ***Countries ranked actions by importance*** |
| ***MN*** | ***NM*** | ***GR,IT*** | ***SER*** |
| *2* | *N/A* | *1* | *N/A* | *Action 1.1: Building AIR innovation ecosystem in marine and green & digital maritime technologies and blue biotechnologies* |
| *1* | *2* | *3* | *2* | *Action 1.2: AIR blue (bio)technologies research and science networks* |
| *3* | *1* | *2* | *1* | *Action 1.3: Maritime and maritime Digital innovation and rollout* |

* + 1. **Are there any suggestions for reformulation/specification of the Actions provided in the initial policy paper?**

MONTENGRO:

Action 1.1: Building AIR innovation ecosystem in marine technologies and blue biotechnologies:

* Development of educational and training programs (e.g. university and/or professional) to support the development of skilled human capital on Blue Technologies

Action 1.2: AIR blue (bio)technologies research and science networks:

* Development of novel eco-friendly products that serve circular economy
* Encouragement and creation of clustering, especially of quadruple helix
* Research on Blue Technologies and prioritization of its adoption by SMEs in the macro-region  *…*

Or idea can be to add new action: “Development of novel eco-friendly products”

* Development of innovative eco-friendly solutions for electricity generation from the sea waves, currents, thermal energy of the sea, wind, etc. for coastal and island regions
* Exploring marine resources for industrial applications
* Development of solutions to decarbonize (fishing) fleets (e.g. new materials, shore-based supply of electricity for vessels in ports and innovative propulsion modes and fuels, etc. (switch from diesel to Liquid Natural Gas and electric vessels))
* Development of a common multi-use deep water offshore platform able to integrate a range of functions (e.g. from the transport, energy, aquaculture, leisure, etc.) for the optimization of the use of ocean space for different purposes
* Development of a sea observation network, in order to map and monitor the seabed and analyse potential deep-sea resources which can contribute to strengthening economic activities in the blue sector
* Research platform marine robotics e.g. to strengthen unmanned marine vehicles for underwater and seabed operations

SLOVENIA:

**Action 1.2: AIR blue (bio)technologies research and science networks:**

initiatives for sharing research infrastructure for common projects i.e. shared (bio)technology testing facilities, Initiative to establish a marine laboratory as an international centre for marine research for healthy and sustainable oceans located in the Adriatic-Ionian Sea region.

In order to select initiatives that ensure the allocation of EUSAIR resources in close cooperation with the EUSAIR partners, it is not necessary to prioritise actions listed as they depend on each other.

GREECE:

* There is a gap regarding the Maritime sector, possibly covered by Pillar 2, but in the marine new technologies, the Maritime sector should be included.
* Also, actions in this area will have to build on the Smart Specialization, Strategies being developed at regional and national levels.

In Action 1.1: Building AIR innovation ecosystem in marine technologies and blue biotechnologies we propose to add:

• Training (Development of educational and training programs to support the development of skilled human capital on Blue Technologies)

In Action 1.2: AIR blue (bio)technologies research and science networks:

• Promote Farm2Fork and MedFish4Ever initiatives

• Encouragement of clustering, especially of quadruple helix

ITALY:

In relation to Action 1.1 we propose to add:

• supporting partnerships to develop, connect or make complementary use of testing and demonstration facilities to accelerate market uptake and scale up of innovation solutions in shared Smart Specialisation priority areas;

• increasing the capacity of AIR innovation eco-systems to participate jointly in global value chains as well as the capacity to participate in partnerships for the AIR.

In Action 1.2 we propose to widen the impact of the action as follows: […] initiatives for sharing research infrastructure for common projects i.e. shared (bio)technology testing facilities, impact of climate change (saltwater intrusion, coastal erosion, subsidence, etc.)

Action 1.3 should be linked to the sustainable fishery, aquaculture and blue biotech, which can have remarkable benefits from the digitalization and interconnected digital innovation hubs jointly mobilizing research/academia, industry, policy actors and civil society

SERBIA: improvement of macro regional impacts and implementation of activities

* + 1. **Are there any additional ideas how the listed challenges could be addressed by the EUSAIR concerning the thematic field of Topic 1? Please remain within the parameters of macro-regional relevance, EU policies compliance and EUSAIR territory and scope.**

GREECE: Maritime sector promotion of technologies for the reduction of emissions and fuel consumption. For example, the use of Artificial Intelligence for the optimization of vessel voyages or “cold ironing” during the vessels' stay in port.

ITALY: Action 1.4 Net zero yachting and marina

• build a common policy framework to support the green transition of yachts and marina;

• development of sharing technology solutions to boost the green transition of leisure boating, in particular through the upgrade of existing yachts.

Action 1.5 Automation & Robotics for maritime application

• build a common policy framework to support the commercial use of drones at sea;

• development of shared technology solutions to boost the application of automated and robotised solutions in the maritime sectors.

