



# REALIZING INTEGRATED REGIONAL OCEANS GOVERNANCE

Summary of case studies on regional  
cross-sectoral institutional cooperation  
and policy coherence

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UN ENVIRONMENT REGIONAL SEAS REPORTS AND STUDIES NO. 199

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# CONTENTS

List of acronyms ..... 6

**1 INTRODUCTION** ..... 8

**2 REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT** ..... 12

    Regional strategies for sustainable development .....12

    Ecosystem-based integrated ocean policy .....15

    Regional Seas and Regional Fisheries Bodies cooperation .....17

    Multi-stakeholder engagement and public-private partnerships .....23

    Organizations working on land-based activities and marine issues .....26

    Processes and forms of cooperation .....28

**3 LESSONS LEARNED**..... 29

References ..... 31

ANNEX ..... 32

## LIST OF BOXES

BOX 1 Mediterranean Sustainable Development Strategy (2016-2021) .....	13
BOX 2 Cooperation across the marine regions around Europe.....	14
BOX 3 African Ocean Governance.....	17
BOX 4 Memorandum of Understanding between General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP).....	18
BOX 5 Abidjan Convention cooperation with Regional Fisheries Bodies in West and Central Africa.....	22
BOX 6 Seoul Outcome on the Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies.....	23
BOX 7 HELCOM partnerships on clean and safe Baltic Sea shipping .....	24
BOX 8 Regional cooperation on marine pollution preparedness and response in the North-West Pacific..	25
BOX 9 Cooperation between the Black Sea Commission and ICPDR (Danube Commission).....	26
BOX 10 OSPAR cooperation with the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission and other relevant intergovernmental organizations.....	28

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABMT	Area-based Management Tool
ABNJ	Area beyond National Jurisdiction
AIMS	Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy 2050
AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AU	African Union
BS	Black Sea
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CPPS	Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur – Permanent Commission of the South Pacific
EBM	Ecosystem-Based Management
EBSA	Ecologically and Biologically Sensitive Marine Area
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FRA	Fisheries Restricted Area
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (of FAO)
H2O	Hilltop-to-Ocean
HELCOM	Helsinki Commission
HNS	Hazardous and Noxious Substance
ICARM	Integrated Coastal Area and River Basin Management
ICPDR	International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IRBM	Integrated River Basin Management
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
JTWG	Danube–Black Sea Joint Technical Working Group
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MCSD	Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development
MERRAC	Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre (of NOWPAP)

MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive (of the European Union)
MSSD	Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEAFC	North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
NOWPAP	North-West Pacific Action Plan
RECOFI	Regional Commission for Fisheries
ROPME	Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment
R2R	Ridge-to-Reef
SAP	Strategic Action Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPAMI	Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance
S2S	Source-to-Sea
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas
UN	Environment United Nations Environment Programme
WFD	Water Framework Directive (of the European Union)

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Regional Seas Programme was established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) in 1974. From its initial mandate to reduce pollution, the Regional Seas Programme has evolved over the last four decades to cover regular monitoring and assessment, land-based and sea-based sources of pollution, Specially Protected Areas and biodiversity, oil spill contingency/recovery plans, coastal habitat management, Integrated Coastal Zone Management, marine litter, and legal and institutional frameworks. Currently, the UN Environment Regional Seas Programme coordinates 18 regions, with more than 146 participating countries; of these, 14 Regional Seas programmes were established under the auspices of UN Environment: for the Black Sea; the Wider Caribbean; the East Asian Seas; East Africa; the South Asian Seas; the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) Sea Area; the Mediterranean; the North-East Pacific; the North-West Pacific; the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden; the South-East Pacific; the Pacific; West, Central and Southern Africa; and the Caspian. Seven of these programmes are directly administered by UN Environment. The partner programmes for the Antarctic, Arctic,

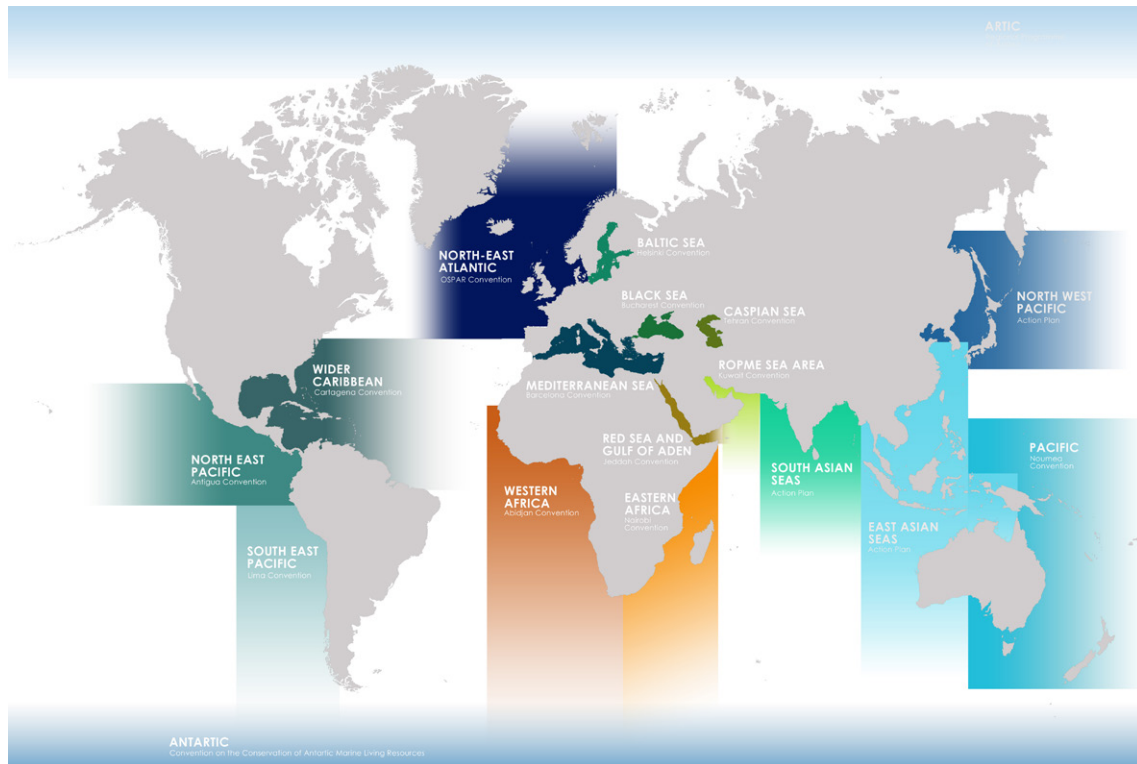
Baltic Sea and North-East Atlantic Regions are also members of the Regional Seas Programme and participate in a global exchange of lessons and information.

