



UN SDSN 4-Seas Initiative

Mobilizing Science Driven Sustainable Blue Growth

Global changes, especially climate change, constitute a permanent threat for the future health of the ocean and seas. Marine ecosystems degradation, pollution, and overexploitation put at risk the flows of benefits for the human health and wellbeing that depend on ocean and seas, while at the same time, ocean and human health interaction are not well studied.

The project team will work in four study areas: the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, and the Aral Sea and it will mobilize science driven sustainable Blue Growth and support the implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, in these areas. The initiative is aligned with SDG 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development as well as with SDGs 6, 13, and 15 primarily but with almost every other SDG as well.

The 4-Seas area holds historical and cultural bonds evolving and adjusting through the centuries and extending up to current times. The initiative will follow a "from source to sea" approach, starting from the watersheds, including urban and rural activities, river flows and finally the seas.

The "4-Seas Initiative" aims to undertake the challenge of protecting the future state of marine ecosystems by developing a Sustainability Transition Plan in order to prevent further degradation of four large bodies of saltwater and to raise awareness of the benefits of Blue Growth.

The SDSN partners comprise the two regional networks [SDSN Mediterranean](#) and [SDSN Black Sea](#) and the six national networks [SDSN Greece](#), [SDSN Italy](#), [SDSN Spain](#), [SDSN France](#), [SDSN Turkey](#) and [SDSN Russia](#). The networks have already joined their forces towards the achievement of SDGs. They bring along to the initiative their extensive experience in related research and innovation as well as in education and training.

The objectives of the "4-Seas Initiative" include:

1. **RESEARCH:** To develop and support sustainable growth pathways in urban and rural areas across watersheds and coastal and marine sectors, from source to sea. To derive plans to manage the land-coastal-sea ecosystems interactions and to reduce conflicts from land-, coastal- and sea- based activities.
2. **EDUCATION:** To create common post-graduate and life-long-learning curricula focusing on the implementation of the SDGs in the 4-Seas region.
3. **DATA MANAGEMENT:** To build and maintain an open-access data repository for relevant research and innovation projects, policies and stakeholders of the 4-Seas region.
4. **INNOVATION:** To foster innovation that will enable the sustainability transition in the region of the 4-Seas through the collaboration with the Innovation Community and the EIT Climate KIC.
5. **POLICY FRAMEWORK:** The initiative is in line with the Agenda 2030 and several European Policy Initiatives and Directives and aims to develop policy alternatives that will combine their objectives and integrate the land-coastal-sea policy framework.