SERBIA**:** Through the EU policies

## Topic 2: Fisheries and aquaculture

### Challenges

* + 1. **Please prioritise the challenges/opportunities provided in the initial policy paper to reflect how relevant they are as regards the added value of being tackled by EUSAIR. *(1 being the most important, other follow in the numerical order)***

*In the Adriatic-Ionian Region there is:*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Ranking*** | | | | | ***Countries marked the challenges/opportunities by importance*** |
| ***MN*** | ***NM*** | ***GR*** | ***IT*** | ***SER*** |
| *1* | *N/A* | *2* | *1* | *N/A* | *Adriatic-Ionian Seas suffer from overfishing. In the Mediterranean the proportion of overfished stocks decreased from 88 % in 2014 to 75 % in 2018, which shows results from joined efforts as well as the need for such efforts to continue. The situation of many stocks remains critical as in 2018 more than 80 % of scientifically assessed stocks are exploited above maximum sustainable yield (MSY) levels, according to the STECF. As a result of countries efforts and GFCM a first Fisheries Restricted Area (FRA) was established in 2017 in Adriatic Sea and became permanent in 2021. In order to achieve MSY for the main commercial stocks in the Adriatic Sea, in 2019 the GFCM adopted a multiannual management plan for demersal fishery in GSA 17-18 and in 2021 a multiannual plan for small pelagic stock in the Adriatic Sea was adopted. It will be fundamental to monitor the application of these plans in order to achieve MSY and resource conservation* |
| *3* | *N/A* | *3* | *4* | *N/A* | *There is a need to improve fishing fleets and gear efficiency and sustainability. increasing the use of selective gear and new, less polluting engines* |
| *2* | *3* | *4* | *6* | *3* | *There is still a problem of data collection and missing data concerning the fish stock assessment. The culture of compliance, data quality* *and the monitoring, control and surveillance capacity have to be improved in many Adriatic-Ionian countries.* |
| *4* | *N/A* | *5* | *2* | *N/A* | *There is need to address socio-economic challenges related to the reduction of fishing effort in order to achieve MSY. An innovative solution could be to introduce the mechanism of fishing quotas in order to reduce overfishing. Other viable strategies include combining fishing activities with tourism and considering the positive impact of fishing for the conservation of the sea (ghost gear policy, Salvamare decree)* |
| *6* | *N/A* | *1* | *3* | *N/A* | *As experiences from other sea basins demonstrate, the economic performance of the primary fishery production increases as fish stocks recover. In that regard and with growing demand and market prices, the Adriatic-Ionian basin has economic potential.* |
|  | *2* | *6* | *5* | *1* | *On the other hand, aquaculture production continues to grow, making the overall sustainability of the sector even more important. Effort will be needed to emphasize the positive aspect of aquaculture products and their sustainability* |
| *5* | *1* | *7* | *7* | *2* | *The compliance of non-EU countries with EU Acquis is of strategic importance.* |

* + 1. **Are there any suggestions for reformulation/specification of the challenges provided in the**

**initial policy paper to reflect how important you find them for your country’s cooperation in EUSAIR?**

NORTH MACEDONIA: The focus has been given to the maritime fisheries, and their related activities, land locked countries are limited in participating.

SLOVENIA: There is a need to improve fishing fleets and gear efficiency and sustainability” does not go together. Reformulate the sentence is required as: “There is an urgent need for the fishing fleets to restructure and to improve the fishing gear to be more sustainable in the long-term - environmentally, socially and economically”.

GREECE:

Fisheries

1. Small-scale coastal fishing has a particular added value for EUSAIR Macroregion due to its role concerning other pillars as well (e.g. environment and tourism).

2. New technologies, and specialized training, is needed.

3. The impact on sector related to climate change and alien species.

Aquaculture

1. The completion of spatial planning will allow the further development of aquaculture and other activities in the marine area, given that the activities coexisted (e.g. tourism).

2. Providing long-term development opportunities that contribute to strengthening the socio-economic fabric of the region.

3. Expansion of cultivated species and utilization of species production potential for purposes other than human nutrition.

ITALY: Please consider the integrations in the table ref. 2.1.1. Moreover, in order to increase the competitiveness of the aquaculture, we ask to take into consideration also the need to facilitate the complicated authorization process for landbased fish farming system and investment support practices with the identification of internal areas, allocated zone for aquaculture (AZA), to facilitate access and reduce administrative charges and timescales for operators.

SERBIA: Lack of participation of landlocked countries.

* + 1. **Is there another challenge concerning the thematic field of *Topic 2: Fisheries and aquaculture* for which you see an added value of being addressed at EUSAIR level? The challenge should be specific to the EUSAIR territory and scope.**

MONTENEGRO:

FISHERIES Some additional challenges for fisheries to be added in existing list could be:

1. Low level of education in the fisheries human capital (especially in the older generations), insufficient training, low level of adaptation to new fisheries concepts / activities
2. Impact on sector related to growing number of Invasive Alien Species, climate change and growing conflict for maritime space with other users
3. Need to bring innovative solutions on fishery practices to minimise the production of litter, as well as selective fishing gears and other innovative actions that reduce the effects of fishing on the environment.

Note: rich freshwater component with numerous lakes and rivers constitutes the macroregion very promising for the development of fisheries activities. In that regard inland fisheries component should be more elaborated because of importance to all microregion and especially because of existing gaps between countries with and without access at the sea are apparent and the strategy must include common actions in that regard.

AQUACULTURE Challenges related to aquaculture, apart of one statement, are not elaborated at all. So there is need for list to be filled.