The Regional Seas programmes also work with other regional organizations on ocean-related issues. Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) – groups of states or organizations that are parties to an international fishery arrangement – work together towards the conservation and management of fish stocks. RFBs can play a critical role in promoting long-term sustainable fisheries, where international cooperation is required for conservation and management. Many regional or subregional economic commissions/communities – such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community – manage the economic development of ocean-related sectors. Other regional bodies include political bodies such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, whose mandate covers ocean-related issues.

Agenda 2030, which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), was adopted at the UN Summit in September 2015. The SDG



Figure 1 Regional Seas Programmes in the world



dedicated to oceans (SDG 14) is as an integral part of the Agenda and provides a strong impetus for regional and institutional cooperation to support the coordination of efforts to address ocean-related targets across shared sea basins.

Many of the other SDGs are also relevant to oceans. These can only be achieved through cross-sectoral cooperation between institutions and stakeholders – addressing pollution sources, for example, requires action from sectors such as navigation, fisheries, agriculture and mining.

Throughout the history of the Regional Seas Programme, cross-sectoral cooperation at the regional seas level (for example, in the Baltic Sea, Western Indian Ocean and Southern Ocean)

has been a major topic of discussion among the respective governing bodies. Examples of good practice have started emerging more recently, providing different regional models for coordinated policy development and institutional cooperation between and among regional organizations.

The UN Environment–European Commission project, ‘Integrated Management and Governance Strategies for Delivery of Ocean-related Sustainable Development Goals’, aims to clarify the role of a regional ocean governance approach in consolidating efforts at various levels, and across the relevant sectors, to achieve agreed regional and global ocean-related objectives.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One of the components of this project was to collect and collate information on the experiences of existing cross-sectoral cooperation frameworks, and to assess the usefulness of such cross-sectoral regional ocean governance in achieving ocean-related objectives; and the extent to which they align with ocean-related SDGs.

The project solicited case studies to highlight experiences and lessons learned from the existing cooperation frameworks at the regional level. The case studies compiled to date are as follows:

- The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025, which involves a highly inclusive process to translate the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs to the regional level (Mediterranean Action Plan)
- Cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea in the context of SDG 14, which involves ongoing efforts promoted by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)
- Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) cross-sectoral cooperation and partnerships on clean and safe Baltic Sea shipping
- Regional cooperation on marine pollution preparedness and response in the North-West Pacific (North-West Pacific Action Plan)
- Cooperation in the Danube-Black Sea Basin between the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Black Sea Commission) and the International Commission on the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)
- Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy 2050 and the African Ocean Governance Strategy (UN Environment)
- Update of the design of an integrated Regional Ocean Policy for the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS)
- Potential cooperation between the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine



Environment (ROPME) and the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) for the development of a Regional Ecosystem-Management Strategy for the ROPME Sea Area

- Cooperation between the Abidjan Convention and the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission
- Cooperation between OSPAR and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission and other relevant intergovernmental organizations, with particular reference to Area-Based Management

The case studies summarized in this document illustrate practical experiences of cross-sectoral cooperation for effective implementation of SDG 14 and other ocean-relevant SDGs. Many of

them were presented at the UN Environment-European Commission workshop on area-based management, regional coordination and cross-sectoral cooperation for the delivery of ocean-related SDGs that took place on 9-10 February 2017 in Brussels.<sup>2</sup>

The case studies are organized according to the following themes: (i) regional strategies for sustainable development; (ii) ecosystem-based, integrated ocean policy; (iii) Regional Seas programmes and Regional Fisheries Bodies cooperation; (iv) multi-stakeholder engagement and public-private partnerships; (v) cooperation between land-based organizations and sea-based organizations; and (vi) processes and forms of cooperation. The last section includes general lessons learned from the case studies.

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<sup>2</sup> The conclusions of the workshop can be found in the annex.

## 2 REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### REGIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Following the adoption of Agenda 2030, the regional organizations working on ocean-related issues started planning for the implementation of relevant SDGs. The regional level is the most appropriate level for establishing a collaborative framework that encompasses whole ecosystems; such frameworks can more efficiently preserve and protect ecosystems while, at the same time, providing opportunities for participating states to sustainably benefit from the services they render.

UN Environment has prepared a set of guidelines to support the Regional Seas programmes in establishing their strategies for the implementation of the relevant SDGs, (UN Environment, in press). Some of the Regional Seas programmes have already started developing strategies, including HELCOM, which has aligned its activities with the relevant SDGs (HELCOM, 2017). Most of the Regional Seas programmes have agreed a set of regional ocean

goals and objectives; their efforts in achieving them under their respective regional frameworks are a direct contribution to their Member States implementation of the relevant SDGs – as shown in the case studies below from the Mediterranean and the European Union.





### BOX 1 Mediterranean Sustainable Development Strategy (2016-2021)

Established in 1995 under the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) and the Barcelona Convention, the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) is a regional body responsible for ensuring the interaction between environmental protection and sustainable development policies.

In 2005, after two years of intensive collaborative work with a wide range of stakeholders, the Contracting Parties adopted the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2006-2015. Since then, a new MSSD (2016-2025) has been adopted – with a vision of “A prosperous and peaceful Mediterranean region, in which people enjoy a high quality of life and where sustainable development takes place within the carrying capacity of healthy ecosystems”(Source: UNEP/MAP (2016). Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025. Valbonne. Plan Bleu, Regional Activity Centre). This is achieved through cooperation, solidarity, equity and participatory governance, structured around six objectives that lie at the interface between the environment and development:

1. Ensuring sustainable development in marine and coastal areas
2. Promoting resource management, food production and food security through sustainable forms of rural development
3. Planning and managing sustainable Mediterranean cities
4. Addressing climate change as a priority issue for the Mediterranean
5. Transitioning towards a green and blue economy
6. Improving governance in support of sustainable development

## BOX 2 Cooperation across the marine regions around Europe

The European Union (EU) has a marine governance framework that requires its Member States to develop strategies to protect their marine environment, based on an ecosystem approach. These strategies are required to assess the state of the marine environment and set 'good environmental status' goals and associated targets on the basis of 11 'descriptors' (e.g., fish populations at levels that are biologically safe; maintaining biological diversity; no harm caused through marine litter). EU Member States also have to develop monitoring programmes and, importantly, develop and implement a set of measures to achieve their environmental objectives by 2020. All these steps are updated every six years. A crucial feature in developing the marine strategies is the reliance on regional cooperation, which is explicitly required by the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)<sup>3</sup> – the legal instrument underpinning the framework. Regional Sea Conventions play an important role in the implementations of these strategies, as they strive to harmonize the ambitions of individual EU Member States, as well as other countries sharing their sea basins, into a coherent environmental framework. There are four pertinent Regional Sea Conventions: OSPAR, HELCOM, the Barcelona Convention and the Bucharest Convention. Under these Conventions, technical groups have been established to specifically work on MSFD-related matters, and the Executive Secretariats of the Regional Sea Conventions provide support to Member States to implement the MSFD. The EU itself is also a Contracting Party to three of these Conventions.

