

# Terms of Reference

## of the Black Sea Argo Society (BSAS)

### 1. Background

The Black Sea is a unique semi-enclosed marine basin characterized by strong stratification, complex circulation patterns, and high sensitivity to climate variability and anthropogenic pressures. Sustained ocean observations are essential to support scientific research, operational oceanography, environmental monitoring, and climate services in the region.

The Argo programme is a global ocean observing system based on autonomous profiling floats that measure temperature, salinity throughout the world's oceans. The first Argo float was launched in the Black Sea in 2005 and to date there are more than 50 floats deployed. Argo provides a sustained and standardized source of high-quality in situ ocean data that is essential for understanding ocean processes, improving ocean and climate forecasting systems, and monitoring long-term environmental change. The programme is currently evolving toward OneArgo, an expanded and integrated global observing system that includes deep ocean and biogeochemical observations, enabling a more comprehensive monitoring of the ocean and its role in the Earth system. Within this global framework, the Black Sea Argo Initiative aims to strengthen and coordinate Argo observations in the Black Sea, contributing to improved regional ocean monitoring, scientific research, and operational oceanography.

The access to sustained and coordinated ocean observations has become increasingly important due to the reduced ship-based observations in the offshore Black Sea area and limited cross-border research activities that may affect the continuity of national monitoring programs. Autonomous observing platforms such as **Argo floats provide a resilient and cost-effective means of maintaining basin-wide observations**, ensuring continuity of essential ocean data and supporting regional and global climate monitoring.

To strengthen cooperation and coordination of Argo observations in the region, the **Black Sea Argo Society (BSAS)** is established as a voluntary collaborative network of scientists and institutions involved in ocean observation, data management, modelling, and marine applications in the Black Sea.

### 2. Mission

The mission of the Black Sea Argo Society is to **promote, coordinate, and strengthen Argo observations in the Black Sea** in support of scientific research, operational oceanography, climate monitoring, and marine policy.

### 3. Objectives

The objectives of the Black Sea Argo Society are to:

- Coordinate Argo observation activities across the Black Sea region
- Support the deployment, operation, and recovery of Argo floats
- Facilitate the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and technical experience
- Strengthen regional capacity through training and workshops

- Foster collaboration between Black Sea countries and international initiatives such as Euro-Argo and the global Argo programme
- Contribute to marine environmental monitoring and climate studies in the Black Sea

#### **4. Scope of Activities**

The **Black Sea Argo Society** may undertake the following activities to strengthen Argo observations and regional cooperation in the Black Sea:

- **Coordinate Argo float deployments in the Black Sea**, including planning, prioritization of deployment location, and synchronization of operations among Black Sea countries
- **Develop a Black Sea Argo observation roadmap** that identifies regional priorities, deployment strategies, and links to the global OneArgo programme
- **Facilitate the exchange of scientific and technical expertise among members**, including quality control, new experiments (e.g., shallow water Argo operation, new sensors integration)
- **Organize workshops, meetings, and training activities** to build regional capacity, strengthen knowledge transfer, and foster collaboration among Black Sea scientists and institutions
- **Promote joint research and collaborative projects**, leveraging Argo and OneArgo data for scientific studies, modelling, forecasting, and environmental assessments of the Black Sea
- **Prepare joint reports, scientific publications, and policy briefs** to inform national and regional stakeholders, support evidence-based decision-making, and enhance visibility of the Black Sea Argo Initiative
- **Cooperate with other observing initiatives and programmes in the Black Sea**, including EMSO ERIC, JERICO, Copernicus, ESA, and other relevant European and global initiatives, to ensure regional contributions align with global priorities

#### **5. Membership**

BSAS is an open-ended society. Membership is open to scientists and institutions involved in ocean observations and related activities in the Black Sea region, as well as Argo data users and stakeholders. Membership is voluntary and based on a commitment to the mission and objectives of the Society.

No membership fee is planned.

Two types of membership may be recognized:

##### **Institutional Members**

Research institutes, universities, operational agencies involved in ocean observation or marine research, regional conventions and European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs).

##### **Individual Members**

Scientists and experts working in relevant fields such as oceanography, marine technology, data management, modelling and forecasting.

## **6. Governance**

The Black Sea Argo Society will operate through a simple governance structure.

### **General Assembly**

- One representative per member
- Responsibilities: strategic planning, approval of work plans, and establishment of Working Groups

### **Chair and Co-Chair**

- Elected by the General Assembly; term: 2 years
- Rotation among Black Sea countries is encouraged
- Responsibilities: Prepare and chair General Assembly meetings; coordinate and ensure the implementation of BSAS work plans and activities; represent BSAS in regional and international initiatives (e.g., Euro-Argo, GOOS); ensure reporting of activities and progress to members.

### **Working Groups**

Working Groups may be established to address specific topics such as:

- Float deployment and technology
- Data management
- Capacity building and training
- Scientific Applications

## **7. Meetings**

The Society will organize:

- An annual meeting of members
- Ad hoc meetings

Meetings will mainly be organised online.

## **8. Entry into Force**

These Terms of Reference enter into force upon agreement by the founding members of the Black Sea Argo Society.