



Regional Seas Biodiversity

Harmonized Reporting between Regional
Seas Programmes National Reporting
and the Convention on Biological Diversity
National Reporting (NBSAP)



Regional Seas Biodiversity

Harmonized Reporting between Regional
Seas Programmes National Reporting and the
Convention on Biological Diversity National
Reporting (NBSAP)

© 2023 United Nations Environment Programme

ISBN: 978-92-807-4033-2

Job number: DEP/2531/NA

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part and in any form for educational or non-profit services without special permission from the copyright holder, provided acknowledgement of the source is made. The United Nations Environment Programme would appreciate receiving a copy of any publication that uses this publication as a source.

No use of this publication may be made for resale or any other commercial purpose whatsoever without prior permission in writing from the United Nations Environment Programme. Applications for such permission, with a statement of the purpose and extent of the reproduction, should be addressed to the Director, Communication Division, United Nations Environment Programme, P. O. Box 30552, Nairobi 00100, Kenya.

Disclaimers

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory or city or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. For general guidance on matters relating to the use of maps in publications please go to <https://www.un.org/geospatial/>.

Mention of a commercial company or product in this document does not imply endorsement by the United Nations Environment Programme or the authors. The use of information from this document for publicity or advertising is not permitted. Trademark names and symbols are used in an editorial fashion with no intention on infringement of trademark or copyright laws.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Environment Programme. We regret any errors or omissions that may have been unwittingly made.

© Maps, photos and illustrations as specified

Suggested Citation

United Nations Environment Programme (2023). Harmonized Reporting between Regional Seas Programmes National Reporting and the Convention on Biological Diversity National Reporting (NBSAP). Nairobi.

Design and Layout

Cover photo by Richard Towell on Flickr

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Author

This report prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Seas Programme

The author is grateful to the following Regional Seas Programmes' Secretariats for their contributions and for providing support and comments to this report in its draft: the Abidjan Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern Africa Region, the Antigua Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northeast Pacific, the Arctic Council, the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution, the Bucharest Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution, the Cartagena Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region, the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia, the Helsinki Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, the Jeddah Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment, the Lima Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Zones of the Southeast Pacific, the Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean, the Northwest Pacific Action Plan, the OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, the Regional Convention for Cooperation on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Pollution Sea Area, the South Asian Conservation Environment Programme, and the Tehran Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea. The author is also very appreciative of the valuable insights of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the European Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme's Ecosystems Integration Branch and the United Nations Environment Programme's Marine and Freshwater Branch.



LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Abidjan Convention
ABDS	Arctic Biodiversity Data Service
ABT	Aichi Biodiversity Targets
AC	Arctic Council
ACCOBAMS	Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area
ASCOBANS	Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas
ASMO	Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Committee (OSPAR)
BIP	Biodiversity Indicators Partnership
BLG	Biodiversity Liaison Group
BSC	Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution
BSEP	Black Sea Environment Programme
CAFF	Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (Arctic Council)
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBMP	Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program
CCAMLR	Commission on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
CEP	Caribbean Environment Programme
CHM	Clearing-House Mechanism
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
COBSEA	Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia
COP	Conference of the Parties
CP	Contracting Parties
CPPS	Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur
DaRT	Data Reporting Tools for MEAs
DPSIR	Drivers Pressures State Impacts Responses (Assessment Framework)
EBSA	Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas
EC	European Commission
EEA	European Environment Agency
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EcoQO	Environmental Quality Objective
EU	European Union
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
GBF	Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

GBIF	Global Biodiversity Information Facility
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEO	Global Environment Outlook
GEO BON	Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network
HELCOM	Helsinki Commission
IEA	Integrated Ecosystem Assessment
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO)
IPBES	Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples and local communities
ISA	International Seabed Authority
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing
KBS	Knowledge-based System
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MCSD	Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MOP	Meeting of the Parties
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive (European Union)
NAP	National Action Plan / National Adaptation Plan
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NEAFC	Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission
NFP	National Focal Points
NIP	National Implementation Plan
NOWPAP	Northwest Pacific Action Plan
OACP	Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries
OSPAR	Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
PAME	Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment
PERSGA	Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden
QSR	Quality Status Report
RAC	Regional Activity Centres
RFB	Regional Fishery Body
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organization
RLI	Red List Index (IUCN)
ROPME	Regional Organization for the Protection of Marine Environment
RSP	Regional Seas Programme
SACEP	South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme



SBI	Subsidiary Body on Implementation
SBSTTA	Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technological Advice
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
UN	United Nations
UNBL	United Nations Biodiversity Lab
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDOALOS	United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	iii
List of Acronyms and abbreviations	iv
Executive Summary	
1. Introduction of the Regional Seas Programmes and the First Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework	1
2. The Assessment Process.....	6
2.1. Collection, Collation and Analysis of Data	7
2.2. Summary of Priority Actions	21
3. Reporting Obligations and Mechanisms	28
3.1. Reporting Obligations and Mechanisms under the 18 Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (including national reporting formats, reporting items and use of indicators, frequency of reporting, report review mechanisms under each of the Regional Seas)	29
3.2. Reporting Obligations and Mechanisms under the Convention on Biological Diversity (possibly linked with the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans processes so far, supporting tools, and prospective Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework national reporting)	43
4. Analysis of Synergies and Gaps.....	48
4.1. Alignment of Indicators of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.....	50
4.2. Alignment of the Reporting Format/Frequency/Mechanism of the Regional Seas Conventions with the National Strategies and Actions Plans of the Convention of Biological Diversity and National Biodiversity Strategies and Actions Plans supported by the Global Environment Facility.....	59
5. Selected Case Studies	64
6. Conclusions and recommendations.....	66
7. References.....	72
8. Annex I. Analysis of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans.....	86
9. Annex II. Case Studies	94



List of Tables, Boxes and Chart

Table 1 Regional Seas Programmes and main features	2
Table 2 Websites links of the Regional Seas Programmes	11
Table 3 Regional Seas Programmes and Governing Instruments	12
Table 4 Strategic Directions/Work Programmes of the Regional Seas Programmes.....	24
Table 5 Summary of key issues for harmonization.....	49
Table 6 List of SDG 14 targets, indicators, custodian agencies and partners agencies.....	52
Table 7 Main spatial level of intervention for each of the SDG 14 targets.....	53
Table 8 Global Biodiversity Framework Proposed Action Targets linked to the mandates of the Regional Seas Programmes.....	54
Table 9 Regional Seas Core Indicators Set (UNEP 2016a).....	56
Table 10 Comparability of Regional Seas Core Indicator Set, GBF Proposed Actions Targets and their links to indicators for SDG 14.....	57
Table 11 Global Biodiversity Framework Proposed Action Targets and associated areas for projects identified by the GEF-8 Strategic Positioning and Programming Directions (GEF 2021b)	62
Table 12 Key findings from the survey responses received	87
Table 13 Survey results from the analysis of each of the RSPs' Secretariat.....	91
Box 1 SDG 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (UNDESA 2021a).....	5
Box 2 Draft template for national reporting on the Nairobi Convention and its Protocols	39
Box 3 Revised Template for national reporting on the Cartagena Convention and Protocols	39
Box 4 Unified Reporting Format for the Tehran Convention and Protocols (Tehran Convention Secretariat 2011)	40
Box 5 Template for national reporting on the Abidjan Convention and its Protocols (Abidjan Convention 2014).....	40
Box 6 Revised reporting format for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols (UNEP/MAP 2017a)	41
Box 7 Proposed structure of a draft template of the CBD Seventh National Report.....	47
Box 8 Kunming Declaration.....	48
Box 9 Survey questionnaire conducted for consultation with the RSCAPs' Secretariats.....	86
Chart 1 Summary of the survey results	93

1. INTRODUCTION OF THE REGIONAL SEAS PROGRAMMES AND THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

This report was prepared as part of the project 'Regional Seas Biodiversity under the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework', implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme and the European Commission (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP] 2021a). Based on the process of adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF)¹ and on the exchange of experiences of the Regional Seas Programmes (RSPs)² of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), this draft report reflects on the role of the Regional Seas Programmes in consolidating, supporting, and more specifically harmonizing national efforts amongst Member States and using them as the vehicle for reporting and follow-up of global objectives and targets.

The first draft of the post-2020 GBF (Convention on Biological Diversity [CBD] 2021a)³ establishes a set of goals for 2050 and associated milestones for 2030 for the state of biodiversity and nature's contributions to people, as well as a set of action-oriented targets.

This proposal considers some of the shortcomings of the past 10 years, with a set of goals and targets informed by science (CBD 2021b). Elements of the people dimension will also be considered in terms of gender equality and human rights considerations.

The post-2020 GBF promotes ownership and mainstreaming, accountability and monitoring of biodiversity and is applicable across sectors and spatial scales. All these points are argued on the basis of how implementation measures could include adopting or modifying policies, legislation, commitment of resources, and institutional development. This can be fruitfully involved in the activities of the Member States - i.e., as a guidance for technical support and expertise and for good practice for reporting.

The overall objective of this report is to review national planning reporting mechanisms under the Regional Seas Conventions and Actions Plans (RSCAPs), select relevant case studies, and analyse possible harmonization between the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) national reporting and the RSCAPs national reporting. Even though the compliance reflects a state of fulfilling the obligations of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and the implementation is bound to the various measures⁴ undertaken to comply with MEAs, this report is expected to offer a contribution to the work of the RSP in a number of ways, placing a much-needed emphasis on national reporting and helping to improve implementation measures.

Regional collaboration is essential to facilitate the implementation of the UNEP's Regional Seas Programme in each of the eighteen regional seas of the following geographical regions: Mediterranean Sea; West, Central and Southern Africa; Wider Caribbean; Western Indian Ocean; East Asian Seas; Northwest Pacific; Caspian Sea; Regional Organization for the

1 The term 'post-2020 global biodiversity framework' is currently considered as a placeholder subject to its approval at the adoption at the COP15 Part II, 22 April-8 May 2022, Kunming, People's Republic of China.

2 The UNEP's RSP is a global programme managed from UNEP's Ecosystems Integration Branch based at the Nairobi Headquarters. The UNEP's RSP is an action-oriented programme that UNEP and many other international organizations and governments all contribute to. In the early 1970s the UNEP Governing Council endorsed a regional cooperation approach to address marine pollution. The UNEP RSP was established in 1974. It encompasses 18 individual Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, of which seven are also hosted by UNEP. They work through Secretariats or Regional Coordinating Units and Regional Activity Centres. See United Nations Environment Programme (n.d.).

3 The First Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework was released in July 2021 by the Co-chairs of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the CBD Secretariat. The framework "builds on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020" and aims to bring about a "transformation in society's relationship with biodiversity and to ensure that, by 2050, the shared vision of living in harmony with nature is fulfilled."

Previous documents are related to a zero draft text CBD/WG2020/2/3 (CBD 2020a) and later updated of this zero draft text CBD/POST2020/PREP/2/1 (CBD 2021c)

4 Mainly the measures herein referred are as follows: adopting domestic implementation measures, enforcing those measures, and reporting on implementation measures.



Protection of the Marine Environment Sea Area; Southeast Pacific; Red Sea and Gulf of Aden; South Pacific; Black Sea; Northeast Pacific; South Asian Seas; Baltic Sea; North-East Atlantic; Antarctic Ocean; and Arctic Ocean.

The UNEP’s RSP covers the abovementioned geographical regions, being fourteen of these RSPs established under UNEP auspices. Seven of them are directly administered by UNEP further to a decision by the Contracting Parties/Participating Countries in the relevant RSCAPs. Seven individual RSPs are administered by other regional organizations that host and provide their Secretariats, including the management of the financial, budgetary and administrative services. These programmes received initial support from UNEP in setting up the relevant RSCAPs for the respective regions. Four RSPs were established independently and, thus, act as

Parties decided to adopt legally-binding instruments, framework conventions and protocols, which are developed to support the Parties in the achievement of their common objectives.

A summary of the UNEP’s RSP, i.e., UNEP administered, non-UNEP administered, independent RSPs, is shown in Table 1.

The Regional Seas Strategic Directions (RSSD) 2022-2025 (UNEP 2021b) aims to mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of oceans more effectively into policies and programmes, harmonize methodologies for tracking progress, and foster an integrated response to combat the ecological, climate, pollution, and health crisis for achieving long-term health of the ocean, as well as the people who rely on the ocean for subsistence or otherwise. The objective is to achieve a diverse, resilient, and pollution-free

Table 1. Regional Seas Programmes and main features

Regional Seas	Main features	Geographical region
UNEP administered	Secretariat, administration of the Trust Fund, financial and administrative services provided by UNEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Mediterranean o Western, Central and Southern Africa o Wider Caribbean o Western Indian Ocean o East Asian Seas o Northwest Pacific o Caspian Sea
Non-UNEP administered	Secretariat is not provided by UNEP Financial and budgetary services managed by the programme itself or hosting regional organisations Support and collaboration provided by UNEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o ROPME Sea Area o Southeast Pacific o Red Sea and Gulf of Aden o South Pacific o Black Sea o Northeast Pacific o South Asian Seas
Independent	Regional framework not established under the auspices of UNEP Invitation to participate in Regional Seas’ coordination activities of UNEP through the global meetings of the RSP, and vice-versa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Baltic Sea o North-East Atlantic o Antarctic Ocean o Arctic Ocean

independent programmes. These programmes are invited to participate in the global meetings of the RSP, share experiences, being parties in twinning arrangements and exchange policy advice and support. For each of the RSPs, an action plan serves as the basis for regional cooperation to address the issues prioritised regarding their marine and coastal environments. For some of the RSPs, the

ocean that supports equitable sustainable livelihoods. This includes climate stability, living in harmony with nature, ocean sustainability and operating within planetary boundaries.

To achieve this objective, three strategic goals are outlined, considering current and emerging objectives at the international and regional level, as follows:

- Goal I: Secure diverse, resilient, and productive marine and coastal ecosystems.
- Goal II: Support assessment, information and knowledge management at all levels to strengthen science-policy dialogue on marine and coastal issues and their interactions.
- Goal III: Increase reach and mainstreaming of the Regional Seas Programme, including advocacy, political support and dialogue for furthering action.

It is anticipated that at regional scale multiple synergies among relevant biodiversity-related MEAs and other international processes as the RSPs are in place to ensure compliance by the Member States. However, it should be strengthened for consistent national reporting on implementation of the RSP existing efforts for implementation at national level, including the effect of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) and associated planning, reporting and review processes.

One of the main objectives of the post-2020 GBF is to facilitate implementation through activities at the national level, with supporting action at the subnational, regional and global levels. This provides a global, outcome-oriented framework for the development of national and regional goals and targets, and the updating of NBSAPs to achieve these goals and targets. It also aims to facilitate regular monitoring and review of progress at the global level. Furthermore, it promotes synergies and coordination between the CBD and its Protocols, and other relevant processes as it is the case of the RSP.

The first draft of the post-2020 GBF responds to the theory of change to persuade their Parties to react and support the urgent, required policy action globally, regionally and nationally, to transform the current economic, social and financial models (CBD 2021a). Global trends of the biodiversity loss will be reversed, and this should be permitted to stabilize the system by 2030, and in parallel, to contribute to the recovery of the system by 2050, achieving the Convention's vision of "living in harmony with nature by 2050"⁵, with the Governments and other stakeholders – i.e., the whole society - engagement. Specific determinants of success will depend on ensuring greater gender

equality and empowerment of women and girls, reducing inequalities, greater access to education, employing rights-based approaches, and addressing the full range of indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, as identified by the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services issued by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, including those not directly addressed by the goals and targets of the Framework, such as demography, conflict and epidemics, including in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."

Tools and solutions will be put in place to facilitate implementation and mainstreaming, according to one of the transformative actions proposed by the framework's theory of change in order to reach the 2050 Vision for biodiversity. In addition, this framework is complementary to and supportive of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - United Nations General Assembly (UNGA A/RES/70/1) (United Nations, General Assembly [UNGA] 2015). In addition, it should be taking into account strategies and targets of other related processes to ensure synergies, harmonization and alignment. The post-2020 GBF should be implemented in accordance with national priorities and capacities, considering the enhanced multidimensional approach to planning, monitoring, reporting and review, and in cooperation with other conventions and international organizations.

In this respect, the CBD invites UNEP, in particular its regional offices, as well as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to facilitate activities designed to support the national and regional implementation of the Convention and the post-2020 GBF, in cooperation with other relevant implementation agencies. The CBD requests the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to provide adequate, timely and predictable financial support to eligible countries with a view to enabling the planning for and implementation of the post-2020 GBF as well as for the monitoring and review of its implementation. The CBD further advocates for gender-responsive approaches in all its work including in the Post-2020 GBF. Similarly, as part of its funding requirements, the GEF also calls for gender integration in all its projects as outlined in its gender policy. For instance a new Global Environment Facility

5 A vision adopted by the CBD's 196 member parties in 2010.



(GEF) Policy on Gender Equality was approved at the 53rd meeting of the GEF Council which took place in 2017 in Washington, DC. The policy marked GEF's increased ambition to address gender equality and promote women's empowerment across its operations, and, in particular, in its projects and programs. It is a logical step stemming from the increased attention to gender equality and women's empowerment by the conferences of the parties to the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) that the GEF serves, and the Sustainable Development Goals that call for gender-responsive approaches and actions. GEF: <https://www.thegef.org/newsroom/news/new-policy-gender-equality-gef>. The policy provides details on the practical steps and required actions to implement the principles and mandatory requirements specified in the Policy with a focus on gender-responsive design, implementation, and monitoring of GEF programs and projects. GEF Guidance on Gender Equality: <https://www.thegef.org/publications/gef-guidance-gender-equality>. In 2014, the CBD COP 12 adopted the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action, reaffirming its objectives and updating to align with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action is a significant decision and mandate for Parties on the integration of gender considerations and identifies possible actions for Parties, as well as a strengthened framework of actions for the Secretariat, to mainstream gender across policy, organizational, delivery and constituency spheres. <https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/gender-biodiversity-nbsaps-report-final.pdf>. The gender action plan included a '2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action' Pocket Guide: Summary and Examples <https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/CBD-GenderPlanofAction-EN-WEB.pdf>. At COP14, Parties agreed that the process to develop the post-2020 global biodiversity framework would be gender-responsive, by systematically integrating a gender perspective and ensuring appropriate representation, particularly of women and girls, in the process. <https://www.cbd.int/gender/>.

Comparative analysis between the CBD national reporting and the RSCAPs national reporting have been developed. By identifying synergies and possible additional measures needed to be implemented by their Contracting Parties/Participating Countries concerned, it may avoid that some of the information

being requested to them would be duplicative and redundant. Further, NBSAPs should emphasize the use of indicators to facilitate assessments of progress, highlighting in parallel differences and possible synergies between indicators.

However, despite existing overlaps and synergies, it is noted that both national reporting will maintain similar functional scope, using similar terminology and adapting the context as a starting point. The different templates, negotiated and adopted usually across the Conferences of the Parties (COPs), have broad environmental focus, and provides general obligations on the Convention and its Protocols operations. It will work considering a scope towards a widespread tendency of the RSPs aimed at facilitating and enhancing implementation in the post-2020 GBF period.

Case studies, the final part of this draft report, takes into consideration the appropriate strategies to convey the outcomes with some details and possible comparability - often alignment of indicators of the RSCAPs, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the post-2020 GBF. To address this subject, the report analyses six different regional frameworks, highlighting some examples and identifying options to harmonize national reporting. It traces connections between the different case studies - here, the possible harmonization between the CBD national reporting and the RSCAPs national reporting. The possible approaches for harmonization are studied in the following regions: Arctic Ocean; Mediterranean Sea; North-East Atlantic; Northwest Pacific; South Pacific; and Western Indian Ocean.

As the nature of the work areas in each region is markedly different, all sharing a similarly outlook in the best of cases. It should therefore be underlined that such an alignment of the requirements should be done by each RSCAP's indicator frameworks linked to specific strategic documents and monitoring programmes. That is also one of the issues that the objective is not to compare as such the legal instruments but to analyse where additional measures could be taken in terms of implementation. This will help ensure harmonized indicator development and standardized reporting in line with the SDGs, that aimed at providing information on different tools which can be used to support the operationalization of the post-2020 GBF.

As a methodology, it collected information on the status of activities developed in terms of ocean science and knowledge to use for decision making and desired adaptation to new forms of reporting. Further investigated synergies and gaps have been used, as well as priorities to guide and align the science gaps identified across an overview of tools and platforms and concepts in development.

The aim will be to define and analyse baseline data and targets based on RSCAPs, SDGs and other sources for use in the different national reporting and assessment processes. By considering the interlinkages in the implementation process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDG 14 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA] 2022), this action will contribute to improve ocean governance through appropriate, cross-sectoral strategies and policies.

Box 1 shows some facts and figures related to SDG 14 provided by UN Statistic Division.

The conclusions and recommendations reached in this report derive from the assessment of a survey conducted in September 2021 that provided additional information to identify the RSCAPs activities and work areas to support Member States in adopting domestic measures, enforcing these measures, and in reporting as it is the case here, which must be complementary to the global level.

As briefly summarized above, the step-by-step approach applied to the development of the report was the following sequence:

- i Preliminary analysis process.
- ii Simplification and harmonization process.
- iii Alignment reporting.

National data harmonization and exchange of experiences of the RSCAPs through a survey and further discussion.

Box 1: SDG 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

- The sustainability of our oceans is under severe threats, i.e., plastic/marine pollution ocean warming, eutrophication, acidification, fishery collapse
- Over 3 billion people rely on oceans for their livelihoods
- Dead zones¹ are rising at an alarming rate, from 400 in 2008 to 700 in 2019
- Over half of marine key biodiversity areas are not protected
- About half of countries worldwide have adopted specific initiatives to support small-scale fishers
- On average, only 1.2% of national research budgets are allocated for ocean science
- The contamination of the world ocean's affect women's livelihoods, their health and health of their children (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women [UN Women] 2018) General Assembly Resolution 71/312: Our ocean, our future: call for action underline the need to integrate Goal 14 and its interrelated targets into national development plans and strategies, to promote national ownership and to ensure success in its implementation by involving all relevant stakeholders, including national and local authorities, members of parliament, local communities, indigenous peoples, women and youth, as well as the academic and scientific communities, business and industry. The member states recognize the importance of gender equality and the crucial role of women and youth in the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (<https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/71/312>)

Source: UNDESA (2021a)

1 "Dead zones" are areas of water that lack sufficient oxygen to support marine life.



2. THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The initial assessment consisted of collection, collation and analysis of data including gender disaggregated data relating to national reporting. This information was based on existing online resources which are publicly accessible in the specific webs, and other ways as digital format reports. A preliminary analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data was used to finalize the assessment, highlighting significant findings.

The methodology was based on collecting and collating information on the existing and planned national reporting mechanisms under the RSCAPs. The RSCAPs' information included reporting for the Convention implementation reflected in its Protocols, Action Plan⁶, Thematic Action Plan, Strategic Action Programme and related National Action Plans (NAPs). Select data to be collected were based on the following parameters: relevant type of tools and resources for data collection and analysis to formulate specific questions⁷.

Information on the format and items as well as indicators both in report format and online platform have been collected, as well as mechanisms of national reporting, taking into consideration the periodicity, the review process under the RSP, the contributions to the regional report preparation, and other processes albeit at different levels of detail. So that this information should be considered as case studies.

There are six case studies⁸ identified and explored in this assessment which cover a range of issues as follows: (1) A comprehensive and sustained system for marine observation and data-exchange in the Arctic Ocean; (2) Developing innovative approaches for data collection in the Mediterranean region; (3)

Ecosystem assessment and reporting on the state of the marine environment in the North-East Atlantic; (4) Ecological Quality Objectives targets to implement and report SDG 14 indicators in synergy with other goals in the Northwest Pacific; (5) Strengthening national capacity in environmental planning in the South Pacific; (6) Regional Science Policy Dialogues in the West Indian Ocean.

The purpose of the national reporting⁹ is therefore outlined as follows: demonstrating compliance; assessing effectiveness of implementation; informing on status and trends of biodiversity; enabling decision-making; identifying interactions with other processes; and stocktaking of work done and identification of future work. The indicators¹⁰ that are used to measure progress towards the CBD and other processes have been analysed to find common elements to be used for continuing regional state of the marine environment reporting. To this end, it has been formulated recommendations on how to contribute to possible harmonization between the CBD national reporting and the RSP national reporting.

The assessment was conducted according to the following sequence:

1. Identifying of information's needs and sources, namely information sources – i.e., tools and data, regional reports on the state of environment, existing templates/formats for reporting, set of indicators, and other complementary resources.
2. Defining the information needs.
3. Identifying the synergies and overlaps for the CBD national reporting and the RSP national reporting.
4. Reflecting findings on the different types of selected case studies.

6 Action Plans are related to strategic programmes of measures and actions for achieving clean, healthy and productive seas.

7 Starting with this section and continuing to Section 5, specific questions for discussion have been considered.

8 Selected case studies are reflected in Section 5 of this draft report, while the Annex II is providing more detailed information in this regard.

9 National reporting considered as a 'by-product' of management of national environmental information.

10 Comparability of the Regional Seas Core Indicator Set and the GBF Proposed Actions Targets, and their links to the SDG 14 are described in Section 4.1., which can be subjected to possible discussion.

What is harmonization?

Harmonization can be considered as any activity that leads to a more integrated process and greater potential for sharing information, ultimately any activity that makes processes easier, more efficient, more effective or easier to implement.

2.1. Collection, Collation and Analysis of Data

A key issue addressed after a preliminary analysis and later consolidated, is how to integrate all the information on existing and planned national reporting mechanisms¹¹ under the RSCAPs.

Decision-making on how to sustainably utilise marine resources needs the support of adequate scientific knowledge including gender dimensions, which requires marine scientific research. Other issues, such as the protection of the marine ecological environment and the study of the relationship between climate change and the ocean, also need the conduct of marine scientific research to gather necessary scientific data, information and knowledge.

Ocean-based strategies should be enacted with assessments of their long-term viability and potential impacts to the marine environment. These must be in place as comprehensive, scalable, and long-term coastal and ocean monitoring systems that track ocean health. Gathering data helps to learn and understand what it needs to plan and adapt in order to improve and harmonize reporting as part of a coherent, broad nationwide system of data collection covering all areas of the RSCAPs.

The envisaged actions considered collection of data through a streamlined indicator-based monitoring and reporting system to MEAs. Furthermore, indicators of the SDGs and other relevant mechanisms could be analysed to find comparison between the NBSAPs - as the main national planning instrument under the CBD - and the RSPs national reporting.

Comparability of indicators related to the RSCAPs, the SDGs and the proposed goals and targets of the

post-2020 GBF are presented hereinafter (in Section 4.1). The analysis of interrelated goals and targets across the RSCAPs and the CBD from the global to the regional level, will help to organize national information to suit the needs of national reporting under various processes. This will seek to draw together the results from the different insights provided by the RSCAPs' Secretariats that stem from the survey.

The report collates, compiles and reviews information on knowledge. Mainly, the products consulted to access to information, through the consolidation of current literature and available data, were the following sources: information databases; institutional technical reports; national reporting templates; research and information reports; guidelines for the preparation of national reports; management guidebooks; policy briefs; information sheets; peer-review publications; online training resources; and the UNEP Document Repository.

A summary of key data sources for monitoring and reporting have been identified, namely data easily accessible – i.e., instantly, openly and freely accessible. However, some data are fragmented and scattered in various databases and institutional repositories. As a result, it is challenging to assemble them for monitoring and reporting purposes.

It is expected that data informing decisions and evaluating performance will increase further to meet the growing demand for information on more evidence-based conservation. Data sources to cover data sets, databases and data platforms, as well as specific reports were identified through a web search and literature review using a combination of key terms, namely websites of the RSPs and the CBD in itself. Available data, tools and platforms were investigated at certain level of detail¹².

¹¹ For instance, combining data from different sources and provide a comparable view of data from different analysis.

¹² Data sources are both primary and secondary sources. As conservation agencies data providers and database managers are in need to use data, processes can be streamlined through the increased of data sharing and capacity building, where it is needed most. This could be used to enhance biodiversity monitoring and reporting, in line with the new post-2020 GBF biodiversity targets that will replace the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.



It was explored platforms as UN Biodiversity Lab (UNBL 2.0, <https://unbiodiversitylab.org/>)¹³, which is freely available online to governments and other stakeholders as a digital public good. The UNBL 2.0 with the new functionalities will provide decision-makers with access to open data in spatial planning to support the achievement of global priorities for deliver on the post-2020 GBF and the Paris Agreement.

The CBD Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM, www.cbd.int/chm) and the national clearing-house mechanisms that provide effective information services to facilitate the implementation of the NBSAP, were explored. The network of national CHM (www.chm-cbd.net) are helping to combine knowledge and action, towards a biodiversity knowledge network for scientific and technical cooperation. Similarly, the CBD Bioland Tool (<https://demo.test.chm-cbd.net>) as a demonstration website, supports Parties to establish a national CHM website that can facilitate the implementation of their NBSAPs.

Data need to be used in decision-making, and this can be enhanced by presenting data in formats that are easy to interpret, such as graphs, maps and dashboards. Thus, the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP, <https://bipdashboard.natureserve.org/>) Dashboard was searched. The BIP is an interactive, user-friendly tool that support the development and use of biodiversity-related indicators in progress reporting of other MEAs and support intergovernmental processes and development processes such as the Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES, <https://ipbes.net>) and the SDGs.

It also helps to strengthen capacity at the national level for indicator development and use in implementation and reporting of NBSAPs and the SDGs. Furthermore, it was analysed the NBSAP Forum (<https://nbsapforum.net/forum>), with the support for action on NBSAPs, it is an online forum that provides support for biodiversity conservation planning and reporting.

13 The UN Biodiversity Lab was first launched in 2018 to support Parties in their commitments to the CBD. The UNBL 2.0 was launched in October 2021. The UNBL 2.0 is a free, open-source platform that enables governments and other stakeholders to access state-of-the-art maps and data on nature, climate change, and human development to generate insight for nature and sustainable development.

Websites of other key organisations linked to working on biodiversity data were explored as the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO BON) portal (<https://geobon.org>). The framework and development process of Biodiversity Observation Networks (BONs) provide a conceptual framework for national and regional biodiversity observation systems organized around the integration of applied science and end-users.

There are national and regional BONs such as the Arctic (<https://geobon.org/bons/national-regional-bon/regional-bon/arctic-bon/>)¹⁴ and the Asia-Pacific (<https://geobon.org/bons/national-regional-bon/regional-bon/asia-pacific-bon/>)¹⁵ BONs and thematic BONs. The Arctic BON focuses on linking and integrating existing biodiversity observation efforts and data to support conservation planning and policy-making. The Asia Pacific BON is active in promoting research collaborations, capacity building, and a culture of data sharing.

At the global scale, the Marine BON (MBON, <https://geobon.org/bons/thematic-bon/mbon/>)¹⁶ facilitates the development of a common framework for the integration of marine biodiversity observations with environmental variables. MBON is sharing regional observations through common data standards and offering access to the advanced geospatial analysis tools of the Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS, <https://www.obis.org/>)¹⁷, which supports current and future World Ocean Assessments of

14 The Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP) is an international network of scientists, government agencies, Indigenous organizations and conservation groups working together to harmonize and integrate efforts to monitor the Arctic's living resources. The CBMP facilitates Arctic biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of the region's natural resources. Its goal is to facilitate more rapid detection, communication, and response to significant biodiversity-related trends and pressures.

15 The Asia-Pacific BON has been working on the identification of threats to biodiversity, in particular, drivers of biodiversity loss, mangrove loss, wetland loss, and anthropogenic actions that hamper the achievement of SDGs.

16 The Marine Biodiversity Observation Network (MBON) is a coalition who agree to share knowledge know-how to evaluate changes of biodiversity in the ocean, including data, products, protocols and methods, data systems and software. The MBON is working in coordination with the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) and the Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS) to develop Essential Ocean Variables (Muller-Karger et al. 2018).

17 The Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS) is a global open-access data and information clearing-house on marine biodiversity for science, conservation and sustainable development.

the UN (United Nations 2020) and the needs of the RSCAPs.

The InforMEA Portal (<https://www.informe.org/>) – the UN Information Portal on MEAs - includes COP decisions and resolutions, news, events, MEAs membership, lists of national focal points (NFPs), national reports and implementation plans and other information under the custodianship of MEAs Secretariats. It also includes regional sections as well as sections on internationally agreed goals as the SDGs, and how they relate to provisions of the Conventions. The Data Reporting Tool (DaRT, <https://dart.informe.org/>)¹⁸ for MEAs is a private and secure national working space to collect, organize, share, and maintain information, data and knowledge across conventions and across reporting purposes, which supports Parties to use synergies of knowledge and information management for national reporting under various processes to biodiversity-related conventions (CBD 2020b). This tool enables cross-linkages between biodiversity-related targets from the national to the regional and global levels, to support national and regional assessment of progress and facilitate related reporting obligations. DaRT enables countries to strengthen cooperation between government ministries and other national authorities, allowing a clear assessment of all the relevant data related to drivers of biodiversity loss whether land use change, climate change, pollution, natural resource use and exploitation, gender responses or invasive species. In addition, it aims at integrating national biodiversity information, contributing to analyse information against the SDGs and enhancing implementation of the biodiversity-related MEAs towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Thus, it is building on global strategies to facilitate reporting - e.g., the SDGs. Regional strategies are available in the DaRT - e.g., EU Biodiversity Strategy (European Commission (2011)). The DaRT and other tools such as the InforMEA Initiative (<https://www.informe.org/en/mea-topic/biological-diversity>) brings together MEAs to develop harmonized and interoperable information systems for the benefit of Parties. The DaRT tool is also being applied for a gender-responsive monitoring of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

These abovementioned tools were created to support Parties in implementing the conventions and to report on their progress, successes and barriers encountered through national reporting. Other tools for enhanced implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions are the CBD Bioland Tool (<https://www.chm-cbd.net/bioland-tool>) and the NBSAP Forum. A tool to find and treat data and extract information is UNBL 2.0, while the BIP Dashboard refers to a tool suitable for indicators. The latest versions of key biodiversity reports have been considered for references to specific data sets – e.g., the 5th Global Biodiversity Outlook (CBD 2020c) -, namely the sustainable fisheries and oceans transition section and other sections of the Global Environment Outlook (UNEP 2019).