Since May 2017, the emphasis on regional cooperation has been further strengthened through a new EU legal instrument under the MSFD, further specifying how to achieve 'good environmental status'.<sup>4</sup> While allowing for a more risk-based and flexible approach – to focus on the main problems in the marine environment – it also requires EU Member States to develop regional threshold values, to be included in their determination of good environmental status. Experience from the first six years of MSFD implementation has shown varying levels of ambition among the Member States, even within the same marine region. The new approach is expected to provide further coherence in the environmental objectives for each marine region within the EU.

<sup>3</sup> Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy

<sup>4</sup> COMMISSION DECISION (EU) 2017/848 of 17 May 2017 laying down criteria and methodological standards on good environmental status of marine waters and specifications and standardised methods for monitoring and assessment, and repealing Decision 2010/477/EU



**ECOSYSTEM-BASED INTEGRATED OCEAN POLICY**

Healthy ecosystems and the sustainable provision of their services is the basis for ocean policy. Management of ocean areas and resources involves multiple sectors, such as fisheries, navigation, energy, tourism and mining, many of which directly depend on the health and productivity of the marine environment – which provide sectoral benefits from ecosystem services. Land-based human activities also impact the quality of these resources and the integrity of ecosystems. An ecosystem-based approach involves cross-sectoral cooperation and the integrated management of resources and marine space – and can form the basis of integrated ocean policies.

In recent years, initiatives to integrate ocean policy at the regional level have been developed. Under the African Union, ‘Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy 2050’ was adopted in 2014 by the Heads of States. In addition,

‘Agenda 2063 - Africa We Want’ includes a chapter on oceans. The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) also agreed to develop an African Ocean Governance Strategy, and its development is under way. Similarly, the Member States of the Permanent Commission of the South Pacific (CPPS) decided to develop their own integrated ocean policy and to base it on the national integrated ocean policies of its members, which are currently being developed. Under the Regional Organization of the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME),<sup>5</sup> the Member States decided to develop an ecosystem-based management strategy – essentially, a strategy for integrated regional sea management. After reviewing the current ocean-related policy environment in the region, ROPME Member States decided to prioritize cooperation between ROPME and its fisheries counterpart, the Regional Commission of Fisheries. In the cases of AMCEN, CPPS and ROPME, the countries have set up multi-sectoral and multiple-stakeholder consultation processes to achieve their goals.

<sup>5</sup> Bahrain, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates

**Integrated Regional Ocean Policy of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS)**

In August 2012, the CPPS Ministers committed themselves “to the new strategic orientation of the Organization, according to which the CPPS, in view of the challenges of the twenty-first Century, will support Member Countries to achieve in an integrated perspective, their sustainable development” (Source: [http://cpps.dyndns.info/asambleas/x\\_asamblea/Commitment%20of%20Galapagos%20for%20the%20XXI%20Century.pdf](http://cpps.dyndns.info/asambleas/x_asamblea/Commitment%20of%20Galapagos%20for%20the%20XXI%20Century.pdf))

Through the CPPS workshop on Integrated Regional Ocean Policy (October 2015), CPPS members States discussed:

- The relationship between national ocean policies designed and developed in Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and Peru, as well as their

relationship with other global ocean governance issues – such as the governance of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ), and the overall role of Regional Seas Programmes and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations

- Identified possible options and steps towards an integrated regional ocean policy for the South-East Pacific
- Explored possible means of implementing the SDGs, particularly Goal 14.

The General Assembly of the CPPS at the twelfth Ordinary Assembly (November 2015), while recognizing the importance of the Integrated Regional Ocean Policy, determined that all the Member States should first advance their own national ocean policies.

**ROPME Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) Strategy**

The eight governments of the ROPME region (Bahrain, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) signed up to the Kuwait Regional Convention for Cooperation on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Pollution (Kuwait Convention) and the Action Plan for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas (Kuwait Action Plan).

The sixteenth ROPME Council in 2013 stressed the importance of an integrated approach, and the adoption of an “Ecosystem-Based Management Approach as a road map towards the sustainability of the marine environment, its resources and its services”.

To implement the decision, the ROPME Secretariat moved towards developing a Regional EBM

Strategy for the ROPME Sea Area. The original idea was to involve all relevant ocean sectors such as navigation, oil, fisheries, coastal development and tourism. However, given the regional ocean characteristics, the Secretariat suggested focusing initially on four key issues: the environment – which underpins all other activities – fisheries, oil and coastal development. The fisheries sector would be the first to be involved in the process of developing the EBM Strategy, considering the close linkages between the environment and the fisheries sector; a mutual understanding already exists between the two sectors that healthy ecosystems are fundamental for sustainable fish production.

The Member States established an experts’ Working Group to develop a draft strategy with technical support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency and UN Environment.



### BOX 3 African Ocean Governance

On 6 December 2012 in Addis Ababa, the African Union’s (AU) second Conference of African Ministers in Charge of Maritime-Related Affairs, adopted the 2050 Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS). The vision of the Strategy is “to foster increased wealth creation from Africa’s oceans and seas by developing a sustainable thriving blue economy in a secure and environmentally sustainable manner, as well as increased national, regional and continental stability, through collaborative, concerted, cooperative, coordinated, coherent and trust-building multilayered efforts to build blocks of maritime sector activities in concert with improving elements of maritime governance” (Source: African Union 2015 Integrated Maritime Strategy <http://pages.au.int/maritime>). To operationalize the aspirations stated in the Strategy, the Member States adopted a Plan of Action to accompany the Strategy – a road map and timeline that identifies the major activities/actions, the output measures, the lead organizations, and the institutions responsible for the implementation of activities.

In March 2015, at the fifteenth ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN), African Ministers of Environment adopted the Cairo Declaration on Managing Africa’s Natural Capital for Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication (Cairo Declaration). The African States agreed “to develop an ocean governance strategy in Africa in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Regional Seas Conventions as well as the strategies set by the AU, namely the AIMS 2050 and Agenda 2063: Africa We Want” (Source: [http://www.unep.org/sites/default/files/amcen6/amcen\\_sixth\\_special\\_session\\_cairo\\_declaration\\_final.pdf](http://www.unep.org/sites/default/files/amcen6/amcen_sixth_special_session_cairo_declaration_final.pdf)) Although the two initiatives appear to be distinct, their objectives, the main activities and the actors involved are similar. They both arise from the need to address fragmented governance of the coastal and marine ecosystems of Africa, to promote intersectoral and intergovernmental cooperation, and to address poverty and development concerns.

