

IntelComp project – Preparatory Living Lab series on Climate Change and Blue Growth - The Black Sea and Caspian Sea Group Workshop No. 2 “Understanding the gap between Knowledge and Action”

Follow-up
October 08, 2021, 12: 00-14: 00 CET

The Black Sea and Caspian Sea Group of the Preparatory Living Lab series of the [IntelComp project funded by Horizon 2020](#) came together on Friday the 08th October 2021, and discussed about the source of data they use for their work and what is missing to further improve their work.

Introduction

The participants were welcomed by the coordinators of the Preparatory Living Labs on Sustainable Growth under Climate Change, Prof. [Phoebe Koundouri](#), Co-chair [UN SDSN Europe](#) and [UN SDSN Greece](#) and Prof. [Nicos Theodossiou](#), Chair [UN SDSN Black Sea](#).

Prof. [Phoebe Koundouri](#) presented the [Sustainable Euro-Asian Seas Initiative \(SEAs\)](#). The Initiative aspires to integrate results from various Horizon 2020 projects that are affiliated with the leading institutions of the Initiative, while supporting their delivery employing its wide international network of academics, research centers, policy makers, entrepreneurs, and innovators across the world. The EU funded projects scientifically directed by Prof Koundouri that comprise the SEAs Initiative namely are [IntelComp H2020 project](#) (affiliated with [ATHENA RC-SDU](#)), [COASTAL H2020 project](#) (affiliated with [ICRE8](#)), which aims to bring together stakeholders in coastal and rural natural and social sciences to formulate and evaluate business solutions and policy recommendations to improve coastal-rural synergy while preserving the environment, [BRIGAID H2020 project](#) (affiliated with [ICRE8](#)), which aims to bridge the gap between innovators and end-users in resilience to floods, droughts and extreme weather, [DOORS H2020 project](#) (affiliated with [ATHENA RC-SDU](#)), which will harmonize research and provide the infrastructure to better understand the Black Sea, develop the framework to support Blue Growth and early development of start-ups, and provide evidence to inform policy and behavioral change, [SEAwisE H2020 project](#) (affiliated with [ATHENA RC-SDU](#)), which aims to provide a fully operational approach for European ecosystem-based fisheries

management based on persistent networks and co- designed innovation, [BRIDGE-BS H2020 project](#) (affiliated with [ReSEES](#), [AUEB](#)), which aims at advancing the research and innovation to co-develop blue growth within resilient ecosystems in the Black Sea, and ARSINOE H2020 project (scientifically directed by Prof. [Chrysi Lapidou](#) and affiliated with [ATHENA RC-SDU](#)), which aims to develop solution pathways that are co-created and co-designed by stakeholders, who can then select either existing CIW technologies, or technologies by new providers (or a combination) to form an innovation package. The SEAs Initiative and its leading institutions ([UN SDSN Black Sea](#), [UN SDSN Greece](#), [UN SDSN Mediterranean](#) and [UN SDSN Europe](#)) strongly support the development and implementation of the IntelComp project providing detailed pathways for each sector, system in the economy that will enable the technological, financial and policy transition.

Then **Prof. Nicos Theodossiou**, thanked the stakeholders for their participation. He stressed the significance of Sustainable Development Solutions Networks in the engagement of scientists for providing solutions towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and that the stakeholder’s participation is invaluable.

Workshop

Next, **Ms. Lydia Papadaki**, Manager of SDSN Greece, introduced Miro, a visual collaboration platform, which will be used by the participants to collaborate through the whole series of Living Labs. The participants had the chance to explore and learn Miro via some special exercises called “Miro Olympics”



Figure 1 Screenshot of the Miro Olympics

Next, **Mr. Charis Stavridis**, Co-Manager of SDSN Black Sea, presented the international datasets that are most commonly used in research projects, such as the OECD database, the UN Stats relevant sites, Eurostat, SDSN Index & Monitoring site, World Bank and, last but not least, the European Policies site, in which someone can find all the EU policies categorized by topic.



Figure 2 - Charis Stavridis presenting the international datasets

Prof. Koundouri, took the floor, and emphasized the fact that the Living Lab is part of the IntelComp Horizon 2020 project, that has been funded during the last round of calls and it focuses on trying to develop a competitive Intelligence Cloud High-Performance Computing Platform for AI-based Science Technology & Innovation Policy Making. Furthermore, she mentioned that to focus on the IntelComp project we have to streamline our work in this Living Lab in order to understand what IntelComp is trying to develop making towards implementing IntelComp project and what it tries to develop, and this is the competitive platform for science technology and innovation making. *“This particular Living Lab is focused on Climate Change and its effect on Blue Growth and our aim is to identify new and innovative AI services and give these services to public administrators and policy makers across Europe to create an ecosystem that will allow collaboration and co-creation of policy design that will be data and intelligence driven. So, our idea is to help policy design become smart innovative and AI-based and help implement STI (Science Technology and Innovation) policy makers to provide better policy in a very co-creation ecosystem. It very important to make really clear the aim of the Living Lab”* she stated.