It is crucial avoiding a huge level of duplication of effort that occur in different organisations often developing similar data sources or data mapping platforms. In many cases, their efforts will be enhanced if they can collaborate more on coproducing and sharing data. Thus, identified gaps between different data managers and users will only be bridged through improved coordination and collaboration. It is pointed out the need to break out of institutional silos and move away from a focus on specific databases and platforms to collaborate more on coproducing and sharing data. So that all these data sources are designed to be able to mainstream biodiversity data into decision-making in a way to find, access or use easily. By establishing these principles, efficiency and complementarity will help to improve the timeliness of data delivery and satisfactorily, and the quality of reporting between knowledge and action. It also aims at providing decision makers with the best available data to put the marine environment at the centre of sustainable development. It was also searched what the Parties have reported to other processes and assessed what information of other integrated processes and approaches are requesting to facilitating national reporting to the RSCAPs and the CBD. Parties are required to develop key indicators for measuring the state of conservation. A framework of goals, targets and indicators are helping to make common information requests. What makes reporting a challenge can be that in some cases, at the national level, joint thematic reporting is one of the most overlooked areas of reporting. In these cases, Parties might require more coordination and cooperation at national level, with more stakeholder

18 Currently the DaRT Phase III focuses on increasing interoperability with other tools



involvement. This will imply to manage integrated data and information management nationally and facilitate increased synergies in reporting and improved planning and decision-making for implementation.

Drawing on the material analysed, other main points about the delivery of global conservation goals such as the SDGs (Ritchie et al. 2018) have been focused on the use of tracking biodiversity at subnational, national, regional and global scales. Set of indicators and indices are currently being measured by regional entities and seeks to identify common elements. The assessment is focused on its practical application by exploring how the post-2020 GBF for international negotiations is being examined. Regional data sources are included in the analysis, considering key data sources identified, and additionally, the information provided by the Secretariats of the RSCAPs.

This is focused on outcome-oriented reporting and builds on issues of relevance to more than one RSCAP. Websites of the RSCAPs explored are shown in the Table 2.

The RSP generally have an Action Plan which serves as the basis for regional cooperation. Most of the RSPs have a framework convention complemented by issue-specific protocols. There are no framework conventions and protocols in the East Asian Seas, Northwest Pacific and South Asian Seas regions. Besides this, in the Arctic region there is no regional convention as such; instead, a binding agreement on cooperation on marine oil pollution preparedness and response was adopted in May 2013. Action Plans and/or Framework Conventions were mostly amended in the 1990s to integrate new principles of international law which emerged with the adoption of the CBD in 1992 and the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1994 (UNEP 2016a).

In accordance with the relevant decisions of the Governing Council, the Regional Action Plans that are already operational, were adopted as follows: Barcelona Convention (1975); Kuwait Convention (1978); Abidjan Convention (1981); Cartagena Convention (1981); COBSEA (1981); Lima Convention,

1981; Jeddah Convention (1982); Noumea Convention (1982); Nairobi Convention (1985)¹⁹.

The substantive aspect of any regional program is outlined in an action plan that is adopted by an intergovernmental meeting in the region. UNEP coordinates directly or, in some regions indirectly through existing regional organizations, the preparatory process. In this process focused on leading to the adoption of the action plan, the concerned governments and the competent global and regional organizations are involved to identify the scope and contents of an action plan corresponding to the needs and priorities of each particular region. For some regions, Protocols for regional cooperation of the following RSCAPs were adopted to:

1. Combat pollution by oil and other harmful substances from ships, - UNEP/MAP 1976; ABC 1981; PERSGA 1982; CEP 1983; Nairobi Convention 1985.
2. Reduce pollution from land-based sources and activities – UNEP/MAP 1980; BSC 1982; SPREP 1983.
3. Encompass biodiversity conservation, particularly through the creation of protected areas – Nairobi Convention 1985; CPPS 1989; CEP 1990.
4. Include gender equality and socio-economic development features as the adoption of the UNEP/MAP's Mediterranean Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)²⁰, 2008, which entry into force in 2011; the additional protocol to the Abidjan Convention on ICZM, 2017 (Abidjan Convention 2017); CEP Guidelines for Integrated Planning and Management of Coastal and Marine Areas in the Wider Caribbean to develop region-wide ICZM approaches; Black Sea Regional ICZM Guidelines and the process towards an ICZM Protocol for the Nairobi Convention²¹.

19 Other action plans are being developed, such as action plans of the South Asian region; the Black Sea region; and the Northwest Pacific region.

20 The Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) process can feed into ICZM, being a broader process than ICZM, and can provide a tool to make target areas and interventions spatially explicit.

21 Conference of Plenipotentiaries and 6th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention - Decision UNEP(DEPI)/EAF/CP.6/3: Strengthening Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Western Indian Ocean.

Table 2: Websites links of the Regional Seas Programmes

Geographical Region	Regional Seas Programme	Websites links
Mediterranean Sea	Barcelona Convention (UNEP/MAP)	https://www.unenvironment.org/unepmap/
West, Central and Southern Africa	Abidjan Convention (ABC)	https://abidjanconvention.org/
Wider Caribbean	Cartagena Convention (CEP)	https://www.unenvironment.org/cep/
Western Indian Ocean	Nairobi Convention	https://www.nairobiconvention.org
East Asian Seas	COBSEA	https://www.cobsea.org
Northwest Pacific	NOWPAP	https://www.unenvironment.org/nowpap/
Caspian Sea	Tehran Convention	http://www.tehranconvention.org/
ROPME Sea Area ¹	Kuwait Convention	http://ropme.org
South East Pacific	Lima Convention (CPPS)	http://www.cpps-int.org/index.php
Red Sea and Gulf of Aden	Jeddah Convention (PERSGA)	http://www.persga.org/
South Pacific	Noumea Convention (SPREP)	https://www.sprep.org/
Black Sea	Bucharest Convention	http://www.blacksea-commission.org
Northeast Pacific	Antigua Convention	N/A ²
South Asian Seas	South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP)	http://www.sacep.org/
Baltic Sea	Helsinki Convention (HELCOM)	https://www.helcom.fi
North-East Atlantic	OSPAR Convention	https://www.ospar.org/
Antarctic Ocean	Antarctic Treaty (CCAMLR)	https://www.ccamlr.org
Arctic Ocean	Arctic Council	https://arctic-council.org/

1 ROPME Sea Area referred to as the Kuwait Action Plan Region in the past.

2 The Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northeast Pacific (The Antigua Convention) was signed in February 2002. The Convention is not yet entered into force. An Action Plan was approved, and the following key elements were subject to consideration and including addressing issues of sewage and other pollutants; physical alteration and destruction of coastal ecosystems and habitats; overexploitation of fishery resources; and the effects of eutrophication. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/11134/nep_convention_es.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Gender mainstreaming strategies and Action plans - UNEP Gender Policy and Action Plan, UNEP MAP Barcelona Convention MedProgramme Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, SPREP Gender Policy,

Detailed information has been compiled from each of the RSPs websites and other sources, including legal instruments, institutional framework and contracting parties as shown below in Table 3.



Table 3: Regional Seas Programmes and Governing Instruments

Geographical Region	Regional Seas Convention (Year adopted - entry into force)	Action Plan/Strategy (Year adopted)	Legal Instruments (Year adopted – entry into force)	Institutional Framework	Contracting Parties
UNEP Administered					
Mediterranean	Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit (1976/1995 – 1978/2004)	Mediterranean Action Plan (1975 – 1995 updated – MAP Phase II)	Protocol on Dumping (amended, 1995) Protocol on Land-based Sources and Activities (2008) Protocol on Specially Protected Areas 1999 Protocol on Prevention and Emergency (2004) Protocol on Offshore (2011) Protocol on Hazardous Wastes (2008) Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (2008-2011)	Secretariat Regional Activity Centres NFP Bureau Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSDD) Advisory Body Compliance Committee	Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, the European Union
Western, Central and Southern Africa	Convention for cooperation in the protection and development of the marine and coastal environment of the West and Central African Region (1981 – 1984) (2008, amended and renamed)	Action Plan for the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central Africa Region (1981)	Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management Protocol on Sustainable Mangrove Management Protocol on Environmental Norms and Standards for Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration and Exploitation Activities	Secretariat Regional Coordination Unit Conference of the Parties Contracting Parties National Focal Points	Benin, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo
	Abidjan Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern Africa Region		Protocol concerning the Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment from Land-Based Sources and the Activities (LBSA) (2012) Protocol concerning the Cooperation in Combating Pollution in Cases of Emergency in the Western and Central African Region (1981-1985)	Regional Centre for Cooperation in case of Emergency	Angola*, Cabo Verde*, Democratic Republic of the Congo*, Equatorial Guinea*, Guinea-Bissau*, Mauritania*, Namibia*, Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe* ¹

1 Parties that have not yet ratified the Convention (*).

Table 3: Regional Seas Programmes and Governing Instruments

Geographical Region	Regional Seas Convention (Year adopted - entry into force)	Action Plan/Strategy (Year adopted)	Legal Instruments (Year adopted – entry into force)	Institutional Framework	Contracting Parties
UNEP Administered					
Wider Caribbean	Cartagena Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region (1983–1986)	Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP-CEP) and Action Plan (1981)	Protocol concerning Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region ("Oil Spills Protocol") (1983 – 1986) Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region ("SPAW Protocol") (1990 – 2000) Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region ("LBS Protocol") (1999 – 2010)	Secretariat Regional Coordinating Unit Regional Activity Centres Regional Activity Networks Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee of the SPAW Protocol Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee of the LBS Protocol Oil Spills Steering Committee	Antigua and Barbuda ^[1,2,3] , Bahamas ^[1,2,3] , Barbados ^[1,2,3] , Belize ^[1,2,3] , Colombia ^[1,2,3] , Costa Rica ^[1,3] , Cuba ^[1,2] , Dominica ^[1] , Dominican Republic ^[1,2,3] , France ^[1,2,3] , Grenada ^[1,3] , Guatemala ^[1] , Guyana ^[1,2,3] , Honduras ^[1,2,3] , Jamaica ^[1,3] , Mexico ^[1] , Netherlands ^[1,2] , Nicaragua ^[1] , Panama ^[1,2,3] , Saint Kitts and Nevis ^[1] , Saint Lucia ^[1,2,3] , Saint Vincent and the Grenadines ^[1,2] , Trinidad and Tobago ^[1,2,3] , United Kingdom ^[1] , United States of America ^[1,2,3] , Venezuela ^[1,2,3]
Western Indian Ocean	Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean (1985-1996) amended in 2010, and renamed Amended Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean	Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region (1981)	Protocol for the Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean from Land-Based Sources and Activities (2010-not yet into force) Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Marine Pollution in Cases of Emergency (1985-1996) Protocol concerning Protected Areas and Wild Fauna and Flora (1985-1996) Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (2016, 1st negotiation Meeting)	Secretariat Regional Coordinating Unit Conference of the Parties National Focal Points Partners Expert groups/Task forces	Comoros, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania, South Africa

2 Parties that have ratified the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols: Oil Spills Protocol [1]; SPAW Protocol [2]; LBS Protocol [3].



Table 3: Regional Seas Programmes and Governing Instruments

Geographical Region	Regional Seas Convention (Year adopted - entry into force)	Action Plan/Strategy (Year adopted)	Legal Instruments (Year adopted – entry into force)	Institutional Framework	Contracting Parties
UNEP Administered					
East Asian Seas	Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) ³	Action Plan for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine and Coastal Areas of the East Asian Region (revised 1994)		Coordinating Body Secretariat National Focal Points Regional Activity Centres Working Group	Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Viet Nam
Northwest Pacific	Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) ⁴	Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment (1994)		Regional Coordinating Unit Intergovernmental Meeting Secretariat National Focal Points Regional Activity Centres	Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation
Caspian Sea	Tehran Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea	Action Plan for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (2003) Caspian Environment Programme (CEP)	Protocol on the Conservation of Biological Diversity Protocol on the Protection of the Caspian Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol concerning Regional Preparedness, Response and Co-operation in Combating Oil Pollution Incidents 2011 Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context	Conference of the Parties Interim Secretariat National Convention Liaison Offices and Officers	Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan

³ There is not a Framework Convention and Protocols in the East Asian Seas region.

⁴ There is not a Framework Convention and Protocols in the Northwest Pacific region.

Table 3: Regional Seas Programmes and Governing Instruments

Geographical Region	Regional Seas Convention (Year adopted - entry into force)	Action Plan/Strategy (Year adopted)	Legal Instruments (Year adopted – entry into force)	Institutional Framework	Contracting Parties
UNEP Administered					
Non-UNEP Administered					
ROPME	Kuwait Regional Convention for Cooperation on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Pollution(1978-1979) Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment Sea Area	Action Plan for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Areas of ROPME Sea Area: Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (1978)	Protocol concerning Regional Cooperation in Combating Pollution by Oil and Other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency (1978)	Intergovernmental Council Secretariat Judicial Commission	Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates
Non-UNEP Administered					
ROPME (continued)			Protocol concerning Marine Pollution resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf – (1989)		
			Protocol for the Protection of the Marine Environment against Pollution from Land-Based Sources - 1990		
			Protocol on the Control of Marine Trans-boundary Movements and Disposal of Hazardous Wastes and Other Wastes - 1998		
			Draft Protocol concerning the conservation of biological diversity and the establishment of protected areas		



Table 3: Regional Seas Programmes and Governing Instruments

Geographical Region	Regional Seas Convention (Year adopted - entry into force)	Action Plan/Strategy (Year adopted)	Legal Instruments (Year adopted – entry into force)	Institutional Framework	Contracting Parties
UNEP Administered					
Southeast Pacific	Convention on the Organization of the Permanent Commission of Exploitation and Conservation of the Maritime Resources on the South Pacific (1952)	Action Plan for the Protection of the marine environment and coastal areas of the Southeast Pacific (1991) (modified in 2013)	Protocol for the Conservation and Administration of the Marine and Coastal Protected Areas of the Southeast Pacific (1989-1994)	National Focal Points Consultative Group Executive Secretariat General Authority Working Groups	Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru
	Lima Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Zones of the Southeast Pacific and its associated protocols (1981-1986)		Protocol for the Protection of the Southeast Pacific against Radioactive Contamination (1989-1995)		
Red Sea and Gulf of Aden	Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment (Jeddah Convention) (1982-1985)	Action Plan for the Conservation of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (1976-1995) Programme for the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA)	Protocol for the Protection of the Southeast Pacific against Pollution from Land-based Sources (1983-1986)	Intergovernmental Body (PERSGA) Ministerial Council Secretariat Contracting Parties National Focal Points	Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen
			Southeast Pacific Action Plan (1981)		
Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (Continued)			Protocol concerning Land-based Activities (2005-not yet entry into force)		
			Protocol concerning Technical Cooperation during Emergency (1982 - 1985)		
			Protocol concerning Management of Fisheries and Aquaculture (2017)		

Table 3: Regional Seas Programmes and Governing Instruments

Geographical Region	Regional Seas Convention (Year adopted - entry into force)	Action Plan/Strategy (Year adopted)	Legal Instruments (Year adopted – entry into force)	Institutional Framework	Contracting Parties
UNEP Administered					
South Pacific	Noumea Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region (1986-1990) Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes (Waigani Convention) (1995-2001) Convention on Conservation of Nature (Apia Convention) (1976-1990) (suspended in 2006)	Action Plan of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) has been superseded by the Secretariat Strategic Plan (2017-2026)	Protocol for the Prevention of Pollution of the South Pacific Region by Dumping (1986-1990) Protocol concerning Cooperation in Combating Pollution Emergencies in the South Pacific Region (1986-1990) ⁵ Protocol for the Protection of the South Pacific Region against pollution from land-based sources (1986)	Biennial SPREP Meeting SPREP Secretariat including a Project Coordination Unit Executive Board	Samoa, Australia*, Cook Islands*, Federated States of Micronesia*, Fiji*, France*, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands*, Nauru*, New Caledonia, New Zealand*, Niue, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea*, Samoa*, Solomon Islands*, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United Kingdom, United States of America ⁴⁵ , Vanuatu, Wallis, Futuna
Black Sea	Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Bucharest Convention) (1994)	Strategic Action Plan for the Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea (2009)	Protocol on Protection of the Marine Environment against Pollution from Land-based Sources (1992-2004 -replaced)	Contracting Parties Commissioners Permanent Secretariat Advisory Groups	Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine
Black Sea (Continued)			Protocol on Cooperation in Combating Pollution by Oil and other Harmful Substances in Emergency Situations (2004) Protocol on the Protection of the Marine Environment against Pollution by Dumping (1992-1994) Protocol on Biodiversity and Landscape (2002-2011)	Regional Activity Centres National Focal Points	



5 Twelve SPREP Members (*) are Signatory Parties to the Noumea Convention and most of these Parties are also signatories to both the Dumping Protocol and the Emergencies Protocol adopted within the Convention.

6 The Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Cooperation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances, once in force, will supersede the Emergencies Protocol.

Table 3: Regional Seas Programmes and Governing Instruments

Geographical Region	Regional Seas Convention (Year adopted - entry into force)	Action Plan/Strategy (Year adopted)	Legal Instruments (Year adopted – entry into force)	Institutional Framework	Contracting Parties
UNEP Administered					
Northeast Pacific	Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northeast Pacific ⁷ (Antigua Convention) (2010)	Action Plan for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine and Coastal Areas of the Northeast Pacific (2002)		Secretariat Intergovernmental Meeting	Guatemala, Panama
South Asian Seas	South Asian Conservation Environment Programme (SACEP) ⁸	Action Plan for the Protection and Management of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the South Asian Seas Region (1995)		Secretariat Governing Council Consultative Committee National Focal Points Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting	Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal
Independent					
Baltic Sea	Helsinki Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (1992-2000)	Baltic Sea Action Plan (updated, 2021) ⁹ Recommendations (Legally Binding Agreements)		Contracting Parties Helsinki Commission HELCOM Secretariat Working Groups	Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Russia Federation, Sweden, European Union

7 There is very limited information about this Convention by searching available sources. The Convention is still at an incipient stage in its implementation, as formerly mentioned.

8 There is not a Framework Convention and Protocols in the South Asian Seas region.

9 The Baltic Sea Action Plan, adopted in 2007 and updated in October 2021, is divided into four segments with specific goals, as follows: Biodiversity, with its goal of a “Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient”; Eutrophication, with its goal of a “Baltic Sea unaffected by eutrophication”; Hazardous substances and litter, with its goal of a “Baltic Sea unaffected by hazardous substances and litter”; and Sea-based activities, with its goal of “Environmentally sustainable sea-based activities”.

Table 3: Regional Seas Programmes and Governing Instruments

North-East Atlantic	Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (the OSPAR Convention) (1992-1998)	Strategy of the OSPAR Commission for the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic 2030 (OSPAR Commission [OSPAR] 2021a) (Legally binding Decisions, non-binding Recommendations and Agreements)	OSPAR Commission (Article 10 of the Convention) Secretariat Committees Subsidiary bodies Contracting Parties	Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, the European Union, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom
Antarctic Ocean	Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CAMLAR Convention) (1980-1982)	Conservation measures Resolutions	CAMLAR Convention CCAMLR Commission Scientific Committee Contracting Parties Secretariat Subsidiary Bodies	Parties that are Members of the Commission: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, People's Republic of China, the European Union, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay ¹⁰
Arctic Ocean	Arctic Council (1996) ¹¹	Arctic Marine Strategic Plan 2015-2025 Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy Declaration Legally Binding Agreements Programme for the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) ¹²	Arctic Council Secretariat Indigenous Peoples' 13 Secretariat Ministerial Meeting Senior Arctic Officials Meeting Task forces/Expert Groups	Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden, United States of America ¹⁴

¹⁰ CCAMLR's Contracting Parties that are not Members of the Commission: Bulgaria, Canada, Cook Islands, Finland, Greece, Mauritius, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Vanuatu.

¹¹ There is not a Convention as such, although an Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response was adopted in May 2013.

¹² <https://www.pame.is>

¹³ Six Indigenous Peoples' organizations have been granted Permanent Participants status in the Arctic Council.

¹⁴ Indigenous Peoples' organizations are the following: Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Saami Council.



What other data are available that could be used by governments and other stakeholders at national or international level to enhance and harmonize national reporting?²²

2.2 Summary of Priority Actions

Existing data sources are identified by strategic theme depending on its relevancy to reporting obligations, while drawing upon existing processes, standards and tools for knowledge exchange. Discussions on the available tools and platforms have been generated in the context of the post-2020 GBF. Prioritisation seems an obvious first step both at the national and regional level. Consequently, it should prioritize how the post-2020 GBF and RSPs may relate and complement one another (through the adequate tools and resources).

The priority actions identified will, therefore, aim at enhancing compatibility between the post-2020 GBF and the RSP. Thus, the following major actions have been undertaken:

1. Synthesis of the formats and mechanisms of national reporting under the RSCAPs including the indicators used.
2. Analysis on how the information in the national reporting is used for regional achievement assessment.
3. Review of the formats and selected national biodiversity strategies and action plans developed under the CBD.
4. Analysis of use of the RSPs national reporting for the post-2020 GBF reporting purposes.
5. Analysis of possible harmonization and gaps between the CBD national reporting (particularly, NBSAPs) and RSP national reporting.

The information on the formats, items, and indicators have been collected, reviewed, synthesized, and analysed both in report format and reporting mechanisms from online platforms. Relevant information included reporting for the implementation of the Conventions, Protocols, Action Plans, Thematic

Actions Plans, Strategic Action Programmes and related NAPs.

After the collection and collation of information on the abovementioned aspects through the websites of the RSCAPs and the CBD, the results can be summarised into three broad classes: key resources (websites, technical reports); thematic programmes on marine and coastal biodiversity (marine litter, coral reefs, mangroves, etc.); and cross-cutting issues (identification, monitoring, indicators and assessments).

A short survey for consultation was circulated among the RSCAPs Secretariats. The related survey was designed to support the discussion and the analysis on possible harmonization between the CBD post-2020 GBF national reporting and the RSCAP national reporting.

The first phase comprised activities as data gathering via web sites and the survey questionnaire, and analysis of the existing, available templates for national reporting to RSPs.

During this phase, the following questions were raised:

1. Do your Contracting Parties/Participating Countries report progress on the implementation of the Convention text, Protocols, Action Plans, Thematic Action Plans (marine litter, coral reefs, etc.), Strategic Actions Programmes and related National Action Plans?
 - a. If yes, please indicate existing and/or planned tools (for example, national reporting templates, regionally agreed indicators, and online platforms/ dashboards) used for national reporting. Please include web links to these tools. If a specific website is not in place, please attach the documents to your response.
 - b. If yes, please indicate if data or information collected using these tools are used for regional and national assessments on the state of the marine environment.

²² Questions for consideration and discussion are included in each section and sub-section along the report, with the aim to compile and analyse possible solutions and actions thereof.

2. Has your region developed a multi-disciplinary regional marine research programmes aimed at producing quality-controlled knowledge products for decision-making?
3. Do the marine research programmes linked with the question 2 above also support data collection related to national reporting indicators to track progress towards national targets?
4. What mechanisms would be needed to identify and address knowledge gaps in your region for reporting purposes (if needed)?
5. Is there any effort, present or in the past, to coordinate Regional Seas national reporting with the Convention of Biological Diversity related national reporting, particularly, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)?
 - a. If so, please indicate what information from the Regional Seas reporting was used for the Convention of Biological Diversity reporting purposes.
 - b. If not, please indicate what could be done to harmonize national level reporting on biodiversity.
6. In your region, what strategy, approach, or institutional arrangement is used to achieve successful national reporting mechanisms?
7. In your view, what capacity development assistance should be provided to your Participating Countries/Contracting Parties to fulfil their obligations of national reporting, both to your Convention/Action Plan and to the Convention of Biological Diversity?
8. Please provide any additional comments you would find suitable on this matter.

Although this survey did not specifically collect data on gender equality and human rights, future surveys will ensure that this important dimension is included. UNEP has made Commitments to Member States and these can only be honoured through our work. As articulated in UNEP's MTS 2022-2025: in paragraph 25. "[...] UNEP will work to fully implement Environment Assembly resolution 4/17 on promoting gender equality and the human rights and empowerment of women and girls in environmental

governance. UNEP will fully support Member States in their achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5 in the context of the environment, calling for women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of environmental decision-making. The focus will be on operationalizing gender and human rights dimensions and non-discrimination issues in programme and project design. UNEP will foster the widespread use of a gender lens to ensure that gender equality and human rights perspectives are fully embedded and integrated through associated principles. Linkages between gender indicators, gender-disaggregated data and policy recommendations will be observed and applied, as will gender-informed feedback loops and reinforced monitoring frameworks. UNEP will also collect good practices that can be shared at the wider United Nations level." In paragraph 34, "UNEP will strengthen institutional capacity for gender-responsive programme delivery. Gender equality is a multiplier and cross-cutting factor of sustainability and an effective and efficient way to address issues of poverty, health, food security and access to energy. In the period 2022/2025, UNEP will leverage the opportunities provided by the Sustainable Development Goals to strengthen the institutional capacity of policymakers, UNEP staff and key partners to develop and implement gender-responsive policies and strategies. UNEP will enable access to information by stakeholders and government partners, development and implementation of gender-responsive environmental policies and strategies and strengthened strategic partnerships with key partners in order to secure commitments and elicit collective gender-transformative actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals."

And as per General Assembly resolution on Oceans: Resolution 71/312. Our ocean, our future: call for action. Member states underline the need to integrate Goal 14 and its interrelated targets into national development plans and strategies, to promote national ownership and to ensure success in its implementation by involving all relevant stakeholders, including national and local authorities, members of parliament, local communities, indigenous peoples, women and youth, as well as the academic and scientific communities, business and industry. They recognize the importance of gender equality and the crucial role of women and youth in the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine



resources for sustainable development <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/71/312>.

The analysis of the survey showed in Annex I, reflects the number of responses received and screened under the different criteria with the aim of determining the potentiality for contributing to this end.

A number of RSCAPs Secretariats took part in the consultation process and provided detailed feedback which helped to extract general conclusions and recommendations, which are available in Section 6.

As indicated above, the survey contents dealt with these main aspects:

1. Reporting progress on implementation by the Member States.
2. Regional marine research programmes for decision-making.
3. Data collection on national reporting indicators to track progress towards national targets.
4. Existing mechanisms for knowledge gaps.
5. Alignment RSCAPs national reporting with CBD national reporting.
6. Strategies, approaches, institutional arrangements for achieving successful national reporting mechanisms.
7. Capacity development.
8. Further comments on national reporting.

It was also considered key features and benefits, related to compliance reporting and reporting on the national marine environmental status, to be achieved by developing national marine strategies. It should also include the associated indicators – the Regional Seas Core Indicators Set (UNEP 2016b).

By developing an understanding of what Parties can deliver national data, it will facilitate the activities that might be supported by the RSCAPs. It comprised analysis of information of all RSCAPs. The UNEP-administered RSCAPs - Mediterranean Sea, West and Central Africa, Wider Caribbean, Western Indian Ocean, East Asian Seas, Northwest Pacific, Caspian Sea -; non-UNEP administered RSCAPs - Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment Sea Area, Southeast Pacific, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, South Pacific, Black Sea, Northeast Pacific, South Asian Seas -; and independent RSCAPs

- Baltic Sea, North-East Atlantic, Antarctic Ocean and Arctic Ocean.

Information was collected by direct communication to the RSCAPs' Secretariats and from the websites of the RSCAPs.

The collected information was reviewed and compiled to provide:

- i. An analysis of RSCAPs data and information and other tools and available platforms;
- ii. A summary of the indicators established by the RSCAPs;
- iii. An overview of data assessment for relevance of national mechanisms for reporting.

This outlook for reporting can be summarized as follows:

- Firstly, from the approach that online reporting constitutes major relevance for harmonization, as a pooling available web-based tools that could facilitate harmonization.
- Secondly, Parties should contribute to the coordination and data management nationally, while RSCAPs should support Parties in implementation and reporting processes, gathering the experience provided by their Parties, and inform the CBD with lessons and insights from them.
- And finally, at global level, the CBD should address the reporting burden of Parties, and promote harmonization and synergies for the reporting purposes²³.

After completing the evaluation of the survey, comparative case studies were outlined, which involved for the most part of them in the analysis and synthesis of core themes identified in this assessment through the strategic directions in force or current work programmes. Core themes are included in the Table 4.

23 The Environmental Management Group (EMG) in January 2001, discussed the harmonization of national reporting. UNEP was invited to serve as task manager. A note was prepared by the UNEP Executive Director on "Harmonization of Information Management and Reporting for Biodiversity-related Treaties" which was discussed at subsequent EMG meetings.

Table 4: Strategic Directions/Work Programmes of the Regional Seas Programmes

RSCAP	Strategic Directions Work Programme	Core Themes
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention)	Mid-term Strategy 2016-2021 (United Nations Environment Programme/ Mediterranean Action Plan [UNEP/MAP] 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land and sea-based pollution • Biodiversity and ecosystems • Land and sea interaction and processes • Integrated Coastal Zone Management • Sustainable consumption and production • Climate change adaptation
Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region (NOWPAP)	Medium-Term Strategy 2018-2023 (Northwest Pacific Action Plan [NOWPAP] 2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support ecosystem-based integrated coastal and river basin management • Assess status of the marine and coastal environment • Prevent and reduce land- and sea-based pollution • Conserve marine and coastal biodiversity
Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean Region (Nairobi Convention)	Work Programme 2018-2022 (United Nations Environment Programme - Nairobi Convention [UNEP-Nairobi Convention] 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments and capacity development • Management • Coordination and legal aspects • Information and awareness • Financing the work programme
Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)	Strategic Directions 2018-2022 (Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia [COBSEA] 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land-based marine pollution • Marine and coastal planning and management • Governance, resource mobilization and partnerships
Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Tehran Convention)	Work Programme 2018-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Convention Action Programme • Public Participation Strategy • Caspian Sea Plan concerning Regional Cooperation in Combating Oil Pollution in Cases of Emergency • Environmental Monitoring Programme
Secretariat of the Pacific Environment Programme (SPREP)	Strategic Plan 2017-2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change resilience • Ecosystem and biodiversity protection • Waste management and pollution control • Environmental governance
Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern Africa Region (Abidjan Convention)	Work Programme 2020-2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecosystems and habitats assessment • Management • Coordination and political and legal issues • Communication and Information Technology



RSCAP	Strategic Directions Work Programme	Core Themes
Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention)	Work Programme 2021-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication, education, training and awareness • Assessment and management of environmental pollution • Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
Arctic Council Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)	Work Plan 2021-2023 (Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment [PAME] 2021a) Arctic Marine Strategic Plan 2015-2025 (PAME 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine Protected Areas • Ecosystem-approach to management • Resource exploration and development • Arctic marine pollution • Arctic shipping
Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources – CCAMLR ¹ (CAMLR Convention)	Strategic Plan 2019-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecosystem Monitoring Program • Scheme of International Scientific Observation • Fisheries Monitoring and Compliance • Data and Information Systems • Marine Protected Areas • Marine debris • Climate change
Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS)	Work Plan 2020-2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mangroves Regional Action Plan • COMPACSE Programme, Marine Litter • Marine invasive species • Marine Mammals Action Plan • Marine Protected Areas Network • Data management (SIBIMAP; Atlas SPINCAM), OBIS Training
South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP)	Strategy 2020-2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Protection of marine environment from land-based activities • Human resources development through Regional Centers of Excellences • National and regional oil and chemical spill contingency plan • Regional Strategy and Task force on Ballast Water Management in South Asia • South Asia Coral Reef Task Force

¹ Thematic tasks include the actions required to deliver several overarching thematic objectives to support and facilitate CCAMLR's objectives, activities and decision-making processes.

RSCAP	Strategic Directions Work Programme	Core Themes
Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA)	Strategic Action Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional strengthening to facilitate regional co-operation • Reduction of navigation risks and maritime pollution • Sustainable use and management of living marine resources • Development of a regional network of Marine Protected Areas • Support for ICZM • Public awareness and participation • Monitoring and evaluation of Programme Impacts
Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (HELCOM Commission)	Work Programme (Action Plan, 2021 update)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity • Eutrophication • Hazardous substances and litter • Sea-based activities
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Commission)	North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean seas • Biologically diverse seas • Productive and sustainably used seas • Seas resilient to climate change and ocean acidification
Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Bucharest Convention)	Work Programme 2021-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information System • Geographical Information Systems Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (BSIMAP 2017-2022) • Institutional and Expert Network • Implementation of MoUs (GFCM; EEA; ACCOBAMS; ICPDR) • Cooperation with IMO, EMSA • Marine litter prevention • LBS Pollution Control • Regional Contingency Plan • Monitoring and information systems for reducing oil pollution • Implementation of ICZM principles
Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Bucharest Convention)	Work Programme 2021-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LBS Pollution Control • Regional Contingency Plan • Monitoring and information systems for reducing oil pollution • Implementation of ICZM principles

What findings have been addressed and discussed in accordance with key concepts of interpreting and reporting for helping to formulate recommendations to the analysis, synthesis and review to be conducted on the national reporting?