### REGIONAL SEAS AND REGIONAL FISHERIES BODIES COOPERATION

The global and regional reports on the state of the marine environment show that the fisheries sector, in particular, can have adverse impacts on the marine environment. Within this sector, it is widely recognized that a healthy and productive environment, and functioning coastal and marine ecosystems contribute to maintaining fish stocks and sustainable fish production. The introduction of the ecosystem approach into fisheries policies supports the mainstreaming of environmental concerns in the sector. The

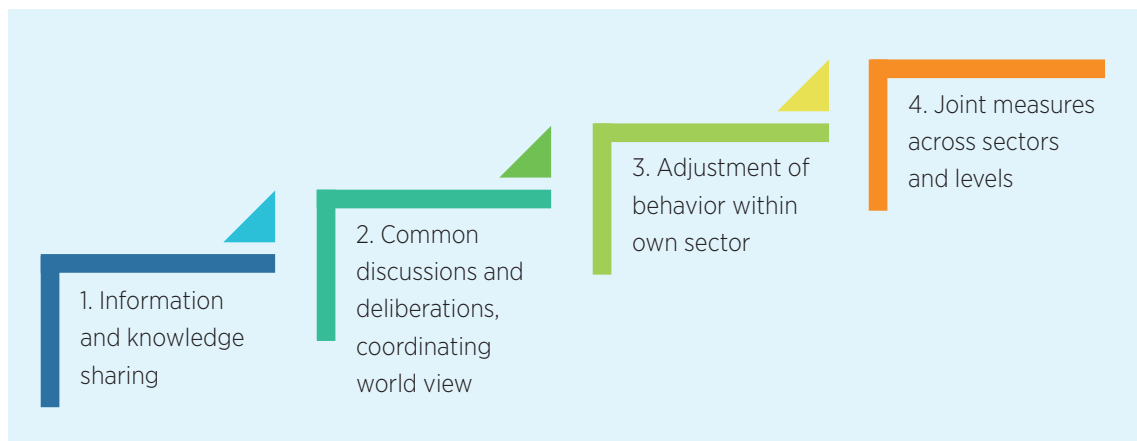


adoption of the ecosystem approach for fisheries by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has prompted cooperation between the Regional Seas Programmes and Regional Fisheries Bodies in various parts of the world. The Collective Arrangement between the OSPAR Commission and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission is a good example of such inter-institutional collaboration. The Contracting Parties adopted a stepped approach, starting with opening dialogues and mutual

exchanges to learn about each other’s mandates and activities (NEAFC and OSPAR, 2015) through the cooperation ladder indicated in Figure 2.

Many of these institutional cooperation frameworks are regulated by Memorandums of Understanding – such as the ones between the GFCM and MAP, and between the Abidjan Convention and the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (detailed in Box 4).

Figure 2 The cooperation ladder



**BOX 4 Memorandum of Understanding between General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP)**

The GFCM (of the FAO) adopted, at the fortieth session of the Commission (May-June 2016), a “Resolution for a midterm strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries” (Source: Resolution GFCM/40/2016/2 for a mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries <http://www.fao.org/gfcm/decisions/en/>). This is also the basis for the implementation of SDG 14. To implement the Strategy, GFCM entered into cooperation with other regional organizations and mechanisms. As part of this process, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with MAP. The areas of cooperation covered by the MoU and a brief overview of its implementation are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1** Areas of cooperation and implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and the Mediterranean Action Plan

AREA OF COOPERATION	ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT/ONGOING
<p><b>Promoting ecosystem-based approaches for the conservation of the marine and coastal environment and ecosystems, and the sustainable use of its living and natural resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Contribute to the formulation/implementation of a regional framework strategy for an ecosystem approach based on agreed indicators and reference points (ecological, biological, etc.) to monitor the status of the marine environment and coastal ecosystems including living marine resources.</li> <li>▶ Cooperate in undertaking assessments of the state of the marine environment and ecosystems, and of marine living resources, including socioeconomic aspects relating to the environmental impacts of fisheries, the impacts of Marine Protected Areas on marine living resources, and the environmental impacts of coastal and marine aquaculture.</li> <li>▶ Collaborate in the formulation, development and implementation of key regional strategies to integrate the environment within social and economic development, especially in relation to fisheries and aquaculture.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mitigating the impact of fisheries and aquaculture activities on marine habitats and species</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Collaborate in the elaboration (including extrabudgetary fundraising) of a joint regional project for the evaluation and mitigation of by-catch of endangered and non-target species, and of the impact of fishing gear on marine habitats.</li> <li>▶ Consider initiatives to develop the concept of marine spatial planning, taking into account fisheries and aquaculture activities, activities for the preservation of marine habitats and associated species, and possible conflicts between these activities and other sea uses.</li> <li>▶ Exchange data and information on deep-sea habitats, biodiversity and living resources.</li> <li>▶ Collaborate in initiatives that raise awareness and mitigate major impacts such as reducing the amount of litter from fishing gear.</li> </ul>

AREA OF COOPERATION	ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT/ONGOING
<p><b>Identification, protection and management of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs), marine areas of particular importance (hotspots of biodiversity, areas with sensitive habitats, essential fish habitats, areas of importance for fisheries and/or for the conservation of endangered species, coastal wetlands)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Enhance collaboration with other relevant organizations, as appropriate, including those with which MoUs have been signed, to create a common regional database of sites of particular importance for biodiversity conservation and for fisheries management, complementary to and coherent with the MAP database on pollution and biodiversity monitoring.</li> <li>▶ With regard to the Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) and the Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs), in particular those located partially or wholly in ABNJ, the Parties will collaborate to harmonize existing respective criteria to identify those areas. In the cases where the locations of SPAMIs and FRAs are overlapping wholly or partially mechanisms for their establishment requires harmonization and coordination.</li> <li>▶ The Parties will cooperate to promote the adoption of eventual management schemes developed within SPAMIs and FRAs to ensure that measures are consistent with the objectives and are respectful of the mandates of both organizations. Measures with potential impact on fisheries in SPAMIs will be discussed by the Parties.</li> <li>▶ Monitor the status of the species listed in Annexes 2 and 3 of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biodiversity; pursue activities to ensure that exploitation of all species included in Annex 3 is regulated, following the same Protocol.</li> <li>▶ Cooperate in undertaking assessments of the state of coastal lagoons and other relevant coastal wetlands for the formulation and dissemination of sustainable management and use of their living resources.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Integrated Maritime Policy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Study the impacts of climate change on the marine environment and ecosystems, and their marine living resources.</li> <li>▶ Contribute to the formulation and adoption of appropriate fisheries and aquaculture adaptation and mitigation to climate change measures, in line with environmental adaptation measures, including enhancing knowledge and communication.</li> <li>▶ Strengthen scientific advice on issues of common interest, including the negative effects of marine pollution on marine living resources and ways to better address cumulative impacts.</li> <li>▶ Explore new fields of investigation applied to the conservation of the marine environment and marine ecosystems, and the sustainable use of marine living resources to promote an integrated approach to environmental and fisheries issues.</li> </ul>