Next, participants jumped back to Miro and rated the referred international datasets sources according to how frequent they use it and its ease of use. This gave the chance to several participants express their opinion about the international datasets presented earlier and how they utilize them.

A Competitive Intelligence Cloud/High Performance Computing Platform for Artificial Intelligence-based Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Making.

For instance, **Dr. Stefanos Xenarios**, Assoc.Professor at the Graduate School of Public Policy in Nazarbayev University (Kazakhstan), mentioned that for their work World Bank database is more reliable, as they data are frequently updated, while the FAO database is not as reliable. He also mentioned that we need consistent and reliable data. Beyond World Bank database, there is a database in Russian from 70s to 90s, which is not accessible to non-Russian speakers. There is some effort in translating these data, but there questions in regard to the consistency and reliability.

Aliya Assubayeva, PhD student at Nazarbayev University (Kazakhstan), stressed the importance of presenting data through interactive tools, in order to better understand them.

Madina Kazbak, who works in SDSN Nazarbayev University, shared that she mostly uses national statistics, but for international statistics, she uses UN stats and World Bank.

Aizada Ismailova, works in the establishment of SDSN in Kazakhstan, she mostly uses national datasets from Kazakhstan

Bota Sharipova, PhD student in water government issues, does not use as much databases. She would trust data for World Bank and UN Stats.

Furthermore, there are difficulties in accessing data regarding the Caspian Sea, because some data are in Russian. They are not in the same place; they are not translated and sometimes they are not easy to access.

Prof.Theodossiou took the floor and referred to data collected and analyzed by several research projects and mentioned that there are some issues in the dissemination of the results of the research project and the data collected and used. The IntelComp project could aid towards this direction. We need “to find ways in order all the outputs of the research funded projects can be used by other researchers”.

Next, **Prof. Koundouri**, explained the approach of cross-mapping existing sustainability policies, explained how these policies are interconnected and referred to how one can mobilize implementation under the umbrella of these policies and how they are related to the IntelComp project. She started with showing the existing international and European policy framework. The main drivers for a transformative recovery from the pandemic, the expected economic recession, the climate change and the biodiversity crisis are global climate neutrality by 2050 (including technological advances, circular economy, and nature-based solutions), Sustainable Finance and Climate Adaptation and Resilience. She showed how the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement (2015) provide the long-term vision and blueprints for developing these transformation pathways to keep the global temperature increase under 1.5°C. IPCC Report¹ states that we cannot afford the extreme effects of weather conditions caused by climate change if the average temperature increases more than 1.5°C.

¹ <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/>

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She also presented the transformations Europe must make to implement the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the European Green Deal, and enable a green and digital, job-based, and fair recovery from COVID-19 Pandemic². She emphasized that the Agenda 2030 is the most holistic agenda we ever had. The 6 Transformations as developed by Sachs et al. (2019)³ outlining an action agenda for designing, implementing, and monitoring the SDG Transformations are listed below:

- Education, Gender and Inequality
- Health, Wellbeing, and Demography
- Energy Decarbonisation and Sustainable Industry
- Sustainable Food, Land, Water, and Oceans
- Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Digital Revolution for Sustainable Development

She highlighted that we need to incentivize the relevant authorities to implement these SDGs. She referred to the role of the European Green Deal and of the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan that will enable the transition to a climate-neutral green economy mobilizing at least €1 trillion of sustainable investments over the next decade through the EU budget, creating an enabling framework for private investors and the public sector and providing tailored support to public administrations and project promoters in identifying, structuring, and executing sustainable projects. She also referred to the role of the EU Semester Process, occurring every 6 months, where the Europe tries to align its policies. Europe is a great example of Leadership for the transition to sustainability. She emphasized that Europe is very advanced in terms of policies, laws, and capacity building (European Climate Law, EU Taxonomy, Fit-for-55 Package, Biodiversity Strategy Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Marine Spatial Directive etc) and thus, it is important for stakeholders from the Black Sea region to follow these efforts and transpose them in their local circumstances. She closed by saying in the last months of 2021, we have 3 important Summits, the UN Food Systems Summit in New York, the UN Biodiversity Summit in China and the COP 26 on Climate Change in Glasgow.

² Find more: <https://phoebekoundouri.org/research-and-policy-reports/>

³ Sachs, J. D., Schmidt-Traub, G., Mazzucato, M., Messner, D., Nakicenovic, N., & Rockström, J. (2019). Six transformations to achieve the sustainable development goals. *Nature Sustainability*, 2(9), 805-814.