3. REPORTING OBLIGATIONS AND MECHANISMS

Compilation, analysis and interpretation of information on existing formats, items, indicators, review mechanisms under each of the RSP have been undertaken for the purposes outlined above. Additionally, mechanisms under the CBD linked with the post-2020 GBF – NBSAPs - and prospective post-2020 GBF national reporting have been explored. It involves building an overview of the current efforts of Parties as they engage in the implementation of the CBD and the RSCAPs. The post-2020 GBF further calls for Parties to enable the participation of women, indigenous people and various stakeholder groups at all levels. Tracking data on these groups ensures No One is Left Behind and further supports progress towards the SDGs as gender equality and human rights remain central to the agenda.

Several MEAs have been negotiated and adopted addressing specific environmental concerns. As a result of a general concern, at the increasing number of national reports that countries are required to submit as expressed in various forums, Parties have noted that they must prepare reports to comply with the requirements of conventions and agreements reached at major conferences and global programmes of action. For Parties, the requests constitute a burden, and for countries with limited capacity, the burden has become overwhelming. It has also become apparent that some of the information being requested is duplicative and redundant. Requests vary from information on national legislation to highly technical and detailed data at the national level.

Although most of the conventions have already or are formulating guidelines to assist countries in reporting, most of these conventions require the formulation of national strategies to prepare a standardized and simplified format that could be used by Parties in preparing information on a single subject or in clusters of subjects.

National reporting origin, evolution and specificities in what do it, differ from national reports and from national reporting in MEAs. In this regard, the

conventions could facilitate harmony in the gathering and management of common data at national level. Regarding reporting obligations, concrete institutional reforms are discussed at COPs and other meetings on how to improve the international governance system within the context of governance for sustainable development, to contribute to a more effective sustainable development system, achieving the setting of a global environmental agenda and policy, due to the fact of increasing challenges to Parties in terms of biodiversity conservation, pollution, the impact of climate change, among others.

MEAs play a crucial role in forming the overarching international legal basis for global environmental efforts to address environmental issues. UNEP provides support to Member States towards the implementation of MEAs, improving compliance with and information of MEAs as well as ensuring compliance with gender-responsive and rights-based approaches. UNEP also works at the global level to support MEAs processes, and within the regions to identify priority MEAs-implementation related issues and provide identification and policy analysis and supports international multilateral negotiations and international environmental policy-making through negotiations to addressing the country-specific questions using implementation.

Considering the recommendations and decisions produced by the subsidiary bodies – SBSTTA Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technological Advice (SBSTTA), Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) -, the MEAs Secretariats, and COPs/MOPs, it may be questioned to what extent are the provisions and mechanisms in these MEAs mandatory or voluntary. For this context, it can be used to analyse national implementing legislation for each RSP and review national institutional arrangements responsible for implementing and enforcing each RSP.

A national mechanism for reporting can be considered as a national public mechanism or structure that is mandated to coordinate and prepare reports to and

engage with international and regional mechanisms, and to coordinate and track implementation of the treaty obligations and the recommendations emanating from these mechanisms. The national mechanism performs these functions in coordination with ministries and civil society.

What is a national mechanism for reporting?

3.1 Reporting Obligations and Mechanisms under the 18 Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (including national reporting formats, reporting items and use of indicators, frequency of reporting, report review mechanisms under each of the Regional Seas)

Member States are obliged to report on measures to be taken to support implementation of the RSCAPs and their Protocols. The reporting process begins with the setting up by the Secretariats of reporting mechanisms.

The RSPs have several common elements. The process of establishing a RSP usually begins with the development of an action plan outlining the strategy of a regionally coordinated programme, aimed at the protection of a common body of water. The action plan is based on the region's environmental challenges as well as its socioeconomic and political situation. It may cover issues ranging from chemical wastes and coastal development to the conservation of marine species and ecosystems. In most cases, the action plan is underpinned by a strong legal framework in the form of a regional convention and associated protocols on specific problems. The legally binding convention expresses the commitment and political will of governments to tackle their common environmental problems through joint, coordinated activities.

The development of integrated approaches for assessments, databases and data services to data collection and analysis and information management of relevance to the RSCs are available. Testing of a joint reporting format on specific themes and

identify common issues both in work programmes and in scientific activities, could help to create harmonization strategies in addition to the data consolidation and integration. For this reason, an optimal scenario should be created for the identification of data, indicators and assessments to support harmonization of data and information at regional level – in some cases limited to specified amount of standardised data.

Development of tools and approaches are presented in most of the RSPs' websites with a great level of detail. Access to relevant resources should be reflected on the harmonization strategies, where appropriate. A list of available resources is shown below.

Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR):

- CCAMLR implements measures to support the conservation and management of Antarctic living marine resources by reducing the risk harvesting activities may have on the sustainability of target species, on species taken incidentally as by-catch and on the marine ecosystem. CCAMLR seeks to achieve optimal levels of compliance with conservation measures and has been pioneering in its endeavours to achieve this.
- CCAMLR has adopted a conservation measure to support the implementation of a Compliance Evaluation Procedure for all Members.
- CCAMLR conservation measures support a suite of monitoring and compliance systems and tools. Members implement compliance systems that include vessel licensing, monitoring of vessel movements, monitoring of vessel transshipments, the System of Inspection, the Vessel Monitoring System, the Catch Documentation Scheme.
- CCAMLR has adopted additional conservation measures to specifically address the threat of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. These measures include the establishment of a Non-Contracting Parties IUU Vessel List and the Contracting Parties Vessel List and obligations in respect of the control of



- nationals from CCAMLR Member countries.
- The Standing Committee on Implementation and Compliance (SCIC) is a subsidiary body to the Commission and meets annually to review the operation of conservation measures and compliance systems and to advise the Commission on their refinement and implementation.
- The Secretariat's Data Centre (<https://www.ccamlr.org/en/data/data>) is the custodian of data which underpin the Commission's decisions and support the implementation and monitoring of those decisions. These data are used principally by CCAMLR's Scientific Committee, specialised working groups and community of scientists, resource managers, fishery officers and policy makers. The Secretariat also maintains a range of common software tools and analytical applications such as nautical twilight calculator, tag overlap calculator, stock assessment models.
- CCAMLR data are submitted on standard forms and include data from fisheries in the Convention Area, scientific observations on board fishing vessels, research surveys and ecosystem monitoring, compliance activities and processes.
- Some CCAMLR data are freely available in the public domain, and these include registry of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and risk areas, data contained in the Fishery Reports, and fishery and trade summaries published annually in the Statistical Bulletin.
- CCAMLR data forms available for use are fishery, catch and effort data, fine-scale catch and effort data (trawl fisheries; pot fisheries; longline fisheries), fine-scale biological data, VME-indicator data, fine-scale catch, effort and biological data (trawl surveys), transshipment data, scientific observer, finfish/krill trawl and longline fisheries data and cruise report forms, marine debris, beach survey data collection, marine mammal entanglement, seabird colony debris data collection, hydrocarbon soiling data recording, opportunistic marine debris data collection.
- The Data Centre that are not freely available (accessible only through use of

the CCAMLR Data Access Rules) includes fishery data, catch and effort reports, haul-by-haul catch, effort, biological and VME-indicator data, fishery and trade statistics, scientific observer data, biological and operational data, tag-recapture and otolith data, fishery survey data (including acoustic surveys), ecosystem and marine debris monitoring data.

Arctic Council (Arctic Council n.d.):

- Arctic Council as the leading intergovernmental forum, is promoting cooperation in the Arctic. Regarding the tools and data, Arctic Council presents a series of projects with associated databases, maps, case studies and guidelines.
- The Arctic Biodiversity Data Service (ABDS, <https://www.abds.is/>) is an online tool to house, collect, display and search for Arctic biodiversity related data, maps and graphics for decision making.
- The ABDS Metadata Portal, the Arctic OBIS and the Arctic Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) are managed by the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF).
- The tool comprises headline indicators data on protected areas, land cover change, Arctic Species Trend Index, modelling Arctic oceanography connectivity to further develop PAME's MPA toolbox (PAME 2021b).
- The ABDS also included Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP) data with information on Pan-Arctic Passive Acoustic Monitoring, CBMP marine, freshwater and terrestrial monitoring, and Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA).
- In terms of sensitive and protected areas data, relevant available data are related to Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment AMSA 2C, protected areas and Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs).

Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki Convention):

- The development of Helsinki Convention

- (HELCOM) Data and Geographic Information System provides the HELCOM Map and Data Service (HELCOM MADS, <https://helcom.fi/baltic-sea-trends/data-maps/>) which contains geospatial data relevant for HELCOM work from status assessments to shipping density maps. It contains various functionalities for viewing datasets and is linked with HELCOM Metadata catalogue to view metadata of each dataset and to enable download.
- HELCOM collects monitoring data related to marine environment into various thematic databases and provides direct access to all HELCOM geospatial datasets.
 - Databases of the study on “Development of a shared data and information system between the EU and the Regional Seas Conventions”²⁴.
 - HELCOM COMBINE Database contains data of oceanographic monitoring data gathered by CPs within the COMBINE monitoring programme.
 - HELCOM Biodiversity Database contains macro-species observation data made available by CPs.
 - HELCOM/OSPAR Ballast Water Exemptions Decision Support Tool, is a joint regional tool to identify low risk routes for International Maritime Organization (IMO) Ballast Water Management Convention exemptions.
 - HELCOM Pollution Load Compilation (PLC) Database contains all waterborne nutrient and contaminant discharges stemming from HELCOM pollution load monitoring.
 - HELCOM MPA Database (former Baltic Sea Protected Areas Database) is designed to centralise relevant information on the Baltic Sea Protected Areas. The database includes general information on the sites and their management plans, as well as lists of species, biotopes, and biotope complexes.
 - HELCOM Monitoring of Radioactive Substances (MORS) Environmental database contains levels of radioactivity monitored in water, sediment and biota in the Baltic Sea.
 - HELCOM MORS Discharge Database contains data reported by HELCOM CPs on airborne and waterborne discharges resulting from nuclear facilities in the Baltic Sea and North Sea region.
 - HELCOM Coastal Fish Core Indicator Database (COOL) contains data collected from coastal fish monitoring and used for coastal fish core indicators.
 - HELCOM/ASCOBANS Harbour porpoise Database contains observations of sightings, by-catches and strandings as reported by HELCOM CPs. Data is available from HELCOM Biodiversity Database.
 - HELCOM Automatic Identification System (AIS) Database contains AIS data on ship positions in the Baltic shared by CPs. The aggregated data products (shipping density maps) can be accessed from HELCOM Map and Data Service.

Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Bucharest Convention) (Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution [BSC] n.d.):

- Black Sea Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Program (BSIMAP) 2017-2022 (BSC 2017).
- Black Sea Information System (BSIS).
- Component on the Convention on Biological Diversity in BSIMAP and BSIS, indicator-based reporting.
- Regional Database on Pollution (RDB-P) of the Black Sea Commission.
- Annual State Reports to the Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission Working Groups – Pollution Monitoring Assessment (PMA) and Land Base Sources (LBS).
- Data collection on Environmental Aspects of the Management of Fisheries and other Marine Living Resources component in BSIMAP and BSIS.
- Data collection and information on combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

24 The EC Directorate-General for Environment (DG ENV) (DG ENV contract) study for the development of a shared data and information system between the EU and the four European Regional Seas Conventions: HELCOM; OSPAR; UNEP/MAP; BSC; and the European Environment Agency (EEA), to evaluate how these data could be used to support the reporting objectives of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and other related EU Directives. https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/aff9880d-df5e-44ec-854e-8f098fcff2e5/DIKE_10-2014-05b_RSCDataReporting_Report.pdf



Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention):

- The thematic information and databases as well as data sharing platforms (INFO/MAP) are maintained by the MAP Regional Activity Centre for Information and Communication (INFO/RAC, <http://www.info-rac.org/en/infomap-system/bcrs-reporting>).
- The mission of the INFO/RAC is to provide adequate information and communication services and infrastructure technologies on public participation of Barcelona Convention and on reporting related to the issue for the protection of the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment.
- INFO/RAC is responsible to manage dataflows related to the Barcelona Convention reporting obligations – the Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS), the National Baseline Budget (NBB) tool, and the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programmes (IMAP) -, data policy, data exchange protocols, online reporting tools, as well as further developing the governance IT platform for common standardisation and specification of data. The MAP Secretariat has the legal responsibility of BCRS, whereas INFO/RAC is responsible for its operation and development.
- INFO/RAC has designed the InfoMAP System that is the UN Mediterranean knowledge platform to provide and share data, information services and knowledge for the benefit of the MAP components and Member States, based on the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) principles.
- The InfoMAP System is also able to support the Mediterranean Quality Status Report (QSR) and the State of Environment and Development in the Mediterranean Report (UNEP/MAP and Plan Bleu 2020). Its main scope is to provide access to reporting system, harmonize data structure and models, create a common catalogue of resources, integrate data with interoperability layer, create a common platform to view, query and analyse data,

and produce tools to support data and information dissemination.

- The InfoMAP platform represents the unique access point to the all the InfoMAP nodes and other data services at regional level and is composed of a geoportal to orchestrate the Spatial Data Infrastructure, the InfoMAPNode, the Data Centre Reporting System, the Programme for the Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution in the Mediterranean Region (MEDPOL) Info System, and the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programmes IMAP Pilot Platform.
- The national (IMAPs) Infosystem was established in line with the SEIS principles to support data collection and reporting from the implementation of IMAPs and preparation of QSRs.
- The BCRS is the InfoMAP module that allows CPs to report under Article 26 of the amended Barcelona Convention and several articles of different Protocols of the MAP. The main objective of the system is to collect, store, manage and process compliance reporting data (textual and numerical) regarding the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.
- The BCRS data flow within the Data Centre Reporting System is subdivided in seven mandatory protocols that Parties have to report - Dumping Protocol, Land-based Sources (LBS) Protocol, SPA Protocol, Prevention and Emergency Protocol, Offshore Protocol, Hazardous Wastes Protocol, ICZM Protocol.

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention):

- The OSPAR Data and Information Management System (ODIMS, <https://odims.ospar.org/en/>) is a geoportal providing access to OSPAR data and associated metadata. ODIMS facilitates data reuse, where data are reported once and used multiple times. By connecting to the OSPAR Assessment Portal the transparency of data underpinning assessments and reports is maximised.

- Not all OSPAR data streams are managed by the Secretariat directly; there is extensive use of webservices to seamlessly present all data alongside each other.
 - ODIMS allows users to create and share maps of available layers to interrogate the available data and information for individual purposes.
 - The OSPAR Assessment Portal (OAP, <https://oap.ospar.org/en/>) is a platform with a range of functions, primarily for accessing OSPAR's assessments. There are built in charting functions to better penetrate the presented information. Maps made available via ODIMS can be directly embedded in an assessment enabling users to involve themselves with the presented assessment information. Each assessment is fully traceable from input data through to final assessment products, as the data and information underpinning OSPAR's assessments are linked to via OSPAR's Data and Information Management System.
 - The assessments presented on OAP include Common Indicator Assessments, Committee Assessments, the QSRs 2000, 2010, and the upcoming QSR 2023⁸⁶.
 - The Coordinated Environmental Monitoring Programme Appendices are presented in OAP to increase their accessibility and make use of the built-in version control system that will allow CPs to refer to a specific version of the table in their national consultations without older versions expiring.
 - A Resource Catalogue⁸⁷ includes a section on Guidance, Enumeration Tables and Glossaries to act as a live reference resource.
- marine environment in the NOWPAP region.
 - Databases developed and maintained are, inter alia, the Marine Environment Data, Contaminants and Nutrients, Marine Protected Areas, Oil Spill Accidents, Hazardous and Noxious Substance Spill Accidents, Reference on Atmospheric Deposition of Contaminants, Reference on River and Direct Inputs of Contaminants, Reference on Integrated Coastal and River Basin Management, Coastal and Marine Environment Geographical Information Systems (GIS), GIS and Remote Sensing Products.
 - Marine Environmental Data is a database from the major outcome of the DINRAC's activity - Annual Summary of Major Marine Environmental Data Available. The Marine Environmental Data is the results of the annual collection of data and information collected by DINRAC Focal Points according to the designed Data Collection Framework and Data Collection Form.
 - Contaminants and Nutrients is a database on the information related to the contaminants and nutrients in the marine and coastal environment in the NOWPAP region, serves as entry to access many information sources mainly in the NOWPAP region.
 - Marine Protected Areas Database has given a review and understanding on the current situation and development of nature reserves, including the location, name, level, type, area, nature condition, social and economic situation, management, marine protected species diversity and list of endangered species, so as to promote information exchange and distribution on marine and coastal environmental protection in the region.
 - Oil Spill Accidents Database, the list of Oil Spill Accidents is developed and updated regularly by the Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre (MERRAC, <http://merrac.nowpap.org/merrac/>) and maintained by DINRAC. It includes the name and nationality of the vessel, the location (i.e., longitude), type of spilled oil and effects, etc.

Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region (NOWPAP):

- NOWPAP Data and Information Network Regional Activity Centre (DINRAC, <http://dinrac.nowpap.org/>) was established in 2000 to coordinate various regional activities relevant to data and information exchange and offer reliable and up-to-date information services related to the coastal



- Hazardous and Noxious Substance (HNS) Spill Accidents Database, the list of HNS Spill Accidents is developed and updated regularly by MERRAC and maintained by DINRAC. It includes the location (i.e., longitude and latitude), name of ship, type of HNS, etc.
- Reference Database on Atmospheric Deposition of Contaminants into the marine and coastal environment in the NOWPAP Region, is developed and maintained by the Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Centre (POMRAC, <http://pomrac.tigdvo.ru/>) and DINRAC.
- Reference Database on River and Direct Inputs of Contaminants into the marine and coastal environment in the NOWPAP Region, is developed and maintained by POMRAC and DINRAC.
- Reference Database on Integrated Coastal and River Basin Management is developed and maintained by POMRAC and DINRAC for improving information exchange related to integrated management of coastal areas and river basins in Northwest Pacific.
- Reference ICARM comprises data on articles, scientific reports, databases and internet resources concerning sustainable development of coastal zones and river basins in NOWPAP Region.
- Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing (RS) Products is a set of Databases on Coastal and Marine Environment GIS and RS Products in the Northwest Pacific Region, developed and maintained by NOWPAP DINRAC.
- Database on Coastal and Marine Environmental Institutions in the Northwest Pacific Region is developed and maintained by DINRAC. The main information is on the institution/organizations involved in all aspects of coastal and marine environmental research and management in the region.
- Database on Coastal and Marine Environmental Experts in the Northwest Pacific Region is developed and maintained by DINRAC. The main information in the database is on individuals involved in all aspects of coastal and marine environmental research and management in the region.

Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA):

- Assessment of the state of the marine and coastal environment in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region is one of the earliest issues dating back to the 1970s. Cooperation in scientific research, monitoring, assessment and in combating pollution is prioritized in the Jeddah Convention (1982) - Article X – Scientific and Technical Cooperation.
- Qualitative and quantitative analysis of various marine ecosystem parameters provide the scientific basis for improved decision making at all levels and formulation and implementation of sustainable development policy.
- The Regional Environmental Monitoring Program (Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden [PERSGA] n.d.) aims at supporting Member States with human and technical capacities as well as equipment to implement monitoring activities and reduce the gap between States in implementing their national monitoring programs. Some member states have successfully established their sustainable national monitoring programs and provided data to PERSGA regularly. Some other countries are still making efforts to initiate their national monitoring programs.
- PERSGA has developed a database and GIS system that is used for the management of monitoring data generated by the national monitoring programs. PERSGA is seeking effective participation of all Member States in the regional monitoring program and regular monitoring data flow to the regional database.
- The Regional Environmental Monitoring Program provides scientific data to support the development of appropriate national legislation and to assist in making scientifically based decisions in coastal management; establishes and maintains a standardized integrated database of socioeconomic, ecological, biological, chemical and physical variables.
- The Regional Environmental Monitoring

Program aims at establishing an online monitoring and early warning network in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region and at updating mapping of significant habitats and anthropogenic threats, including sensitivity mapping for oil spills and other pollution hazards.

- The Regional Environmental Monitoring Program seeks to provide data on the state of the coastal and marine environment discuss the patterns of changes in the current state of the marine environment in the region, with the necessary decisions taken at the national and regional levels accordingly. The program is also following up with the Member States, collecting monitoring data reports and supporting them with the necessary technical and human capacities to facilitate carrying out sampling and analysis. Furthermore, the program aims at enhancing the collaboration with the countries for collection of available data from current monitoring activities for enriching the regional database of environmental ecosystem variables, and aims at harmonizing research and monitoring variables, inter-calibration of monitoring methods and sharing experience among countries.

Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME):

- ROPME is concerned with disseminating information and knowledge for the protection of ROPME Sea Area. Thus, ROPME has a wealth of data and information that are considered an important asset for ROPME activities.
- ROPME has identified the need to establish ROPME Integrated Information System (RIIS, <https://riis-ropme.org>) that would allow proper management of the existing data and information. RIIS will allow disseminating the valuable information to the Region. In doing so, it would allow preparing information for decision and policy makers, scientific and research institutes, agencies responsible for managing ROPME sea area coastal zone, and the public.

- The ROPME RIIS is a web-based application for archiving, organizing and sharing ROPME Sea Area (RSA) data available at the ROPME Secretariat.
- RIIS has four modules, and each module is designed to visualize data pertaining to a particular project/activity. RIIS is primarily a spatial application from where data on the modules and sub-modules are embedded and displayed on this platform.
- Apart from showcasing existing data on the RSA, future plans are being formulated to enhance and integrate new and existing datasets into the core of the RIIS modules. Main modules are described below.
- Ocean Cruise Information System (OCIS) is the module which provides users with data generated from oceanographic cruises activities in the RSA.
- Sea Contaminants Information System (SCIS) is the module which provides users with data and information about contaminant survey activities in the RSA.
- Remote Sensing Image Order Management System (ROMS) provides the user with a view of available satellite images on the RSA and the facility to request/order these images from ROPME Secretariat.
- Country Profile Information System (CPIS) contains country-wise data particularly marine indicators, national resources (experts, institutions, etc.) and technical reports such as those on Harmful Algal Bloom (HABs), Fish Kill, Mammal Mortality, Marine Biodiversity, etc.

Convention for the Protection of Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region (SPREP):

- The Pacific Environment Portal provides an easy way to find, access and reuse regional and national data. The main purpose is to provide easy access and safe storage for environmental datasets to be used for monitoring, evaluating, and analysing environmental conditions and trends to support environmental planning, forecasting, and reporting requirements at all levels.
- This portal is part of the Pacific Data Ecosystem, a partnership between Pacific Island Countries, SPREP and the



Pacific Community (SPC) to improve data management and sharing through two online data tools, the Pacific Environment Portal (PEP) and the Pacific Data Hub (PDH).

- Information Portals are the Inform Regional Data Portal, National Environment Data Portals, Pacific Climate Change Portal (PCCP, <https://www.pacificclimatechange.net/>), Pacific Islands Protected Area Portal (PIPAP, <https://pipap.sprep.org/>), Pacific Meteorological Desk and Partnership (PMDP, <https://www.pacificmet.net/>), Pacific Network for Environmental Assessment (PNEA, <https://pnea.sprep.org/>), Regional Frameworks and Strategies Directory (<https://www.sprep.org/node/987>), Lessons Learned and Best Practices in Environment Management (<https://www.sprep.org/lessons-learned-and-best-practices-environment-management>).
- The outputs of the Inform Project have positively contributed to strengthening national and regional capacity in the establishment of Environment Data Portals, State of the Environment reports, National Environment Management Strategy and the first Regional State of the Environment and Conservation report to better manage the environment – i.e., State of environment and conservation in the Pacific Islands: 2020 regional report (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme [SPREP] 2020).
- Marine Waste in the Pacific Dashboard is related to marine pollution originating from purse seine and longline fishing vessel operations in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean between 2003-2015 as derived from the Form GEN-6, a tool to monitor fishing vessel violations. SPREP completed analysis of the marine pollution incidents are reported by fisheries observers.
- GIS and Spatial Data Dashboard gives an overview of GIS related datasets on the Pacific Environment Portal. From digital atlases, interactive spatial data viewers to open access geospatial data repositories and online maps.

Permanent Commission for the Protection of the Pacific (CPPS):

- Data management has improved with two online geoportals with information on marine biodiversity, ICM indicators and environmental information, such as the regional atlas SPINCAM (<http://atlasspincam.net/smartatlas/>). A geoportal with information on marine mammal, MPAs and sea turtles – SIBIMAP (<http://cpps.dyndns.info/sibimap/>) - has been developed.
- The CPPS became an Ocean Biogeographic Information System Node at the beginning of 2017.

Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern Africa Region (Abidjan Convention):

- A prospective software, i.e., Data Management System²⁵ will be put in place shortly. This will help Parties to facilitate their compliance with reporting requirements.

Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean Region (Nairobi Convention):

- The Nairobi Convention Clearinghouse (<https://www.nairobiconvention.org/clearinghouse/>) provides accurate and relevant data and information for improved management and protection of the coastal and marine environment in the Western Indian Ocean region. The goal is to improve the data sharing, coordination and participation of the Western Indian Ocean countries.
- The objectives of the Clearinghouse are the development of human resource capacities and appropriate information infrastructure at national level, the development of an enabling environment for assessment through advocacy of standards, and the

25 OpenKM Document Management System.

access to relevant data and information on the coastal and marine environment.

- The main services of the Clearinghouse are acquisition of data and making it available over the internet, along with the mechanisms for search of data.
- Data and information have been categorized into six broad emerging trends - biophysical environment, human environment, economic activities, policy and governance, planning and management, cost-benefits analysis, and clearinghouse capabilities.
- The main capabilities of the Nairobi Convention Clearinghouse mechanism will be the continued acquisition of data and making it available online, other capabilities include data dashboard, search, mapping services, data catalogue, which are described below.
- Data dashboard is a quick snapshot of selected indicators to show the state of the coast in the West Indian Ocean region.
- Search enables and allow users to locate specific data and maps using a comprehensive search criterion categorized according to coastal and marine thematic areas, countries and type of resource.
- Data catalogue contains a reference list of products available - data, documents, maps, map services, graphs and imagery.
- Mapping services offer capability of viewing all the spatial data in the Clearinghouse without the need for specialized software. The map viewer will allow users to select different layers based on a specific coastal and marine thematic area and overlay it on a single basemap. The visualization of the maps can be combined with Web Map Service (WMS) or other Application Programme Interface (API) to provide users with a simple web interface when requesting for a map.
- The Nairobi Convention Clearing House Mechanism will be linked to the national nodes in each of the Participating Countries in order to facilitate data sharing, in addition to its information dissemination and exchange functions.
- Under the European Union funded project ACP MEAs 3 project, the Nairobi Convention has developed a gender operational note to

support its project countries mainstream and operationalise gender dimensions of compliance and enforcement of MEAs and strengthen environmental governance.

Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention):

- Database of Protected Species listed under the SPAW Protocol is available.
- Database of Protected Areas (<https://www.car-spaw-rac.org/?SPAW-listed-Protected-Areas-Database-PA-Listing>)²⁶ listed under the SPAW Protocol is a web-based tool developed that follows the reporting format and offers the possibility to prepare and submit reports online by the interested Parties.

By exploring all of URL (included in the end notes of this section), this helps finding solutions, identifying good examples and the case studies of Annex 2.

Regarding reporting on state of marine environment, and specifically, to increase the understanding and enhance the information on the state and trends of the marine environment in the preparation of the national state of environment (SoE) reports - also called as state of the marine environment report (SOMER), state of the marine environment and development report (SoED) or state of the marine biodiversity report (SMBR) for others RSPs -, the development of reporting formats has been considered for the implementation of the Conventions and its Protocols, as well as other relevant scientific national and regional reports and publications.

Although some RSPs' Secretariats informed that there are no specific reporting templates, in some cases, it is required to draft guidelines for the preparation of national reports regarding the preparation of SOMER, as is happening for instance with regard to ROPME Sea Area. For this purpose, each Thematic Expert Group is also required to prepare its guidelines for national reporting.

²⁶ A web-based tool that follows the reporting format has been developed to offer the possibility to prepare and submit reports online by the interested Parties.



The SoE reports are usually based on the latest information on policy and legislative measures, institutional arrangements, stakeholder engagement, future challenges and barriers to the improvement of the state of the environment in the regions.

It would include a gap analysis, showing the needs and requirements of the countries, individually and collectively, in the areas of monitoring, information collection and management related to policy, decision-making and implementation of the Conventions and its Protocols, as is the case of Bucharest Convention and its Protocols (BSC 2019). A number of these regional reports on the state of environment and conservation - e.g., Arctic, UNEP/MAP, SPREP, BSC, NOWPAP²⁷, PERSGA, ROPME Sea Area²⁸ - have been explored for both reasons, analysing the SoE's structure and contents and finding some synergies, focused both on harmonization practices in biodiversity assessments, and on harmonization of methods, standards, and guidelines.

Other related websites and supporting tools reflect the importance of using recommended templates to provide support to the Parties. As an example, SPREP provides a recommended template (SPREP 2021) for individual indicators to be considered in national state of environment (SoE) reports. The template can be used when creating a SoE report, and sections can be added or adapted to fit country's needs.

By analysing national templates is agreed that these are designed to provide information on the measures taken by the Parties to implement relevant provisions of the related Convention and its Protocols, and on the effectiveness of such measures in meeting the objectives of the Convention and its Protocols.

Summarized forms of national reporting templates as some examples, are included in the following dedicated boxes that reflect the main contents of the existing templates of five of the UNEP-administered RSCAPs, as follows:

- Draft template for national reporting on the Nairobi Convention and its Protocols, UNEP(DEPI)/EAF/CP6/BUR.DOC/5, 2010 - Box 2.
- Revised Template for national reporting on the Cartagena Convention and Protocols, UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.41/INF.25 Rev.1, 2021 - Box 3.
- Unified Reporting Format for the Tehran Convention and Protocols, TC/COP3/8, 2010 – Box 4.
- Template for national reporting on the Abidjan Convention and its Protocols, UNEP(DEPI)/WACAF/COP.11/8, 2014 - Box 5.
- Revised reporting format for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols, UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.23/4, 2017 – Box 6

27 The Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Centre (POMRAC) is developing the third issue of the NOWPAP flagship publication, State of the Marine Environment Report for the NOWPAP region (SOMER-3). The assessment is focused on atmospheric and land- and sea-based pollution threats, marine biodiversity and eutrophication.

28 The ROPME's SOMER report dated in 1990 is focused on marine water pollution and its effects of the ecosystem (Lindén et al. 1990).

Box 2: Draft template for national reporting on the Nairobi Convention and its Protocols

Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern Africa Region

Template for national reporting on the Nairobi Convention and its Protocols (UNEP(DEPI)/EAF/CP6/BUR.DOC/5)

Section 1: Designated National Focal Point, Institution and Implementation Plans – Articles 4, 16

Section 2: Measures to prevent, reduce and combat Pollution from Ships, Caused by Dumping, from Land-Based Sources, from Sea-Bed Activities and from Airborne Pollutants -

Articles 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

Section 3: Specially Protected Areas – Article 10

Section 4: Co-operation in Combating Pollution in Cases of Emergency – Article 11

Section 5: Environmental Impact Assessment – Article 13

Section 6: Scientific and Technical Co-operation – Article 14

Annex I: Protocol for the Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBSA Protocol)

Annex II: Protocol Concerning Protected Areas and Wild Fauna and Flora in the Eastern African Region

Section 2: Migratory Species - Article 6

Section 3: Introduction of Alien or New Species - Article 7

Section 4: Establishment of Protected Areas and sharing of information - Articles 8,14,15,16,1

Section 5: Frontier Protected Areas - Article 13

Annex III: Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Marine Pollution in Cases of Emergency in the Eastern African Region

Section 2: Communication of information concerning, and reporting of marine pollution incidents – Article 5

Source: (UNEP 2010)

Box 3: Revised Template for national reporting on the Cartagena Convention and Protocols

Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region

Revised Template for national reporting on the Convention and its Protocols

(UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.41/INF.25 Rev.1)

Section 1: Designated National Focal Point, Institution and Implementation Plans - Articles 4, 15

Section 2: Measures to Reduce Marine Pollution from Ships, Caused by Discharges or Dumping, from Exploration or Exploitation of the Seabed, or from Discharges to the Atmosphere - Articles 5, 6, 8, 9

Section 3: Cooperation in Cases of Emergency – Article 11

Section 4: Environmental Impact Assessment – Article 12

Section 5: Scientific and Technical Cooperation – Article 13

Section 6: Adoption/Amendment of the Convention and its Protocols – Articles 17,18

Section 7: The Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region

Section 8: The Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) - Article 4, 10, 11, 20, 21

Section 9: The Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources (LBS) and Activities - Articles I, III, VI, VII

Source: (UNEP 2021c)



Box 4: Unified Reporting Format for the Tehran Convention and Protocols

Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea

Part 1. General Information

Part 2. Review of activities for the implementation of the provisions of the Tehran Convention and its Protocols

Prevention, Reduction and Control of Pollution

Pollution from Land-Based Sources - Article 7

Pollution from Seabed Activities - Article 8

Pollution from Vessels - Article 9

Pollution Caused by Dumping - Article 10

Pollution from Other Human Activities - Article 11

Prevention of Introduction, Control and Combating of Invasive Alien Species - Article 12

Environmental Emergencies - Article 13

Protection, Preservation, Restoration and Rational Use of Marine Living Resources - Article 14

Coastal zone management - Article 15

Caspian Sea level fluctuation - Article 16

Environmental Impact Assessment - Article 17

Monitoring - Article 19, Tehran Convention, - Article 9, 2.b, Draft Biological Diversity Conservation Protocol, - Article 13, 1.c, 2, Draft Protocol for the Protection of the Caspian Sea against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities

Research and Development - Article 20

Exchange of and Access to Information - Article 21, Tehran Convention, - Article 14, 15, draft Protocol for the Protection of the Caspian Sea against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities, - Article 17, 18, Draft Biological Diversity Conservation Protocol, - Article 6, Protocol on Environment Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and Protocol Concerning Regional Preparedness, Response and Co-operation in Combating Oil Pollution Incidents

Exchange on a regular basis information, in accordance with the provisions of this Convention

Part 3. Implementation of COP Resolutions, Decisions

Part 4. General Conclusions and recommendations

Source: (Tehran Convention Secretariat 2011)

Box 5: Template for national reporting on the Abidjan Convention and its Protocols.