AREA OF COOPERATION	ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT/ONGOING
<b>Integrated Maritime Policy (cont.)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="560 371 1353 510">▶ Explore new fields of investigation applied to the conservation of the marine environment and marine ecosystems, and the sustainable use of marine living resources to promote an integrated approach to environmental and fisheries issues.</li> <li data-bbox="560 546 1353 645">▶ Collaborate in initiatives related to the implementation and monitoring of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) approach and marine spatial planning, as well as other zoning approaches.</li> <li data-bbox="560 680 1059 707">▶ Develop and implement a joint pilot project.</li> </ul>
<b>Legal, institutional and policy related cooperation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="560 775 1353 842">▶ Consult regularly on policy issues of common interest to identify synergies.</li> <li data-bbox="560 878 1353 945">▶ Promote exchanges of information and data as appropriate, and share the results of this cooperation through a website.</li> <li data-bbox="560 981 1353 1079">▶ Participate (as a permanent Member in the case of the GFCM) in the MCSDD to formulate sustainable development frameworks and guidelines for coastal area management.</li> <li data-bbox="560 1115 1353 1214">▶ Exchange views on the governance of the Mediterranean, with regard to those areas beyond national jurisdiction and take part, where possible, in ongoing initiatives aimed at improving governance.</li> <li data-bbox="560 1249 1353 1384">▶ Organize joint side events, where necessary, including together with other organizations, while attending meetings held in other international forums that could be relevant to the further promotion of the goals and objectives of the MoU.</li> <li data-bbox="560 1420 1353 1599">▶ Promote cooperation and exchange of information between compliance committees, as set up under both Member's respective frameworks, to address issues of common concern (pollution discharges into the sea; illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, etc.) (yet to be implemented).</li> <li data-bbox="560 1635 1353 1688">▶ Participate, where appropriate, in projects implemented by the other mechanism.</li> <li data-bbox="560 1724 1353 1859">▶ Attend regional/subregional meetings and subsidiary body meetings of interest as organized respectively by each mechanism – such as SPA/RAC meetings and meetings related to the implementation of the ecosystem approach.</li> <li data-bbox="560 1895 1353 1951">▶ Coordinate positions within international forums which involve both mechanisms (yet to be implemented).</li> </ul>

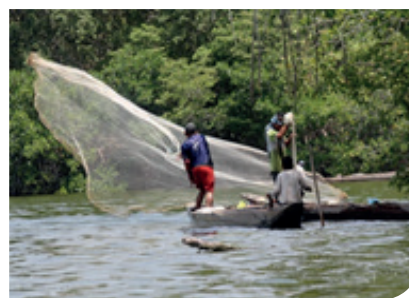
### BOX 5 Abidjan Convention cooperation with Regional Fisheries Bodies in West and Central Africa

The Abidjan Convention for the Cooperation on the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region covers the Atlantic coast from Mauritania to South Africa. There are a number of Regional Fisheries Bodies in this region, one of which – the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission – has signed an MoU with the Abidjan Convention. The MoU covers areas such as the delimitation of continental shelves, IUU fishing, the coordination of policies and legislation on fishing gear, the ecosystem approach and Marine Protected Areas, capacity-building and public awareness-raising.

The two organizations contributed to the execution of a marine ecosystem project,<sup>6</sup> the ‘Protection of the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem’, implemented by UN Environment and FAO, with funding from the Global Environment Facility. The coordination of project activities is organized under the respective mechanisms of the Abidjan Convention Conference of the Parties and the Commission of the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission. Parties to the Abidjan Convention also decided to establish a Guinea Current Commission, which should include a fisheries component, under a Protocol to the Abidjan Convention.

<sup>6</sup> Based on a concept developed by National Oceans and Atmosphere Administration, the Large Marine Ecosystems (LME) aims at implementing the ecosystem approach in the marine and coastal environment – from knowledge to management. The Global Environment Facility used this approach in their funded projects in the International Waters focal areas in which a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis led to the development of a Strategic Action Programme.

There is growing cooperation between the Regional Seas programmes and Regional Fisheries Bodies in multiple regions, including the Mediterranean, the Western Indian Ocean, the North-East Atlantic, West and Central Africa, the Black Sea, the ROPME/RECOFI area, and the Caribbean. In some regions, the Regional Seas programmes function as Regional Fisheries Bodies. This is the case, for instance, for the South-East Pacific, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Given the ongoing and planned cooperation in various regional seas, the Sustainable Ocean Initiative<sup>7</sup> organized a Global Dialogue between the Regional Seas Organizations and Regional



Fisheries Bodies – summarized in the Seoul Outcome. This global platform could serve as the mechanism for the exchange of lessons learned from different regions and for discussing specific issues of common interest.

<sup>7</sup> Under the Convention on Biological Diversity, working with UN Environment and FAO.

### BOX 6 Seoul Outcome on the Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies on Accelerating Progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets was organized in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in September 2016 (under the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity). A healthy environment and resilient ecosystems underpin sustainable fisheries and food security, and the ecosystem approach to fisheries contributes to sustained environmental functions and the provisioning of ecosystem services. The essential role played by regional organizations in supporting actions by national governments for the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems was clearly understood. Countries and regional organizations from different ocean regions, had the opportunity to share a diversity of experiences, challenges, priorities and capacities.

To further enhance cooperation and coordination among Regional Seas Programmes and RFBs, a number of possible approaches were identified:

- Developing joint regional-level strategies, MoUs or other collaborative arrangements to identify common objectives, outline joint and/or complementary activities, and clarify roles and expectations of respective regional organizations
- Identifying specific issues of common interest around which to structure cooperation and coordination, both on scientific and technical matters as well as management tools and approaches, including with other relevant intergovernmental organizations addressing these issues
- Exchanging scientific information and promoting harmonized approaches for collecting and accessing data produced by a range of entities, such as governments, universities, research partnerships and non-governmental organizations
- Developing common baselines and databases for scientific information on marine and coastal biodiversity (e.g., Ecologically and Biologically Sensitive Marine Areas, Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems and Ocean Biodiversity Information Systems)
- Supporting national reporting to regional frameworks, including through standardized approaches for indicators and reporting formats, and aligning them with reporting on progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the SDGs, with particular focus on indicators for which there is information available from existing data sources

#### MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

In promoting cooperation among institutions, engagement of and dialogue among stakeholders is key. Under the different regional and sectoral institutional frameworks, a wide range of stakeholders, including

from the private sector, are participating in decision-making.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships can be developed to enhance cross-sectoral dialogue at different levels. Normally, such partnerships include government institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations,

research institutions, regional and international organizations, private companies and faith-based organizations. Across these sectors, stakeholders can discuss common issues of interest. Given the

important role the private sectors play, private-public partnerships can contribute to cross-sectoral cooperation, as well as consolidated efforts for achieving SDGs.

### BOX 7 HELCOM partnerships on clean and safe Baltic Sea shipping

Clean shipping, a prime example of a cross-sectoral marine management issue, calls for effective coordination between different national administrations (maritime transport and environment), and between international and regional cooperation structures, as well as partnerships between 'private' and 'public' actors.

