

MINUTES OF MEETING

Day 1 – 13 November 2025

09:30 – 10:00 | Registration, Welcome Coffee and Press Conference

The event commenced with the registration of participants at Congress Cahul, Republic of Moldova. During this session, participants received the official meeting materials and engaged in informal discussions, which facilitated initial exchanges among project partners, invited experts, institutional representatives, and local stakeholders.

The welcome coffee created a networking-friendly environment, contributing to relationship-building and knowledge exchange prior to the formal sessions.

In parallel, a press conference was organized to enhance the visibility of the BlueC project. The press conference focused on presenting the project's objectives, expected results, and relevance for climate change mitigation through blue carbon ecosystems. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of protecting aquatic and marine ecosystems in the Black Sea Basin and strengthening cross-border cooperation.

10:00 – 10:30 | Opening Session and Welcome Speeches

The meeting was officially opened by **Mr. Artur Nebunu**, representative of **PP3 – ECC Cahul**, who welcomed all participants on behalf of the host organization. In his opening remarks, Mr. Nebunu highlighted the significance of the meeting as a platform for reviewing project progress, presenting achieved results, and facilitating dialogue between scientific experts, authorities, and stakeholders.

He emphasized that the meeting contributes to improving coordination among partners and ensuring alignment with the project objectives, planned activities, and expected outputs, as defined in the approved **Application Form**.

Welcome speeches were delivered by the project partners:

- **LP – Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University** emphasized the strategic importance of the BlueC project in addressing climate change challenges through the protection, monitoring, and restoration of blue carbon ecosystems, highlighting the scientific and capacity-building dimensions of the project.
- **PP2 – NGO “Bourgas Regional Tourism Association”** underlined the importance of stakeholder involvement, public awareness, and the integration of environmental protection measures with sustainable tourism and regional development.
- **PP4 – Institute of Marine Biology of the NAS of Ukraine** highlighted the role of marine and coastal scientific research in improving the understanding of ecosystem dynamics and supporting evidence-based environmental management in the Black Sea region.

All speakers stressed the value of transnational cooperation, interdisciplinary approaches, and knowledge exchange as key elements for achieving sustainable and long-lasting project results.

10:30 – 11:30 | Partner Presentations – LP Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University

This session focused on the presentation of activities and results implemented by the Lead Partner.

Doç. Dr. Can Burak Özkal presented **Training of Trainers – Activity 1**, detailing the methodology applied for identifying target groups and designing training activities. The presentation explained the criteria used to select relevant stakeholder categories and the structure of the training modules, ensuring that capacity-building actions are tailored to project needs and stakeholder expectations.

Doç. Dr. Deniz Akın Şahbaz presented **Training of Trainers – Activity 2**, focusing on the evaluation of training results. The presentation outlined the assessment tools used to measure learning outcomes, participant feedback mechanisms, and indicators applied to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of training activities.

Alp Tuncer introduced the **project website** (www.blue-c.org), presenting its structure, functionalities, and role as a central communication and dissemination platform. The presentation also included an overview of survey results, highlighting

stakeholder perceptions, awareness levels, and key findings related to blue carbon ecosystems and marine environmental issues.

Prof. Dr. Lokman Hakan Tecer presented the **marine litter monitoring results**, emphasizing the interconnection between marine pollution, ecosystem degradation, and climate change. The presentation provided an overview of applied monitoring methodologies, preliminary findings, and their relevance for policy development and environmental management.

Dr. Şevki Danacıoğlu concluded the session with a presentation on **mapping and modeling activities**, explaining the technical approaches used for spatial analysis, data integration, and modeling. The presentation highlighted how these tools contribute to understanding ecosystem distribution and assessing blue carbon potential.

11:45 – 13:00 | Partner and Expert Presentations

The session continued with presentations from other project partners and invited experts, further broadening the scientific and practical perspective of the meeting.

Fani Semerdjieva (PP2 – NGO “Bourgass Regional Tourism Association”) presented the results of the opinion survey conducted in Bulgaria. The presentation outlined public perceptions, awareness levels, and key findings relevant to stakeholder engagement, communication strategies, and awareness-raising activities.

Yevhen Sokolov (PP4 – Institute of Marine Biology of the NAS of Ukraine) presented on **spatial modelling and mapping of seagrass habitats in the Northwestern Black Sea**, emphasizing the ecological importance of seagrass meadows for carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, and ecosystem resilience.

Galina Minicheva (PP4) delivered a presentation on the **morphofunctional assessment of macroalgae**, explaining how macroalgal indicators can be applied to monitor the ecological status of the Ukrainian Danube Avandelta and support environmental assessment frameworks.

Prof. Costel Stanca, PhD, Director of the Training and Innovation Maritime Centre of Excellence, Constanta Maritime University, addressed **current challenges related to climate change**, focusing on regional impacts, adaptation needs, and the role of scientific research, education, and innovation in strengthening resilience.

The discussions following the presentations emphasized the strong interlinkages between scientific research, environmental monitoring, and policy development.

14:00 – 15:00 | Module 2 – Local Presentations

The afternoon session focused on local and national perspectives related to aquatic ecosystems and environmental management.

Mr. Gabriel Gîlcă (PP3 ECC Cahul, “Apele Moldovei” National Agency) presented a comprehensive overview of the environmental characteristics and main challenges of the river basin of the Republic of Moldova, highlighting its connections with the Black Sea Basin.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Liliana Ceclu (Cahul State University “B.P. Hasdeu”) highlighted the role of education and capacity building within the BlueC project, emphasizing the integration of blue carbon topics into academic curricula and lifelong learning activities.

