



## PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release:

### **URBAN FOUNDATION LAUNCHES REGIONAL PROJECT “BeECO - Joint actions for environmental protection in Black Sea Basin”**

**Yerevan, Armenia** - On August 21, 2020, the Urban Foundation for Sustainable Development officially launched the “BeECO - Joint actions for environmental protection in Black Sea Basin” project funded by the ENI CBC Black Sea Basin Programme. The project implementation commenced on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, through a partnership with PRO NATURA Galati Association (Romania), Association of Cross Border Cooperation “Lower Danube Euroregion” (Romania), Imereti Scientists’ Union “Spectri” (Georgia), Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration Agency (Moldova). The Association of Cross Border Cooperation “Lower Danube Euroregion” (Romania) is the Lead Partner of the project.

The BeECO project derives from the shared idea within the project consortium that common education, awareness, and river clean-up campaigns to reduce river and marine litter are extremely beneficial for environmental protection in the Black Sea. This will be achieved through the following activities:

- organizing information and awareness campaigns among local communities
- organizing common clean-up activities on Sevan Lake, Danube and Rioni rivers and Belev Lake
- developing an IT application that will allow the signalling waste areas along identified rivers and lakes
- establishment of a mobile patrol for the identification and reporting of waste in the areas concerned
- organizing a capacity building campaign (“3R-reduce, reuse, recycle”, “Environmental ranger”, “Environmental entrepreneurship”)

Lake Sevan, the blue beauty of Armenia, set 1900m above sea level is the largest lake in the Caucasus and one of the largest freshwater high-altitude lakes in the world.

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Nearly 28 rivers spill into the lake, fish populations include a very rare and endemic type of fish called “Ishkhan” (Trout), as well as Koghak (capoeta) and Sig (whitefish). The ecosystem of Lake Sevan is damaged by the litter laid on the coastal areas, and the garbage, including plastic, household and industrial waste, that flows into the lake through rivers.

Lake Sevan is one of the 4 locations of the BeECO project to benefit from innovative solutions to be developed within the project - an *IT application* allowing the local *Environmental Patrol* to transmit information about the affected area, the nature of the waste and its quantity to relevant authorities.

The project duration is 24 months.

The project funding is provided by the European Union within the Joint Operational Programme Black Sea Basin 2014-2020. The total amount of funds for the project from the European Union is EUR 647,560.40.

The project envisages raising environmental education and awareness of the society, the joint effort in development of new innovative approaches for improvement of environment contributing to pollution reduction in rivers and the Black Sea basin. The project envisages to conduct seminars and training courses for the target groups - representatives of local self-governments, non-governmental sector, educational institutions and scientific centres, to arrange round tables, joint clean-up campaigns and to create a unified environmental platform in the project countries to share best practices and introduce innovative approaches in the field of waste management.

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Joint Operational Programme Black Sea Basin 2014-2020

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