In the Baltic Sea, the Helsinki Commission's (HELCOM) cross-sectoral cooperation and partnerships on clean shipping have emerged as a particularly successful example of long-term regional cooperation. HELCOM has recognized the key regulatory role of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and, from the outset, has focused on preparing regional initiatives for decisions at the IMO, as well as facilitating their implementation after adoption.

This regional cooperation has facilitated recent regulatory breakthroughs at the IMO, including the 2016 decisions for an 80 per cent reduction in NOx emissions from ships exhaust gases and a complete ban on untreated sewage discharges into the Baltic Sea, as well as regional work on ships' ballast water – a key pathway for the introduction of invasive species.

Ensuring effective regional implementation of such IMO rules is essential. Regional follow-up of IMO rules on oil discharges has resulted in a ca. 90 per cent decrease in operational spills over the last 30 years. This has been facilitated by long-term HELCOM work on coordinated aerial surveillance and the development of port reception facilities.

The HELCOM Maritime group is a prime example of cross-sectoral cooperation: national administrations from the environment and transport sectors, as well as the European Commission, industry groupings and other non-governmental organizations work together at the regional level to address challenges before and after tough regulatory decisions.

The public-private partnership aspect of this cooperation – the effective inclusion of the views and expertise from relevant industries (particularly ship-owners and port authorities) and environmental organizations has been a key ingredient for success in the regional work. The involvement and activities of industry observers within HELCOM has expanded over the years and recent initiatives have drawn several new stakeholders into the process – for example, the Cruise Lines International Association, which has contributed substantially to the regional work on sewage from passenger ships.

The success of clean shipping initiatives has recently inspired similar approaches within HELCOM in other fields: fisheries, agricultural loads and MSP.



### BOX 8 Regional cooperation on marine pollution preparedness and response in the North-West Pacific

Oil and Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) spill incidents remain one of the major pollution threats in the ocean. The area covered by the North-West Pacific Action Plan, shared by four states (Japan, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation) is exposed to a high risk of HNS pollution incidents due to high shipping densities and high levels of industrial and economic development along the coasts.

The establishment of a regional cooperation mechanism for marine pollution prevention and response among the four North Pacific nations proceeded in parallel with the adoption of the Action Plan for the protection, management and development of the marine and coastal environment of the North-West Pacific Region (NOWPAP). The large-scale oil spill incidents (namely, the Sea Prince in 1995 and the Nakhodka in 1997) compelled NOWPAP Member States to give serious consideration to the high risk of oil and HNS spills, and develop appropriate response measures.

To effectively implement regional activities for marine pollution prevention and response in the NOWPAP region, the Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre (MERRAC) was established in the Republic of Korea in 2000. The following two documents provide the framework for cooperation:

- The MoU on Regional Cooperation Regarding Preparedness and Response to Oil Spills in the Marine Environment of the North-West Pacific Region, signed at the ministerial level (2004)
- The NOWPAP Regional Oil and HNS Spill Contingency Plan (adopted for oil spills only in 2003 and later revised to include HNS spills in 2009)

Since the establishment of NOWPAP in 1994, the IMO has been directly involved in the marine pollution prevention and response activities in the region by providing technical support to MERRAC activities under a joint MoU with UNEP. Other similar regional/international organizations such as the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea, the Centre of Documentation, Research and Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution and the European Maritime Safety Agency have also been actively participating in the MERRAC activities. HELCOM and international NGOs such as the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation, International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds and Oil Spill Response Limited have also been actively participating in MERRAC activities.

**ORGANIZATIONS WORKING ON LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES AND MARINE ISSUES**

Eighty per cent of marine pollution originates from land-based activities and many of the threats to coastal ecosystems such as mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass beds are a result of land-based human activities. This requires the collaboration of organizations that have mandates that cover issues both on the land and in the sea, as well as those that deal with land-sea interactions. Both Integrated Coastal Zone

Management (ICZM) and Integrated Coastal Area and River Basin Management (ICARM) are concepts that address issues related to land-sea interactions. These concepts have prompted cooperation between coastal zone managers and managers of river basins that are connected by hydrological, geo-chemical and socioeconomic relationships. More recently, there has been more focus on these interactions with new approaches such as Source-to-Sea (S2S), Hiltop-to-Ocean (H2O) and Ridge-to-Reef (R2R).

**BOX 9 Cooperation between the Black Sea Commission and ICPDR (Danube Commission)**

The ecological state of the coastal waters of the Western Black Sea has improved significantly since the late 1980s and early 1990s. The improvements are a result of a reduction in nutrient input, which has led to a decrease in eutrophication and fewer algal blooms, the recovery of animal populations on the sea floor, and an improved regeneration of macrophytes. The Danube River accounts for over half of the nutrient input to the Black Sea. In addition, inputs of other harmful substances, especially oil, continue to threaten the Black Sea ecosystems. Oil enters the environment as a result of accidental and operational discharges from vessels, as well as from land-based sources. In order to help address these problems, the Regional Sea Convention for the Black Sea and the Danube River Commission were created with respective mandates.

The Bucharest Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution was signed in 1992 and ratified in 1994. It provided the legal basis for combating pollution from land-based sources and maritime transport, and for achieving sustainable management of marine living resources and sustainable human development in the Black Sea region. The updated Strategic Action Plan for the Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea (BS SAP), adopted at the Ministerial Conference in April 2009, reflects the progress achieved since the adoption of BS SAP 1996 (updated in 2002). BS SAP 2009 is based on three key environmental management approaches: (1) Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM); (2) an Ecosystem Approach; and (3) Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM).

The International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) is a transnational body, which has been established to implement the Danube River Protection Convention. The main objective of the Convention is to ensure that surface waters and groundwater within the

Danube River Basin are managed and used sustainably and equitably. This objective involves, inter alia, measures to reduce the pollution loads entering the Black Sea from sources in the Danube River Basin. In 2000, the ICPDR Contracting Parties nominated the ICPDR as the platform for the implementation of all transboundary aspects of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). In 2007, the ICPDR also took responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the EU Floods Directive in the Danube River Basin.

The Danube River provides high river inflow to the Black Sea, and changes within the river basin are having an important effect on the ecological status of the sea. Addressing these issues required cooperation between the two commissions, which started in 1997 on a preliminary basis, and was reinforced by granting mutual observer status and a MoU at a ministerial meeting in Brussels in November 2001.

In 2002, the Danube–Black Sea Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) was established to improve cooperation between the two organizations. This body is drafting guidelines for achieving good environmental status in the coastal waters of the Black Sea, in line with EU legislation. It takes into account the following considerations: (i) common goals and objectives with regard to the prevention of pollution loads and the conservation of riverine and marine environments and ecosystems; (ii) compliance with the provisions of relevant legal instruments for environmental protection in the Danube and Black Sea basins: the Espoo Convention, the Aarhus Convention, the Ramsar Convention and relevant EU legislation, inter alia, WFD and MSFD Directives. The intention is to establish broader cooperation aimed at harmonizing activities, the regular exchange of necessary data, avoiding duplications and promoting synergies through the MoU between the BSC and the ICPDR on common strategic goals (2001).