Some additional challenges for aquaculture to be added in existing list could be:

1. Low rate of adaptation to institutionalized spatial planning, the fact that the existing areas designated for aquaculture are fully occupied, the conflicts with other uses of the sea and coastal line (e.g. tourism) provide limited spatial possibilities for coastal marine aquaculture development.
2. Despite the progress made in the legislation, there is still a time-consuming and complex licensing system as well as problems of economic nature due to lack of liquidity and low access to credit.
3. The sector is threatened by the fact that there are delays in timely enforcement and implementation of a stable and up-to-date operating framework for the industry, global warming and climate change, and pollution of the environment
4. There is need to diversify the industry with new species and offshore technology with the aim of expanding existing demand and penetrating new markets.
5. Aquaculture activities must be environmentally sustainable in the long-term and to be managed in a way that is consistent with the objectives of achieving economic, social and employment benefits, and of contributing to the availability of food supplies.

NORTH MACEDONIA: Recreational fishing and fishing tourism

ITALY: Need to prevent and reduce pollution due to marine litter, microplastic, pesticides, antibiotics in the area;

* Need to improve sustainability and circularity in the aquaculture sector and the fish processing value chain also through innovation related to products and processes;
* Need for skills development;
* Need for a more effective harmonisation with the EU regulatory framework, technical cooperation.

SERBIA: Promotion of recreational fishing and linked activities

### Objectives

The **objective** of the 2014 Action Plan was updated in the initial policy paper:

*Strengthening* ***fisheries*** *in the region through:*

* *Better management and sustainable exploitation of fish stocks. Improvement of data collection and fish stock assessment. Harmonization with EU regulations & international organizations. More efficient and sustainable fishing fleets and gear.*
* *Compliance & implementation of measures to combat illegal, unreported, unregulated fisheries and elimination of destructive fishing practices.*
* *Utilization of Unwanted and Unavoidable catches and discards.*
* *Improvement of professional skills of fishermen.*

*Strengthening* ***aquaculture*** *in the region through:*

* *Increase of aquaculture production. Improvement of productivity, quality, environmental sustainability and diversification in aquaculture.*
* *Introduction of new species, use of alternative raw materials for feed production, new farming technologies, use of advanced processing technologies and innovative actions on traceability.*
* *Improvement of the image and competitiveness of farmed products including the promotion of initiatives on marketing standards and healthy nutritional habits*
* *Acquisition and improvement of professional skills.*

*sound use of the rich high-quality renewable energy resources (wind, solar PV, bioenergy, geothermal, hydro) in the region and improve energy efficiency to comply with Paris Agreement and the Union 2030 energy and climate framework.*

* + 1. **Are there any suggestions for their reformulation/specification? Please, consider also the different trends in blue growth/blue economy policy accompanying the objectives.**

MONTENEGRO:

• Improvement of sustainable aquaculture and strengthening capacity to adapt to climate change

• Enhancement of genetic diversity of farmed aquatic species (fish, molluscs and crustaceans).

SLOVENIA:

- Initiatives to attract the younger generation for the profession of fishermen towards the new activity such as pesca-tourism.

- Finding the innovative solutions for value added short chains.

- Improving innovative technologies and methods in the sector. (Restructuring the fishing fleets to move away from energy-intensive, environmentally destructive fishing vessels in the long-term: environmentally, socially and economically.

- Finding the innovative solutions for value added short chains for fishery and aquaculture.

- Increase of aquaculture production by the maintenance of the fishing nets.

GREECE:

- Creation of a network of protected fishing areas,

- Contribution of research to the creation of more selective fishing tools.

- New types of aquacultures including algae, pharmaceuticals, food, and energy production. The introduction of new species in aquaculture must avoid non-indigenous species that can be invasive in the AIR region. Special effort must be made on development of species for purposes other than nutrition.

ITALY:

We propose to better specify the need:

• for more selective gears;

• to promote the role of women in the fishery sector;

• to improve the integration and consideration of aquaculture in the framework of coastal activities and in particular in maritime spatial planning;

• to consider aquaculture as one of the fundamental activities in order to achieve decarbonisation (for example mussels farming and so forth).

**1.2.2 See proposed additional challenges under point 1.1.3. Additional objectives can be added accordingly.**

### Key stakeholders

* + 1. **Which are the most relevant national/regional (e.g. national/regional institutions, agencies, others) and international (e.g. networks, associations, organisations, partnerships) stakeholders to be involved in order to reach most efficiently the objectives of the Topic 2. (objectives provided in point 2.2.1)?**

MONTENEGRO: Line ministries (Ministry for agriculture forestry and water management, Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism, Ministry of Science and Technological Development…) Municipalities, Scientific organizations, universities and institutes (Institute of Marine biology) Fishermen and aquaculture associations, NGO for protection of nature, Chamber of Commerce.

NORTH MACEDONIA: Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and water Economy, Ministry for environment and Physical Planning, scientific institutions, aquaculture producers.

SLOVENIA: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Ministry of Environment, Ministry for Science, non-Governmental organizations in the field aquaculture, research and scientific organisations, institutes, chambers (of Commerce, Agriculture, Forestry).