Figure 3 - Prof. Phoebe Koundouri presenting the EU policies related to the Climate Change

Next, participants were asked to answer the following questions, by filling the relevant fields in the Miro Platform:

- *What data platforms or monitoring tools exist in your country?*
- *How do you get informed?*
- *What is missing?*

Among else, participants utilize data from the following services:

- the [World Bank – Climate Change Knowledge Portal](#)
- the [Agency for Strategic Planning and reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan – Bureau of National Statistics](#)
- the [Deutsches GeoForschungs Zentrum \(GFZ\) Potsdam](#)
- the International Centre for Water Cooperation (ICWC)
- [Regional research Network "Central Asian Water" \(CAWA\)](#)
- [National Institute of Statistics of Romania](#)
- [The National Bank of Romania – Statistics](#)

The stakeholders, who participated, get informed either directly, by analyzing the relevant data or indirectly through data analysts, while they referred to several issues faced regarding the suggested data sources:

- No detailed information (Lack of daily data)
- Lack of open data (some data are available after purchase in high prices)
- Targeted Governmental Funding
- Lack of easily accessible and reliable data

Discussion

Following the identification of data sources and the arising issues of data utilization, a conversation took place where everyone shared their opinion focusing on the above:

Dr. Stefanos Xenarios, said that in terms of Hydrometeorological data you need to purchase the data on a high price. The data is purchased and not shared. Sometimes are fragmented and sometimes are unreliable because the model in term of Hydrometeorological or Hydroeconomic models are based a lot on remote sensing to cover the gaps.

Bota Sharipova, added that there are a few different dimensions with the same problem. Data are not available, while there is lack of capacity in collecting the data and a lack of interdisciplinarity. For instance, most of the scientists regarding hydrometeorological data are engineers, that do not completely understand the public from a socio-economic perspective.

Zafar Makhmudov, Executive Director of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia, took the floor. The case mentioned above (regarding lack of shareable and open data) is seen not only in Kazakhstan but in all the countries of the region. Sharing information has become quite expensive, while sometimes results are political. Therefore, a question is being raise on “what level should information be disclosed or not”. There are several projects that seek to modernize observation stations, to automatize sensors, which currently, cannot directly send information to central servers, were the collected data are analyzed. He concluded that for the countries of Central Asia, “data cannot be open all the time”.

Stefan Cibian, there are different challenges in regard to data accessibility, data reliability and data openness. For instance, some of these datasets are costly, but the Romanian Governments try to make more and more databases open. Furthermore, there are changes in the indicator collection methods. He expressed that not many data are collected in a local or regional level, as they have more indicators at a national level. Although, there are several University Initiatives, such as [Prof. Benedek's work on the SDGs](#), who [managed to put together all the datasets](#) for all administrative units of Romania.

Bota Sharipova, expressed that utilizing the same datasets globally while ensuring their openness promotes research and works for the public good.

Finally, **Prof. Nicos Theodossiou**, replied that the value of data is something we need to understand better and that data do not belong to anyone and that they are measurements of nature. They are useless if we keep them to ourselves. Especially in regions where data availability is not regulated and not controlled by common organization that applies for everyone and has specifications for data collecting and data monitoring. It's time we all put our efforts to better organize the distribution and operation of such monitoring networks and of course distribute them, because we all need to have access to credible data and to good timeseries, especially when we deal with climate change we need long data, long and extensive datasets, and this is not something we can replace with any other information.

Conclusion

Concluding the meeting, Prof. Theodossiou thanked the stakeholders for sharing their thoughts and highlighted the value of data. The value of data is something we need to understand better and that data are measurements of nature, which could imply that they really do not belong to anyone. Data are useless if we keep them to ourselves. Especially in regions where data availability is not necessarily fully regulated, or managed by common organization, this could provide an opportunity for data collecting and data monitoring. It's time we all put our efforts to better organize the distribution and operation of such monitoring networks and of course distribute them, because we all need to have access to credible data and to good timeseries. Especially, when we are dealing with climate change, we need, long and extensive datasets, and this is not something we can replace with any other information.

The SEAs Initiative is coordinated by

- **Phoebe Koundouri**, Professor and Director of [ReSEES Research Laboratory](#), [Athens University of Economics and Business](#); Director of [Sustainable Development Unit](#) and [EIT Climate-KIC Hub Greece](#), [Athena RC](#); Fellow [World Academy of Art and Science](#); President-Elect of the [European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists](#); Co-chair [UN SDSN Europe](#) and [UN SDSN Greece](#)
- **Nikos Theodossiou**, Professor at the [Aristotle University of Thessaloniki](#), Chair [UN SDSN Black Sea](#)
- **Yannis Ioannidis**, Professor at the [National and Kapodistrian University of Athens](#), Former President [ATHENA Research and Innovation Centre](#), [UN SDSN Greece](#) Strategic Advisory Board

- [Andreas Papandreou](#), Professor [National and Kapodistrian University of Athens](#), co-chair [UN SDSN Greece](#)

Next living labs

The Black Sea and Caspian Sea group will meet on the 17th December from 10 am to 12 pm CET.

Agendas and zoom links will be shared at least one week in advance.

Workshop related materials & Suggestions

Miro Board

The link to the Miro Board used in the workshop can be found [here](#).

Recording

You may find the recording of the Living Lab at this [link](#).

Suggestions

If you have any suggestions regarding the topic, anything you might add to the above follow up or any advice regarding the implementation of the Living Lab, please feel free to fill in the related [google form](#). In the form we do not collect any personal data.