

BlueGrowth Initiative Summary

The problem and proposed solutions

Piraeus is a city facing common problems with other European cities in the field of unemployment, education, urban poverty, social exclusion, environmental issues. Among city's challenges are issues like the digital economy, the smart city vision as the innovation is a cross-cutting theme in Piraeus development agenda. As a port city, Piraeus has a wide number of dynamic activities in the maritime sector. So, the BG constitutes an effort that has a significant contribution in tackling the existing problems and pursuing the challenges since it contributes to the development of jobs, thereafter to the growth of city, the urban poverty, the simulation of business community, the promotion of innovation and ICT, the sustainable development and the improvement of skills.

Among others, BG offers innovation and business strategies applied regarding Blue Economy, acceleration of knowledge transfer to companies, access to new production and technological processes, strengthening of cooperation in the fields of research, education and practice, creating channels for exchanging knowledge, improvement of skills and knowledge in Blue Economy, creation of jobs, continuous development of BG's Marinescape.

Timeframe, dates, important milestones

BG's stages are the below mentioned:

- 1st Stage – Proposals submission (June-October)
- 2nd Stage – Proposals evaluation (October-November)
- 3rd Stage – Award ceremony (December)
- 4th Stage- Incubation programme (January-May)

Link to the specific strategy

BG is linked to **EU Blue Growth strategy** which supports sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors and recognizes the role of maritime contribution to achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

In **Greek Partnership Agreement** it is underlined the significant potential of Blue Economy in Greece for the exploitation of which it is necessary the development of enterprises in the wider region of Piraeus, where the entire maritime sector will be settled in order to convert it into a competitive pole for the international navigation. In **Attica's Region Smart Specialization Strategy** and **Attica's Regional Operational Plan** Blue Economy is identified as one of the 3 privileged areas of specialization which contributes to the enhancement of the innovation activity in the Region. The **Integrated Urban Intervention Plan of Municipality of Piraeus** and the **Municipality's Integrated Territorial Investment** aim at the deployment of the entrepreneurship and the support of startups for the promotion of innovation in Blue Economy and the development of the city as an international business center with activities in Blue Economy.

Main outputs for achieving objective, innovative elements

The main outputs for achieving BG's objectives are:

- The cooperation among Marinescape members.
- The participation of the Marinescape members in the advisory board in order to ensure their active involvement in the development of BG.
- The input of mentors from the Marinescape providing to all trainees an integrated mentoring based on scientific knowledge, market needs and business opportunities.
- The implementation of community networking events for the identification of business ideas and the promotion of BG.

The innovative elements of BG are the following:

- BG is the **first-established at EU level innovation competition for Blue Economy**, with a vision to strengthen the activities of maritime economy with innovative business ideas.
- BG is being implemented by the **partnership of public and private sector**¹.
- BG leads the **Marinescape, a human ecosystem**² around the Blue Economy, working effectively towards the achievement of BG's goals.
- **Members from the Marinescape participate in advisory board and in incubation stage** contributing to the promotion and the development of BG.

Results achieved, monitoring

The **results** that have been achieved until now are the following:

- Establishment of 10 startups
- Creation of 55 jobs
- Implementation of 25 community networking events
- 1 of BG' s awarded startups has been funded by HORIZON 2020
- 2 successful start-ups incubated by BG went to PortXL³ for acceleration process

In order to **monitor** the implementation of BG, a scorecard system – applied on an annual basis – has been developed. Specific indicators are defined for measuring the results of BG-result indicators⁴ and for assessing the degree of achievement of BG's objectives-output indicators⁵. For each one, a target value is defined, which is assessed annually. Through this process, areas of improvement are identified and remedial measures are taken if needed.

BG was awarded during the conference of European Maritime Day 2015 by European Environment Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, **as a successful good practice** and SAP⁶ declares that **BG has great potential to grow into a sustainable organization and deliver on its vision to positively impact people, planet, and profits in the maritime economy.**

Potential for re-use and improvement

BG is linked to strategies that contribute to the development plan of Greece, where the importance of the Blue Economy and its impact is emphasized. BG is a practice that may be **re-used** by other stakeholders who wish to get involved in that sector. Also, BG can easily be adapted by other cities even in case of differentiating some elements like the focus area of BG.

BG has the potential to be **improved and expanded** to other world regions. Efforts to this direction and discussions with other port cities have already started. Multiple options for BG expansion have been considered, providing the advantage of building the BG brand in a wider market and connecting members of the Marinescape ecosystem globally.

¹ Municipality of Piraeus and Aephoria.net

² partners, sponsors, advisors, academia

³ A mentorship driven open innovation program focusing on port related industries, ranging from start-ups and spinouts to SMEs and multinationals

⁴ Measuring the contribution of operations to specific objective, p.ex contribution to the promotion of innovative entrepreneurship in the maritime economy

⁵ Measuring the degree of an activity of a policy measure, p.ex number of new start-up

⁶ a German multinational software corporation that makes enterprise software to manage business operations and customer relations