GREECE:

* Competent ministries (Ministry of Rural Development and Food, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy)
* Hellenic Aquaculture Producers Organization (HAPO)
* Fishermen associations
* Protected Area Management Units (former Management Bodies)
* Coast guard
* Research Institutes (In Greece: HCMR, Fisheries Research Institute) and Universities
* NGOs (in Greece: WWF, iSea, Pelagos, MOm, and others)
* International organizations and treaties (Barcelona Convention through its Regional Action Centres, ACCOBAMS, Bern Convention, etc)

ITALY: It should be created the conditions for ensuring more synergies between EUSAIR partners/actors with the ones from the same Adriatic Ionian macroregion joining the:

a) BLUEMED initiative;

b) WESTMED initiative;

c) the CSAs and other projects funded by the Horizon EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and waters by 2030”;

d) the new PPP sustainable blue economy co-founded by the EU Commission with cluster 6 of Horizon EU.

Moreover we suggest the following typologies of SHs:

- Local/regional and national public authorities;

- FLAGs

- regional and local development agencies;

- chambers of commerce;

- fishery and aquaculture associations;

- SME- enterprises, cooperatives and consortia;

- fishermen associations and fishery and aquaculture producer organisations;

- universities and research institutions;

- cluster management education and training organizations.

SERBIA: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management; Ministry of Environmental Protection; Chamber of Commerce; scientific institutions; aquaculture producers; processors of fisheries products.

### Relevant policies

## **The following policies, regulations, directives, initiatives etc. were identified as relevant for *Topic 2: Fisheries and aquaculture*. Please also think about the funding opportunities related to these policies. Which are the most relevant?**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Most***  ***relevant*** | ***Ranking*** | | ***Some countries ranked policies, regulations, directives, initiatives etc.* *by importance, some only marked the ones deemed most relevant*** |
| ***NM*** | ***IT*** |
| *4X (SER,GR,MN,SLO)* | *1* | *1* | *Common Fisheries Policy and revised fisheries control system* |
| *3X (GR,MN,SLO)* | *N/A* | *2* | *GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea* |
| *4X (SER,GR,MN,SLO)* | *2* | *3* | *Strategic Guidelines for the sustainable development of EU aquaculture* |
| *3X (GR,MN,SLO)* | *N/A* | *6* | *EU Water Framework Directive* |
| *3X (GR,MN,SLO)* | *N/A* | *7* | *Marine Strategy Framework Directive* |
| *2X (GR,SLO)* | *N/A* | *8* | *EU Nitrates Directive (Council Directive 91/676/EEC)* |
| *4X (SER,GR,MN,SLO)* | *4* | *4* | *EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030* |
| *4X (SER,GR,MN,SLO)* | *3* | *5* | *Farm to fork Strategy* |

## **Is there another policy, or initiative, to be mentioned?**

SLOVENIA: Circular economy

GREECE: MedFish4Ever

ITALY:

* The revised Bioeconomy strategy (2018);
* Blue Transformation roadmap 2022-2023 (FAO).

### Actions

There are two **Actions** foreseen in the initial policy paper:

***Action 2.1: Sustainable and resilient fisheries***

* *Support for harmonisation of integrated management and monitoring efforts to comply with regional GFCM schemes and EU acquis (including scientific cooperation) addressing sustainability, vessel and equipment compliance, alien species management and illegal practices.*
* *AI inter-branch organisation bringing together fish producers, processors and marketers to improve the coordination of marketing activities and to develop measures of interest for the whole sector. Encouragement for creation of producer organisations and associations of producer organisations on national/regional level.*
* *AI small-scale fisheries strategy to encourage networking of fishing associations; development of cooperatives; foster efficient value chains; implement capacity building in sustainability, new technology and practices as well as funding opportunities; explore and improve possibilities for joint marketing, logistics and infrastructure.*

***Action 2.2: Sustainable and resilient aquaculture***

* *Cooperation on enabling legal and administrative frameworks, which includes licencing procedures, monitoring of the activity, data exchange, harmonisation efforts.*
* *Networking and clustering initiatives so as to further unlock innovation potential, improve knowledge exchange, introduce innovative practices and technology (up-scaling) to the sector to improve sustainability, efficiency, competitiveness, including the introduction of additional species and purposes (pharmacy, cosmetics)marketing and logistics efficiency*
* *Promotion of certification as a sustainability driver, building awareness on production and consumption side, improving marketing activities and cooperate on introduction into legal framework.*

## Please indicate the relevance of each Action to reflect how important it is for your country's cooperation in EUSAIR.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * **Relevant** | **Fairly relevant** | **Not relevant** | ***Countries ranked Actions by importance*** |
| * *4X (IT,GR,SLO,MN)* | * *2x (NM,SER)* |  | *Action 2.1: Sustainable and resilient fisheries* |
| * *6X (SER,IT,GR,SLO,MN,NM)* |  |  | *Action 2.1: Sustainable and resilient aquaculture* |

## **Are there any suggestions for reformulation/specification of the Actions provided in the initial policy paper.**

MONTENEGRO:

Action 2.1: Sustainable and resilient fisheries

* The identification of existing technologies, best practises and their potential for use in the fishing sector
* The conservation and management of natural resources through cross-border regional cooperation or at sea-basin level;
* Improvement of scientific cooperation in terms of: fisheries management, monitoring of alien species, as well as restoration actions to enhance habitat features caused by fisheries.
* The diversification of activities for fishermen.