Convention for the Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West, Central and Southern Africa Region

Template for national reporting on the Abidjan Convention and its Protocols (UNEP(DEPI)/WACAF/COP.11/8)

Section 1: Designated National Focal Point, Institution and Implementation Plans - Article 16

Section 2: Measures to prevent, reduce and combat Pollution from Ships, Caused by Dumping, from Land-Based Sources, from Sea-Bed Activities and from Airborne Pollutants - Articles 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

Section 3: Co-operation in Combating Pollution in Cases of Emergency – Article 12

Section 4: Environmental Impact Assessment – Article 13

Section 5: Scientific and Technical Co-operation – Article 14

Annex I - The Protocol concerning the Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment from Land-Based Sources and the Activities (LBSA) in the Western, Central and Southern Africa Region

Annex II - Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Marine Pollution in Cases of Emergency

Section 2: Communication of information concerning, and reporting of marine pollution incidents – Article 5

Source: (Abidjan Convention 2014)

Box 6: Revised reporting format for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Revised reporting format for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols (UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.23/4)

Section 1 - Barcelona Convention

1. Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements
2. Legal and regulatory measures
3. Policy measures
4. Monitoring and public access to information

Part 1 Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements

Revised reporting format for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols (UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.23/4)

Section 1 - Barcelona Convention

1. Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements
2. Legal and regulatory measures
3. Policy measures
4. Monitoring and public access to information

Part 1 Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements

Section 2 - Dumping Protocol

1. Legal and regulatory measures
2. Dumping at sea permits and quantities
3. Quantities of wastes or other matter for each dumping site and coordinates for dumpsites
4. Monitoring
5. Placement

Box 6 Revised reporting format for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols (continued)

Part V: Placement - Article 3.4.b, Dumping Protocol

Section 3 - Prevention and Emergency Protocol

1. Legal and regulatory measures
2. Pollution preparedness and response: operational measures
3. Pollution incidents

Section 4 - LBS Protocol

1. Legal and regulatory measures
2. Inventory: LBS Protocol - Article 13c
3. Implementation of Regional Action Plans (RAPs) and their effectiveness:
 1. Regional Action Plans on POPs
 2. Regional Action Plans on the Reduction of BOD5
 3. Regional Plan on the Reduction of Inputs of Mercury
 4. Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean
 5. Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean
4. Implementation of the NAPs and their effectiveness
5. Monitoring
6. Enforcement measures

Section 5 - SPA and BD Protocol

1. Legal and regulatory measures
2. Specially Protected Areas (SPAs)
3. Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs)
4. Endangered and threatened species
5. Monitoring
6. Enforcement measures
7. Implementation of Regional Actions Plans (RAPs):
 1. Action Plan for the conservation of Cartilaginous Fishes in the Mediterranean Sea
 2. Updated Action Plan concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea
 3. Updated Action Plan for the Conservation of Cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea
 4. Action Plan for the conservation of Marine Vegetation in the Mediterranean Sea
 5. Action Plan for the conservation of Bird Species listed in Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol in the Mediterranean
 6. Action Plan for the management of the Mediterranean Monk Seal
 7. Action Plan for the conservation of Mediterranean Marine Turtles
 8. Updated Action Plan for the conservation of the Coralligenous and Other Calcareous Bio-concretions in the Mediterranean Sea
 9. Action Plan for the conservation of Habitats and Species associated with seamounts, underwater caves and canyons, aphotic engineering benthic invertebrates and chemo-synthetic phenomena, in the Mediterranean Sea (Dark Habitats Action Plan)

Section 6 - Offshore Protocol

1. Legal and regulatory measures
2. Permits and quantities
3. Inventory of offshore installations
4. Enforcement measures

Section 7- Hazardous Wastes Protocol

1. Legal and regulatory measures
2. Generation of hazardous wastes and other wastes
3. Transboundary movement of hazardous wastes and other wastes
4. Disposals which did not proceed as intended and accidents
5. Enforcement measures

Source: (UNEP/MAP 2017a)

National reporting templates facilitate sharing of information on issues related to the implementation of the Conventions and Protocols.

One of the main supportive goals of the RSPs for their Parties is enhancing the production and exchange of data, information management, monitoring and assessment through the development of guidelines, baselines, indicators, and monitoring programmes.

In this regard, the prospective harmonized reporting templates will clearly need to meet reporting

obligations for RSCAPs in line with CBD national reporting, i.e., current and future NBSAPs²⁹.

It might acknowledge the existing national reporting templates efforts as an appropriate baseline to design

²⁹ Parties have developed NBSAPs in line with Article 6. General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use. Each Contracting Party shall, in accordance with its particular conditions and capabilities: (a) Develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or adapt for this purpose existing strategies, plans or programmes which shall reflect, inter alia, the measures set out in this Convention relevant to the Contracting Party concerned; and (b) Integrate, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.

the future national reporting template according to the post-2020 GBF process.

Parties report on implementation of the RSCAPs for specific national implementation. In some cases, this happens to report on thematic areas. It has been shown that as part of the solution, joint thematic reporting is an added value for issues of joint concern. Finally, in terms of frequency of the national reporting templates, the responses obtained from the survey for this purpose are the following:

- Biennial – COBSEA; UNEP/MAP; Nairobi Convention; ROPME; CPPS; SPREP; CEP.
- Annual – NOWPAP.
- Regular basis – OSPAR.

What is the role of RSCAPs in addressing challenges and opportunities in the reporting process and the reporting data requested in national templates?

3.2 Reporting Obligations and Mechanisms under the Convention on Biological Diversity (possibly linked with the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans processes so far, supporting tools, and prospective Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework national reporting)

With respect to the national planning under the CBD, it agrees that NBSAPs³⁰ should continue to be the main national planning instrument under the post-2020 GBF, and it proposes an alignment of procedures of existing NBSAPs with the new framework. One of the main aspects is how this should happen and what form NBSAPs should take. Among the issues raised and options proposed are the need for new or updated guidance, guidelines and standards, and new or updated reporting and indicators. The updated NBSAPs is also proposed to include human right-

30 NBSAPs allow the development of coherent national plans for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. NBSAPs help guide countries to meet biodiversity obligations under various biodiversity-related MEAs in a consistent and harmonized manner.

based approach to national actions for biodiversity and be gender responsive by systematically integrating a gender perspective. In essence, NBSAPs will continue to be the main national planning, coordination and implementation instruments under the CBD. While the national commitments would indicate what the Party intends to achieve in relation to the global goals and targets, the NBSAPs would outline how this would be achieved.

The importance of NBSAPs reflecting how Parties are contributing to the new framework, including the need for tracking how national goals, targets and actions aggregate to global goals and targets, with the options of having global goals and targets that can be disaggregated. Furthermore, it contemplates the need for NBSAPs that reflect the scope of the targets under the new framework, and the need for stronger alignment of NBSAPs with national reporting and with monitoring at the global level and an eventual global stocktake³¹. Priorities will necessarily contemplate different areas, especially in the need for synergies with the RSP (CBD 2020d). It was noted that updating or aligning NBSAPs with the new framework could be an opportunity to re-position biodiversity as a vehicle for the implementation of the SDGs within a country.

NBSAPs are designed to define the national goals and targets to be achieved and include a plan for their implementation. Thus, once national targets are agreed upon and adopted, they should be incorporated into the NBSAP. This will provide an opportunity to add into the NBSAP any new activities that may be required to reach the targets. Targets are only meaningful if progress towards their achievement can be monitored.

A complete biodiversity management system would include the following components: (i) a set of goals and targets representing desired outcomes; (ii) a number of priority activities that need to be implemented to reach the goals and targets; (iii) a monitoring programme focusing on the extent that activities have been carried out and/or the degree to which the desired results have been achieved - this should include indicators -; (iv) an adaptive management component that will feed back information allowing the effectiveness of activities to be improved; and (v)

31 This term is referred to 'a reported information for the global review of progress in implementation'.



a review mechanism that includes periodic reporting on progress in each area.

At the national level it is also critical to encourage, promote and facilitate collaboration in development and implementation of NBSAPs. Although NBSAPs are national tools, effective implementation and enforcement requires consideration of transboundary and regional issues. It is also important to consider how to work across national borders to address shared objectives and common challenges in developing and implementing the post-2020 GBF.

New and revised NBSAPs should be formulated to provide a coherent evaluation of the implementation of goals for the post-2020 GBF and national and regional objectives. NBSAPs should emphasize the use of indicators to facilitate assessments of progress. National commitments could build upon existing and ongoing commitments from the current NBSAPs or new commitments which have been made at the political level. The contributions submitted in these commitments would include a clear expected result for 2030, to match the targets in the post-2020 GBF, and would be quantitative and measurable to the extent possible. Furthermore, Parties would be encouraged to set quantitative commitments which are aligned with the headline indicators of the monitoring framework for the post-2020 GBF, if possible.

National commitments would be due within one year after the adoption of the post-2020 GBF. It is proposed that commitments would follow a standard user-friendly template and be submitted via a dedicated registry on the Convention's CHM (CBD 2020e).

The post-2020 GBF biodiversity target indicators will be recognized by various other conventions. In addition, the post-2020 GBF's biodiversity target indicators offer the chance to develop indicators useful for measuring progress towards 2030 and beyond.

The task of the fifteenth meeting of the CBD Conference of the Parties is to set the path for a sustainable future by systemizing the actions needed to ensure transformative change to rebuild a harmonious relationship between nature and people, being the theme "Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth". Highlights

included commitments by the CPs and organizations to step up efforts for biodiversity conservation.

Although outcomes of SBSTTA 23 (CBD 2019a) and SBSTTA 24 (CBD 2021d) revealed evidence base for the post-2020 GBF, it seems that further work needs to be done for the successful adoption of a package of decisions during the second part of the CBD COP 15. By ensuring coherence and allowing for a comprehensive approach to meet the 2030 goals and 2050 vision and by addressing all drivers of biodiversity loss, it explained how direct drivers of biodiversity loss, such as sea and land use change, pollution, and invasive alien species, and indirect drivers, such as demographic and economic ones, are interlinked.

As a mechanism to ensure that the process is on track to achieve the goals and targets – i.e., the A, B, C, D goals, the 2030 milestones and the twenty-one 2030 targets -, the post-2020 GBF will provide a "rulebook" to address direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss and ensure concerted efforts in addressing environmental challenges. The post-2020 GBF will support countries on national policies and programmes that tackle the drivers of biodiversity loss. In this regard, the IPBES promoted governance approaches that are integrative, coherent, inclusive, informed, and adaptive. Promoting synergistic action for biodiversity, climate and oceans is crucial. It called for countries to systematically link their CBD, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and SDG-related commitments, including their NBSAPs and nationally determined contributions (NDCs)³². It urged aligning NBSAPs with the post-2020 GBF.

The current situation requires the very best of multilateralism, highlighted the interlinkages between the CBD and other relevant multilateral conventions.

The Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG)³³ urged that the mandates of the biodiversity-related conventions

32 An NDC is a climate action plan to cut emissions and adapt to climate impacts. Each Party to the Paris Agreement is required to establish an NDC and update it every five years.

33 The Biodiversity Liaison Group comprises the Secretariats of the five global biodiversity-related conventions - i.e., Ramsar Convention, 1971; World Heritage Convention, 1972; Convention on Illegal Trade of Endangered Species (CITES), 1973; Bonn Convention or Convention of Migratory Species (CMS), 1975; Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992 -, and develops recommendations from periodic national reports for further implementation.

should be woven into the post-2020 GBF to take full advantage of their relevant strengths, including by appropriate use of indicators.

The overall objective is to reduce, halt, and reverse biodiversity loss, putting biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030 and achieving the 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature, highlighting biodiversity mainstreaming. It addressed how mainstreaming biodiversity in all economic sectors can be supported for an effective implementation of the post-2020 GBF, such as fisheries.

The SDGs may still be achieved, but that transformational change is needed. It was emphasized that conserving and sustainably using biodiversity is necessary to achieve the SDGs and the objectives of the Paris Agreement. Furthermore, it was highlighted nature conservation as a development issue, and consequently, it was called for mobilizing resources from all sources and placing nature at the centre of decision making.

The process for setting national targets or related commitments in NBSAPs is relatively flexible and largely left to the discretion of the Parties. This flexibility facilitates the reporting process by making it easier for Parties to report in accordance with national circumstances. However, this flexibility and the different approaches – i.e., some Parties have set process-related targets, and some have set outcome-oriented targets, or used a combination of both -, have made it challenging to assess the information in the national reports in a comprehensive and consistent manner and these national reports are not necessarily comparable³⁴.

In late 2019, the CBD Secretariat prepared a survey to evaluate the use of the online reporting tool by Parties. The survey results highlighted the need to improve the robustness and functionality of the online reporting tool, including by making it more streamlined and flexible to accommodate variations in reporting (CBD 2020f). The online reporting tool should be made easier to use. Future rounds of national reporting should focus on key issues necessary to monitor

the implementation of the post-2020 GBF. To avoid repetition and overlaps, it was suggested that some sections of the national report should be mandatory while others could be voluntary.

Regarding the future national reporting in the context of monitoring the implementation of the post-2020 GBF, as already mentioned, national reports should continue to be the main instrument for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the CBD and the post-2020 GBF at national and global levels. However, more effective, robust and transparent national reporting is required.

With regard to the periodicity of national reports, most Parties suggested that the current interval of two national reports in a 10-year period should be maintained. It was also suggested that shorter reports could be prepared every two years while more comprehensive reports could be prepared every four or five years.

Adequate resources and capacity, including the development of additional tools to support national reporting, are essential for the timely preparation and submission of national reports. National planning and reporting processes should be aligned. The changes to the format of the national reports should be minimized to allow for comparability between reporting cycles and better tracking of progress.

The format of national reports adopted by the COPs, has been modified for each cycle based on the experiences and lessons learned in the previous cycles. The template for the seventh national report should build on that of the sixth national report. The format should make use of both multiple-choice questions to allow for the aggregation of information, as well as provide space for narrative responses. The content of the seventh national report should be aligned with the elements of the monitoring framework for the post-2020 GBF. Sections in the national report and questions should focus on information that will be used for the global review or stocktaking of progress in the implementation of the post-2020 GBF.

The seventh national report should be concise, using the most up-to-date data and information from as many sources as possible, including global and regional data sets, as well as the most recent reviews

34 An additional challenge is that some Parties have not included national targets in their NBSAPs but referenced them in their national reports, while other Parties have assessed progress in their national reports against national targets which are different from those in their NBSAPs.

of national implementation and other national assessments.

Parties are encouraged to involve relevant stakeholders in the preparation of their seventh national report. The actions taken by these stakeholders, including the voluntary commitments made by them, will contribute to implementation of national and global targets and, therefore, should be reflected in the national report. This includes representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities, subnational governments, representatives of relevant sectors, business, academia, non-governmental organizations, and civil society organizations. Parties should engage indigenous peoples and local communities as well as relevant stakeholders in the preparation of the national report and reflect their inputs in the national report. Parties are also encouraged to involve the NFPs of the biodiversity-related conventions and the Rio conventions, in addition to the NFPs for the SDGs and other relevant international and regional conventions as the RSPs.

Further, as already mentioned, the seventh national report should be as short as possible and focus on progress in the implementation of the post-2020 GBF, in particular the outcomes of actions taken, challenges encountered, and further actions needed. The proposed key elements of a draft template for the seventh national report³⁵ are aimed at providing a way forward for developing a template which will allow Parties to report: (a) on the status of updating or revising NBSAPs in the light of the post-2020 GBF, including the status of adoption of the NBSAP as a policy instrument and on the main elements of the NBSAP; and (b) on progress towards the 2050 goals, 2030 milestones and targets contained in the post-2020 GBF, using the headline indicators (CBD

2021e, CBD 2021f)³⁶, including key actions taken and challenges encountered.

The seventh national reports³⁷ will provide an initial assessment of progress in the implementation of the post-2020 GBF, in particular outcomes of actions taken, drawing upon information concerning the implementation of NBSAPs and other actions taken to implement the CBD, whereas the eighth national reports will be comprehensive reports reviewing progress in global goals and targets.

To enable global aggregation and analysis of progress, Parties should use a core set of headline indicators (CBD 2021g) contained in the monitoring framework for the goals and targets in the post-2020 GBF in assessing their progress at the national level. The proposed elements of a draft template for the seventh national report (CBD 2020g) are included in the Box 7 below.

The information contained in the seventh national report³⁸ will be used to: (a) undertake a mid-term review of the implementation of the post-2020 GBF by the COPs; (b) contribute to the first Global Biodiversity Commitment Gap Report³⁹; (c) undertake the first global stocktaking by the COPs⁴⁰; (d) develop the sixth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook; (e) contribute to the review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the SDGs and associated targets; (f) contribute to the

35 The revised template for the seventh national report will go through a global peer-review process before it is presented for adoption by the CBD COP 15. This template takes into consideration the experiences and lessons learned from the sixth national report process (CBD 2021h).

36 To facilitate the use of headline indicators at the national level, capacity-building activities and other support, including support for developing and accessing data and the further development of national monitoring systems, will be needed in many developing countries, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), as well as countries with economies in transition. This support would need to be coordinated and aligned with existing support being provided under other existing initiatives, such as GEO BON, the SDGs or the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting. Parties may wish to consider this issue when developing the monitoring framework for the post-2020 GBF.

37 The seventh national reports are due by 30 June 2024 (decisions 14/27 and 15/--). In accordance with decision 14/27, the seventh national report should be submitted in 2023. However, due to the postponement of the CBD COP 15, it is proposed that the seventh national report will be submitted in 2024.

38 To facilitate the preparation of the seventh national report, each section of the report will use a standardized template that contains specific questions with a choice of possible answers.

39 It would be most likely in 2024 or 2025.

40 It would be most likely in 2025.

review of the implementation of the strategic plans of related conventions and processes.

To facilitate the preparation of the seventh national report, an online reporting tool will be further

Harmonization of reporting and information management leads to benefits from synergies and avoiding duplication of effort. At its 3rd meeting in 2005, the BLG (CBD 2005) recognized possibilities for increased harmonization of reporting, including a web

Box 7: Proposed structure of a draft template of the CBD Seventh National Report¹

Section I. Brief overview of the process of preparation of the report, highlighting the following: stakeholders engaged and involved; coordination mechanisms employed if applicable; consultations undertaken at various levels for preparing the report; plan for using the report for communication and outreach activities as well as national planning process if needed.¹

Section II. Status of the updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP) in the light of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, including the following questions:

- Has your country updated or revised its NBSAP or Biodiversity Action Plan in the light of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework?
- Does your country's updated NBSAP or Biodiversity Action Plan include the following elements: Strategies for mainstreaming; Capacity development plan; Resource mobilization plan; Monitoring, reporting and evaluation mechanism; Communication and education plan; Implementation plan (subnational level)?

Box 7 Proposed structure of a draft template of the CBD Seventh National Report (continued)

- Has your country's updated NBSAP or Biodiversity Action Plan been adopted as a policy instrument?
- If you answered "yes" above, please indicate the type of policy instrument your country's updated NBSAP or Biodiversity Action Plan has been adopted as: whole-of-Government; for the environment sector only; legally binding document or law; guiding framework; integrated into the poverty reduction strategy, sustainable development strategy, national development plan, and other related strategies or plans.

Section III. Initial assessment of progress towards the 2050 goals, using relevant headline indicators.

Section IV. Initial assessment of progress towards the 2030 milestones and action targets².

Section V. Executive summary of the report (updated biodiversity country profile) by highlighting key findings³.

- 1 A resource manual will provide further guidance and explanation on the use of the template and will contain links to potential sources of information for the of the seventh national report, as well as other supporting materials will be developed as needed to support the preparation of the report.
- 2 It should be noted that all countries will report progress against the 2030 milestones and targets, drawing on information related to implementation of the CBD and NBSAPs.
- 3 This information will serve as communication material as well as an updated country profile to be made available on the CBD CHM.

developed to allow Parties to submit the seventh national report online. The online reporting tool will be accessible on the CBD CHM. Therefore, as already mentioned, Parties are encouraged to involve the NFPs of the biodiversity-related conventions and the Rio conventions, in addition to the NFPs for the SDGs, when preparing the seventh national report. Parties are also encouraged to use the DaRT developed by UNEP.

portal, common reporting modules and facilitation of harmony in national data management, to facilitate coherent implementation of all five biodiversity-related conventions at the national level. The BLG agreed that they would keep each other informed of proposed developments in national reporting under each of the conventions, with a view to aligning approaches where possible.

What are key global challenges and opportunities for the CBD in the reporting process and the reporting data requested in national templates?



4. ANALYSIS OF SYNERGIES AND GAPS

Achieving harmonization is challenging because of the evolving guidance on reporting occurring within each convention⁴¹, the conventions' different reporting timetables, and the differing types of reports required. However, the BLG recognized that there are some promising possibilities for increased harmonization, such as a web-portal that could be developed to facilitate access to reports and guidelines of each of the conventions, and common reporting modules that could be used for certain themes. This would be useful for each RSPs, as appropriate, to adopt indicators that are consistent with the framework of proposed goals and targets to be adopted at the CBD COP 15 Part II.

As solicited through the survey questionnaire which framed different types of questions, as shown in Annex 1 of this report, and with regard to the analysis of the responses received, significant elements for future reporting have been identified by the RSCAPs' Secretariats. It should be assessed on the basis of initial compatibility studies. However, regardless of whether such contributions qualify as proposals for continuing implementation the agreed strategies, shared and/or common aspects, themes and goals must be applied consistently to reinforce the application of guidelines for action.

Synergies of RSPs national reporting and CBD national reporting will represent progress in addressing international environmental challenges, although that include challenges related to coordination and efficiency. Understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to synergies will help Parties to create requirements that are enforceable, setting programme priorities, and monitoring compliance. By analysing the relevance of the specific objectives of the CBD and the RSPs, this will help to recognize issues identified to reporting. As components of effective enforcement programmes, these objectives

would develop workable solutions through legal, economic, voluntary and information-based tools, and mechanisms.

The role of the public entitled to access to information, public participation and justice, and identification of access rights constituted a careful crafting of the message to be communicated. In this regard, as an example, the MEA Information and Knowledge Management (MEA IKM, <https://www.cbd.int/mea/ikm/>) Initiative seek to develop harmonized and interoperable information systems in support of knowledge management activities among MEAs for the benefit of Parties. Limited institutional mechanism to enforce compliance and the good will of Parties to comply focus on national institutions and processes would be benefited inter alia for data analysis and interpretation⁴², information and data collection dissemination, review of performance, and monitoring, reporting and verification.

Regarding the gaps, these may address effective methods and institutions for participation as the primary constraints and barriers to effective national implementation and enforcement of the MEAs, and other elements such as institutional limitations in terms of legal gaps, political factors, capacity of personnel and institutions.

As mentioned in Section 2.1 of the report, DaRT⁴³ is the first tool that supporting Parties in the effective use of synergies in the field of knowledge and information management for national reporting to biodiversity-related MEAs. Responding to calls from Parties for harmonized and integrated reporting

41 In the context of conventions, national information is requested with a view to monitoring compliance with implementation by Parties to the conventions.

42 Data analysis and interpretation is the process of assigning meaning to the collected information and determining the conclusions, significance, and implications of the findings.

43 DaRT is developed by UNEP, hosted on the InforMEA server, and has been fully operational since September 2019, supporting CBD decisions 14/25 and 14/27 on information management and synergistic reporting, respectively.

over many years, DaRT is a key tool⁴⁴ to support the implementation of the post-2020 GBF. Integrating national biodiversity information in one place is of high value in the context of the post-2020 GBF, which will contribute to the objectives of the CBD and other processes and instruments as the RSPs. Furthermore, the management of environmental information, data and knowledge is a prerequisite for analysing national achievements against the SDGs and ultimately demonstrating the contribution of the implementation of MEAs towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A summary of the main key issues for harmonization at national, regional and global level is indicated in the Table 5.

In 2016, the CBD Secretariat in collaboration with the Secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions and Rio conventions, and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) agreed to explore options for enhancing synergy on national reporting among the MEAs, including consideration of the following possibilities:

- Common sets of indicators, where appropriate.
- Common reporting modules on shared issues.
- Interoperability of information management and reporting systems.
- Harmonization of tools for national reporting (CBD 2016).

What are the benefits of harmonized format for reporting?

Table 5: Summary of key issues for harmonization

Level	Main key issues for harmonization
National	Coordination Data management
Regional	Support Parties in implementation and reporting Gather experience from Parties
Global	Address reporting burden Promote harmonization and synergies

44 DaRT is a key tool to support the implementation of the post-2020 GBF, as well as other tools such as Bioland, the CHM and the UNBL. DaRT is the first tool developed to support Parties in making effective use of synergies in the field of knowledge and information management for national reporting under the biodiversity-related conventions and was endorsed by the InforMEA Initiative. Likewise, InforMEA was established by the MEA Information Knowledge Management (IKM) Initiative <https://dart.informe.org>.

4.1 Alignment of Indicators of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

Monitoring of coastal and marine environment is one of the key tools in scientifically based marine and coastal resources management and is also a source of important indicators for sustainable development. Monitoring at the regional level is characterized by a wide range of time and space. To maximize the benefits of monitoring data in decision-making and management practices, it is essential to maintain an adequate level of quality in sampling analysis and monitoring results at all levels of national and regional monitoring programs.

Based on this concept, standardized parameters should be emphasized in monitoring programs, not only in the way data is obtained, but also in monitoring results to avoid irregularities and to better utilization of the monitoring results. The majority of the RSPs have developed several strategies and thematic plans for the protection and sustainable use of the marine and coastal environment, including indicators, and in some cases monitoring and assessment programs with agreed indicators (UNEP 2018). The indicators have proven to be a useful instrument for Parties to fulfil its reporting obligations. To this end, indicators, related data sources and methods have been examined⁴⁵.

Different tools can be used to support the operationalization of the post-2020 GBF monitoring framework considering many global indicator initiatives and the SDGs indicators towards common reporting and comparability between the RSPs and the CBD NBSAPs.

In this regard, it should be mentioned the Global SDG Indicators Data Platform (UNDESA 2021b) which has been launched in September 2021 and includes a new and user-friendly interface to the Global SDG Indicators Database where SDG indicator data can be easily searched and downloaded. The platform also provides access to the SDG Country Profiles where trends for individual countries across the SDG goals are being shown. The entirely new SDG Analytics allows the interactive analysis of data availability, to review global and regional trends for individual indicators (data series) and to compare trends for countries and areas and for different indicators (data series).

To assess and monitor the state of the marine and coastal environment, and the trends and changes over time, some alignment of indicators and reporting can be considered to support countries. Many regional and global assessments are based on Driver-Pressure-State-Impact-Response (DPSIR) approach. Here for the selection of indicators these sources of data have been explored, global and regional databases; these databases include where relevant SDGs and Regional Seas (RS) indicators.

Commonly, data for these indicators is provided either through national monitoring programmes or national reporting to the relevant regional organizations, combined with the use of global datasets where appropriate. Data is then either made available in national and regional databases and analysed in the state of environment reports or in the thematic assessments reports. The Regional Seas Indicator methodologies and reporting have recently been discussed and are still in progress (Ref.: stocktaking).

The CBD Secretariat has explored with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) the possibility of enhancing synergies among voluntary national reviews for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and post-2020 GBF national reporting under the Convention, including through promoting coordination among the NFPs for the SDGs and the NFPs of the CBD, as well as the possibility of organizing joint training workshops on the preparation of voluntary new reviews and national reports under the Convention (CBD 2020h).

National reports should focus more on outcomes/impacts of actions and identifying gaps in

45 During this period, a series of webinars on indicators for supporting implementation of the post-2020 GBF is being organized by the CBD Secretariat, GEO BON, UNSD and UNEP-WCMC, in collaboration with the UN Regional Commissions, to increase the understanding of the monitoring framework of the post-2020 GBF and to foster collaboration between stakeholders. <https://seea.un.org/events/webinars-supporting-implementation-post-2020-global-biodiversity-framework>.

commitments and implementation, including challenges encountered. National reporting should complement and add value to any global assessments and/or stocktaking by helping to identify institutional capacity and gaps in implementation.

Gaps could also refer to the compilation, analysis and effective use of data. Regarding the knowledge gaps in data and indicators, key information needs were identified while conducting this assessment. It is, therefore, raised this topic in the survey so that knowledge gaps for reporting could be addressed by generating relevant national reporting templates and training national experts, according to the representatives of the RSPs' Secretariats.

The use of indicators in national reports should be encouraged in order to ensure effective monitoring and assessment of progress in implementation. It was suggested that a core set of headline indicators (CBD 2021i) could be developed against which each Party would need to report.

Synergies among the CBD and the RSPs related reporting processes, in terms of both periodicity and content, should be enhanced, in particular the alignment of reporting under the CBD, and synergies in reporting in relation to the SDGs (CBD 2020i)⁴⁶. To this end, modular reporting and the use of the already mentioned DaRT could be explored.

Therefore, advance synergies in reporting between the national reports under the CBD and other related reporting processes in relation to the SDGs are encouraged. To enable global aggregation and analysis of progress, the use of a core set of headline indicators, agreed in the monitoring framework of the post-2020 GBF, is proposed as a mandatory component of national reports.

Regarding the national report templates, these could be pre-populated with available national data and disaggregated from global data sets or national data that is publicly available. Parties would then have the option to use the available data, to propose an alternative data set or to report "no data" or "not relevant". As indicated above, the use of a core set of headline indicators for monitoring and reporting of headline indicators agreed by Parties should be mandatory in preparing the seventh national report to allow for global analysis and aggregation of information contained in the report. Parties could also use relevant national indicators and other indicators, where appropriate.

The post-2020 GBF comprises 21 associated "action targets" and 10 milestones proposed for 2030 and proposes four goals to achieve by 2050, which address reducing threats to biodiversity, meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit-sharing, and tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming (CBD 2021j).

The post-2020 GBF's indicators (CBD 2021k) have been developed considering the following criteria:

- a. Data and metadata related to the indicator are (or will be) publicly available.
- b. Methodology for the data product is either published in a peer reviewed academic journal or has gone through a scientific peer review process.
- c. Indicators will be regularly updated.
- d. Existing mechanism for maintaining the indicators are in place.

As regards the SDGs, below is the Table 6 showing a list of SDG 14 targets, indicators and custodian agencies and partner agencies.

46 To track progress towards the SDGs and other global environmental goals, UNEP established six regional environmental information networks (REIN) and developed a common approach within the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) for indicator-based reporting and assessment to keep the environment under review. The biennial REIN meetings and regular GEOey assessments could play an important role in delivering the evidence base for reviewing progress on the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

Table 6: List of SDG 14 targets, indicators, custodian agencies and partners agencies

SDG 14 target	SDG 14 indicator	Custodian/Partner agency
14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution	14.1.1 (a) Index of coastal eutrophication; and (b) plastic debris density	IOC-UNESCO IMO FAO UNEP
14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans	14.2.1 Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas	IOC-UNESCO FAO UNEP
14.3 Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels	14.3.1 Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations	IOC-UNESCO FAO UNEP
14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics	14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels	FAO
14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information	14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas	IUCN Ramsar Convention UNEP UNEP-WCMC
14.6 By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation	14.6.1 Degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing	FAO
14.7 By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism	14.7.1 Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP in small island developing States, least developed countries and all countries	FAO UNEP-WCMC
14.a Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries	14.a.1 Proportion of total research budget allocated to research in the field of marine technology	IOC-UNESCO UNEP
14.b Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets	14.b.1 Degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries	FAO
14.c Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of 'The future we want'	14.c.1 Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources	FAO ILO UNEP UNCLOS

For SDG Indicator 14.1.1a - index of coastal eutrophication -, main approaches for monitoring coastal eutrophication consider the following indicators: (i) indicators for the cause of eutrophication - nutrient input and concentrations -; (ii) indicators for the direct effects of eutrophication - Chlorophyll-a concentrations, biomass growth, water clarity and turbidity -; and (iii) indicators for the indirect effects of eutrophication - dissolved oxygen levels -. In the literature some information regarding the eutrophication indicators and assessment criteria currently used by RSPs has been found for the following RSPs: CPPS; HELCOM; Nairobi Convention; OSPAR; UNEP/MAP; ROPME.

For SDG Indicator 14.1.1b - plastic debris density -, marine plastic debris is currently monitored in four areas of the marine environment, as follows: (i) washed and deposited on beaches or shorelines, i.e., beach litter; (ii) in the water column; (iii) on the seafloor/seabed; (iv) ingested by biota. Guidance material for beach litter monitoring produced by RSPs as CCAMLR; NOWPAP; OSPAR is reported. Further information is related to marine plastic debris indicators currently used by the following RSPs: HELCOM; NOWPAP; OSPAR; UNEP/MAP.

