



PIRAEUS MUNICIPALITY

## **BLUE GROWTH INITIATIVE: INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENTREPRENEURS IN BLUE ECONOMY**

### **Concept Note**

The City of Piraeus is situated on the coastline of Attica Region, hosting one of the most important commercial, passengers and cruises ports of the Mediterranean. The Municipality of Piraeus with a population of around 165.000 citizens is the metropolitan, market and administrative center of Piraeus Prefecture that includes except from the homonymous municipality, 6 more municipalities-suburbs with a total population of almost half a million inhabitants. The rich history and cultural heritage of the City from antiquity till the modern era is interwoven with the sea as an intermodal trade and passengers hub and a significant industrial center. Nowadays, while maritime activities are expanding, Piraeus is facing major economic, environmental and societal challenges and problems similar to other European cities in the field of unemployment, education, urban poverty, social exclusion, waste and resources management, air pollution, brownfields management and industrial space abandonment. Responding to these needs, Piraeus Municipality has formulated an integrated development Strategy that is based on the exploitation of opportunities that Blue Growth is providing and in setting as vision “to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs to create sustainable economic, social, and environmental growth in the maritime sector”.

Within this Strategic Framework and in line with EU2020, Cohesion and Adriatic-Ionian Macro-regional Policies, in 2014, the City of Piraeus put in place Blue Growth Initiative. A first-established at EU level innovation competition for the maritime economy (Blue Economy), with the objective to bolster traditional economic activities related to the maritime economy with innovative business ideas. Through a call for proposals, Blue Growth Initiative aims to inspire and help young entrepreneurs realise innovative concepts and develop jobs and services related to marine and freshwater resources. Blue Growth Initiative includes 4 stages, from innovative proposals submission and evaluation to an award ceremony and a six months incubation programme. Till today the initiative has contributed in the creation of new jobs and businesses, encouraged the entrepreneurship and promoted innovative business concepts related to the maritime economy and the values of sustainable entrepreneurship, contributing thus to the improvement of entrepreneurial mentality with socio-economic benefits and the enhancement of business activity. Mostly, Blue Growth Initiative has established and leads the Marinescape, a human ecosystem (comprising partners, sponsors, advisors, academia) for Blue Economy that constitutes a vital organisation working effectively towards the achievement of BGI's goals.

Based on a participatory approach and relied on its successful results Blue Growth Initiative was awarded in May 2017 as an URBACT Best Practice (please see further details at <http://www.bluegrowth.gr/>). The City of Piraeus is seeking, with enthusiasm, to continue by integrating Blue Growth Initiative to its newly established Blue Growth Strategy and wishes to share its practices and experiences, and to exchange knowledge with other European cities working on Innovation and Blue Economy.

URBACT III Transfer Networks (<http://urbact.eu/tags/transfer-network>) can provide such an opportunity to Cities wishes to collaborate with the Municipality of Piraeus for the above mentioned scope. At this phase we are seeking initially for two partners to form a proposal for entering the Phase I (six-months preparatory) of Transfer Networks. Therefore, we would kindly like to invite Cities interested in the promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship in sectors and branches of Blue Economy to express their interest for submitting a joint Proposal to a Transfer Network based on Blue Growth Initiative.