Action 2.2: Sustainable and resilient aquaculture

* Promotion of **deferent** certification **schemes** as a sustainability driver, building awareness on production and consumption side, improving marketing activities **and standards, promote healthy nutrition habits** and cooperate on introduction into legal framework.
* Acquisition and improvement of professional skill

NORTH MACEDONIA: Encouragement for creation of producer organisations and associations of producer organisations on national/regional level not only for Fishery, opportunity for establishment PO Aquaculture should be provided.

GREECE: For both 2.1 &2.2:

* Research and promotion of digitizing operations from harvest to distribution using IoT, data science, and predictive microbiology.

For 2.2:

* Research and promotion for new fish products & new species in aquaculture.

ITALY: With reference to sub Action 2.1 we propose the following integrations:

* Support for harmonisation of integrated management and monitoring efforts to comply with regional GFCM schemes and EU acquis (including scientific cooperation) addressing sustainability, vessel and equipment compliance, alien species management, **management of marine litter** and illegal practices.
* AI small-scale fisheries strategy to encourage networking of fishing associations; development of cooperatives; foster efficient value chains; implement capacity building in sustainability, new technology and practices as well as funding opportunities; explore and improve possibilities for joint marketing, logistics and infrastructure and **financial schemes to support the fishermen’s contribution to reduce the marine litter.**

With reference to sub Action 2.2 we propose the following integrations:

* Cooperation on enabling legal and administrative frameworks, which includes licencing procedures, **adoption of fisheries and aquaculture management plans**, monitoring of the activity, data exchange, harmonisation efforts.
* Networking and clustering initiatives so as to further unlock innovation potential, improve knowledge exchange, introduce innovative practices and technology (upscaling) to the sector to improve sustainability, efficiency, competitiveness, including the introduction of additional species and purposes (pharmacy, cosmetics)marketing and logistics efficiency **and to reduce the impact of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture businesses.**

## **Are there any additional ideas how the listed challenges could be addressed on the EUSAIR level concerning the thematic field of Topic 2? Please remain within the parameters of macro-regional relevance, EU policies compliance and EUSAIR territory and scope.**

ITALY: Strengthening and enhancing the role of fishermen through locally regulated management plans. Managed fishing areas, monitoring and tracking of fishing effort and catches of target species using localization tools and data collection transmission.

SERBIA: To divide Pillar 1 into two subgroups related to importance of fishery and aquaculture

## Topic 3: Maritime and marine governance and services

### Challenges

## **Please indicate the relevance of each challenge provided in the initial policy paper to reflect how relevant they are as regards the added value of being tackled by EUSAIR.**

*In the Adriatic-Ionian Region there is:*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * **Relevant** | **Fairly relevant** | **Not relevant** | ***Countries ranked challenges by importance*** |
| * *4X (IT,GR,SLO,MN)* |  | * *2X (SER,NM)* | *Fishing, aquaculture, shipping, renewable energy, nature conservation and other uses compete for maritime space. The maritime spatial plans were developed to reduce conflicts and create synergies between different activities. The coherence of MSP implementation across borders is needed, even though MSP is not a priority in accession negotiation of WB* |
| * *4X (IT,GR,SLO,MN)* | * *2X (SER,NM)* |  | *Many blue economy sectors have difficulties finding suitably skilled employees, which hampers their growth.* |

## **Are there any suggestions for reformulation/specification of the challenges provided in the initial policy paper to reflect how important you find them for your country’s cooperation in EUSAIR?**

NORTH MACEDONIA: Focus of the Topic 3 is given to maritime, provided challenges/opportunities are not relevant, or fairly relevant for land locked countries

Topic 3 should be reformulated into “Governance and services”.

SLOVENIA:

Horizontal (cross cutting) themes: There is an urgent need for training in the use of new technologies, remote robotics, smart devices, etc. A special new workforce is emerging, which should handle these devices properly. The following challenges also arise:

- access to appropriate training and the extinction of apprenticeships, which is absolutely necessary to continue successfully with certain sectors in the blue economy, especially in the shipping industry (there is a need to revive it; enabling practical training; there are fewer and fewer national ship

- owners); - strengthening cooperation between developed and underdeveloped countries appears as a great potential for new business opportunities;

- give more focus to capitalisation of existing results, implemented activities and projects within the EUSAIR, ADRION, IPA and others;

- inter-pillar systematic cooperation. Additionally, connecting the EUSAIR pillars to other macro-regional strategies;

- motivation of young generation for the Blue economy professions.

GREECE:

- The challenge of the multi-use of marine space by various activities: renewable energy, aquaculture, nature conservation, and tourism. In many cases, there are many obstacles to the current legal frame of each member state to facilitate the multi-use of marine space.

- Also the challenge to strengthen Blue technologies, could contribute to Smart Growth in the region, developing human capital, promoting entrepreneurship, and networks of excellence, among research, public and private sectors, aiming at developing innovative products and services and technology transfer.