Prof. Andrei Şeremet (PP3 ECC Cahul) presented on aquatic plant ecosystems in **Lake Beleu and Lake Manta**, underlining their ecological functions, biodiversity value, and relevance for blue carbon storage.

Senior Researcher Polina Casîr (Biosphere Reserve “Prutul de Jos”) presented research findings on aquatic plants in the reserve basin, emphasizing conservation challenges and monitoring needs.

Mrs. Galina Macrîchi (Cahul Environmental Protection Inspection) addressed environmental protection measures and the role of aquatic plants in absorbing blue carbon, stressing the importance of regulatory frameworks and enforcement.

Mr. Alexandru Lupan (Border Police of the Republic of Moldova) presented on the protection of border zones and protected areas, emphasizing inter-institutional cooperation.

15:00 – 16:00 | General Assessment and Q&A

An extensive discussion session allowed participants to reflect on the presentations, exchange experiences, and address questions related to project implementation, scientific methodologies, and policy implications. The discussion highlighted opportunities for improved coordination, data sharing, and joint actions among institutions and stakeholders.

Day 2 – 14 November 2025

09:30 – 10:00 | Registration and Morning Coffee

10:00 – 10:30 | Module 3 – Blue Carbon Education Programme (BCEP)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Liliana Ceclu and **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Liudmila Roșca-Sadurschi** presented the Blue Carbon Education Programme, detailing implemented educational activities, achieved results, and lessons learned. The session emphasized the role of education in raising awareness and fostering long-term behavioral change related to environmental protection.

10:30 – 11:30 | Environmental Projects Implemented

Representatives of local institutions presented environmental projects implemented at community level. The presentations showcased good practices in ecosystem protection, community involvement, and education, demonstrating strong synergies with the objectives of the BlueC project.

11:30 – 12:00 | Team Meeting and Signature of Memoranda of Collaboration

During the internal coordination meeting, project partners reviewed the overall implementation progress, discussed upcoming activities, and clarified partner responsibilities and timelines for the next implementation phase. The discussions focused on ensuring continued alignment with the approved Application Form and Work Plan, as well as on strengthening cooperation mechanisms among involved institutions.

As part of this session, **three Memoranda of Cooperation were formally signed** between key local and regional institutions:

- **Cahul State University “Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu”**
- **Cahul Business Center**
- **Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration Agency**

The signed Memoranda of Cooperation aim to consolidate long-term institutional collaboration in the fields of environmental protection, blue carbon research, education, innovation, and sustainable development. The agreements provide a framework for joint activities related to research, data exchange, capacity building, and awareness-raising, as well as for the implementation of future initiatives aligned with the objectives of the BlueC project.

The signing of the Memoranda represents a concrete and tangible outcome of the meeting, contributing directly to the **sustainability and durability of project results**, and reinforcing cooperation between academic, business support, and public institutions at local and transnational level.

12:00 – 15:00 | Field Visit

As part of the practical component of the meeting, participants attended a study visit to the habitat area of *Ceratophyllum demersum*, an aquatic plant species with significant ecological relevance and blue carbon potential. The field visit was designed to complement the theoretical and scientific discussions held during the conference sessions and to provide participants with direct, on-site exposure to the aquatic ecosystems addressed within the BlueC project.

During the visit, experts from **PP3 – ECC Cahul**, representatives of the **Biosphere Reserve “Prutul de Jos”**, and local environmental specialists provided detailed explanations regarding the ecological characteristics of the habitat. Particular attention was given to the distribution, density, and seasonal dynamics of *Ceratophyllum demersum*, as well as its role in carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, and overall ecosystem functioning.

Participants discussed the environmental conditions influencing the development of aquatic vegetation, including water quality parameters, hydrological regime, sediment composition, and anthropogenic pressures. The discussions highlighted how changes in water flow, pollution sources, and climate-related factors may affect aquatic plant communities and their capacity to store blue carbon.

The study visit also included presentations and practical explanations related to **monitoring methodologies** applied in the area. Experts outlined approaches used for assessing aquatic plant biomass, species composition, and habitat status, as well as methods for collecting field data relevant to blue carbon assessment. The applicability of these methodologies for scaling up monitoring activities within the project and for future cross-border cooperation was discussed.

Participants actively exchanged experiences and perspectives, comparing field observations with scientific results presented during the meeting. The visit facilitated dialogue between researchers, environmental authorities, and local stakeholders on the challenges of ecosystem conservation, data collection, and long-term monitoring. Special emphasis was placed on the importance of integrating field-based observations with spatial mapping and modelling tools developed within the project.

The field visit concluded with a reflection on the added value of practical, on-site activities for enhancing the quality and relevance of project outputs. Participants agreed that direct observation of the habitat strengthens the understanding of ecosystem processes, supports evidence-based decision-making, and reinforces the link between scientific research, environmental management, and policy development. The study visit was recognized as a key element in demonstrating the practical applicability of the BlueC project and its contribution to sustainable ecosystem management and climate change mitigation.

16:00 – 17:00 | General Assessment and Q&A

The final assessment session focused on evaluating the overall outcomes of the meeting, collecting participant feedback, and identifying recommendations and next steps for future project activities.

17:00 – 17:30 | Closure

The meeting concluded with closing remarks, thanking all participants for their active contribution and reaffirming the importance of continued cooperation to achieve the objectives of the BlueC project.