



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**ON THE MIX AND MATCH NETWORKING EVENT**  
*(8 July 2021)*

Call for Start Ups and SMEs to apply for Grants to Develop Digital Technologies in Support of the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea

Within the scope of the implementation of the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) for the Black Sea, the BSEC PERMIS managed Black Sea Virtual Knowledge Centre, in cooperation with the DIGICIRC Project (H2020) and the Black Sea Assistance Mechanism (BSAM), ran a webinar inviting 'Start Ups' and SMEs (Small and Medium Sized Businesses) to apply for grants to help them develop innovative digital technologies in support of the region's Blue Economy.

The webinar told SMES and Start Ups that under the DIGICIRC Blue Economy 'Open Call' if they band together in groups of at least two they could receive up to 60,000 Euros in funding, access to digital tools, coaching and training as well as access to investors to help them develop their innovative digital solutions to enhance the Blue Economy. Applications need to be in by 3 August 2021. If interested please apply here: <https://digidirc.eu/blue-economy/>

DIGICIRC is a European Union funded project currently involving 9 countries with 11 partner organizations led by Cap Digital. It aims at boosting the circular economy by leveraging digital tools.

Mamuka Berdzenishvili from the Black Sea Assistance Mechanism and Mustafa Yucel from Black Sea CONNECT welcomed the participants to the session. Mr. Yucel said: "We very much need start-ups and SMEs over the next few years to help us support the Black Sea and the CMA". The organizers fielded a number of questions about the scope of the project and sectors that qualified for the grants during the Q and A session.

As well as helping to foster digital start-ups in the Black Sea it is hoped that the well-attended webinar will have increased the appetite for private investment in a sustainable Blue Economy across the region to support local business ecosystems.

Mr Thanos Smanis, a blue economy expert with the BSVKC who moderated the webinar, introduced the BSVKC to the audience and showed them the webpage on the BSEC website and what it can do. He urged participants to register on the site and said it was "very much hoped to establish a community" with expertise on the Blue Economy in the region.



Executive Manager of BSEC PERMIS, Ms. Rositsa Stoeva, thanked the participants and said that the BSVKC were planning a series of events around the Blue Economy and how to develop it in the coming weeks.