ITALY:

* The green and digital transition processes are rooted in the competences, therefore it is necessary to reinforce and create skills (upskilling and reskilling) for achieving transitions;
* New horizontal skills are highly required (hearing, relationship, team working and cultural) to accompany the twin transition

## **Is there another challenge concerning the thematic field of *Topic 3: Maritime and marine governance and services* for which you see an added value of being addressed at EUSAIR level? The challenge should be specific to the EUSAIR territory and scope.**

NORTH MACEDONIA: One specific and important Challenge/opportunity is missing, which is pivotal for the enlargement. Consequently, focus on prioritising and accelerating the implementation of relevant policies in the Adriatic-Ionian region and related challenges of common interest to the EUSAIR territory and scope should be added.

ITALY: The maritime spatial plans should also promote prevention and reduction of pollution due to micro plastic, pesticides, antibiotics etc associated with the activities in the area as we as the local biodiversity protection and regeneration.

### Objectives

The **objective** of the 2014 Action Plan was updated in the initial policy paper:

* *Improved Governance of maritime space.*
* *Improved Skills and career development in blue economy and strengthening of networks of academics, training organisations and professional organisations of maritime sectors in the macro-region.*

## **Are there any suggestions for its reformulation/specification? Please, consider also the different trends in blue growth/blue economy policy accompanying the main objective.**

NORTH MACEDONIA: According the suggestion mentioned above new objective should be added:

* Improved implementation of EUSAIR.
* Improved Governance not only of maritime space. Reformulation of objectives, in order to ensure relevance on the EUSAIR territory and scope.

GREECE:

* Development of national, local, and regional bioeconomy strategy is essential.
* Articulating a comprehensive and specific blue biotechnology policy in Europe, and in particular in macro-region countries, under a wider strategic framework, within an overarching science and technology strategy.

ITALY:

* Increasing the professional skills (upskilling and reskilling) and the quality of research in the marine and maritime sectors contributing to the creation of new job profiles and more chances for blue jobs’ opportunities and strengthening networks among academia, higher technical school, and training bodies also in close partnership with industry.
* Promoting more efficient, environmentally friendly and economically sound employment opportunities in the fisheries / aquaculture industry for younger generations – and women.

This shall be done by creating a comprehensive training and occupational framework in line with the latest sustainable development goals through synergies between education institutions, universities, maritime authorities, and fisheries / aquaculture organisations.

SERBIA: It is needed reformulation of objectives, with goal to cover implementation of EUSAIR activities through the region.

## **See proposed additional challenges under point 1.1.3. Additional objectives can be added accordingly.**

### Key stakeholders

## **Which are the most relevant national/regional (e.g. national/regional institutions, agencies, others) and international (e.g. networks, associations, organisations, partnerships) stakeholders to be involved in order to reach most efficiently the objectives of the Topic 3. (objectives provided in point 3.2.1 and additional ones derived from challenges added under point 3.1.3, if relevant)? Indicative international key stakeholders are already listed in the initial policy paper.**

MONTENEGRO: Line ministries (Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism, Ministry of Economic Development and Tourism, Ministry of Capital Investments, Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Water Management,..) Municipalities, Port authorities, Scientific organizations, Universities and Institutes (Institute of Marine biology), NGO, Chamber of CommercE.

NORTH MACEDONIA: Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and water Economy, Ministry for Environment and Physical Planning, scientific institutions.

GREECE: In the field of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP): Planning Authorities and relevant sectoral Ministries, Regional and Local authorities, economic stakeholder organizations, professional champers, civil society as well as scientific institutes and research centers, academic communities: Ministry Of Environment & Energy, Universities, HCMR Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, FRI (Fisheries Research Institute).

ITALY:

It should be created the conditions for ensuring more synergies between EUSAIR partners/actors with the ones from the same Adriatic Ionian macroregion joining the:

a) BLUEMED initiative;

b) WESTMED initiative;

c) the CSAs and other projects funded by the Horizon EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and waters by 2030”;

d) the new PPP sustainable blue economy co-founded by the EU Commission with cluster 6 of Horizon EU.

Moreover we suggest the following typologies of SHs:

• University;

• Higher Technical Institutes;

• Training – VET;

• Clusters;

• Industry;

• National/Regional Authorities;

• Advisory bodies (MEDAC, AAC, etc).

SERBIA: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management; Ministry of Environmental Protection

### Relevant policies

## **The following policies, regulations, directives, initiatives etc. were identified as relevant for *Topic 3: Maritime and marine governance and services*. Please also think about the funding opportunities related to these policies. Which are the most relevant?**

## ***(Please tick the boxes before the selected policies)***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Most relevant*** | ***Ranking*** | ***Some countries ranked policies, regulations, directives, initiatives etc. by importance, some only marked the ones deemed most relevant*** |
| ***NM*** |
| *3X (IT,GR,MN)* | *N/A (NM)* | *Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning* |
| *3X (IT,GR,MN)* | *N/A (NM)* | *Integrated Coastal Zone Management Protocol and Common Regional Framework for ICZM* |
| *4X (SER,IT,GR,MN)* | *1* | *Territorial agenda 2030 of the European Union: A future for all places* |
| *4X (SER,IT,GR,MN)* | *2* | *European Education Area* |
| *3X (SER,GR,MN)* | *3* | *European Research Area* |

## **Is there another policy, or initiative, to be mentioned?**

GREECE: Sustainable blue economy, EU Green Deal

ITALY:

* European Skills Agenda (including EU Pact for Skills);
* Pact for skills - upskilling shipbuilding and maritime technology workers in Europe;
* Digital Education Plan.