SDG Indicator 14.2.1 refers to the management of exclusive economic zones using ecosystem-based approaches. For example, for the contribution to the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES) under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (European Union 2018), ecological indicators are using to monitor and assess the implementation of the ecosystem approach for the quality of marine ecosystems. This requires the measurement and monitoring of a large number of biochemical parameters for an integrated assessment of the

state of marine ecosystems and biodiversity, which implies high levels of resources and technical capacity for ecological monitoring. Information is available on ecosystem approach indicators and assessment criteria currently used by the following RSPs: HELCOM; NOWPAP; OSPAR; UNEP/MAP.

SDG Indicator 14.5.1 refers to coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas. Information of existing indicators and methodologies for monitoring the coverage of MPAs is available, as well as the MPA coverage indicators, assessment criteria and reporting requirements in place for MPA coverage used by the following RSPs: Arctic Council; Bucharest Convention; CPPS; HELCOM; NOWPAP; OSPAR.

There are some synergies between the CBD, RSPs and SDG 14 targets, as indicated below. It added UNFCCC, as an example related to other conventions.

Synergies with SDG 14 targets	
CBD	14.1 14.2 14.3 14.4 14.5 14.6 14.7 14.a 14.b 14.c
RSP	14.1 14.2 14.3 14.5 14.7 14.a 14.b 14.c
UNFCCC	14.2

Furthermore, the SDG 14 indicators depend on the geographical level of intervention. That is, the spatial levels of intervention for each of the SDG 14 targets determine the most relevant geographical scopes for the development of indicators – i.e., subnational, national, transnational, regional or global. Given that, potentially, few global indicators may be available, existing regional and national indicators are key for implementing SDGs targets.

Table 7: Main spatial level of intervention for each of the SDG 14 targets

SDG 14 targets											
Level of intervention	14.1	14.2	14.3	14.4	14.5	14.6	14.7	14.a	14.b	14.c	
Subnational	☐	☐		☐	☐		☐		☐		
National	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Transnational ¹ /Regional	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Global			○		○	○		○		○	

Geographical level of intervention. Subnational: ☐; National: ☐; Transnational/Regional: ○; Global: ○

1 Transnational intervention level applies when the watershed or the marine protected area are shared between two or more countries.



Table 8: Global Biodiversity Framework Proposed Action Targets linked to the mandates of the Regional Seas Programmes¹

Regional Seas Programme	Global Biodiversity Framework Proposed Action Targets																				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Barcelona Convention	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		○			○								
Abidjan Convention	○	○	○	○	○	○					○		○					○	○		
Cartagena Convention	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○		○				○	○		○	
Nairobi Convention	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○				○	○		
COBSEA	○	○	○	○		○	○	○			○	○	○	○				○	○		
NOWPAP	○	○	○		○	○															
Tehran Convention		○	○	○		○															
Kuwait Convention		○	○			○															
Lima Convention	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○			○					○	○		
Jeddah Convention	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○		○							○	
Noumea Convention	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		
Bucharest Convention	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○											
Antigua Convention																					
South Asia Seas	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○										
Helsinki Convention	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○													
OSPAR Convention	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○												
Antarctic Treaty		○	○	○	○	○	○							○				○			
Arctic Council	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○				○								○	○

RSPs' areas of work: ○, relevant to the GBF targets.

¹ Information compiled according to the following publication (as a reference): Report on Regional Seas Biodiversity under the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (CBD 2021).

Table 7 indicates the SDG 14 targets and main spatial level of intervention.

Moreover, improving **data disaggregation** for SDG indicators is fundamental for the full implementation of the SDG **indicator** framework to fulfil the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In response to the efforts made by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), it is necessary to develop statistical standards and tools and build capacity on gender disaggregated data to measure progress for those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations, the IAEG-SDGs have created a dedicated work stream on data disaggregation⁴⁷ and set out to define and compile the necessary standards and tools for disaggregating data (including by sex and age). There are three primary disaggregation dimensions for indicator data for SDG 14 (Life below Water), - i.e., by ecosystems; by taxonomic groups; and by threats -, as well as for SDG 15 (Life on Land).

It may be necessary to create a matrix to show, if at all possible, with the existing category of indicators, indicators and methodologies used by the RSPs - i.e., Regional Seas Core Indicators (RSCI) set (UNEP 2016b), a set of 22 indicators developed – then, linked them to the relevant SDG 14, and contribute to each GBF proposed action target.

The adoption of common indicators towards a more integrated approach between the SDGs and key global indicator frameworks would contribute to align with a number of approaches and categorization of relevant indicators in a regional perspective. Table 8 indicates the proposed action targets of the post-2020 GBF in accordance with the RSPs relevant mandates.

The Table 9 (UNEP 2016b) is part of the Regional Seas Matrix. As regards the latter, an attempt of this exercise is reflected in Table 10 as pitches for action to align the 22 Regional Seas indicators set⁴⁸ with the indicators for SDG 14 and the GBF proposed actions targets. This table was prepared with due regard to the desirability of obtaining the information about the comparability of RSCI, GBF proposed action targets and SDG 14 indicators as of December 2021.

47 Traditionally, indicator disaggregation processes have focused on social and economic indicators, but the SDG indicator framework also encompasses environmental dimensions, and disaggregation is an important process as regards environmental indicators.

48 The process of developing the Regional Seas indicator system began in 2014, in which a technical workshop was convened to identify Indicators for monitoring the state of Regional Seas (UNEP 2014a; UNEP 2014b). A year later, the Regional Seas Indicator Working Group was established and a core set of 22 regional seas indicators during two meetings held in 2015 and 2016 (UNEP 2015a; UNEP 2015b).

Table 9: Regional Seas Core Indicators Set

No	Category of indicator	Possible RS coordinated indicator	Desirability in RS
1	Total inputs of nitrogen and phosphorus from agriculture, sewage and atmospheric nitrogen	Chlorophyll a concentration as phytoplankton biomass	BSC, HELCOM, Nairobi Convention, NOWPAP, OSPAR, ROPME, UNEP/MAP
2	Inputs of marine chemical pollution Trends for selected priority chemicals	Trends for selected priority chemicals incl. POPs and heavy metals	BSC, CPPS, Nairobi Convention, NOWPAP, OSPAR
3	Overall levels of marine litter Quantification of beach litter items	Quantification and classification of beach litter items	HELCOM, Nairobi Convention, NOWPAP, OSPAR, PERSGA
4	Ocean warming	Annual mean sea surface temperature	agreed
5	Fish landings	Fish catches within EEZ	FAO
6	Aquaculture	Application of risk assessment to account for pollution and biodiversity impacts	FAO
7	Aquaculture	Destruction of habitat due to aquaculture	FAO
8	Population pressure / urbanization	Length of coastal modification / coastal reclamation	NOWPAP, ROPME, SACEP, UNEP/MAP
9	Eutrophication status	Location of algal blooms reported	agreed
10	Pollution hotspots	Concentration of status of selected pollutants/ contamination in biota and sediments and temporal trends/Number of hotspots	agreed
11	Ocean acidification	Aragonite/pH/alkalinity	ROPME (pH)
12	Level of exploitation of commercial fisheries	Percentage stocks overfished compared to MSY	FAO
13	Species replacement as a consequence of capture fisheries	Marine trophic index	FAO
14	Endangered species	Distribution of RLI of threatened species	NOWPAP
15	Loss of critical habitat	Trends in critical habitat extent and condition	CPPS, NOWPAP
16	National Action Plans to reduce input from Land-Based Sources	Percentage of NAP ratified / operational	agreed
17	Waste water treatment	Percentage of coastal urban population connected with sewage facilities/Percentage of waste water facilities complying with adequate standards/Percentage of untreated waste water	agreed
18	Incentive to reduce marine litter at source	Percentage port waste reception facilities/ Incentives to reduce LBS/Percentage of recycled waste on land	agreed
19	Climate change adaptation	Percentage of NAP (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC] 2021) /sector-based/number of existing national coastal and marine plans incorporating CC adaptation	agreed
20	Fish harvested within safe ecological limits	Fisheries measures in place and multilateral/ bilateral fisheries management arrangements	FAO
21	Critical marine habitat under protection	Percentage of MPAs designated	agreed
22	National ICZM in place	National ICZM guidelines and enabling legislation adopted	agreed

Source: (UNEP 2016b)

Table 10: Comparability of Regional Seas Core Indicator Set, GBF Proposed Actions Targets and their links to indicators for SDG 14^{1,2}

The indicators for which UNEP is not the custodian agency are shown in italics; these indicators are under the custodianship of FAO (14.4) or IOC-UNESCO (14.3).

No	RSCI Category of indicator	No	GBF Proposed Actions Targets	Linked to Indicator for SDG 14
1	Total inputs of nitrogen and phosphorus from agriculture, sewage and atmospheric nitrogen	7	Reducing threats to biodiversity Reduce pollution from all sources	14.1 Reduce marine pollution 14.1.1a Index of coastal eutrophication 
2	Inputs of marine chemical pollution Trends for selected priority chemicals	7	Reducing threats to biodiversity Reduce pollution from all sources	14.1 Reduce marine pollution 14.1.1a Index of coastal eutrophication 
3	Overall levels of marine litter Quantification of beach litter items	7	Reducing threats to biodiversity Reduce pollution from all sources	14.1 Reduce marine pollution 14.1.1b Plastic debris density 
4	Ocean warming	8	Reducing threats to biodiversity Minimize the impact of climate change	14.2 Protect and restore ecosystems 14.2.1 Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas 
5	Fish landings	5	Reducing threats to biodiversity Fisheries sustainability	14.4 Sustainable fishing 14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels 
6	Aquaculture	10	Meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit sharing Ensure all areas under aquaculture are managed sustainably	14.4 Sustainable fishing 14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels 
7	Aquaculture	10	Meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit sharing Ensure all areas under aquaculture are managed sustainably	
8	Population pressure / urbanization	12	Meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit sharing Increase the area of, access to, and benefits from blue spaces	14.2 Protect and restore ecosystems 14.2.1 Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas 
9	Eutrophication status	7	Reducing threats to biodiversity Reduce pollution from all sources	14.1 Reduce marine pollution 14.1.1a Index of coastal eutrophication 
10	Pollution hot spots	7	Reducing threats to biodiversity Reduce pollution from all sources	14.1 Reduce marine pollution 14.1.1a Index of coastal eutrophication 14.1.1b Plastic debris density 
11	Ocean acidification			14.3 Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification 14.3.1 Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations 

1 The global indicator framework was adopted by the General Assembly on 6 July 2017 and is contained in the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/71/313).

2 CBD in 2021 conducted an analysis of the linkages between the proposed goals, targets and monitoring framework of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the Sustainable Development Goals (CBD 2021m)

12	Level of exploitation of commercial fisheries	9	Meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit sharing	14.4 Sustainable fishing 14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels	
			Ensure benefits for people through sustainable management		
13	Species replacement as a consequence of	4	Reducing threats to biodiversity	14.5 Conserve coastal and marine areas 14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas	
			Ensure active management actions to enable the recovery and conservation		
14	Endangered species	4	Reducing threats to biodiversity	14.5 Conserve coastal and marine areas 14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas	
			Ensure active management actions to enable the recovery and conservation		
15	Loss of critical habitat	2	Reducing threats to biodiversity	14.5 Conserve coastal and marine areas 14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas	
			Ensure that at least 20 per cent of marine ecosystems are under restoration		
16	National Action Plans to reduce input from Land-Based Sources	7	Reducing threats to biodiversity	14.1 Reduce marine pollution 14.1.1a Index of coastal eutrophication	
			Reduce pollution from all sources		
17	Wastewater treatment facilities	7	Reducing threats to biodiversity	14.1 Reduce marine pollution 14.1.1a Index of coastal eutrophication	
			Reduce pollution from all sources		
18	Incentive to reduce marine litter at source	7	Reducing threats to biodiversity	14.1 Reduce marine pollution 14.1.1b Plastic debris density	
			Reduce pollution from all sources		
19	Climate change adaptation	8	Reducing threats to biodiversity	14.2 Protect and restore ecosystems 14.2.1 Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas	
			Minimize the impact of climate change		
20	Fish harvested within safe ecological limits	5	Reducing threats to biodiversity	14.4 Sustainable fishing 14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels	
			Fisheries sustainability		
21	Critical marine habitat under protection	3	Reducing threats to biodiversity	14.5 Conserve coastal and marine areas 14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas	
			Ensure that at least 30 per cent of sea areas are conserved through effectively and equitably managed		
22	National Integrated Coastal Zone Management in place	1	Reducing threats to biodiversity	14.2 Protect and restore ecosystems 14.2.1 Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas	
			Ensure that sea areas are under integrated biodiversity spatial planning		

What are the key global challenges and opportunities in the reporting process and the reporting data requested in national templates?

4.2 Alignment of the Reporting Format/Frequency/Mechanism of the Regional Seas Conventions with the National Strategies and Actions Plans of the Convention of Biological Diversity and National Biodiversity Strategies and Actions Plans supported by the Global Environment Facility

Many commitments have arisen or are in the process of being negotiated and agreed, and international agreements are expected to mobilize global, national, and community action and raise the level of ambition for the MEAs. This will also contribute towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the SDGs, and other targets and plans for the coming decade that the international community is expected to agree in 2022. The Global Environment Facility (GEF)⁴⁹ has a formal mandate as a financing mechanism under the CBD. In this sense, opportunities under the GEF-8 replenishment⁵⁰ in supporting and delivering on this set of ambitious existing and emerging goals have been identified through the associated focal areas including those that related to gender equality and human rights as indicated in the GEF as well as the CBD gender guidelines.

The GEF, the UNDP and UNEP committed to fast-tracking financial and technical support to developing countries for GBF implementation. In this regard, Governments are making commitments, including financial ones, the private sector is increasingly

supportive, and political momentum is building, as is the sense of urgency, addressing on a path to recovery by 2030, moving towards the 2050 vision of the CBD of living in harmony with nature.

There is a need for increased cooperation and collaboration between evolving mandates and organizations. Indicators are an important part of planning and reporting process including the headline indicators. The NBSAPs are the main instrument to identify national commitments, include all targets and actions, and address all performance indicators relevant to the identified targets drawing on the monitoring framework attached to the post-2020 GBF. These planning documents should be updated on a continuous basis and gender and human rights dimensions consistently reported on. Thus, national reports should report on all actions identified in the NBSAPs (CBD n.d.) using agreed indicators including headline indicators.

Under this objective, the GEF-8 (Global Environment Facility [GEF] 2021a) will support actions that foster global cooperation and contribute to the post-2020 GBF and the implementation of the existing planning frameworks as the NBSAPs assisting countries to meet several goals through the associated areas of collaboration, i.e., biodiversity, climate change, oceans, pollution⁵¹.

The NBSAPs developed during the 2011-2020 period were generally overambitious and lacked prioritization. Governments often did not have sufficient financial resources and institutional capacity to implement, monitor, and report on all their NBSAPs commitments. Effective implementation of the post-2020 GBF will therefore require that ambition in outcomes is matched by ambition in the required means of implementation. CBD targets and other global (and national) indicators can be incorporated into NBSAPs during the NBSAP revision, or into sectoral and other related strategies and policy documents - such as climate change strategies, sustainable development strategies, protected areas strategies, nature conservation strategies. Or, even better, related targets could be integrated into these strategies prior to their integration to NBSAPs. This

49 The Global Environment Facility has a unique governing structure organized around an Assembly, the Council, the Secretariat, 18 agencies, a Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) and the Evaluation Office. The GEF serves as a financial mechanism for several environmental conventions.

50 Initial stage discussions of GEF Trust Fund (GEF-8) have taken place to fund activities during the four-year period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2026. The next two GEF investment cycles, from 2022-2026 (GEF-8) and 2026-2030 (GEF-9) will be critical to the achievement of global environmental ambitions and needs over the coming decade, with a focus on systems change and environmental restoration at large scale.

51 For instance, this could be applied among Large Marine Environments, Regional Seas Conventions and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations to protect and restore key habitats, and to increase area, connectivity and integrity



type of integration provides for the mainstreaming of biodiversity (CBD 2021n) into national sectoral and development policies and is, therefore, encouraged.

It was conducted a global keyword search of NBSAPs, and National Reports posted on the CBD website to better analyse what the RSPs may propose for consideration. Additionally, information from CBD decisions taken on harmonizing report to biodiversity-related MEAs were explored. Specifically, these were on: (i) identifying opportunities and joint activities to enhance synergies; (ii) facilitating and implement capacity-building activities; (iii) enhancing effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of the objectives of the conventions, reducing unnecessary overlap and duplication at all relevant levels; (iv) development of tools and procedures enabling harmonized implementation of the conventions, learning from other relevant processes; (v) harmonization of knowledge management and reporting; and (vi) coordinated national planning in implementation of biodiversity-related conventions, including via NBSAPs.

Many NBSAPs do not indicate any links with the SDGs and with other national and global agendas to which biodiversity has much to contribute. Likewise, often opportunities to streamline national planning for biodiversity and other environmental areas (particularly, those under RSPs, UNFCCC, and other MEAs) are not seized. Many NBSAPs also generally do not indicate how, when, and by whom implementation will be monitored at the national level including assessments of effectiveness of measures taken, and how the results of this monitoring will feed back into national planning cycles (CBD 2021o).

The GEF Program is meant to set up a transformative process for biodiversity finance, in all participating countries. It should be carried out in parallel to the revision of NBSAPs that may arise out of the agreement on the post-2020 GBF. The Program will be further tested and refined to create a more specific approach and to contribute to global environmental benefits, such as addressing drivers of environmental degradation and responding more effectively to emerging country priorities as included in the NBSAPs, NAPs, NDCs and National Implementation Plans (NIPs).

Enabling activity support will be provided to all GEF-eligible countries to revise their NBSAPs, and to produce the National Reports to the CBD that will be identified during upcoming COPs and MOPs with submission dates to the CBD during the GEF-8 period.

Furthermore, the GEF Secretariat resources will be bolstered to include a resource dedicated to the management of information, reporting and knowledge resources and the further development and use of the Management Information System across the GEF Partnership.

Member States on their ability, commit to ensuring the development, adoption and implementation of an effective post-2020 GBF, including inter alia providing the necessary means of implementation and appropriate monitoring, reporting and review mechanisms, accelerating and strengthening the development and updating of NBSAPs.

Moreover, the UN agencies have agreed on four main areas of action to support Member States during 2021-2030 to:

- a. Support country abilities to halt biodiversity loss and to sustainably use and enhance biodiversity through policies and programmes.
- b. Establish strong coalitions for biodiversity.
- c. Mainstream biodiversity in UN internal programmes and operations.
- d. Enhance UN-wide coherence and follow-up on biodiversity.

Based on the current draft of the proposed goals and targets of the CBD post-2020 GBF and searching for ensuring complementarity and synergies in the national reporting system, a series of projects can be a good approach to underpin socio-economic and environmental developments with reference to specific GEF focal areas, i.e., biodiversity; oceans; pollution; climate change, to support the NBSAP revision process. In addition, this can be considered as a key process in advancing the synergistic implementation of integrating environmental aspects into national and regional development plans and strategies to foster sustainable development.

Box 8: Kunming Declaration¹

The Kunming Declaration was adopted by the high-level segment of COP 15 Part I on Wednesday, 13 October 2021. The Declaration:

- emphasizes that biodiversity, and the ecosystem functions and services it provides, supports all forms of life on Earth and underpins our human and planetary health and wellbeing, economic growth and sustainable development;
- expresses deep concern that progress has been insufficient to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
- recognizes that the unprecedented and interrelated crises of biodiversity loss, climate change, land degradation and desertification, ocean degradation, and pollution share many underlying drivers of change;
- stresses that urgent and integrated action is needed for transformative change across all sectors of the economy and all parts of society;
- notes the call from many countries for a 30-by-30 target; and
- declares that putting biodiversity on a path to recovery is a defining challenge of this decade.
- Ministers and other heads of delegations commit to:
 - ensuring the development, adoption and implementation of an effective GBF, including providing the necessary means of implementation and appropriate monitoring, reporting, and review mechanisms;
 - working across their respective governments to promote biodiversity mainstreaming, including into policies, regulations, planning processes, poverty reduction strategies and economic accounting;
 - accelerating and strengthening the development and updating of NBSAPs;
 - improving the effectiveness and coverage of area-based conservation and management, including recognizing the rights, and ensuring the participation, of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities;
 - stepping up efforts to ensure the aims of the Nagoya Protocol, taking into account the context of digital sequence information;
 - strengthening the development, assessment, regulation, management, and transfer of relevant biotechnologies;
 - increasing ecosystem-based approaches to ensure benefits across economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, including to address biodiversity loss, degraded ecosystems, resilience, climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable food production, and health;
 - stepping up actions around coastal and marine ecosystems;
 - ensuring post-pandemic recovery policies address biodiversity; and
 - working with ministries of finance and economy to, inter alia, eliminate, phase out or reform subsidies and other incentives harmful to biodiversity.

¹ The first part of COP 15 was held in Kunming, People's Republic of China, from 11-15 October 2021 in an in-person and online hybrid format. The Open-ended Working Group on the GBF held its first meeting from 27-30 August 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya, the meeting discussed the modalities of the process, leading up to the goals and the approach to the framework; its second meeting from 24-29 February 2020 in Rome, Italy, focused on the zero draft; and the first part of its third meeting virtually from 23 August - 3 September 2021, which negotiated the first draft of the GBF. The next important meetings that will be held are as follows: the resumed sessions of the CBD's subsidiary bodies (SBSTTA 24 and SBI 3) and of the Open-ended Working Group on the post-2020 GBF (WG2020-3) are scheduled to take place concurrently in person in Geneva, Switzerland, now planned to take place on 14-29 March 2022, and the second part of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties which is scheduled to be also held in person in Kunming, People's Republic of China, from 28 April-8 May 2022.

Then, there is the Kunming Declaration that highlights the commitments made by the Ministers and other Heads of Delegations at the 15th Meeting of the CBD COP Part I, as shown in Box 8.

The Table 11 shows the GBF proposed action targets and the associated areas for projects identified by the GEF-8 Strategic Positioning and Programming Directions.



Table 11: Global Biodiversity Framework Proposed Action Targets and associated areas for projects identified by the GEF-8 Strategic Positioning and Programming Directions (GEF 2021b)¹

Global Biodiversity Framework Proposed Action Targets	Associated Areas
Target 1. Ensure that all land and sea areas globally are under integrated biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning addressing land- and sea-use change, retaining existing intact and wilderness areas.	Biodiversity
Target 2. Ensure that at least 20 per cent of degraded freshwater, marine and terrestrial ecosystems are under restoration, ensuring connectivity among them and focusing on priority ecosystems.	Biodiversity
Target 3. Ensure that at least 30 per cent globally of land areas and of sea areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and its contributions to people, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.	Biodiversity
Target 4. Ensure active management actions to enable the recovery and conservation of species and the genetic diversity of wild and domesticated species, including through ex situ conservation, and effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to avoid or reduce human-wildlife conflict.	Biodiversity
Target 5. Ensure that the harvesting, trade and use of wild species is sustainable, legal, and safe for human health.	Biodiversity
Target 6. Manage pathways for the introduction of invasive alien species, preventing, or reducing their rate of introduction and establishment by at least 50 per cent, and control or eradicate invasive alien species to eliminate or reduce their impacts, focusing on priority species and priority sites.	Biodiversity
Target 7. Reduce pollution from all sources to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and human health, including by reducing nutrients lost to the environment by at least half, and pesticides by at least two thirds and eliminating the discharge of plastic waste.	Oceans Pollution
Target 8. Minimize the impact of climate change on biodiversity, contribute to mitigation and adaptation through ecosystem-based approaches, contributing at least 10 GtCO ₂ e per year to global mitigation efforts, and ensure that all mitigation and adaptation efforts avoid negative impacts on biodiversity.	Biodiversity Climate Change
Target 9. Ensure benefits, including nutrition, food security, medicines, and livelihoods for people especially for the most vulnerable through sustainable management of wild terrestrial, freshwater and marine species and protecting customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities.	Biodiversity
Target 10. Ensure all areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, in particular through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, increasing the productivity and resilience of these production systems.	Biodiversity
Target 11. Maintain and enhance nature's contributions to regulation of air quality, quality and quantity of water, and protection from hazards and extreme events for all people.	Oceans
Target 12. Increase the area of, access to, and benefits from green and blue spaces, for human health and well-being in urban areas and other densely populated areas.	---

¹ The GEF-8 Biodiversity focal area strategy responds to the objectives of the CBD and its Protocols and the evolving draft of the post-2020 GBF. The goal of the GEF-8 Biodiversity focal area strategy is: "Globally significant biodiversity conserved, sustainably used, and restored".

Global Biodiversity Framework Proposed Action Targets	Associated Areas
Target 13. Implement measures at global level and in all countries to facilitate access to genetic resources and to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources, and as relevant, of associated traditional knowledge, including through mutually agreed terms and prior and informed consent.	Biodiversity
Target 14. Fully integrate biodiversity values into policies, regulations, planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies, accounts, and assessments of environmental impacts at all levels of government and across all sectors of the economy, ensuring that all activities and financial flows are aligned with biodiversity values	Biodiversity
Target 15. All businesses (public and private, large, medium and small) assess and report on their dependencies and impacts on biodiversity, from local to global, and progressively reduce negative impacts, by at least half and increase positive impacts, reducing biodiversity-related risks to businesses and moving towards the full sustainability of extraction and production practices, sourcing and supply chains, and use and disposal.	Biodiversity Oceans Pollution
Target 16. Ensure that people are encouraged and enabled to make responsible choices and have access to relevant information and alternatives, taking into account cultural preferences, to reduce by at least half the waste and, where relevant the overconsumption, of food and other materials.	---
Target 17. Establish, strengthen capacity for, and implement measures in all countries to prevent, manage or control potential adverse impacts of biotechnology on biodiversity and human health, reducing the risk of these impacts.	Biodiversity
Target 18. Redirect, repurpose, reform or eliminate incentives harmful for biodiversity, in a just and equitable way, reducing them by at least US\$ 500 billion per year, including all of the most harmful subsidies, and ensure that incentives, including public and private economic and regulatory incentives, are either positive or neutral for biodiversity.	Biodiversity
Target 19. Increase financial resources from all sources to at least US\$ 200 billion per year, including new, additional and effective financial resources, increasing by at least US\$ 10 billion per year international financial flows to developing countries, leveraging private finance, and increasing domestic resource mobilization, taking into account national biodiversity finance planning, and strengthen capacity-building and technology transfer and scientific cooperation, to meet the needs for implementation, commensurate with the ambition of the goals and targets of the framework	Biodiversity
Target 20. Ensure that relevant knowledge, including the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities with their free, prior, and informed consent, guides decision-making for the effective management of biodiversity, enabling monitoring, and by promoting awareness, education and research.	Biodiversity
Target 21. Ensure equitable and effective participation in decision-making related to biodiversity by indigenous peoples and local communities, and respect their rights over lands, territories, and resources, as well as by women and girls, and youth.	Biodiversity

Which are the major challenges faced by Member States in implementing the RSCAPs and the CBD NBSAPs?



5. SELECTED CASE STUDIES

Harmonizing national reporting is at the heart of various international negotiations. While discussions are ongoing, it is becoming more apparent that action at the regional level is needed. Indeed, the regional level is the most operational level and progress made within regional frameworks will positively influence discussions in international fora. In order to address this issue, a set of selected case studies from different regional frameworks have been analysed.

As mentioned in Section 2.1, main objectives are referred to manage integrated data and information management nationally and facilitate increased synergies in reporting. This particularly enables to improved planning processes, reporting procedures and decision-making for implementation.

Key lessons and insights from the RSPs processes referred to streamlining of reporting at the national level which implies better coordination and cooperation, better management of environmental data and information, and stakeholder involvement. A solution for these issues should include early intervention of specialised agencies, funds, programmes of the UN systems and the MEA Secretariats.

As mentioned in the previous sections of the report, many CBD COP's mandates for harmonization of national reporting to biodiversity-related conventions, to international organizations and other processes have been discussed. However, challenges to harmonization, streamlining, and integration have been found, as well as challenges to reporting. These issues are described with more detail in Annex 2.

It includes a few case studies illustrating different aspects of harmonizing national reporting. The selected case studies considered in this evaluation cover six regional frameworks for which over 80

countries, and more precisely 87 Contracting Parties/ Participating Countries⁵², have reporting obligations.

The following case studies are compiled:

Case study 1: A comprehensive and sustained system for marine observation and data-exchange in the Arctic Ocean.

Case study 2: Developing innovative approaches for data collection in the Mediterranean region.

Case study 3: Ecosystem assessment and reporting on the state of the marine environment in the North-East Atlantic.

Case study 4: Ecological Quality Objectives targets to implement and report SDG 14 indicators in synergy with other goals in the Northwest Pacific.

Case study 5: Strengthening national capacity in environmental planning in the South Pacific.

Case study 6: Regional Science Policy Dialogues in the West Indian Ocean.

Efforts on harmonization of reporting to the CBD NBSAPs and the RSPs are specified later, considering the different priorities identified to:

- i Promote cooperation and synergies of the CBD and the RSP.
- ii Support streamlining of reporting to the CBD and the RSP.
- iii Link reporting to ongoing implementation by building on the collaborative work of CBD and RSP on indicators and streamlined reporting.
- iv Increase the resources and capabilities of countries to effectively implement their

52 It is included the European Union in addition to the Contracting Parties/Participating Countries considered in two of the Regional Seas Programmes of the case studies.

- biodiversity strategies and commitments.
- v Enhance synergies between the CBD and the RSPs, enabling countries to streamline

their work toward the fulfilment of their obligations, avoiding duplication of efforts and rationalising available resources.

What harmonization strategies may be considered particularly appropriate for a meaningful comprehension of the selected case studies?

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The methodology applied for data collection and analysis included two steps. The first step comprised collection of the data apart from using the survey questionnaire. National reporting through the existing reporting templates of RSPs were also reviewed. The second step included comparative analysis of the indicators against the datasets as specified in the Section 4.1 of this draft report. More specifically, data fields as RSPs' datasets as specified in the Section 3.1, defined in their respective web sites, could be mapped against the national templates used for reporting.

As a result of the consultation process, it was identified different approaches from the RSPs based on gathered information and comments about how assess adequate arrangements for knowledge management to streamline actions.

As a result of the analysis process, it was identified a series of questions for each section that are included hereinafter, specifying several topics for discussion. Annex I to this report gives a brief profile of RSPs' insights on national reporting according to the reporting obligations at regional levels. Annex 2 presents some examples regarding the analysis of the existing practices on data structure for reporting together with the outcomes of a proposed harmonization strategies across different regions frameworks.

The draft report was discussed by the respondents, i.e., representatives of the RSPs' Secretariats. It was expected that additional comments would be received from the representatives of the RSPs' Secretariats and the Project Coordination Team. Based on the feedback received, an amended and edited version of the report was prepared and presented to the Project Coordination Team.

The following conclusions and recommendations build upon the information as outlined in Section 2.2, to identify possible harmonization of reporting as a technique to induce compliance under the CBD and

the RSPs, and to adopt measures in this regard. This complements the information that has been prepared for the selected case studies.

Key findings suggest that a regional approach can produce more timely and higher quality actions to protect the marine environment and ensure sustainable use versus a global approach.

A short survey was circulated in September 2021 among the RSPs' representatives. Based on their experience of the institutional context in which the respondents operate, some preliminary recommendations for harmonizing RSCAPs national reporting and CBD national reporting are being developed.

The expected outcome provides a few actionable recommendations to consider regional and global strategies and policy needed to achieve the harmonization of national reporting. Parties might encourage to adopt and institutionalize these initiatives and promote their use by the related stakeholders.

An exchange of views about how specific measures should be improved further, was promoted through the discussion of existing and required actions and their implementation to meet global, regional and national needs and targets.

From the case studies and previous analysis provided in this draft report, it can be concluded that harmonization of national reporting is one of the main requisites to avoid duplication of efforts by the Member States. The analysis confirms that regional frameworks can deliver relevant responses to this process. By encouraging a pooling of effort, the respondents pointed out and recognised the importance of archiving and sharing data to inform national and regional processes.

In summarizing the harmonization process in response to the post-2020 GBF and the role of the

RSPs, this issue raises significant questions for consideration (as reflected at the end of each section and subsection along the report) as follows:

- What is harmonization?
- What other data are available that could be used by governments and other stakeholders at national or international level to enhance and harmonize national reporting?
- What findings have been addressed and discussed in accordance with key concepts of interpreting and reporting for helping to formulate recommendations to the analysis, synthesis and review to be conducted on the national reporting?
- What is a national mechanism for reporting?
- What is the role of RSCAPs in addressing challenges and opportunities in the reporting process and the reporting data requested in national templates?
- What are the key global challenges and opportunities for the CBD in the reporting process and the reporting data requested in national templates?
- What are the benefits of harmonized format for reporting?
- What are key global challenges and opportunities in the reporting process and the reporting data requested in national templates?
- Which are the major challenges faced by Member States in implementing the RSCAPs and the CBD NBSAPs?
- What harmonization strategies may be considered particularly appropriate for a meaningful comprehension of the selected case studies?

Thus, a summary of the information previously indicated in other sections of the report, related to the purpose of national reporting, challenges to national reporting and to harmonized reporting, and possible solutions for harmonized reporting, is listed here below:

- Purpose of national reporting: Demonstrating compliance; overview of implementation; assessing effectiveness of implementation; stocktaking and future planning; informing on status and trends of

biodiversity; supporting decision-making; and identification with other processes.