**PROCESSES AND FORMS OF COOPERATION**

The case studies clearly show that the process of building cooperation between and among sectoral organizations had different starting points and followed different pathways. Once two or more sectoral organizations start discussions, a process should be established to create understanding and trust. Many of the

cases of cooperation between Regional Seas and Regional Fisheries Bodies started dialogues with a clear intention of reaching a MoU. However, on the journey towards integrated ocean governance, the aim is to bring as many organizations as possible on-board – the case of OSPAR and NEAFC shows an interesting stepped approach towards engagement of other relevant organizations.

**BOX 10** OSPAR cooperation with the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission and other relevant intergovernmental organizations

Cooperation between OSPAR and its partners was realized via the development of a cooperation mechanism involving organizations with differing and separate competences for the management of human activities in the seas in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

The core organizations that have adopted the Collective Arrangement are the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) and the OSPAR Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment in the North-East Atlantic. It is hoped that in due course, at least two other organizations with a common interest in collaboration will adopt the Collective Arrangement: the IMO and the International Seabed Authority. For organizations that have not reached a formal Collective Arrangement and are cooperating informally at the secretariat level, the existing MoUs provide a general basis for ongoing cooperation.

The focus of the Collective Arrangement is on sharing information on the location of managed areas and the objectives for management actions. This naturally leads on to more general sharing of information between the organizations, which can then influence further decisions/actions taken within their respective mandates. The Collective Arrangement focuses on selected areas of the North-East Atlantic, identified by each of the organizations. The participants jointly maintain an annex to the Collective Arrangement that includes information on the areas that they have identified as relevant to the arrangement. This includes the coordinates of the borders of such areas as well as information on what measures apply to these areas. This means that all relevant information on area management in the North-East Atlantic is in one place. This ensures that decision makers have access to information on what other organizations have done or are currently doing before making their own decisions regarding particular areas.

## 3 LESSONS LEARNED

The summary of lessons learned from the case studies is provided below:

- Shared challenges in a shared sea basin can contribute to strengthening regional efforts and political will to address them.
- The political will of the Member States of regional organizations is key to cross-sectoral cooperation. Existing conventions and action plans may serve as instruments for the development of cross-sectoral cooperation, which in turn may help to achieve the objectives of each of these instruments.
- Building initial trust among the different regional organizations is a key starting point. All of the case studies used face-to-face contacts and regular communication to build trust. In some cases, formal or informal communication channels between the secretariats or the governing bodies were opened.
- The engagement of Contracting Parties or Member States is essential for ensuring they take the lead in coordinating nationally across sectoral divides. Over time, in the best-case scenario, this process becomes iterative, with increasing cooperation at the regional level also driving increased coordination at the national level and vice versa.
- A lot of regional-level cross-sectoral cooperation starts without clearly defining cooperation objectives. It is advisable that regional organizations are clear about their respective mandates and mutually respect the mandates of partner organizations. If there are issues of concern about actions carried out under the mandate of other organizations they should be raised diplomatically. Instructing other bodies is likely to lead to tensions.
- Where possible, finding neutral sources of technical advice, scientific information or peer review can make cross-sectoral dialogue more effective. These sources can be used to facilitate agreement on common products (such as assessment of regional ecosystems and ecosystem relevant data products), approaches (such as the use of ABMT and the adoption of the ecosystem approach), or even processes (such as joint assessments or joint strategy development).



- Cross-sectoral cooperation cannot be achieved without the participation of all relevant stakeholders. Each regional organization has a mechanism for stakeholder consultation and should be employed as much as possible in cross-sectoral dialogue. Private actors play a key role in many regional sectoral organizations, and private-public partnerships should be included from the beginning.
- Memorandums of Understanding, formal Collective Arrangements, mutual Governing Body decisions, and common policy instruments and strategies are used to regulate cooperation and cross-sectoral policy coherence. The case studies provide useful lessons on the advantages and disadvantages of each of these instruments.

For example, a MoU may trigger a formal cooperation process but may not necessarily create mutual understanding of mandates or the scope of action. Common policy instruments provide a clearer strategic direction for all the organizations involved, but involve lengthy negotiations and significant financial resources.

- Multiple-sector, integrated ocean policy development is necessary for a more holistic approach to ocean management. There are many initiatives that have recently started working towards this goal at the regional level but the results are yet to be seen. Many of the regions initiated cooperation between two sectors on the basis of regional ocean priorities, practicality and a history of previous cooperation.

In summary, the case studies clearly show that none of the ocean-related SDG can be achieved by single organizations. It is obvious that regional-level implementation can provide opportunities to involve Member States in achieving shared targets and goals. Until recently, the challenges of cross-sectoral cooperation – particularly, the lack of sufficient human and financial resources required to consider cross-sectoral issues – meant that many organizations were unwilling to engage in regional initiatives. The case studies demonstrate a variety of ways to break the sectoral silos and practical approaches to promote cooperation.

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# ANNEX

Conclusions of the workshop on area-based management, regional coordination and cross-sectoral cooperation for delivery of ocean-related SDGs (9-10 February 2017, Brussels)

## Discussion summary

- The workshop was attended by experts from UN Environment, European Commission, European Environment Agency, European External Action Service, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, International Union for Conservation of Nature, World Maritime University, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Institute of Advanced Sustainability Studies, Institut du Développement Durable et des Relations Internationales, Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, representatives of Regional Seas Programmes (Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), Teheran Convention, Black Sea Commission, Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur (CPPS), Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME), OSPAR Commission, Helsinki Commission (HELCOM)) and a regional fisheries management organization (General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean). Representatives of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea also joined the meeting by skype to make a presentation. The discussion focused on the delivery of SDG 14 and other ocean-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the application of ABMT and through regional cross-sectoral cooperation to coherently implement marine, maritime, fisheries and other relevant policies.
- The 2030 Agenda brings new impetus towards ocean sustainability, placing resource use and conservation into a wider sustainable development framework. In order to address the linkages between sectors and initiate substantive and concrete actions towards coordinated management strategies and policies, political will needs to be mobilized.