### Actions

There is one **Action** foreseen in the initial policy paper:

***Action 3.1: Governance of maritime space for a sustainable and transparent use of maritime and marine resources***

* *cooperation in implementation of adopted Maritime Spatial Plans to achieve coherent practices across borders*
* *promotion of MSP principles in accession countries*
* *cooperation in adopting clearer legal frameworks for development of Allocated Zones for Aquaculture (AZAs), marine protected areas (MPAs), exploiting deep-sea water and marine mineral resources.*

***Action 3.2 and Action 3.3: Already part of other activities, but in a more specific and focused way. Since these topics did not find their way into the flagships, we propose to skip it from the revised AP.***

## **Are there any suggestions for reformulation/specification of the Action provided in the initial policy paper.**

Activities 3.4. and 3.5 are not transferred to the questionnaire, but they are part of Initial policy paper for TSG 1

MONTENEGRO:

Action 3.4. Promotion of blue skills

• Network of training/education centres/institutes to cooperate in development/sharing of blue skills programmes

• Continuous re-evaluation of competences to meet new skills demands, including digital skills

• Development of programmes for maritime up-skilling or re-skilling

• Building on existing networks (i.e. UniAdrion, Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce) for student-, apprentice-, internship exchange programmes in maritime-related topics EUSAIR Action Plan revision Thematic consultation questionnaire for Pillar 1 TSG 13

Action 3.5. Sustainable and prosperous communities

• Encouragement of networking and exchange between local communities in planning and implementation of best practices leading towards more sustainable and prosperous communities (i.e. combat marine litter pollution, development of fishtourism and ichthyotourism, start-ups and local employment and promotion of partnership working)

• Trans-regional cooperation between community-led local development (CLLD) strategies for actions

NORTH MACEDONIA: Despite comment to skipped of **Action 3.2 Institutional capacity to harmonise standards and Regulations** this Action provide opportunities for better cooperation and development of common understandings and harmonised standards and regulations as well as sharing of best practices. Institutional capacity of the involved public bodies and stakeholders to harmonise standards and regulations is pivotal for implementation of macro-region strategy.

**Action 3.3. Data and knowledge sharing it is also very important for the policy makers** Sharing data

and knowledge among public bodies is important for the efficiency of the public administration and can increase their efficiency.

Proposed action 3.1 is not applicable for land locked countries.

Action 3.2 aims at improving the quality of public services and improving governance mechanisms for international cooperation and is not part of other activities, should not be skipped.

Action 3.3 also should not be skipped, it is very important for the policy makers.

Action 3.2 and 3.3 will provide better collaboration and sharing of knowledge and

experience between the countries in the Region.

Action 3.2 and 3.3 are not part of other activities, the comment for skipping them it is not

relevant.

GREECE: I think the initial Action foreseen in the initial policy, is well formulated and still relevant today

SERBIA: Proposed action 3.1 is not relevant for land locked countries.

Action 3.2 is important for the relevant institutions.

Action 3.3 is important for the important for the policy makers and should remain.

Action 3.2 and 3.3 should stay as separate actions

## **Are there any additional ideas how the listed challenges could be addressed on the EUSAIR level concerning the thematic field of Topic 3? Please remain within the parameters of macro-regional relevance, EU policies compliance and EUSAIR territory and scope.**

NORTH MACEDONIA: Although challenges should be addressed on the EUSAIR level and parameters of macroregional relevance, EU policies compliance and EUSAIR territory and scope, most of proposed actions under this Topic are not applicable for landlocked countries. Challenges and opportunities for non EU countries, and landlocked countries related to this topic (which is related to flagship BOLSTERING CAPACITY BUILDING AND EFFICIENT COORDINATION OF PLANNING AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR IMPROVING MARINE AND MARITIME GOVERNANCE AND BLUE GROWTH SERVICES) are not taken into consideration. Ex. Compliance/adaptation of non-EU countries with EU Acquis.

SLOVENIA: Inclusion of skills development and capacity building for the inter-pillar systematic cooperation in EUSAIR.

ITALY: AIR Pact for Marine and Maritime Skills: Unlock the capacity needed at the regional and local level of the AIR to deliver quality training and mobilise collaborating arrangements in order to anticipate and respond to the fast-changing skill needs of the labour market. Creating partnership among demand and offer of training, industry and Academia/Higher Vocation Training.

SERBIA: Challenges and opportunities for non-EU countries, and landlocked countries related to this topic should be taken into consideration. For example: Alignment with EU Acquis of candidate/potential candidate countries

## Other challenges and Actions

## **Do you have any additional ideas for Challenges or Actions to be addressed by EUSAIR concerning the Pillar 1, not already included under the above-mentioned Topics? Please remain within the parameters of macro-regional relevance, EU policies compliance and EUSAIR territory and scope.**

MONTENEGRO: Since Montenegro coordinating Pillar 1, here would be addressed some challenges from mentioned position based on experiences acquired in the implementation of EUSAIR so far. These challenges are presented during last GB or last TSG 1 meeting and we are now providing them in written:

1. Initial Policy Paper is based on comparing content of the Action Plan 2014, Input from the Flagships Document for our Pillar, and finally Suggested Updates for Revision are based on the content of Flagships. With this approach there is possibility that we are closed in the circle, that means suggested updates are based on Flagships Document, and Flagships Document are based on the priorities from the existing Action Plan 2014. This approach possibly not provide with possibility to include something new to solve some chronic problems of this Pillar, but is somewhat limited by an existing AP.
2. Pillar 1, its priorities, as well as the name itself does not fully reflect all countries of the AI region involved in EUSAIR implementation. Since the beginning of the implementation of the Strategy, the Pillar 1 has faced the challenge of involving countries with limited or no access to the sea. For now, we have 4 such countries out of 10. This pillar as well as its future activities in its Revision need to be addressed in mentioned direction, try to involve all countries equally or to large possible extent.
3. Pillar - Jumbo Pillar. We can characterize Pillar 1 as a Jumbo pillar given the topics covered: Blue technologies, Fisheries and Aquaculture and Maritime and Marine Governance and Services. Also, majority of membership of this pillar coming from field of fisheries and aquaculture and a lot of activity goes in that direction. Potentially other topics were not equally treated, especially Maritime and Marine governance and Services, so it might be good to think about the introduction of sub- groups in this Pillar.

NORTH MACEDONIA: Most of challenges and Actions are proposed regarding marine development and related activities, which are not applicable for landlocked countries. Small part of proposed actions could be addressed for those countries.

Support of non-eu countries in their path to the EU are not sufficient. However, only with strengthen macro-regional cooperation in the region, underlining that with cooperation can be common solutions and common future of the EUSAIR.

The potential of the Strategy to be a relevant and effective tool in facilitating the enlargement process and can serve to strengthen and accelerate the EU enlargement process by supporting candidate countries in supporting national reforms aimed at implementing EU Acquis and EUSAIR priorities. Therefore, more challenges and actions related to cooperation should be provided.

SLOVENIA: For the proposed new pillar: Social innovation: Demographic challenges and Labour Shortages (EUSAIR as other macro-regional strategies is also facing demographic changes, which include the ageing of society, low birth rates, population migrations from poorer countries to wealthier ones, the lack of specialised knowledge and skills for handling the new technology by older population, motivation of young generation for the Blue economy professions.

SERBIA: Upgrade of further activities to all EUSAIR countries

## EUSAIR governance

## **Please comment on your experience of engaging with the TSG1 or with EUSAIR in general in terms of its effectiveness.**

MONTENEGRO:

* TSGs role and process should be more clearly defined.
* All TSG need to follow a coordinated approach.

NORTH MACEDONIA: EUSAIR have possibility to embed all countries in the region.

Concerning the work of TSG 1 I think that on-line meetings are good for short coordination and clarification of some topics or when is not possible to organize meetings in person (which was the situation with Covid -19 restrictions) otherwise on line meetings are not fruitful and it is not given opportunity to get insight the certain work.

GREECE:

* Lack of communication and interest by some TSG Members resulted in delays in the implementation of the strategy and actions.
* It is essential to enhance the cooperation between the involved public authorities of the macro-region.
* Low interest and participation by TSG members in events, workshops and meetings of the Pillar.
* Low interaction between TSG members among themselves, as well as with other Governance Structures (ex. Facility Point Project Partners)

SERBIA: Activities of TSG 1 are focused on research and science, no activities related to macroregional relevance, EU policies compliance and EUSAIR territory and scope, no possibility for embedding and collaboration of all countries in the region.

## **Do you have something to suggest in terms of improving the functioning of the TSG 1 or EUSAIR in general?**

MONTENEGRO:

* Professionalize the PC function

One of Principles of the Strategy is that there is no additional administration. On the other hand, the amount of work for pillar coordinators increase. Over the years, it requires more knowledge and skills in different fields to adequately answer to the specific tasks. In this regard there is suggestion that the function of PC needs to professionalized, and that each country has its own TSG members.

* Coordination of Specific Pillars to be rotating

Over the years, the impression that countries that coordinate the pillars and responsible for their implementation are obtained and they have a high degree of ownership (such as Greece and Montenegro for Pillar 1). For better implementation of the strategy, it is necessary to enable rotation in coordination of specific Pillar.

NORTH MACEDONIA: To organize capacity building for the EUSAIR functioning. To organize capacity building for TSG members to highlight the pillars, objectives, topics and their role in the strategic approach. Consequently, more collaboration and increasing awareness should be promoted.

Taking into consideration that Action Plan is very important document it should be committed adequate time for analysis and discussion within the TSG. It should be organized additional – specific meeting where action plan will be present and discussed. In addition, in the Action Plan focus is given to the marine activities, therefore land lock countries are limited in participation on the related actions.

GREECE:

* Appointment of TSG representative directly involved and actively participating in the themes/activities of their Pillar. A suggestion would be the TSG representatives from each state could be full-time designated by the authorities for engaging with EUSAIR.
* Better communication among the EUSAIR implementers and stakeholders.
* Capitalization of practical knowledge, given that it is necessary to make knowledge available for socio-economic use within the region aims to create competitive products, services, processes, entrepreneurial activity, and social cohesion.

SERBIA: Capacity building for the TSG members to improve strategic planning and to make the EUSAIR a place for regional discussion.

* To divide science approach and institutional functioning within TSG 1