- Challenges to national reporting: Reporting burden; duplication; lack of cooperation and coordination; lack of information or lack to access to information.
- Challenges to harmonized reporting: Availability and accessibility of the information (data scattered and fragmented, digital scarcity) poor coordination within countries (a need in improving institutional capacity); different reporting cycles for each RSPs and the NBSAPs; different terminology; different signatory and ratification status for countries.
- Possible solutions for harmonized reporting: Strengthening, when appropriate, coordination among NFPs; cooperation through joint programmes of work, memoranda of understanding, memoranda of cooperation, joint scientific activities; common definitions and terms; joint reporting on specific themes.

Considering the above, the following recommendations were suggested for examination.

Synergies and the coherent national implementation of CBD NBSAPs and RSPs.

To explore opportunities for synergistic activities and increased coordination, as well as to exchange information, and in response to Member States' requests to improve coordination and cooperation, ongoing programmes and initiatives have been mentioned. Efforts on harmonization of national reporting and indicator development could take advantage of the synergies among the CBD NBSAPs and RSPs on specific issues.

Undertake thematic actions will facilitate: (i) exchange of information and the creation of the necessary mechanisms to ensure that lessons learned are shared; (ii) establishment of communication tools; (iii) harmonization of data and information administered by each of the RSPs and by the CBD; (iv) much greater harmony and sharing of resources with other regional initiatives, potentially offering prospective information resources and knowledge tools.



Specifically, actions could help countries to understand that reporting should be an output and a by-product of ongoing implementation so that reporting is embedded in efforts to improve national information management and implementation.

Implementing synergies at the national level.

At the national level, close interaction amongst the NFPs is essential for strengthening cooperation and collaboration in implementation (UNEP 2015c). Conducting this in the context of the national mechanism that coordinates actions on the SDGs may provide additional benefits.

At the national level, it is also critical to encourage, promote and facilitate collaboration in development and implementation of NBSAPs. Although NBSAPs are national tools, effective implementation of CBD requires consideration of transboundary and regional issues, and in developing and implementing the post-2020 GBF it is also important to consider how to work across national borders to address shared objectives and common challenges.

Continuous collaboration across multi-sectoral governmental bodies, and non-governmental stakeholders at all levels is contributing to bridge the gap between national and subnational actions and high-level policy-making processes. There is ongoing dialogue in any case which seems to be wide-ranging. However, it is still needed supplemental support to convene intersectoral national dialogue spanning for example, the oceans-climate nexus. On the same topic, it is essential to provide the tools for better knowledge for enlightened decision-making.

It is broadly accepted that support networking at regional, sub-regional, and national levels would contribute to enable scaling-up of good practices, sharing of experience and mutual understanding.

Benefits of a regional approach.

The importance of a regional approach to biodiversity cooperation and to strengthen the link between the global and national levels of biodiversity cooperation while furthering cooperation is reflected in the role of

the RSPs that are in a unique position for biodiversity cooperation⁵³ as it serves as an intermediary between the national and the global level. While the CBD provides guidance and standards at a global level, Parties will benefit from a concentrated platform that will facilitate information exchange and harmonization and the involvement of major stakeholders.

From the regional level, data and information can be more easily aggregated in order to report globally as part of future sub-global assessments to be developed⁵⁴.

If multiple MEAs, including the RSPs and other international processes, are involved in implementation of particular aspects of the post-2020 GBF, then a process should be developed to bring together reported information for the global review of progress in implementation (also referred to as a 'global stocktake').

Avoiding duplication would need a more integrated system for reporting, although any new system may require use of new tools and approaches and will need to build on current tools and processes and use existing reports.

Operationalization of the post-2020 GBF and the role of RSPs.

A key element of operationalization for relevant aspects taken in the strategies and work plans of RSPs, implies that each RSP need to act in their own processes following the adoption of the framework by the 15th Meeting of the CBD's COP.

Given the level of engagement of RSPs in implementation of the post-2020 GBF, coordination will be valuable, both for enhancing cooperation and

53 Potential areas for cooperation on means of implementation include identifying opportunities for collaboration in addressing all means of implementation such as capacity-building, resource mobilization and knowledge management, as well as communication. A key part of developing the integrated approaches such as nature-based solutions or ecosystem-based approaches, may be necessary for implementation of the post-2020 GBF.

54 These sub-global assessments will be developed by the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

facilitating synergy, building wherever possible on existing mechanisms.

It should be underlined the need of ensuring clarity on how the objectives, roles and responsibilities of each RSP (UNEP 2021d) would be in terms of integrated reporting into the post-2020 GBF.

Different tools and platforms can be used to support the operationalization of the post-2020 GBF (e.g., UNBL 2.0, GEO BON). These available tools and platforms may relate and complement one another.

Consolidating processes, structures and applications.

The transparency that is gained from process harmonization helps to get rid of duplicate processes and applications that are performing similar tasks. Hence, it will fully support the process for decision-making during consolidation in a post-merger integration phase.

Implementing process harmonization requires a careful and considered approach, but the benefits can be of enormous significance at the time to: (i) articulate the design principles that will govern the process harmonization; (ii) model the processes and the associated data using agreed standard frameworks; (iii) introduce measures to evaluate to what extent and how these processes are harmonized.

With the successful implementation of process harmonization, it is possible to reach these goals.

Technological innovation and development.

Global linkages of technology and innovation should be used to accurate monitoring data and implement managing strategies.

Most of the RSPs are reported on the opportunity of being currently reflected by Parties about active digitalisation due to the implementation of advanced technologies (e.g., robotics, automated equipment, autonomous vehicles, sensors) for efficient utilisation.

Data collection and the dissemination of research and data facilitate compliance.

Unrestricted and efficient near-real time data management and data sharing, including open access policies, should be used to provide added value to identify future directions in ocean data and information management. This is a general concern mentioned by all respondents.

Although scientific knowledge is in effect constantly developing, the aim should be to establish a comprehensive and sustained system for marine observation and data exchange. It requires increased multinational and multisectoral collaboration and investment.

As mentioned in previous sections, new reporting system will be developed as measures could be taken to contribute to the implementation to the CBD and the RSPs to improve the flow, accessibility, and relevance of specific data.

Best scientific available information and regular assessments.

This will help to identify solutions and success stories that reconcile opposing views.

By laying the groundwork for better policies, it will enable to diagnose in a collaborative way the challenges to ensure the long-term viability solutions through the existing partnerships. Hence, it should explore and promote efforts that increase biodiversity, adaptive capacity and resilience by translating knowledge into policy actions and measures which will be applied by the Member States.

Experiences and lessons learned from the RSPs.

Of the analysis process, positive assessment of the prospect for status enhancement could cautiously be confirmed to extent, if possible, to other MEAs within the same thematic cluster (and different from the Regional Seas Programmes) and their reporting obligations. However, it is important to note, that it currently lacks a convincing strategy to overcome



them. Developing common reporting formats will both to support and work for effective multilateralism.

In providing their completed survey responses, the respondents emphasized it, and that should be reflected in the 'new template' alongside with the major challenges encountered.

Complementarity and coherence.

In terms of complementarity about the harmonization of national reporting, the Member States should be supported in updating and implementing national strategies and operational NAPs. This includes the coordination of competent ministerial departments in charge of its implementation to achieve the global targets, and in particular the regional targets.

As emphasized by several respondents, certain pre-requisites are needed for successful implementation. These include establish a strong review mechanism to evaluate progress in implementing the national strategies, plans and programmes, and create synergies with the evaluation framework of the CBD. So, it would be an opportunity to explore new joint actions towards conservation, management and sustainable use in all regions. This would ensure that regional and international commitments and obligations on biodiversity are correctly reflected in national legislation.

Thus, defining the links between the RSP national reporting and CBD national reporting and potential consolidation, would ensure that the RSCI set support the post-2020 GBF goals and the action-oriented targets.

Hence, it would serve as an effective instrument to mainstream biodiversity into relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies, plans and programmes. Moreover, this would ensure effective coordinated enforcement mechanisms in each stage of the compliance process.

Additionally, the implementation of joint actions can potentially lead to *de facto* that other relevant legislations such as fisheries, would be in line with international commitments and obligations for biodiversity conservation through governance norms

including transparency and accountability to ensure adequate performance.

All RSPs reaffirm their firm commitment of cooperation in this regard.

Effectiveness of harmonization process.

The effectiveness of harmonization depends on whether co-design⁵⁵ will be measured in terms of implementation of actions.

It should encourage the RSCAPs to continue addressing the abovementioned issues through improving cooperation to integrating approach in research and innovation into all regions. On the other hand, it should also emphasize to engage fully with all efforts that have the aim of improving the current measures. Likewise, it would call for a firm commitment to the process, strengthening scientific and technological aspects, based on the existing partnerships.

Review gaps and options for funding for NBSAPs.

It should be considered within each country through their national resource mobilization strategy. By strengthening the uptake and execution of innovative financing mechanism, this will help to complete the cycle from research and innovation programmes.

Integrated approaches.

Avoiding failures at this stage is crucial in terms of making good on the Member States' commitments. For example, as it was the case of the implementation of the ABTs. Although progress has been made by the Parties towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its ABTs, it is stated that this process was going through multiple silos, in addition to possibly lack of implementation support and enabling conditions at the national

55 Generated knowledge with the aim of making the greatest possible contribution to a potential co-design of templates (formats) should be complemented with the national reporting formats to the CBD NBSAPs.

scale, and in particular, the implementation of data-to-indicator workflows that help streamline the monitoring of the impact of conservation actions in target achievements⁵⁶.

The current monitoring framework proposal for the post-2020 GBF addresses some of these challenges by providing guidance so that Parties can easily identify appropriate indicators, i.e., Headline, Component and Detailed Indicators, for the different targets (CBD 2020i). Further guidance will be provided for the sustained production, delivery and use of biodiversity indicators.

By breaking down silos it should be ensured that oceans are embedded in the post-2020 GBF, with a view to, inter alia, protecting and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems, reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience to the climate change impacts, and addressing land-based and marine pollution.

The abovementioned recommendations fall under the following broad types: (i) enhancing coordination and improving communication of progress towards the global goals and targets of the post-2020 GBF and SDGs; (ii) integrating assessments and observing networks; and (iii) using open-access databases to establish baselines.

The Open-Ended Working Group on the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is currently making headway in advancing preparations and in laying the foundations for the approval of the post-2020 GBF in May 2022 at the 15th Meeting of CBD COP. A note of caution would be related to pay special attention to ensuring that the underlying processes and the new requirements are well understood and followed, with the aim of deploying strategies rapidly in the regions. It would therefore enable to provide guidance to the Member States on this issue.

All that is very promising for harmonizing both the Regional Seas Programmes national reporting and the Convention on Biological Diversity national reporting.

56 Parties to the CBD, in many cases, have struggled to easily and effectively track and guide progress to national targets due to their limited access to user-friendly indicator methodologies and the reliable data needed for these indicators.

7. REFERENCES

Abidjan Convention (2014): National Reporting Template Summary. https://abidjanconvention.org/themes/critai/documents/cop/13/National_Reporting_Template.pdf.

Abidjan Convention (2017). Additional Protocol to the Abidjan Convention on ICZM. ABC-WACAF/COP.12/8. [https://abidjanconvention.org/themes/critai/documents/meetings/partnersmeeting2019/Working%20Documents/Anglais/ABC-WACAF-COP12%20-%20ICZM%20Protocol%20final%20version%20\(05.06.18\).pdf](https://abidjanconvention.org/themes/critai/documents/meetings/partnersmeeting2019/Working%20Documents/Anglais/ABC-WACAF-COP12%20-%20ICZM%20Protocol%20final%20version%20(05.06.18).pdf).

Arctic Council (n.d.). Website. <https://www.arctic-council.org>.

Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (n.d.). <https://helcom.fi/baltic-sea-trends/indicators/>

Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (2007). <https://www.bipindicators.net>.

Caporusso, C. and Hougee, M. (2019). Harmonizing Marine Litter Monitoring in the Wider Caribbean Region: A Hybrid Approach. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27901/Marine_LitWCR-en.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

Coastal Oceans Research and Development – Indian Ocean (n.d.). Coral reefs, SDGs and the post-2020 biodiversity framework. <https://cordioea.net/coralreefsdg/>.

Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur (2020a). Compendio de Iniciativas Emblemáticas sobre Buenas Prácticas contra la Basura Marina en la región del Pacífico Sudeste. Guayaquil: Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur. http://cpps.dyndns.info/cpps-docs-web/planaccion/docs2020/publicaciones/CBPBM_Web.pdf.

Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur (2020b). XXIII Reunión del Grupo Consultivo del Plan de Acción para la protección del medio marino y áreas costeras del Pacífico Sudeste. <http://cpps.dyndns.info/cpps-docs-web/planaccion/docs2020/enero2020/AG-GC/XXIIIIGC-Informe.pdf>.

Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (n.d.). Annual BSC Work Programme 2019/2020. http://www.blacksea-commission.org/_commission-wps.asp.

Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (2017). Black Sea Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Program (BSIMAP) 2017-2022. https://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/international-cooperation/regional-sea-conventions/bucharest/pdf/BSIMAP_2017_to_2022_en.pdf.

Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (2019). *State of the Environment of the Black Sea (2009-2014/5)*. Krutov, A. (ed.). Istanbul: Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution. <http://www.blacksea-commission.org/SoE2009-2014/SoE2009-2014.pdf>.

Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution. Black Sea Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Program for years 2017-2022. https://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/international-cooperation/regional-sea-conventions/bucharest/pdf/BSIMAP_2017_to_2022_en.pdf.

Commonwealth of Australia (1995). Agreement establishing the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) [as an intergovernmental organisation]. <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties/1995/24.html>

Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (2017). State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report. Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna International Secretariat, Akureyri, Iceland. 978-9935-431-63-9. <https://caff.is/marine/marinemonitoring-publications/state-of-the-arctic-marine-biodiversityreport/431-state-of-the-arctic-marine-biodiversity-report-full-report>

Convention of Biological Diversity (2005). Third meeting of the Biodiversity Liaison Group: Report of the Meeting. BLG-3/REP.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2010). Decision adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its tenth Meeting X/2: The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/X/2. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-10/cop-10-dec-02-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2015). Links between the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/19/INF/9. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-19/information/sbstta-19-inf-09-en.pdf>.

Convention of Biological Diversity (2016). Decision adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity XIII/27: National reporting CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/27 2016 <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-13/cop-13-dec-27-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2019). Report of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice on its twenty-fourth Meeting. CBD/SBSTTA/23/9. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/e215/de56/af0aed70a7410e0fbffbe686/sbstta-23-09-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2020a). Zero Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. CBD/WG2020/2/3. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/efb0/1f84/a892b98d2982a829962b6371/wg2020-02-03-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2020b). The Data Reporting Tool for MEAs (DaRT) - A tool for biodiversity knowledge management in support of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework implementation. CBD/SBI/3/INF/8. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/3f65/d8fe/7e3a76d05cb0fc279fd7f38c/sbi-03-inf-08-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2020c). *Global Biodiversity Outlook 5*. Montreal: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. <https://www.cbd.int/gbo/gbo5/publication/gbo-5-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2020d). Report on the thematic consultation on transparent implementation, monitoring, reporting and review for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. CBD/POST2020/WS/2020/1/3. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/8e6f/ef4f/b7d30589fb00d97b900d17af/post2020-ws-2020-01-03-en.pdf>

Convention on Biological Diversity (2020e). Further information and draft template for the submission of national commitments/contributions to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. CBD/SBI/3/11/Add.3/Rev.1. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/52ce/9f02/6994d00ec58bb28d20b86b47/sbi-03-11-add3-rev-01-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2020f). Results of the survey to evaluate the use by Parties of the online reporting tool for the sixth national report. CBD/SBI/3/INF/3. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/0f68/a775/c24f00080e446d3f92c3c246/sbi-03-inf-03-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2020g). National reporting under the Convention. CBD/SBI/3/11/Add.1. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/c73b/d485/2e44b1d6a0502098ad0235a6/sbi-03-11-add1-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2020h). Options for enhancing synergies on national reporting among biodiversity-related Conventions and Rio Conventions. CBD/SBI/3/11/Add.2. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/38c5/24c3/d3ce15f5a2fa80e3bfec0de/sbi-03-11-add2-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2020i). Post-2020 global biodiversity framework: Scientific and technical information to support the review of the updated goals and targets, and related indicators and baselines proposed indicators and monitoring approach for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. CBD/SBSTTA/24/3/Add.1. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/ddf4/06ce/f004afa32d48740b6c21ab98/sbstta-24-03-add1-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2021a). First Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. CBD/WG/2020/3/3. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/abb5/591f/2e46096d3f0330b08ce87a45/wg2020-03-03-en.pdf>.



Convention on Biological Diversity (2021b). Detailed scientific and technical information to support the review of the proposed goals and targets in the updated zero draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/21. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/21ab/d0fe/625d61435079e80fde83d851/sbstta-24-inf-21-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2021c). Update of the Zero Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. CBD/POST2020/PREP/2/1. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/3064/749a/0f65ac7f9def86707f4eaefa/post2020-prep-02-01-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2021d). Report of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice on its twenty-fourth Meeting (Part I). CBD/SBSTTA/24/11). <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/9472/6090/90511f710677dd22c112db03/sbstta-24-11-en.pdf>

Convention on Biological Diversity (2021e). Proposed headline indicators of the monitoring framework for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. CBD/WG2020/3/3/Add.1. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/d716/da69/5e81c8e0faca1db1dd145a59/wg2020-03-03-add1-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2021f). Comments from the survey on headline indicators post-2020 global biodiversity framework. CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/29. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/e068/9905/299212eac8dc52bac49de7ba/sbstta-24-inf-29-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2021g). Proposed monitoring approach and headline, component and complementary indicators for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. CBD/WG2020/3/INF/2. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/437d/a239/12a22f2eaf5e6d103ed9adad/wg2020-03-inf-02-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2021h). Lessons from the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme and United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre in supporting the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and suggestions for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. CBD/SBI/3/INF/30. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/e4f6/5897/402f27ceb479e4cc0b38a56b/sbi-03-inf-30-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2021i). Marine input to headline indicators of the draft post-2020 global biodiversity framework. CBD/WG2020/3/INF/4. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/17fa/0316/dd5b6065c2dc638eb3c38942/wg2020-03-inf-04-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2021j). One-pagers on the goals and targets of the first draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. CBD/WG2020/3/INF/3. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/a1cf/199a/6e57a57ce2b79eaf2db446f9/wg2020-03-inf-03-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2021k). Indicators for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/16. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/a6d3/3108/88518eab9c9d12b1c418398d/sbstta-24-inf-16-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2021l). Report on Regional Seas Biodiversity under the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/24. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/0c09/8814/cc8c0cd04f77b9a61240a33c/sbstta-24-inf-24-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2021m). Linkages between the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/12. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/8221/82b3/46f7213f305e091b5c07a452/sbstta-24-inf-12-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2021n). Action Plan for the long-term approach to mainstreaming biodiversity compilation of relevant sources of information. CBD/SBI/3/INF/21. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/b0df/77f7/d44e6dfc871dc7a67bcd1334/sbi-03-inf-21-en.pdf>.

Convention on Biological Diversity (2021o). Updated analysis of experience under the Convention and other processes, and considerations for the enhancement of a multidimensional review mechanism. CBD/SBI/3/INF/11. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/d653/8200/7f77377ffc85a554260a66cc/sbi-03-inf-11-en.pdf>.

Convention of Biological Diversity (n.d.). National Biodiversity Strategies And Action Plans (Nbsaps):Latest Nbsaps. <https://www.cbd.int/nbsap/about/latest/>.

Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (2018). COBSEA Strategic Directions 2018-2022. Secretariat of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) and United Nations Environment Programme, Bangkok. <https://www.unep.org/cobsea/resources/policy-and-strategy/cobsea-strategic-directions-2018-2022>.

European Commission (2011). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020. COM (2011) 244 final. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0244&from=EN>.

European Commission (2020). *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (Directive 2008/56/EC)*. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0259&from=EN>.

European Union (2008). 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 (Marine Strategy Framework Directive). Official Journal of European Union. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32008L0056&from=EN>.

Garcia, S.M. and Rice, J. (2020). *Assessing progress towards Aichi Biodiversity Target 6 on sustainable marine fisheries*. Technical Series No. 87. Montreal: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. 103. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-87-en.pdf>.

Gill, M.J., Crane, K., Hindrum, R., Arneberg P., Bysveen, I., Denisenko, N.V. et al (2011). Arctic Marine Biodiversity Monitoring Plan (CBMP-MARINE PLAN). CAFF Monitoring Series Report No.3. Akureyri: CAFF International Secretariat. <https://www.caff.is/marine/marine-monitoring-publications/3-arctic-marine-biodiversity-monitoring-plan>.

Global Environment Facility (2021a). Global Environment Facility-8 Programming Directions. GEF/R.8/05. https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/GEF-8%20Programming%20Directions_0.pdf.

Global Environment Facility (2021b). GEF-8 Strategic Positioning and Programming Directions https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/2021_04_22_First_Meeting_GEF-8_PDs_Presentation.pdf.

Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (2014): <https://geobon.org>

Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (n.d.): Arctic Bon. <https://geobon.org/bons/national-regional-bon/regional-bon/arctic-bon>.

Helsinki Commission (2021). Baltic Sea Action Plan: 2021 update. <https://helcom.fi/media/publications/Baltic-Sea-Action-Plan-2021-update.pdf>.

Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (2019). *Marine Regions Forum 2019: Achieving a Healthy Ocean - Regional Ocean Governance beyond 2020*. Berlin, 30 September-2 October 2019. https://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/02/MRF2019_Conference-Report_fin_04.02.2020.pdf.

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2020). Global Ocean Science Report 2020—Charting Capacity for Ocean Sustainability. Isensee, K. (ed.). Paris: UNESCO Publishing. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375147>.

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2021). The Ocean Decade: The Science We Need for the Ocean We Want. <https://www.oceandecade.org/>.



Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2019). Díaz, S.M., Settele, J., Brondízio, E., Ngo, H., Guèze, M., Agard, J., Arneth, A., Balvanera, P., Brauman, K., Butchart, S. and Chan, K., Garibaldi, L. A., Ichii, K., Liu, J., Subramanian, S.M., Midgley, J.F., Miloslavich, P., Molnár, Z., Obura, D., Pfaff, A., Polasky, S., Purvis, A., Razaque, J., Reyers, B., Roy, Chowdhury, R., Shin Y.J., Visseren-Hamakers, I.J., Willis K.J., and Zayas, C.N. (eds.) Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Bon: IPBES Secretariat. https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/inline/files/ipbes_global_assessment_report_summary_for_policymakers.pdf.

Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (2019). Guidelines for the monitoring and assessment of plastic litter and microplastics in the ocean. Kershaw P.J., Turra A. and Galgani F. (eds.). IMO/FAO/UNESCO-IOC/UNIDO/WMO/IAEA/UN/UNEP/UNDP/ISA. Rep. Stud. GESAMP No. 99. https://wesi.unep.org/media/docs/marine_plastics/une_science_dvision_gesamp_reports.pdf.

Lindèn, O. et al (1990) State of the marine environment in the ROPME Sea Area. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 112 Rev.1. <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/11738/rsrs112.pdf?sequence=1&%3BisAllowed=>.

Mispiratcegy, M., Ganisheva, K., Ostermann, O.P., Neuville, A., Battistella, L., Mandrici, A. et al. (2021). Monitoring and mapping biodiversity conservation funding with eConservation. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC126162>.

Muller-Karger, F.E., Miloslavich P., Bax, N.J., Simmons, S., Costello, M.J., Sousa Pinto, I. et al (2018). Advancing Marine Biological Observations and Data Requirements of the Complementary Essential Ocean Variables (EOVs) and Essential Biodiversity Variables (EBVs) Frameworks. *Frontiers in Marine Science* 5 (211). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2018.00211>.

Northwest Pacific Action Plan (2019). NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy 2018-2023. <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/27258>.

Northwest Pacific Action Plan (2021). Report on the implementation of activity "Development of NOWPAP EcoQO targets aligned (where possible) with SDG indicators, phase 2". http://pomrac.tigdvo.ru/Pub/DOC/FPM-18/18_6%20Report%20on%20the%20implementation%20of%20activity%20EcoQOs%20targets,%20phase%202.pdf.

Northwest Pacific Action Plan Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Centre (2014). State of the Marine Environment Report for the NOWPAP region (SOMER 2). <http://pomrac.tigdvo.ru/Pub/Report%20for%20the%20NOWPAP%20region%20SOMER%202.pdf>

Northwest Pacific Action Plan Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Centre (2017). Regional overview of possible Ecological Quality Objective indicators for the NOWPAP region.<http://pomrac.tigdvo.ru/Pub/DOC/PUBL/REGIONAL%20OVERVIEW%20OF%20POSSIBLE%20ECOLOGICAL%20QUALITY%20OBJECTIVE%20INDICATORS%20FOR%20THE%20NOWPAP%20REGION%20Pomrac%202017.pdf>.

Northwest Pacific Action Plan Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Centre (2022). <http://pomrac.tigdvo.ru/>.

Northwest Pacific Action Plan Data and Information Network Regional Activity Centre (n.d.). <http://dinrac.nowpap.org/>.

Northwest Pacific Action Plan Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre (n.d.). <http://merrac.nowpap.org/merrac/>.

Northwest Pacific Action Plan Special Monitoring and Coastal Environmental Assessment Regional Activity Centre (n.d.). <http://cearac.nowpap.org/>.

OSPAR Commission (2018). OSPAR Science Agenda: 2018 Update. <https://www.ospar.org/documents?v=40399>.

Spalding, Mark D. and Leal, M. (eds.) (2021). *The State of the World's Mangroves 2021*. Global Mangrove Alliance. <https://www.mangrovealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/The-State-of-the-Worlds-Mangroves-2021-FINAL-1.pdf>.

Tehran Convention Secretariat (2011). Unified Reporting Format for the Tehran Convention and Protocols: Note by the interim Secretariat. <https://tehranconvention.org/system/files/tcis/unified-reporting-format-for-the-tehran-convention-and-protocols.pdf>.

United Nations (2016). *The First Global Integrated Marine Assessment: World Ocean Assessment I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://www.un.org/depts/los/global_reporting/WOA_RPROC/WOACompilation.pdf.

United Nations (2020). World Ocean Assessment II. Output of the second cycle of the Regular Process. Final Unedited Draft. 19th November 2020. Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (Regular Process). United Nations. https://www.un.org/regularprocess/sites/www.un.org.regularprocess/files/woaii-4th_and_final_draft_18nov_to_14th_ahwgv_in_tc.pdf

United Nations (2021a). The Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects - Volume II. <https://www.un.org/regularprocess/sites/www.un.org.regularprocess/files/2011859-e-woa-ii-vol-ii.pdf>

United Nations (2021b). The Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects – Volume I. <https://www.un.org/regularprocess/sites/www.un.org.regularprocess/files/2011859-e-woa-ii-vol-i.pdf>

United Nations Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (2021). UNEP/EA.5/3/Rev.1. <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/35162/Doc3%20Reve1%20EnglishK2100501.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2017). High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development - 2017 HLPF. Thematic review of SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development – Background Note. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14375SDG14format-revOD.pdf>.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2021a). The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2021/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2021.pdf>.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2021b). Statistics: SDG Indicators Database. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/unsdg>.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2021c). Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects. <https://www.un.org/regularprocess/>.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2022). The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal14>.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2018). Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/2/gender-equality-in-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development-2018>.

United Nations Environment Management Group (2020). Supporting the Global Biodiversity Agenda: A United Nations System Commitment for Action to assist Member States delivering on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. <https://unemg.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/EMG-Biodiversity-WEB.pdf>.

United Nations Environment Programme (1986). Action Plan for the Conservation of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 81. <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/11891/rsrs081.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

United Nations Environment Programme (2010). Template for national reporting on the Nairobi Convention and its Protocols as per Decisions CP6/1, 7&8 AND CP6/7(2) UNEP(DEPI)/EAF/CP6/BUR.DOC/5. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/21050/UNEP%28DEPI%29_EAF_CP6_BUR.DOC_5%20National%20reporting%20template%20%20The%20Nairobi%20Convention.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

United Nations Environment Programme (2014a). Technical Workshop on Selecting Indicators for the State of Regional Seas. Summary of regional seas indicator system. UNEP/EARS/WG.1/INF5. Geneva, 30 June – 2 July 2014. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/11062/ears_wg1_inf5_summary_of_the_regional_seas_indicator_systems.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

United Nations Environment Programme (2014b). Measuring Success: Indicators for the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/mar/mcbom-2016-01/information/mcbom-2016-01-inf-01-en.pdf>.

United Nations Environment Programme (2015a). The first meeting of the Regional Seas Indicator Working Group. Conclusion of the meeting. UNEP/EARS/WG.2/5. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/10934/ears_wg2_5_indicatorworkshop_report.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

United Nations Environment Programme (2015b). Conclusion of the first meeting of the Regional Seas Indicator Working Group. UNEP/EARS/WG.2/5. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/10934/ears_wg2_5_indicatorworkshop_report.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

United Nations Environment Programme (2015c). Sourcebook of opportunities for enhancing cooperation among the Biodiversity-related Conventions at national and regional level. <https://nationalmeasnergies.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/sourcebook-web.pdf>.

United Nations Environment Programme (2016a). Regional Oceans Governance: Making Regional Seas Programmes, Regional Fishery Bodies and Large Marine Ecosystem Mechanisms Work Better Together. <https://ninum.uit.no/bitstream/handle/10037/10316/article.pdf>.

United Nations Environment Programme (2016b). Regional Seas Core Indicators Set. UNEP/WBRS.18/INF9. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/11078/wbrs18_inf9_rs_indicators.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

United Nations Environment Programme (2018). Regional Seas Follow up and Review of the ocean related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Conceptual Guidelines. UN Environment Regional Seas Reports and Studies No 208. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27295/ocean_SDG.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

United Nations Environment Programme (2019). Global Environment Outlook – GEO-6: Healthy Planet, Healthy People. Nairobi. <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/27539>.

United Nations Environment Programme (2021a). **Regional Seas Biodiversity under the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework**. Nairobi. https://wedocs.unep.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/35102/RSB_Post2020GBF.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y.

United Nations Environment Programme (2021b). Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2022-2025. <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/36810/RSSD.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

United Nations Environment Programme (2021c). Revised Template for national reporting on the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.41/INF.25 Rev.1) http://gefcrew.org/carrcu/19IGM/LBSCOP5/Info-Docs/WG.41_INF.25.Rev1-en.pdf

United Nations Environment Programme (2021d). A role for the Regional Seas Programme under the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/36353/RSP2020GBF.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>.



United Nations Environment Programme (n.d.). Regional Seas Programme. <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/oceans-seas/what-we-do/regional-seas-programme>

United Nations Environment Programme – Abidjan Convention (2014). National Reporting Template on the Abidjan Convention and its Protocols. UNEP(DEPI)/WACAF/COP.11/8. https://abidjanconvention.org/themes/critai/documents/cop/13/National_Reporting_Template.pdf.

United Nations Environment Programme, *Caribbean Environment Programme (2019)*. *State of the Cartagena Convention Area: An Assessment of Marine Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities in the Wider Caribbean Region*. <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/36346>.

United Nations Environment Programme - Nairobi Convention (2018). Proposed work programme for the period 2018–2022 for the implementation of the Nairobi Convention: Note by the Secretariat. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/25759/CP9.2_Work_Programme_EN.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y.

United Nations Environment Programme - Nairobi Convention (2021). The State of Ocean Governance in the Western Indian Ocean. <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/state-ocean-governance-western-indian-ocean-region>.

United Nations Environment Programme - Nairobi Convention and Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (2015). The Regional State of the Coast Report : Western Indian Ocean. Paula, J. (ed.). <https://nairobiconvention.org/clearinghouse/node/150>.

United Nations Environment Programme - Nairobi Convention and Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (2021). Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas Outlook: Towards achievement of the Global Biodiversity Framework Targets. Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme/Nairobi Convention Secretariat. https://www.nairobiconvention.org/clearinghouse/sites/default/files/_MPA%20Outlook_July%202021.pdf.

United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (2016). Decision IG.22/1: UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016–2021. UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/6071/16ig22_28_22_01_eng.pdf.

United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (2017a). Draft Decision IG.23/1: Revised reporting format for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols. UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.23/4. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/21870/17ig23_04_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (2017b). 2017 Mediterranean Quality Status Report. https://www.medqsr.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/2017MedQSR_Online_0.pdf.

United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (2019). State of the Environment and Development 2019: Preliminary version of Chapter 8 Environmental governance in the context of the MAP – Barcelona Convention, 2030 Agenda and SDGs. https://planbleu.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/PBRAC-Inf.5.8_SoED2019_Chapter8.pdf

United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (2020). Process for the elaboration of the “Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region” (Post-2020 SAP BIO). Meeting Report. https://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/meetings/post_sapbio/2020/post_2020_sapbio_online_report.pdf.

United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (2021). Report on the status of implementation of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) (UNEP/MED WG.502/3). https://rac-spa.org/meetings/nfp15/nfp_docs/wg502_03_status_of_implementation_eng.pdf.

United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan and Plan Bleu (2020). State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean. https://planbleu.org/wpcontent/uploads/2021/04/SoED_full-report.pdf.

United Nations Environment Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre (2020). Integrating biodiversity into the Sustainable Development Agenda: An analysis of Voluntary National Reviews. Cambridge: UNEP-WCMC. https://www.unep-wcmc.org/system/dataset_file_fields/files/000/000/597/original/UNEP-WCMC_-_VNR_Analysis_-_June_2020.pdf?1592932662.

United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (2019). FAO's input to the Secretary-General's background note to the Preparatory Meeting of the 2020 United Nations Conference to Support Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/fao.pdf>

United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (2021). Report of the eighth Meeting of Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network. Rome, 24-25 February 2021 –Virtual meeting. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1343. Rome. <https://www.fao.org/3/cb5544en/cb5544en.pdf>.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2021). National Adaptation Plans. <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/national-adaptation-plans>.