- A holistic approach to oceans should include effective governance, institutional interactions and coherent policies, and SDG 14 and other ocean-related SDGs are important drivers to that end.
- Frameworks for cooperation among stakeholders across various levels could be further developed, to enable the development and implementation of systemic approaches and governance arrangements, thus ensuring that SDG 14 delivery follows an integrated, ecosystem-based approach to allow for addressing pressures on the path to a sustainable 'blue economy'.
- Partnerships, in their various dimensions, are recognized as the basis for delivery of SDG 14 and other ocean-related targets. This includes vertical (across, for example, regional-global scales), horizontal (across sectors) and multi-stakeholder partnerships (including civil society, the private sector and others).
- Partnerships at the sea basin-level provide an opportunity for regionally-coordinated efforts to harmonize delivery of ocean-related parts of the 2030 Agenda by stakeholders within the sea basins. Strengthened inter- and intra-organizational coordination and information sharing to support cross-sectoral cooperation is important. Several good examples of cross-sectoral cooperation exist at the regional level, particularly the cooperation between Regional Seas Programmes and Regional Fisheries Bodies. Such partnerships can be established through, inter alia, Memorandums of Understanding and similar formal agreements, such as in the cases of GFCM and UNEP-MAP or OSPAR and the Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission. An important first step is to understand the different mandates of these organizations through dialogues.
- Many strategy development processes to support sustainable ocean and coastal development are noted. Continued exchange of information and mutual learning and feedback are encouraged to ensure coherence. In this context, it would be important to ensure coherence among the strategies and possibly even combining them under an umbrella strategy. In that effort, we should, to the extent possible, use existing governance structures.
- The meeting noted existing sustainable development strategies adopted at the regional level to accelerate progress towards the implementation of SDG 14 – for example, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) and the midterm strategy (2017-2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries adopted by the GFCM.
- Different levels of development and maturity have been attained by individual RFBs and Regional Seas Programmes. Information on the results of performance reviews and effectiveness evaluations should be shared, also with a view to monitoring the implementation at the regional level, monitoring the impacts of the respective frameworks and evaluating effectiveness of regional ocean governance.
- The meeting acknowledged a number of existing regional governance frameworks and processes, in particular, regional ministerial forums for the environment, which address marine and coastal issues. This includes, for example, the decision of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) of March 2015 underlining the role of the Regional Seas Conventions and the decision to develop an “African Ocean Governance Strategy”. Other examples are the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean with a decision on oceans in March 2016. The Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities in Asia and the Pacific is also expected to address this topic in its next session.

- The meeting identified some developments at the subregional level, on which broader governance mechanisms and strategies could build:
  - In Africa, the Regional Seas Conventions are contributing to the AMCEN process. In particular, the Abidjan Convention is developing a regional ocean governance blueprint and the Nairobi Convention is gathering lessons learned on tools and methods for integrated coastal management, taking into consideration climate change and the blue economy.
  - In the Mediterranean, the institutional framework around the MSSD is a key example, which could serve as a building block for the African Ocean Governance Strategy and inspire other regional governance mechanisms, including interconnected seas such as the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea and the Red Sea.
  - In Latin America and the Caribbean, there is increased integration between subregional initiatives: the cooperation between the Cartagena Convention and the West and Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission, the CPPS's integrated ocean policy process, and its Galapagos Commitments, working with other mechanisms in the South Pacific.
  - In Asia, there is increased coordination between East Asian regional programmes and a new strategy for the Coordinating Body for the Seas of East Asia is under development. A new marine biodiversity strategy is being developed for South Asia Seas under the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme, and ecological objectives are being set for the North-West Pacific Action Plan.
  - In the Pacific, the Ocean Commissioner coordinates ocean-related regional policies under the Pacific Island Forum, and has launched a 'Pacific Oceanscape Initiative' as well as a 'Pacific Ocean Alliance'.
- Continued exchange of information, mutual learning and feedback among regional processes, involving key stakeholders and partners such as the EU, are needed in order to ensure coherence and synergies between the different sustainable development strategies and initiatives.
- Area-based management tools (ABMTs) can help operationalize the ecosystem approach and thereby contribute to the achievement of many ocean-related SDGs and targets, including food security, poverty eradication and coastal resilience, at regional, national and local levels. There is an opportunity to consider ABMTs from a systemic perspective; to identify the connectors between different tools, to map specific pathways on how ABMTs can contribute to SDGs, and to develop frameworks combining ABMTs to achieve multiple management objectives and a range of ocean-related SDGs. Further capacity-building at regional and national levels to support implementation of ocean-related SDGs is necessary, particularly on ABMTs concepts, on the application and possible combination of ABMTs, and on ensuring coherence between terrestrial ABMTs and marine ABMTs.
- There is scope for further advancing ICZM and Marine Spatial Planning across borders. Facilitating the sharing of data and experience is recommended to inform the practical application of ABMTs. This should include strengthening of socioeconomic analysis, models for socioeconomic values and issues (complementing ecosystem models) as well as mapping and assessment of the cumulative impacts of human activities.
- There is a need to address upstream issues – for example, land-based sources of pollution and wastewater impacting coastal and ocean areas. Land-based pollution management and

integrative ABMTs (e.g., integrated watershed management, ridge-to-reef approaches and ICZM) could address land-sea interactions, thus linking SDGs 6, 14 and 15. Similarly, the ‘blue economy’ is dependent on and affected by land-based activities impacting oceans.

- Important lessons can be learned from practical application of ABMTs – for example, from the Nairobi Convention case study. This example from South Africa illustrated the challenges in implementing integrated coastal management and its relationship with pre-existing land-based management and regulatory systems.

**Action points**

- Ocean-related organizations (such as UN Environment, FAO and CBD) should consider more formal cross-sector cooperation, building on and formalizing existing platforms and processes to facilitate exchange of good practices towards sustainable development. This may include:
  - Exchange of experience and lessons learned through a dedicated platform
  - Cross-sectoral dialogue and coordination of information and data exchange at the regional level
  - Assessment of the potential for developing joint SDG implementation strategies among Regional Sea Conventions and Regional Fisheries Bodies, in close cooperation with the organizations with complementary mandates (e.g., UN Environment, CBD, FAO, etc.)

- Strategic partnerships are to be built on existing global and regional governance structures and strategies, and on inclusive stakeholder participation to target and involve the private sector and civil society. The case of ‘clean shipping’ under HELCOM demonstrates a concrete example of a private-public partnership.
- A better understanding should be developed of the mandates and activities of different complementary ocean management mechanisms and how they relate to the SDGs. Based on such understanding, cross-sectoral dialogues may start even without setting cooperation objectives. As a result of initial dialogues, data and information sharing can be pursued to prepare further cooperation between these mechanisms.
- Further performance and effectiveness reviews of Regional Seas Programmes and Regional Fisheries Bodies should be undertaken, also to monitor/evaluate the implementation of SDGs at the regional level and the impact of policies.
- Lessons can be drawn from existing policy interactions, such as between the EU MSFD and the work of respective Regional Seas Conventions, the CPPS Integrated Ocean Policy process and ROPME Ecosystem-Based Management Strategy development.
- Explore options for more coordinated application of different single-sector and multi-sectoral ABMTs within comprehensive ocean management structures and develop a guiding framework on how combinations of different ABMTs may jointly contribute to a range of ocean-related SDG targets.



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