United Nations General Assembly (2015). Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A/RES/70/1. https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_1_E.pdf.

United Nations General Assembly (2019). 2020 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. A/RES/73/292. https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/73/292&Lang=E.

United Nations Statistics Division (2021). Sustainable Development Goals Progress Chart 2021. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2021/progress-chart-2021.pdf>.

8. ANNEX I. ANALYSIS OF THE REGIONAL SEAS CONVENTIONS AND ACTION PLANS

This section draws out the main conclusions from the analysis on each one of the different topics discussed and proposes recommendations of the processes applied for harmonizing national reporting. It is argued that the survey provides a testing ground for how the attempts to bring about a more unified reporting formats may work out in practice.

The survey questionnaire for consultation with the RSCAPs' Secretariats as shown in Box 9, was designed and circulated among the RSCAPs' Secretariats in September 2021. An invitation to take part in the consultation was sent to all representatives of the RSPs' Secretariats. Subsequently, some general and individual reminders were sent out to the representatives to encourage their participation, 50% replied to the survey.

For most responses, one of the ways to analyse and compare the data was focusing on priority topics. The survey results were linked to the questions posed in each section and sub-section of this report.

As a survey data analysis plan to get this information across, it facilitated to identify activities or subjects of importance to be considered. Most responses highlighted the role of the RSCAPs' Secretariats as facilitators and information providers.

The analysis was undertaken to gain a wide range of informed perspectives from the respondents. A set of questions allowed to obtain feedback on various aspects of national reporting mechanisms. It aimed to explore views on good practice for RSPs, focussed on promoting common technical standards and

Box 9: Survey questionnaire conducted for consultation with the RSCAPs' Secretariats

1. Do your Contracting Parties/Participating Countries report progress on the implementation of the Convention text, Protocols, Action Plans, Thematic Action Plans (marine litter, coral reefs, etc.), Strategic Actions Programmes and related National Action Plans?
If yes, please indicate existing and/or planned tools (for example, national reporting templates, regionally agreed indicators, and online platforms/dashboards) used for national reporting. Please include web links to these tools. If a specific website is not in place, please attach the documents to your response.
If yes, please indicate if data or information collected using these tools are used for regional and national assessments on the state of the marine environment.
2. Has your region developed a multi-disciplinary regional marine research programmes aimed at producing quality-controlled knowledge products for decision-making?
3. Do the marine research programmes linked with the question 2 above also support data collection related to national reporting indicators to track progress towards national targets?
4. What mechanisms would be needed to identify and address knowledge gaps in your region for reporting purposes (if needed)?
5. Is there any effort, present or in the past, to coordinate Regional Seas national reporting with the Convention of Biological Diversity related national reporting, particularly, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)?
If so, please indicate what information from the Regional Seas reporting was used for the Convention of Biological Diversity reporting purposes.
If not, please indicate what could be done to harmonize national level reporting on biodiversity.
6. In your region, what strategy, approach, or institutional arrangement is used to achieve successful national reporting mechanisms?
7. In your view, what capacity development assistance should be provided to your Participating Countries/ Contracting Parties to fulfil their obligations of national reporting, both to your Convention/Action Plan and to the Convention of Biological Diversity?
8. Please provide any additional comments you would find suitable on this matter.

practices related to some general considerations for which the respondents shared similar concerns.

This, in turn, provides insight into what aspects would be essential as suggestions for harmonizing both CBD national reporting and RSP national reporting. It is identified in the following key issues and priorities:

- Information systems: Availability of information to be reported.
- Institutional arrangements: Ministries in charge of reporting obligations and enforcement to the CBD and the RSPs.
- Capacity-building: Key for national implementation.
- Financial sustainability for integrated reporting: Cost-effective solutions.

Survey and evaluation

A summary of responses (%) in terms of impact and the importance of the specific contents of the survey questionnaire, relevant to this report is indicated in Table 12.

1. Reporting progress using existing and/or planned tools (national reporting templates, regionally agreed indicators, online platforms/dashboards) on implementation.

Most of the RSPs responded favourably on this matter, although some RSPs specified that not all CPs have reported for a certain period.

- 1 RSP informed that CPs reported during ordinary meetings, expert meetings.
- 1 RSP informed that CPs reported on an action plan, and there are no specific reporting templates except for the state of the marine environment report.
- 4 RSPs informed that CPs reported with the national reporting template under the Convention and its Protocols.
- 1 RSP mentioned that CPs reported about the activities developed during the reporting period for each of the Protocols and Regional Thematic Action Plans. Indicators are not included in the reporting formats.
- 1 RSP informed that some of the CPs mainly reported through voluntary national review reports on the implementation of the SDG 14 and emphasized the need of a robust system of reporting. **

Table 12: Key findings from the survey responses received

	Questions	Responses (%)			
		High	Moderate	Low	N/A
1.	Reporting progress on implementation	100			
2.	Regional marine research programmes for decision-making	90		10	
3.	Data collection on national reporting indicators to track progress towards national targets	70		30	
4.	Existing mechanisms for knowledge gaps	70		20	10
5.	Alignment RSP national reporting with CBD national reporting - NBSAPs	20	20	60	
6.	Strategies, approaches, institutional arrangements for achieving successful national reporting mechanisms	90		10	
7.	Capacity development	100			
8.	Further comments on national reporting	40			60

Information structure and format. The existence of different types of information structure and format across the RSPs means, that it is necessary, that reporting would be streamlined and harmonized.

- 4 RSP informed that CPs are using a format/template.
- 1 RSP mentioned the importance of the Integrated Information System.
- 1 RSP informed that no analysis of data collected for the regional assessments on the state of the marine environment was available, although this is proposed to consider for updating formats.

Reporting period and frequency of reporting. The reporting period and frequency of reporting differs significantly among the RSPs which informed that CPs report biennially, annually, or on a regular basis.

- 6 RSPs informed that CPs reported biennially.
- 2 RSPs informed that CPs reported annually.
- 1 RSP informed that CPs reported on a regular basis.

2. Regional marine research programmes for decision-making.

It differs significantly for the majority of the RSPs.

- 3 RSPs pointed out that several regional marine research programmes are in place.
- 1 RSP informed that several projects are specifically designed to enable fully informed decision making; some of them are ongoing projects on monitoring guidelines, data collection for supporting the existing monitoring programmes and developing new ones.
- 1 RSP pointed out some research programmes designed by the CPs which are specifically designed to contribute to decision making.
- 1 RSP informed that some products are related to support decision-making.
- 1 RSP mentioned that assessments help with increasing knowledge base.
- 1 RSP stated that some products as the assessment reports on state of the

environment in the region include marine research programmes for decision-making processes and data provision for this purpose and gave more examples regarding these products.

- 1 RSP informed about the development of an integrated monitoring and assessment programme which enables quantitative, integrated analysis on the state of environment and covers thematic areas, including common regional indicators and targets.

3. Supporting data collection related to national reporting indicators to track progress towards national targets.

- 1 RSP informed about an integrated information system which includes requirements for reporting.
- 1 RSP added that there are no specific indicators and targets; these indicators are pending of approval by Member States (in progress), this is neither applied for regional reporting on SDGs.
- 1 RSP mentioned that no indicators are considered in reporting templates since neither in protocols nor action plans are included indicators. However, at the time of updating these legal instruments, it is expected that indicators will be included in future reports.
- 1 RSP informed that reviewing the reporting process is still an ongoing process.
- 2 RSPs provided no answer on this issue.
- 1 RSP mentioned that there is progress towards national targets which are monitored by each CP and reported in their national reports.
- 1 RSP informed that ongoing research programmes support data collection to national reporting indicators to track progress towards national targets.
- 1 RSP mentioned that CPs develop monitoring and assessment programmes, and these programmes support regional assessments and track progress towards the regional set of indicators – common indicators – at national level.

Data quality assurance.

- 3 RSPs mentioned the production of quality-controlled knowledge products at the regional level.
- 1 RSP informed the need of development indicators and monitoring methodologies at national level, as well as the lack of standardized data collection at national level.

4. Existing mechanisms to identify and address knowledge gaps for reporting.

- 1 RSP addressed that it is required by developing relevant national reporting templates and training national experts.
- 1 RSP informed that reporting requirements are not clearly identified and approved by CPs.
- 1 RSP highlighted the need for strengthening communication between the project managers and NFPs.
- 1 RSP recommended for future regional and national actions plans, or planned revision of these plans, to consider national reporting indicators and associated targets.
- 1 RSP pointed out the importance to create harmonized protocols and indicators. Currently one of the work areas focused on minimum standards or parameters to report.
- 1 RSP mentioned the need of including reporting requirements when indicators are agreed.
- 1 RSP informed that mainly if guidelines for sharing information, and communication would be in place, this will add value to a capacity building programme for addressing knowledge gaps, which in turn, will be supporting the existing data-sharing platform.
- 1 RSP informed that key strategies – strategic action programme and regional strategy - are being developed in line with the post-2020 GBF. One of the strategies is built on a set of goals and targets, and the second one comprises an evaluation and monitoring framework with indicators and targets to be developed for this specific

regional strategy, using existing monitoring tools and including ocean-related SDGs indicators, and the post-2020 GBF proposed action targets.

5. Efforts to coordinate RSP national reporting and CBD national reporting.

All RSPs supported the initiative to coordinate reporting efforts.

- 1 RSP informed that UNEP and CBD urged to coordinate national reporting.
- 5 RSPs mentioned that there are no coordination efforts in this regard.
- 1 RSP added that it should encourage inclusion of reporting on relevant areas of the NBSAPs.
- 1 RSP highlighted the importance of a process in which CPs can agree to the approach that RSP indicators are aligned with the post-2020 GBF indicators.
- 1 RSP mentioned the existing coordination of RSP national reporting and CBD national reporting in the context of achievements of the ABTs. In this respect, comparison of data and indicators have been included in related reports, and more specifically, in those of SIDS, as well as in some thematic reports.
- 1 RSP suggested that the approach for a new elaborated reporting template should be in line with the CBD, i.e., post-2020 GBF proposed action targets and the relevant SDGs targets. This consolidated option will be very valuable and effective to avoid duplication of efforts.

6. Strategies, approaches, institutional arrangements to achieve successful national reporting mechanisms.

- 1 RSP mentioned that the thematic expert groups are required to prepare the specific guidelines.
- 1 RSP informed that this is possible through reporting on medium-term strategies, resolutions of intergovernmental meetings,



network of regional activity centres, regional working groups and projects.

- 1 RSP provided no information on this matter.
- 1 RSP informed about international arrangements through consulting group formed by NFPs which are responsible for the follow up of the Regional Action Plan implementation.
- 1 RSP mentioned that NFPs in their roles and responsibilities, facilitate effective communication to the competent authorities, inform to the Convention Secretariat and submit the national reporting template to the Secretariat.
- 1 RSP informed that a Compliance Committee was established to support CPs to fulfil national reporting obligations.

7. Capacity development.

All RSPs (100 %) identified the need of capacity development to support Parties in their national reporting processes.

- 1 RSP proposed that CBD and UNEP organize informative training workshops for national reporting.
- 1 RSP suggested some specific trainings (not specified which ones).
- 1 RSP suggested to provide technical assistance to CPs.
- 1 RSP pointed out the need on capacity in developing and harmonizing indicators, targets and monitoring of the measures taking by the CPs to implement and meet its reporting obligations.
- 1 RSP notified that is crucial defining key indicators for the CPs to identify, select, measure, and monitor these indicators.
- 1 RSP highlighted the need of more and more resources should be provided to the CPs.
- 1 RSP mentioned the necessity of better capacity for indicator-based assessments building on harmonized methodologies. It is also added the capacity building needs, and suggested the following actions, for

instance, providing technical skills for monitoring and reporting, strengthening institutional development and coordination, mainstreaming monitoring and reporting at the national level.










- 1 RSP offered the capacity provided by the Convention to the National Data Centres in terms of supporting technological aspects and human resources, to archive and share data, facilitate national reporting processes and ultimately, to inform regional processes.
- 1 RSP mentioned the need to support and assist CPs in some areas, such as technical support.

8. Further comments on national reporting.

- 1 RSP recommended producing regular and accurate quality reports throughout **quality** assurance process.
- 1 RSP suggested to support countries through technical assistance, for instance in the process of preparation of the reports.
- 1 RSP recalled on indicators harmonization and unified reporting systems among the different MEAs, that is, it would also apply to RSPs.
- 1 RSP highlighted the importance of having data and information provided by the CPs with the aim of evaluating and testing these data and information and of having the opportunity of the comparison and consolidation of selected indicators, and the later needed harmonization of national reporting.
- 1 RSP mentioned that it would be necessary to develop data-sharing protocols and policies, as well as strategies focused on knowledge and information management. In this regard, also innovative funding should be a priority as better and most cost-effective solutions.

Information from responses received from each of the RSPs' Secretariat is summarized in Table 13.

Table 13: Survey results from the analysis of each of the RSPs' Secretariat¹

Regional Seas Programmes National Reporting									
Reporting progress on implementation	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Regional marine research programmes for decision-making	Light Blue	Light Blue	Pink	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Data collection on national reporting indicators to track progress towards national targets	Light Blue	Green	Green	Light Blue	Light Blue	Green	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Existing mechanisms for knowledge gaps	Light Blue	Green	Green	Orange	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Alignment RS national reporting with CBD national reporting	Pink	Pink	Green	Light Blue	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Light Blue
Strategies, approaches, institutional arrangements for achieving successful national reporting mechanisms	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Pink	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Capacity development	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Further comments on national reporting	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Light Blue	Light Blue	Orange	Light Blue

¹ The rate for data visualization and analysis (looking at the relationships between the variables about the key findings and percentages), is showed under these types: blue-shaded cells (High); green-shaded cells (Moderate); sand-shaded cells (Low); lavender-shaded cells (Non applicable).

Conclusions

Participation corresponds to 50 per cent, 9 RSPs responded the survey out of 18, i.e., OSPAR, NOWPAP, SPREP, COBSEA, UNEP/MAP, CEP, CPPS, ROPME, Nairobi Convention providing 10 survey questionnaires (one of the RSPs submitted two of these related documents for the responses, which were compiled from the Regional Coordination Unit and from one of the Regional Activity Centres). Additionally, some information has been provided by two Secretariats – Abidjan Convention, Arctic Council -, and some additional responses were received from two Secretariats - CCAMLR, HELCOM.

The respondents' participation allowed them to identify main challenges and explore potential limitations. In essence, it recommends to: (i) improve data mechanisms at national level for collection and access; (ii) continue and/or strengthen capacity building interventions, and (iii) promote a consistent approach from CBD NBSAPs in their reporting process.

Respondents gave importance to all suggested topics proposed in the survey. All the topics were relevant to priorities of common interest, and the discussion of some issues. Regarding the implementation of the reporting process of NBSAPs to the CBD, the RSPs differs significantly.

As subjects of importance, it will be required to capitalize on the full potential of the solutions and identify the type of institutional, technical and capacity-related obstacles, as well as the lack of accessible knowledge/information, if any.

Most of the RSPs mentioned that in some cases, the information is usually fragmented. Other challenges are the lack of comprehensive monitoring and regular progress tracking and the limited coordination between institutions and sectors.

By analysing the responses received through the survey on national reporting, the RSPs Secretariats provided insights on whether national reporting processes are comprehensive or not, or whether there are any apparent gaps or not. Furthermore, with regard to the national institutional arrangements

responsible for implementing and enforcing each RSCAPs, it highlighted what would need to be changed.

Regarding the structure of national reporting template, it revealed that each of RSPs introduced its own RSP-tailored reporting template, with a range of specific fields, as agreed by CPs. This means that for most of cases, it aims to streamline the reporting requirements. Thus, it will help to harmonize data structure and format for obligatory reporting.

The issues and challenges faced about the existing practices for reporting to the RSPs and the CBD NBSAPs, specifically focused on institutional arrangements, capacity building and resources.

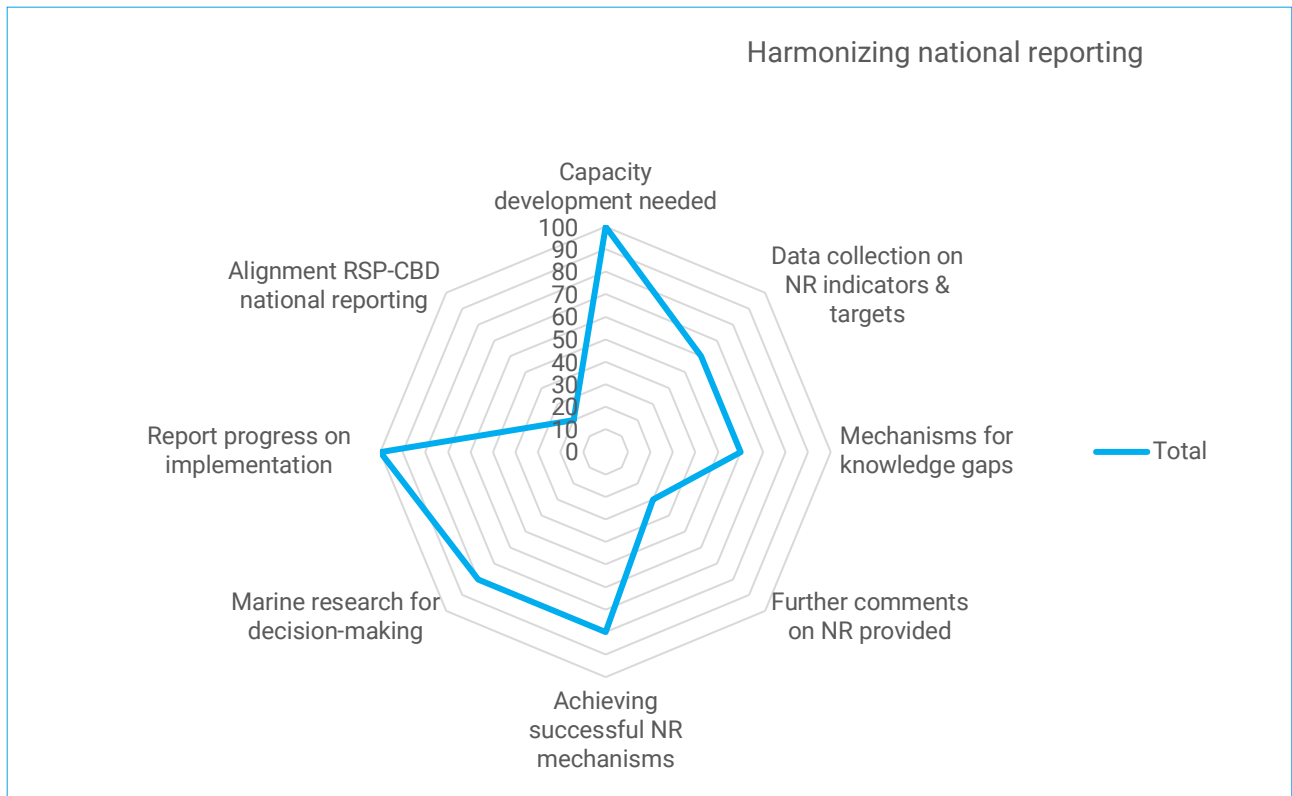
Results from the questionnaire emphasized the necessity for the development of compatibility indicators tables for ensuring the quality of data submitted. Thus, it is necessary to generate such data in formats that are easy to handle and compatible with other data sources and methodologies that can be used in harmonizing data sources.

Harmonizing data used in reporting and aligning them with international standards would help automate and streamline reporting procedures. Reducing information requirements can benefit the Parties through improved quality and timeliness of data submissions. Streamlined reporting procedures and documents can also significantly help reduce reporting burden and improve effectiveness from compliance system to meet the reporting obligations by Member States.

Examples of shared interests of the 9 RSPs are related to encourage appropriate balance on technical inputs, activities and achievements, and impacts and capacity building collaboration with the CPs. More resources and collective action to address key pressures are part of a workable solution.

Most of the RSPs, stressed the necessity of adequate arrangements for knowledge management to support in achieving efficient dissemination of information on national and international level, and specifically, to support Member States in achieving ocean-related SDGs targets with the purpose of supporting common actions that advance implementation of

Chart 1: Summary of the survey results



regional and international conventions, agreements and initiatives⁵⁷.

variables and how the responses reflected different insights within the RSPs on harmonizing national reporting between RSCAPs and the CBD.

For visualizing the survey responses, a radar chart – i.e., Chart 1 - has been used as a graph to export the survey results and compare the values of the relevant

57 It refers to the post-2020 GBF, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement.

9. ANNEX II. CASE STUDIES

Environmental analytical data are of major importance as they serve many purposes. It is essential that their quality is assured, and supplementary information is published in addition to the analytical results. In this regard, guidance document for the reporting of analytical data about the minimum information should be provided. Data products need to be made freely available according to Open Data principles, i.e., be accessible without restrictions on use, modification and sharing.

In view of the significance of marine environmental analytical data it is crucial that the quality of both sampling and analysis be assured, and the procedures used, as well as all additional information reported. There is a minimum level of information required in order to guarantee the fitness for using the data processing records to ensure the security of data.

Efforts on harmonization of reporting could be centred on supporting national comparisons, data quality assessments, discussions on the targeting of indicators for integrated management and planning strategies, in order to: (a) develop integrated approaches to data collection and analysis and information management of relevance to the RSPs; (b) increase synergies in the process of reporting to the RSPs; and (c) contribute to improved overall planning and decision-making processes at the country-level related to the implementation of the RSP and the post-2020 GBF.

The situational analysis and reporting process design should be focused on linkages and synergies for reporting to the RSPs and CBD NBSAPs at national level that could be identified and strengthened, as well as on duplication in reporting processes that could be identified and eliminated.

For enhancing the capacity for data collection and analysis, it needs analysis and approach developed for each country (training and technology used; for instance, through joint thematic reporting formats and joint reporting portals), with the aim of streamlining the harmonization process at the national level.

This section includes a selection of case studies which consider the outputs of the consultations carried out through the survey. So that these case studies include information from the valuable insights received and references searched for further information on this subject.

The case studies are presented as examples that could help to work collaboratively within RSCAPs and with external partners, to deliver good data protection and information management processes, including the adoption of new approaches and priorities.

The following initiatives ensure a responsive and cohesive approach to meeting country needs, helping to develop information management strategy and provide innovative approaches to data, information management, and systems delivery. Thus, it would be more operational that marine data would be comparable across regions and within countries.

CASE STUDY 1: A COMPREHENSIVE AND SUSTAINED SYSTEM FOR MARINE OBSERVATION AND DATA-EXCHANGE IN THE ARCTIC OCEAN



Background

Baseline documentation of marine environments and ecosystems is needed to effectively manage natural resources. Regional warming, ocean acidification and changes in sea-ice distribution present a variety of challenges to polar ecosystems that need quantified adequately.

The disappearance of summer sea-ice in the Arctic increases access to valuable sea-bed minerals and allows exploitation of hydrocarbons. To protect and manage these natural resources, it needs to observe and understand the ecosystems, and the predicted system transformations, including increasing human activities. The possibility of a seasonally ice-free Arctic Ocean within a few decades, and rapidly acidifying upper water layers will have profound implications for the future of marine living resources.

There is also increased access to potentially substantial and valuable mineral resources from the bottom of the Arctic Ocean, including methane hydrates, oil, gas, polymetallic nodules (manganese nodules) and bioprospecting⁵⁸. Although exploitation opportunities have clear societal and energy security values, it could also bring disruption to wildlife migration routes, pollution threats and habitat destruction for benthic and pelagic ecosystems.

Challenges

The potential and importance of marine resources present some challenges for sustainable management and use of living resources, alongside environmentally sensitive extraction of mineral and hydrocarbon resources.

Many of the regions identified for future seabed mining are already recognized as vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs)⁵⁹. Issues such as the vulnerable nature of deep-sea environments to mining impacts, the currently limited technological capacity to minimize harm, the significant gaps in ecological knowledge, and uncertainties of recovery potential of deep-sea ecosystems, need to be assessed. The need of information about marine biodiversity and ecosystems, including seafloor and sub-seafloor communities in the Arctic Ocean, is fundamental to investigating future impacts.

The strong seasonality and significant uncertainties associated with changing polar ecosystems require long-term environmental and biodiversity time-series observations, and improved modelling to enhance predictive capacities. This will require an investment to upgrade and expand observing infrastructure, support research on modelling and forecasting and improve sharing of data and information.

The aim should be to establish a comprehensive and sustained system for marine observation and data-exchange covering the Arctic Ocean.

Solutions and actions

It is encouraging responses of the international community to the biodiversity crisis, however, the data which are currently supporting biodiversity assessments vary spatially, temporally, and/or thematically. To address these challenges, the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO BON) as a global observing system for biodiversity, aims to improve the acquisition, coordination and delivery of biodiversity observations

⁵⁸ Bioprospecting activities must comply with the definition of utilization of genetic resources of the Nagoya Protocol or as stated in the national law or policy.

⁵⁹ In the deep waters of the Nordic Seas and adjacent areas, several benthic habitats such as cold-water coral reefs, coral gardens, and deep-sea sponge aggregations have been classified as vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), due to their uniqueness, limited spatial extent, physical fragility, and slow recovery rate.

and related services to users including decision-makers and the scientific community.

GEO BON has developed a globally coordinated strategy for the monitoring of biodiversity change based on two fundamental components: an Essential Biodiversity Variables (EBVs)⁶⁰ framework, and a system of coordinated Biodiversity Observation Networks (BONs) for sustained, operational monitoring. BONs pursue to integrate existing biodiversity monitoring efforts, currently scattered across regions, to build a coordinated and harmonized system of observing systems for biodiversity. Its structure is centred on the different levels of organization of biodiversity and related ecosystem services.

Variables are prioritized from the many potential biodiversity change variables based on relevance, sensitivity to change, scalability, feasibility, and data availability. These criteria make EBVs complementary to constitute biodiversity indicators, such as those used to track progress against the international and national targets for CBD and the SDGs.

In this regard, a series of webinars⁶¹ are being organized by the CBD Secretariat, GEO BON, UNSD and UNEP-WCMC in collaboration with the UN Regional Commissions, to support implementation of the post-2020 GBF in order to increase the understanding of the monitoring framework of the post-2020 GBF, to foster collaboration between national statistical offices, Parties to the CBD and experts in the biological sciences for its operationalization and to discuss the current activities and technical aspects of implementation of the post-2020 GBF monitoring framework at the global and at the national level.

By referring to the regional and thematic BONs, these BONs connect monitoring efforts for different dimensions and scales of biodiversity. National BONs are directly oriented to serve the needs of national

and sub-national policy-makers and correspond to the operational scale of many monitoring initiatives, addressing policy needs for reporting on MEAs (e.g., CBD), and to support national reporting needs for the CBD and SDGs.

This knowledge-based system (KBS) can then underpin and extend ecosystem-based management of Arctic Ocean living resources.

The Arctic BON focuses on linking and integrating existing biodiversity observation efforts and data to support conservation planning and policy-making. In this regard, the State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report (SAMBR) (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna [CAFF] 2017) is a synthesis of the state of knowledge about biodiversity in Arctic marine ecosystems, detectable changes, and important gaps to assess state and trends in biodiversity across six focal ecosystem components (FECs): marine mammals, seabirds, marine fishes, benthos, plankton, and sea ice biota. This publication was the culmination of the first five-year implementation phase for the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Monitoring Plan.

Outcomes

The conceptual framework for national and regional biodiversity observation systems organized around the interaction between (and integration of) basic and applied science, and end-users. Furthermore, the process for BON development is defined around the engagement of the different stakeholder groups; the assessment of user needs and available data, tools, and platforms; the design of the BON, which includes inter alia data collection methods, data management, analysis and reporting; and its implementation. This flexible approach has been used and adapted for the Arctic Ocean.

The Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP) (Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network [GEO BON n.d.]) is an international network of scientists, government agencies, Indigenous organizations and conservation groups working together to harmonize and integrate efforts to monitor the Arctic's living resources. The CBMP facilitates Arctic biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of the region's natural resources.

60 Essential Biodiversity Variables are defined as a set of metrics capable of measuring state of species, populations, or ecosystems and used as a common basis for the calculation of indicators measuring biodiversity and ecosystem change.

61 The previous webinars conducted in 2021 were as follows: Ecosystem extent and integrity (Goal A); Species populations and area-based conservation (Goal A, Target 2); Genetic diversity (Goal A); and Nature's contribution to people (Goal B, Target 9, Target 11).

Its goal is to facilitate more rapid detection, communication, and response to significant biodiversity-related trends and pressures.

The Arctic Marine Biodiversity Monitoring Plan (CBMP-Marine Plan) (Gill et al. 2011) integrates existing marine biodiversity monitoring efforts (both traditional scientific and community based) from across the Arctic and represents an agreement between six Arctic coastal nations and a great number of national, regional, Indigenous and academic organizations and agencies in all six countries on how to monitor Arctic marine ecosystems. The CBMP-Marine Plan identifies agreement on: (i) a suite of common biological parameters and indicators to monitor and report on change across Arctic marine ecosystems; (ii) key abiotic parameters,

relevant to marine biodiversity, which should be monitored; (iii) optimal sampling schemes (e.g., where, when and how the suite of parameters should be measured and by whom); and, Arctic Marine Areas, by which monitoring results will be organized and reported.

The biodiversity crisis calls for both the adoption of a common framework for biodiversity monitoring, and the establishment of a system of harmonized biodiversity observation systems that supports it. GEO BON has facilitated the establishment of several national, regional, and thematic BONs, and developed a capacity building and knowledge transfer platform to further improve the design of biodiversity observation systems.

CASE STUDY 2: DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE APPROACHES FOR DATA COLLECTION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION



Background

So far further emphasis has been shown on the standardization and exchange of data. A major issue that must be addressed is how to fill the gap of accepted standards for data structures that can serve biodiversity data management.

In the context of ocean data management, scientists, data managers and decision makers need mutual cooperation. Decision makers will spur to more innovation and efficiency regarding research topics with policy priority, and hence, guide researchers. Correspondingly, scientists need to provide data managers with reliable and first quality-controlled data and make data available for decision makers.

This can be used to support advisory and regulatory measures. Given that specific information is needed for various types of thematic areas, this implies the need of better evaluation and use of environmental data and, thus, for a better marine environment management, monitoring and reporting.

Challenges

The Barcelona Convention Reporting System is managed by the Info-RAC Data Centre. Some of the activities of the Info-RAC Data Centre contribute and provide support to the process of elaboration of specific strategies⁶² such as the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (SAP BIO) (UNEP/MAP 2020). It is recently highlighted by the Info-RAC Data Centre, the importance of the diagnosis to be carried out at national level within the elaboration process of

62 Other strategy is related to the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean.

the Post-2020 SAP BIO that should consider relevant frameworks such as the Ecosystem Approach and the NBSAPs processes.

Solutions and actions

The Reporting Info System is an infrastructure to support reporting activities under article 26 of the amended Barcelona Convention and several articles of different Protocols of the Mediterranean Action Plan. Article 26 of the Barcelona Convention stipulates that the Contracting Parties shall transmit to the Secretariat reports on:

- a. the legal, administrative or other measures taken by them for the implementation of the Convention, the Protocols, and the recommendations adopted by their meetings;
- b. the effectiveness of these measures and problems encountered in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols and its following Protocols:

- Protocol Concerning Cooperation in preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea (Prevention and Emergency Protocol).
- Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil (Offshore Protocol).
- Protocol for the prevention and elimination of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircrafts or Incineration at Sea (Dumping Protocol).

- Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol).
- Protocol on the prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal Hazardous Wastes Protocol.
- Protocol for the Specially Protected Areas and Biodiversity (SPA and BD Protocol) (UNEP/MAP 2021).
- Protocol on the Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean (ICZM Protocol).

In this regard, the unified reporting format of the existing UNEP/MAP reporting system under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (https://idc.info-rac.org/bcrs/country%20user%20visual_guidance.pdf/) is available for such purpose. The Reporting Format was designed to help the integration of the information needed for all legal instruments abovementioned. Additionally, MAP Barcelona Convention has produced a lessons-learned report, through gender case study compilation, on issues homologous with the overall MedProgramme

The Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP)⁶³ lay down the principles for an integrated monitoring for biodiversity and non-indigenous species, pollution and marine litter, coast and hydrography in an integrated manner.

The implementation of IMAP is in line with article 12 of the Barcelona Convention and several monitoring related provisions under different protocols with the main objective to assess Good Environmental Status (GES) (European Union 2018). The main pillar comprises the 27 common indicators as presented in decision IG 22/7. The implementation of IMAP requires standard guidelines and approaches in monitoring the 27 common indicators and the revision of national monitoring programmes of the Contracting Parties to be aligned with the IMAP indicators. Regular national data reporting will contribute to thematic and overall regional assessments. The national (IMAPs) Infosystem was established in line with the SEIS⁶⁴ principles to support data collection and reporting from the implementation of IMAPs and preparation of QSRs. The first integrated assessment based on

The **Reporting Info System** is the infrastructure which provides tools to support the report activity. The main target of the system is allowing collection, storage, management, and process of reporting data.

The **Reporting Data** is the textual and numerical data regarding the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols that the Contracting Parties are requested to provide to the Secretariat on a biannual basis. The collection, management and processing of reporting are at the core of the Reporting Info System and reporting activities.

The **Data Centre** is a web-based reporting infrastructure. It aims to improve the harmonization of the management of the data flows from the detailed definition of the requested data to the generation of the final information products such as specific reports and environmental indicators.

agenda: gender integration in Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), marine and coastal pollution, coastal disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, coastal developmental planning, and advocacy for gender-inclusive marine ecosystem management and research.

The definitions of the main concepts regarding the Reporting Info System, the Reporting Data and the Data Centre, are shown hereunder.

63 The 19th Meeting of Contracting Parties in 2016 agreed on in its Decision IG. 22/7, the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast).

64 Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) is a collaborative approach aiming to organise environmental information based on key principles, that is, information should be: (i) managed as close as possible to its source; (ii) collected once and shared with others for many purposes; (iii) readily available to easily fulfil reporting obligations; (iv) easily accessible to all users; (v) accessible to enable comparisons at the appropriate geographical scale and the participation of citizens; (vi) fully available to the general public and at national level in the relevant national language(s); (vi) supported through common, free, open software standards. <https://eni-seis.eionet.europa.eu/east/governance/what-is-seis>



IMAP is the 2017 Quality Status Report (QSR) (UNEP/MAP 2017b)⁶⁵.

The implementation of IMAP requires standard guidelines and approaches in monitoring the common indicators and the revision of national monitoring programmes of the CPs to be aligned with the IMAP indicators.

Outcomes

Contracting Parties have developed IMAP-based monitoring and assessment programmes at national level, which generate national data for submission to the IMAP Info System. This is supporting regional

assessments such as QSRs as well as tracking of progress towards the regionally set indicators, i.e., common indicators, at national level. Furthermore, UNEP/MAP highlighted the importance of ensuring clear linkages between the monitoring component to be included in the post-2020 SAP BIO and the IMAP and its indicators, so that duplication of indicators should be avoided.

UNEP/MAP informed through the Info/RAC Data Centre that is ready to support the post-2020 GBF process, and to, inter alia, promote the mainstreaming of biodiversity into all relevant environmental policies as well as relevant policies for the sustainable use of marine living resources.

65 The 2017 Quality Status Report builds upon an initial Integrated Ecosystem Assessment developed in 2011, the 2012 Mediterranean State of Environment Report, as well as several thematic assessments.

CASE STUDY 3: ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING ON THE STATE OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT IN THE NORTH-EAST ATLANTIC



Research and increased knowledge are needed to deliver improved understanding of how the marine environment functions, the impacts of individual and combined effects of human activities, and to assess the effectiveness of measures. To this end, Contracting Parties establish complementary or joint programmes of scientific or technical research guided by the OSPAR Science Agenda (OSA) (OSPAR 2018).

On the other hand, in the publication on the Progress Report on Implementation of OSPAR measures (OSPAR 2021b), it is highlighted a series of successful, collective actions that describe good progress on implementation of measures and included some challenges.

Challenges

Effective protection of the marine environment requires a consistent and harmonized implementation of measures across all Contracting Parties. As stated in the OSPAR Convention's Text, in the General Obligations, "..., *Contracting Parties shall, individually and jointly, adopt programmes and measures and shall harmonise their policies and strategies*". Sharing best practices and lessons learned on effectiveness of measures will help to support an adaptive management through the identification of obstacles and challenges to progress and the identification of the steps needed to ensure a high degree of effectiveness of measures in the region.

Solutions and actions

Consistent measures should be developed for the purpose of assessing the marine environment and determining existing knowledge gaps. In this regard, the 2018 OSA for marine environment assessments contains a prioritised list of 44 knowledge gaps,

aiming at improving future OSPAR assessments, notably the OSPAR's next Quality Status Report (QSR) due in 2023 (OSPAR n.d.), and contains suggestions for increasing OSPAR's knowledge base.

The OSA includes priority science needs, suggestions for focused action to close the knowledge gaps and to make better use of new scientific knowledge gained, as well as the approach adopted for the identification and prioritisation of knowledge gaps and who was involved. Updated information is based on knowledge gaps identified in OSPAR's 2017 Intermediate Assessment (IA 2017) (OSPAR 2017). Assessment and monitoring are critical activities of the OSPAR Commission. Resources and guidance to support indicator task groups and Contracting Parties in their assessment and reporting are provided⁶⁶.

The format for the up-coming QSR 2023 will allow access to high-level summaries and detailed background documents for thematic assessments, common indicator assessments and a range of other assessments, and links to the relevant data. The QSR 2023 will also provide information in a format that can be used as a common regional report for relevant EU Member States to use in their national reporting on the state of the marine environment under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (EU MSFD) (European Union 2018).

This work is supported by OSPAR's Data and Information Management System (ODIMS)⁶⁷, which supports access to OSPAR's data. In this respect, ODIMS and the wider implementation of OSPAR's data management strategy are key in supporting

⁶⁶ Article 22 of the OSPAR Convention requires that the Contracting Parties report to the OSPAR Commission at regular intervals on the steps they have taken to implement OSPAR Decisions and Recommendations, the effectiveness of the measures and problems encountered in the implementation. The legal text of OSPAR's Decisions or Recommendations includes requirements for this implementation reporting in the form of a timeframe and format for reporting.

⁶⁷ <https://odims.ospar.org/en/>



the assessment and the monitoring processes. Assessment sheets and reporting units' guidance, created for this purpose, are available.

Reporting units are used to spatially define an area for the purpose of presenting the results calculated from an assessment. The assessment uses a defined methodology as the one provided by the OSPAR's Coordinated Environmental Monitoring Programme (CEMP)⁶⁸ that aims to deliver comparable data from across the OSPAR Maritime Area. The CEMP Appendices have been adapted to align with the EC's requirements for the EU MSFD reporting and are available in the OSPAR Assessment Portal (OAP)⁶⁹. The purpose is to assist those Contracting Parties that are EU Member States in their national reporting commitments for EU MSFD Article 11 Monitoring Programmes. The CEMP Appendices are also included as metadata for the relevant data layers in ODIMS.

In 2021, the North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES) 2030 (OSPAR 2021c) was adopted. This was supported by a high-level review of OSPAR's previous strategy for the decade 2010-2020. The thematic focus of the NEAES 2030 is dealing with the following core themes: (i) Clean seas; (ii) Biologically diverse seas; (iii) Productive and sustainably used seas; and (iv) Seas resilient to climate change and ocean acidification.

The NEAES 2030 is the means by which the OSPAR's 16 Contracting Parties will implement the OSPAR Convention until 2030. It sets out collective objectives regarding biodiversity loss, pollution, including marine litter, and climate change. Its implementation is part of the OSPAR's contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs.

The operational objectives set qualitative and quantitative targets to support achievement of the strategic objectives. The 12 strategic objectives set out OSPAR's goals on eutrophication, hazardous substances, radioactive substances, marine litter, protection, conservation and restoration of species and habitats, sustainable use of the marine

environment, underwater noise, protecting the seabed, and climate change and ocean acidification.

Under the ecosystem approach, management decisions are knowledge and science based. In terms of monitoring and assessment, the development of the OSPAR common indicators will continue to track the effects of pressures from human activities on the marine environment, and to assess progress towards the strategic objectives set out in the NEAES 2030. The common indicators are the basis for regular OSPAR assessments of the changing status of the marine environment and the pressures from human activities. These indicators are based on information from monitoring programmes described in the CEMP.

Regarding the regional cooperation, OSPAR will continue to build on the multilateral and bilateral cooperation established with other intergovernmental organisations to improve the protection of the North-East Atlantic, as relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), such as the Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), and cooperation with other organizations as the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the Arctic Council.

Strengthen cooperation on common challenges related to the implementation of the OSPAR objectives and on international ocean issues will continue with UNEP, including with relevant RSCAPs. OSPAR will contribute to the implementation of marine-related UNEP strategies, plans and programmes.

Additionally, OSPAR will be highly supportive for the implementation of global processes and agreements, among others, such as the CBD including the post-2020 GBF process, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEP 2022) resolutions and decisions, the UN Decade of Ocean Science (Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [IOC-UNESCO 2021]), the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (UNDESA 2021c), and the UNFCCC.

68 <https://www.ospar.org/work-areas/cross-cutting-issues/cemp>

69 <https://oap.ospar.org/en/ospar-monitoring-programmes/cemp/cemp-appendices/>

Outcomes

Monitoring and assessment of the marine environment require the effective use and management of data and information to support the production of robust assessments. This is achieved through the ODIMS and the OAP.

A key deliverable is the publication of the next edition of the QSR 2023. This QSR 2023⁷⁰ will fully provide information of the overall state of the North-East

Atlantic and its ecosystems as well as contribute to understanding the effect of OSPAR's work on pressures on and the state of the marine environment.

The NEAES 2030 emphasizes the importance of regional cooperation in ensuring the effective protection and sustainable use of the seas and that OSPAR will continue to play a leading role in addressing global ocean issues.

⁷⁰ QSR 2023 may be used by Contracting Parties that are also EU Member States to support their reporting obligations under the EU MSFD.

CASE STUDY 4: ECOLOGICAL QUALITY OBJECTIVES TARGETS TO IMPLEMENT AND REPORT SDG 14 INDICATORS IN SYNERGY WITH OTHER GOALS IN THE NORTHWEST PACIFIC



Background

The Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) is mobilizing multi-stakeholder partnerships and resources through its Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2018-2023 (NOWPAP 2019), to focus on four strategic priorities, as follows:

1. Ecosystem-based integrated coastal and river basin management.
2. Assessment of the state of the marine and coastal environment.
3. Preventing and reducing land-based and sea-based pollution.
4. Conserving marine and coastal biodiversity.

In this respect, NOWPAP represents a regional coordination mechanism for supporting progress towards ocean-related SDGs, using an integrated, evidence-based and programmatic approach to the four strategic priorities abovementioned.

In addition, the MTS 2018-2023 sets out to deliver results in three operational pillars that comprise: an ecosystem-based approach to sustainable development of marine and coastal areas to achieve Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs); monitoring and reporting on progress towards SDG 14; and strengthening NOWPAP partnerships with relevant global and regional institutions.

Challenges

NOWPAP is delivering its mandate through its MTS 2018-2023 to contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The proposed Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the 2018-2023 MTS, aims to significantly improve service delivery to Member States, in terms of coordination of the regional implementation of the ocean-related SDGs using NOWPAP mechanism.

The process for possible alignment with the SDGs indicators is underway.

Solutions and actions

Regarding the NOWPAP's contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region, the above mentioned three pillars are supporting the following SDGs and targets:

- a) An ecosystem-based management approach to sustainable development of marine and coastal areas to achieve the Ecological Quality Objectives, thereby is helping the SDG 14: Life below water.
- b) Monitoring and reporting on progress towards SDG 14, in particular its targets: 14.1: By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution; 14.2: By 2020, sustainably manage, and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience and take action for their restoration, to achieve healthy and productive oceans; 14.5: By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on best available scientific information; and 14.c: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.
- c) Strengthened partnerships with relevant global and regional institutions. Based on common principles and values and the shared goal of marine and coastal conservation, NOWPAP continues collaborative work with major stakeholders from both, public and private sector

stakeholders, other RSPs, and regional and global multilateral partners⁷¹.

NOWPAP provide Member States with reliable information and data on the state of the marine and coastal environments, including the status of biodiversity and conservation measures, to support evidence based policy-making. Furthermore, Member States could also use NOWPAP inputs to report on SDG 14 implementation at national level and to global monitoring processes.

NOWPAP activities will also support the achievement of the following SDGs: 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Action), 15 (Life on Land) and 17 (Strengthen Partnerships for Sustainable Development).

During 2018-2023, NOWPAP will finalize the list of EcoQOs indicators (Northwest Pacific Action Plan Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Centre [NOWPAP POMRAC] 2018). In addition, NOWPAP will start collecting data and reporting on EcoQOs indicators as well as the SDGs indicators.

Regarding the priority area of assessing status of the marine and coastal environment, regular assessment of the environmental status and trends within the NOWPAP region, is one of the key components of the NOWPAP Programme of Work.

The NOWPAP Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Centre (NOWPAP POMRAC 2022) is involved in the implementation of several major elements of the sustainable management strategy for the Northwest Pacific adopted by the Member States. Such priorities are as follows: (i) monitoring and assessment of the environmental conditions; (ii) integrated coastal area planning; (iii) integrated coastal area management;

(iv) establishment of a collaborative and cooperative network.

The POMRAC has compiled and published several technical reports on atmospheric deposition of contaminants, pollutants input with rivers, integrated coastal planning and management, and other issues. General assessments of the status of marine environment were prepared in the form of the "State of Marine Environment Report" (SOMER). The first SOMER was published in 2007 and the second one was published in 2014 (NOWPAP POMRAC 2014). The major goal for the next edition, the SOMER-3, is to present the integrated assessment of environmental problems, status and trends related to the existing and changing natural and socio-economic conditions in the NOWPAP region.

The POMRAC cooperates with the NOWPAP Regional Activity Centres (RACs) in the establishment of a collaborative, regional monitoring programme, i.e., Special Monitoring and Coastal Environment Assessment Regional Activity Centre (NOWPAP CEARAC n.d.), Data and Information Network Regional Activity Centre (NOWPAP DINRAC n.d.), and Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre (NOWPAP MERRAC n.d.).

Some of the main functions and tasks of the POMRAC are to: (i) collect information on technologies and know-how in the field of monitoring of atmospheric deposition and rivers and direct inputs in the Northwest Pacific Region; (ii) organize data intercalibration in cooperation with other international and regional organizations concerned, especially with IOC UNESCO; (iii) promote harmonization of the approaches and techniques used in NOWPAP/3 monitoring network, among others.

A 'NOWPAP Sustainable Development Goals Outlook 2030' report will be prepared, reviewing regional progress towards ocean-related SDGs. NOWPAP will provide Member States with integrated assessments of the state of the marine and coastal environment and its individual components to support evidence-based policymaking. The focus will be on biodiversity, eutrophication, chemical and biological pollution, harmful algal blooms, marine litter, threats from oil and hazardous and noxious substances spills, and climate change impacts.

71 NOWPAP is a non-country partner or collaborator of the following international organizations and regional institutions: COBSEA; the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), ex-officio member of several thematic groups; the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA); the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC); the Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC) of IOC-UNESCO; IMO; UNDP/GEF Yellow Sea LME Project Phase II. NOWPAP works on marine litter issues closely with the Tripartite Environmental Ministers Meeting (TEMM).

Informed robust data and assessments issued by NOWPAP, will imply that policy-making and decision-making will be provided with means to integrate the environmental dimension of sustainable development of marine and coastal areas and support regional progress towards the SDGs 6, 12, 14, 15 and 17.

POMRAC developed a preliminary list of some EcoQOs and possible associated indicators adopted by the Member States to be used to monitor the status of marine environment based on experiences from other RSPs, such as HELCOM, UNEP/MAP, OSPAR, in relation with the EU MSFD (European Union 2008).

HELCOM uses core indicators with quantitative threshold values to evaluate progress towards the goal of achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) in the Baltic Sea. Core indicator evaluations are regularly updated and published as core indicator reports (Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission [HELCOM] n.d.).

As an example, UNEP/MAP⁷² through the Ecosystem Approach and Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP), provide a list of 7 Ecological Objectives (EO) and the associated common indicators, as indicated hereunder.

- EO 1 Biodiversity: **Common indicator 1, 2, 3, 4, 5**
- EO 2 Non-indigenous species: **Common indicator 6**
- EO 3 Harvest of commercially exploited fish and shellfish: **Common indicator 7, 8, 9, 10, 11**
- EO 5 Eutrophication: **Common indicator 13, 14**
- EO 8 Coastal ecosystems and landscapes: **Common indicator 16, 25**
- EO 9 Pollution: **Common indicator 22, 23, 24**
- EO 10 Marine litter: **Common indicator 17, 18, 19, 20**

The following five EcoQOs suggested for the NOWPAP region are similar to the EcoQOs in the other regions mentioned.

- EcoQO 1: **Biological and habitat diversity are not changed significantly due to anthropogenic pressure**
- EcoQO 2: **Alien species are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystems**
- EcoQO 3: **Eutrophication adverse effects are absent**
- EcoQO 4: **Contaminants cause no significant impact on coastal and marine ecosystems and human health**
- EcoQO 5: **Marine litter does not adversely affect coastal and marine environments**

Outcomes

After the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, the work on EcoQOs has become more important for the NOWPAP Member States. Given that work is in progress for the approval by the NOWPAP Member States of specific indicators and targets, the EcoQOs identified are relevant to the assessment process and the possible alignment with the SDG indicators, namely the SDG 14.

EcoQOs⁷³ are being developed to provide operational objectives and indicators for applying the ecosystem approach.

Therefore, the outcomes of POMRAC activities will be relevant for the development of indicators on EcoQO 3 (eutrophication), EcoQO 4 (contaminants) and EcoQO 5 (marine litter, including microplastics) and this should be enhanced.

In respect the CEARAC activities, these will be applicable for EcoQO 1 (biodiversity), EcoQO 2 (alien species) and EcoQO 3 (eutrophication). EcoQOs indicators to be agreed upon by the Member States should be available at DINRAC website in the future.

All these activities will contribute to the achievement of several SDGs, particularly SDG 14. Thus, NOWPAP will further synergize its activities with regional and global priorities and institutions, while expanding its partnerships and continue engaging in global processes and mechanisms in support of the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development, i.e., the SDG 14.

⁷² Ecosystem Approach and Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP). <http://web.unep.org/uneppmap/who-we-are/ecosystem-approach>

⁷³ EcoQOs targets could be set up for the following four indicators: (i) Nutrients concentration in the water column; (ii) Chlorophyll a concentration in the water column; (iii) Concentration of contaminants in water and sediments; (iv) Trends in the amount and composition of litter washed ashore.

When it comes to harmonizing national monitoring approaches and considering the experience of other RSPs, the recommended actions are that countries agree on common regional EcoQOs, operational

criteria and common indicators to be applied. NOWPAP Member States are currently provided by a marine environment monitoring system (or systems) and the applicable national standards.

CASE STUDY 5: STRENGTHENING NATIONAL CAPACITY IN ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC



Background

The Secretariat of the Pacific Environment Programme (SPREP) is the primary regional organization concerned with environmental management and sustainable development in the Pacific. The mandate of SPREP is to promote cooperation in the Pacific region, provide assistance to protect and improve its environment, and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations (Commonwealth of Australia 1995)⁷⁴. SPREP has also developed Environmental And Social Safeguards & Gender Mainstreaming policy. The Gender Policy reinforces SPREP's commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women, recognizing the importance of both men and women being equally involved in the planning and management of the environment and its natural resources at all levels. The policy establishes a framework and operating principles, and outlines priority areas of action.

The Action Plan⁷⁵ of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme has been superseded by the Secretariat Strategic Plan (2017-2026). Progress against the Strategic Plan

is monitored through the biennial Performance Implementation Plan.

SPREP Member States adopted the related Strategic Plan, identifying four priorities: (i) climate change; (ii) biodiversity and ecosystem management; (iii) waste management and pollution control; and (iv) environmental monitoring and governance.

SPREP coordinates the policies, programmes and activities of 26 governments and administrations of the Pacific region on the protection and sustainable use of the environment. In addition, SPREP develops strategies, action plans, and guidelines, and provides technical and advisory support to its members in designing and implementing NBSAPs and supports its members with high-impact projects across the Pacific region.

Challenges

The 14 Pacific member countries of the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS)⁷⁶ are parties to and strong supporter of many MEAs but experience and knowledge in negotiation skills have been identified as major constraints in effective participation and negotiations. In addition to the lack of negotiating skills, a further constraint is the lack of relevant available information prior to meetings on issues to be negotiated.

Solutions and actions

The Inform Project (SPREP n.d.)⁷⁷ and the African, Caribbean and Pacific States ACP MEAs 3 Programme⁷⁸ are identified as good examples

74 Article 2 of the Agreement of establishing the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

75 The Action Plan included the following: (a) co-ordinating regional activities addressing the environment; (b) monitoring and assessing the state of the environment in the region including the impacts of human activities on the ecosystems of the region and encouraging development undertaken to be directed towards maintaining or enhancing environmental qualities; (c) promoting and developing programmes, including research programmes, to protect the atmosphere and terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems and species, while ensuring ecologically sustainable utilisation of resources;(d) reducing, through prevention and management, atmospheric, land based, freshwater and marine pollution; (e) strengthening national and regional capabilities and institutional arrangements; (f) increasing and improving training, educational and public awareness activities; and (g) promoting integrated legal, planning and management mechanisms.

76 <http://www.acp.int/>.

77 SPREP (n.d.). The Inform Project. <https://www.sprep.org/inform>

78 SPREP (n.d.). Pacific Hub Component - Capacity Building Related To Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) In African, Caribbean And Pacific (ACP) Countries - Phase III <https://www.sprep.org/acp-meas>

which represent part of the strengthening process of national capacity in environmental planning in the region.

The Inform Project is the unified response for the need of data-driven decision making in the Pacific thanks to the strategic partnership between the Pacific Island Countries, SPREP and UNEP to increase the availability of environmental data. The key challenges that the Inform Project addressed are to: (i) increase data availability as evidence of the environmental resources, trends and drivers of environmental change; (ii) improve information management and interpretation as well as standard procedures for environmental data; and (iii) easy access and timely information for decision making, planning and reporting.

The Inform Project's key deliverables are the following ones:

1. A network of national Environmental Data Portals: online data repositories that provide an easy way to store, share, access and reuse national environmental data.
2. A set of environmental knowledge management tools to improve data monitoring and reporting capabilities.
3. National and regional capacity building to monitor, review and report on national development plans such as the State of Environment Assessment and MEAs.

The Project has been executed in fourteen Pacific Island Countries during a four-year regional project (2017–2021) including the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. By assisting its Member States SPREP contributes to harmonize monitoring and reporting processes, as appropriate, of strategies, programmes, activities and guidance sources such as the Environmental Indicators Guidebook: Pacific Island Countries (SPREP 2021)⁷⁹. This recent

publication contains environmental indicators (Part I) and core indicators (Part II).

In 2012 the SPREP members approved the development of a set of standardised indicators for use by member countries. Through the Inform Project, SPREP programmes then developed a set of 34 indicators that was endorsed by members at the 2018 SPREP meeting. The indicators are placed in broad themes such as Atmosphere and Climate, Biodiversity, Built Environment, Coastal and Marine, and Governance. These are the main themes typically used by Pacific Island countries to group indicators in their State of Environment reports and are also consistent with the grouping of datasets on the national environment data portals. Environmental Monitoring and Governance is one of key focus areas of SPREP.

SPREP produces Regional State of Environment and Conservation reports. The reports use existing data, and tools that have been developed to aggregate and display the data in an easily accessible format. These build on the use of National Environment Portals⁸⁰ that have been established in all Pacific Island countries which include a reporting tool for MEAs, through the Inform Project funded by GEF.

The Pacific Environment Data Portal (<https://pacific-data.sprep.org/>) contains environmental information for decision making, and currently connects 14 national environment portals, providing tools for the monitoring, evaluation and analysis. To this end, Parties can better plan, forecast, and report at the national, regional and international level.

The Environmental Monitoring and Governance Programme is one of the key SPREP focus areas. The ACP MEAs Phase 3 Programme of Activities emphasize key areas in the implementation, enforcement of, and compliance with MEAs. Building capacity, processes and infrastructure, and developing national legislation and frameworks and knowledge management are the main components of these activities. The Project is also promoting

79 SPREP (2021). Environmental Indicators Guidebook: Pacific Island Countries. Apia: SPREP. https://pacific-data.sprep.org/system/files/SPREP%20Report%20Indicator%20Guidebook%20Press%20Edition%20web%20edition%20final%20v2_0.pdf.

80 Data portals are related to Atmosphere and Climate, Built Environment, Coastal and Marine, Culture and Heritage, Inland Waters, Land, Biodiversity and Nuclear Legacy. <https://www.sprep.org/inform/data-portals>. For further information about the data portals, this can be found at InformDocs: <https://pacific-data.sprep.org/>



a common understanding of addressing gender specific issues and roles to come up with an impactful delivery of the project using the 'Operational Note' as a guide developed in consultation with gender experts both within UNEP and outside, including the project partners. Launched on 8th March 2021 to commemorate the International Women's Day, this Note is intended to provide guidance to project partners and their collaborators on using specific gender considerations within the objectives and provisions of the ACP MEAs 3 project.

Mainstreaming refers to the process of ensuring that environmental management, protection and conservation are integrated into sustainable development planning and management. The region has agreed to facilitate sustainable development at the national level through the National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS). SPREP is strengthening national environmental governance frameworks so that the environment pillar can effectively contribute to the NSDS process.

SPREP is strengthening therefore national capacity in environmental planning by assisting Member States in the review and formulation of their national environment management plans and policies. This is done within the framework of national development plans with the aim of evolving these into NSDS or Plans.

In 2021 an e-learning platform was launched to increase regional capacity in data management and the use of newly developed tools. The Inform Project has built a series of online courses and GIS expertise peer to peer trainings that is free to join, is open worldwide and includes a certificate issued by SPREP upon completion.

The Inform Project has also set up new partnerships, for example with international organizations such as IOC UNESCO and UNDP. In this respect, it could be emphasized the IOC Ocean InfoHub Project (OIH, <https://oceaninfohub.org/>), which is a new global initiative to streamline access to ocean science data and information for management and sustainable development.

The project is focused on an openly accessible web platform designed to support interlinkages and interoperability with local, regional and thematic data and information infrastructures including existing clearinghouse mechanisms.

The initial focus of OIH is on responding to requests for data products and services from these three regions: African region; Latin America and Caribbean region; and the Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS). All these regions have successful stories to share. It also assists countries in their reporting requirements, so that regions and countries can learn from each other.

The OIH development and implementation principles will be fully based on co-design, and will facilitate better access to global databases, as well as better visibility of national and regional data holdings. The OIH formalizes partnerships with other UN agencies and key international partners, among others.

Outcomes

SPREP is strengthening national capacity in environmental planning by assisting members in the review and formulation of their national environment management plans and policies. This is done within the framework of national development plans with the aim of evolving these into NSDS or Plans.

It has been identified that multi-sector strategic planning helps breakdown organisational barriers. In addition, clear institutional strategies are needed, owned by stakeholders, management and staff. Moreover, effective performance management systems are needed within institutions. In summary, weak coordination of projects, activities and training events affects capacity development at all levels (individual, organisational) in the region.

Since its inception in 2009, the ACP MEAs 3 Programme, is continuing support to ACP countries and is now in its third phase. Two of the objectives of the Programme are:

- i) improving ACP countries' capacities for the management of coasts and oceans in line with the related RSPs, and
- ii) improving enforcement of and compliance with biodiversity-related MEAs related to the CBD, CITES, CMS, and chemicals and waste, i.e., Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata.

Furthermore, the ACP MEAs 3 Programme comprises the two following components:

- Effective implementation, monitoring, enforcement of, and compliance with MEAs related to biodiversity and chemicals and waste (the SPREP Component); and
- Effective implementation of the RSC to address pollution and ICZM (the Noumea Component).

The ACP MEAs 3 Programme is a joint partnership between the European Union, the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), UNEP and FAO. The programme aims to build capacity in 79 countries in Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) regions to support them in fulfilling their obligations as parties to MEAs, to address the environmental challenges they face and to reap the benefits of improved environmental governance at national and regional levels. The global relevance of the ACP MEAs 3 Programme is reflected in its alignment with the SDGs⁸¹.

The Programme's partners, currently, include the African Union Commission (AUC), the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM), the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), the Abidjan Convention Secretariat, the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, the Cartagena Convention Secretariat, the Noumea Convention Secretariat, the Bamako Convention, the BRS Convention Secretariat⁸², the Minamata Convention Secretariat, the CBD Secretariat, the CITES Secretariat and the CMS Secretariat.

As already mentioned in Section 3.1 of this report, the outputs of the Inform Project have positively contributed to strengthening national and regional capacity in the establishment of Environment Data Portals, State of the Environment reports, National Environment Management Strategy and the first Regional State of the Environment and Conservation report to better manage the environment.

81 Covering a wide range of targets under SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life below Water), SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

82 <http://www.brsmeas.org/>



CASE STUDY 6: REGIONAL SCIENCE POLICY DIALOGUES IN THE WEST INDIAN OCEAN



Background

According to the Work Programme 2018–2022 for the implementation of the Nairobi Convention (UNEP-Nairobi Convention

2018), this Programme is focused on a number of themes, such as assessments, ecosystem-based management, including marine protected areas management, environmental governance and capacity development, and their interlinkages.

Through this Programme, existing partnerships are being enhanced and new ones will be developed. New areas are being explored with RFMOs and other organisations about activities relating to fisheries, blue economy, ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs), vulnerable marine ecosystems (VME), areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA) and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).

Challenges

Work areas identified are mainly focused on assessments and capacity building, management, coordination and legal aspects, and information and awareness.

To identify cooperation needs, particularly to scale up programmes and projects implementation in key areas, it is important to build valuable, strategic partnerships.

In essence, addressing gaps between knowledge and actions and availability of the information are required. In this respect, to overcome these obstacles, a number of initiatives on capacity development, sharing of scientific information, and research collaboration and cooperation are in place.

Solutions and actions

The Contracting Parties/Participating Countries (CPs/PCs) to the Nairobi Convention agreed on common positions about the exchange of knowledge and information. Therefore, the CPs/PCs adopted various decisions at the different COPs to strengthen the link between science, policy and actions and, in turn, enhance informed decision making for the management of coastal and marine resources in the region.

Decisions include mechanisms to facilitate the establishment of a network of academic and research institutions, as it is the case of the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA)⁸³ that serves as the Secretariat of the network. Other decisions are related to the establishment of a platform to convene Science-Policy Dialogues.

A Consortium for the Conservation of the Coastal and Marine Ecosystems in the Western Indian Ocean region (WIO-C)⁸⁴ was established as a network of local scientific organisations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and universities, to encourage collaboration between science and policy structures.

The Consortium partnership is designed to improve information exchange, synergy and coordination between NGOs working on coastal and marine environment issues, and to move towards a joint programmatic approach to attain good results.

In addition to these partnerships, the Nairobi Convention established the Forum for Academic and Research Institutions (FARI) in 2004 with WIOMSA playing the Secretariat's role of hosting the Forum. The Forum is comprised of experts from academic and research institutions in the region with a mandate in marine sciences.

83 <https://www.wiomsa.org/>

84 <https://wio-c.org/>

On this same topic, the Integrated Management of the Marine and Coastal Resources of the Northern Mozambique Channel (NoCaMo) Project⁸⁵ is a good example of cooperation and collaboration research. The NoCaMo project is funded by the Fonds Français pour L'Environnement Mondial (FFEM) and aims to ensure that the high biodiversity value of the Northern Mozambique Channel's coral reefs, seagrass, and mangrove ecosystems are maintained by 2025. This partnership is formed by four organizations: the Nairobi Convention; World Conservation Society (WCS), CORDIO⁸⁶, and World Wildlife Fund-Madagascar (WWF-Madagascar).

During the period 2018–2022, the Nairobi Convention is implementing two projects funded by the CPs and the GEF, namely, a project on implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Protection of the Western Indian Ocean from Land-based Sources and Activities (WIO-SAP)⁸⁷, and the Western Indian Ocean Large Marine Ecosystems Strategic Action Programme Policy Harmonization and Institutional Reforms (WIO LME SAPPHIRE)⁸⁸.

The Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention has provided support for the World Ocean Assessments, i.e., the second cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting (United Nations 2021a) and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment (United Nations 2021b), including Socioeconomic Aspects, covering the region of the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden⁸⁹ and the area of the Regional Organization for Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME)⁹⁰ and the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI).

The Nairobi Clearinghouse (<https://www.nairobiconvention.org/clearinghouse/>) mechanism host assessments, reports and guidelines, that have been provided by the NFPs, partners, experts, among others. Assessments are related to marine spatial planning (MSP), economic valuation of critical habitats, marine litter, water quality monitoring, technology for management of waste, and community adaptation to climate change.

The National Marine Ecosystems Diagnostic Analysis Assessments reports provide a comprehensive analysis of the state of the marine environment in the region, that in turn, provide significant information for improving existing National Action Plans for the management of marine resources. Reports as the Marine Protected Areas Outlook (UNEP-Nairobi Convention and Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association [WIOMSA] 2021) and the Regional State of the Coast Report (UNEP-Nairobi Convention and WIOMSA 2015) comprise valuable data that are appropriate in the context of the CBD national reporting.

Outcomes

The WIO-C comprises a group of international and regional NGOs in partnership with intergovernmental organizations that are active in regional marine and coastal ecosystem management in the Western Indian Ocean.

The agreed actions from a meeting organized by WIO-C related to the agenda item on the post-2020 GBF, indicate that in advancing discussions about possible actions, a science-policy paper on integrated targets for post-2020 GBF will be prepared by CORDIO (Coastal Oceans Research and Development – Indian Ocean [CORDIO] n.d.).

In the context of the ACP MEAs 3 Programme on Enforcing Environmental Treaties in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries (already mentioned in the previous case study on strengthening national capacity in environmental planning in the South Pacific), the Nairobi Convention is implementing a series of activities that will directly benefit from the science to policy dialogue (UNEP-Nairobi Convention 2021) including gender dimensions.

85 Integrated Management of the Marine and Coastal Resources of the Northern Mozambique Channel (NoCaMo) Project. <https://www.nairobiconvention.org/northern-mozambique-channel-project/>

86 <https://cordioea.net/>

87 <https://www.unep.org/nairobiconvention/projects/implementation-strategic-action-programme-protection-western-indian-ocean-wiosap>

88 <https://www.unep.org/nairobiconvention/projects/western-indian-ocean-large-marine-ecosystems-sapphire>

89 The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden is the geographical region of one of the RSP, the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA).

90 The area of the Regional Organization for Protection of the Marine Environment refers to ROPME Sea Area.





Contact details:

United Nations Avenue, Gigiri
P.O. Box 30552, 00100 Nairobi, Kenya
Tel. +254 20 762 1234
unep-publications@un.org
www.unep.org