

TEXTE

101/2021

**Final report**

# Marine Regions Forum

**An international stakeholder forum to strengthen regional ocean governance**

**by:**

Dr. Barbara Neumann, Sebastian Unger, Laura Weiand

Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies e.V. (IASS), Potsdam

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TMG – Think Tank for Sustainability (TMG), Berlin

**publisher:**

German Environment Agency



TEXTE 101/2021

Ressortforschungsplan of the Federal Ministry for the  
Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

Project No. (FKZ) 3717 25 261 0

Report No. FB000520/ENG

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On behalf of the German Environment Agency

## Imprint

### **Publisher**

Umweltbundesamt  
Wörlitzer Platz 1  
06844 Dessau-Roßlau  
Tel: +49 340-2103-0  
Fax: +49 340-2103-2285  
[buergerservice@uba.de](mailto:buergerservice@uba.de)  
Internet: [www.umweltbundesamt.de](http://www.umweltbundesamt.de)

 [umweltbundesamt.de](https://www.facebook.com/umweltbundesamt.de)

 [umweltbundesamt](https://twitter.com/umweltbundesamt)

### **Report performed by:**

Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies e.V. (IASS)  
Berliner Str. 130  
14467 Potsdam

### **Report completed in:**

January 2021

### **Edited by:**

Section II 2.3 Protection of the Marine Environment  
Dr. Manuela Krakau

Publication as pdf:

<http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/publikationen>

ISSN 1862-4804

Dessau-Roßlau, July 2021

The responsibility for the content of this publication lies with the author(s).

## Acknowledgements

We would like to express our very great appreciation to the members of the Advisory Board, Joseph Appiott (Secretariat of Convention on Biological Diversity), Abou Bamba (Abidjan Convention Secretariat), Jessica Battle (WWF International), Julian Barbière (Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO), Meg Caldwell (David and Lucille Packard Foundation), Darius Campbell (North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission), Maria Damanaki (SYSTEMIQ; The Paradise International Foundation; former at The Nature Conservancy), David Freestone (Sargasso Sea Commission), Kristina Gjerde (International Union for Conservation of Nature), Fredrik Haag (International Maritime Organization), Lorna Inniss (Caribbean Environment Programme), David Johnson (Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative), Markus Knigge (Blue Action Fund), Kosi Latu (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme), Gaetano Leone (Barcelona Convention Secretariat), Ronan Long (World Maritime University), Piero Manini (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), Nilanto Perbowo (Secretary General of the IDN Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Palau), Rashid Sumaila (University of British Columbia), Kristian Teleki (World Resources Institute), Dire Tladi (University of Pretoria), Ambassador Ngedikes Olai Uludong (Permanent Representative of Palau to the UN), Osvaldo Urrutia (South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation), Ambassador Méntor Villagómez (Secretariat of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific), Martin Visbeck (GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel) and Dixon Waruinge (Nairobi Convention Secretariat).

Our sincerest gratitude also goes to the members of the Steering Group, Ann-France Didier (Ministry of the Ecological Transition of France), Raphaël Goulet (European Commission), Jacob Hagberg (Ministry of Environment and Energy, Sweden), Heike Imhoff (Germany Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety), Manuela Krakau (German Environment Agency), Marijana Mance (European Commission), Takehiro Nakamura (UN Environment Programme), Ingo Narberhaus (Germany Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety), Stefanie Schmidt (European Commission) and Andrea Weiß (German Environment Agency), including previous members of the Steering Group Jorid Hammersland (Swedish Ministry for the Environment and Energy), Matjaž Malgaj (European Commission), and Andreas Papaconstantinou (European Commission), for their valuable and constructive guidance, suggestions and collaboration during the development and implementation of the Marine Regions Forum. Their willingness to give their time, creativity and personal capacity so generously has been a critical factor of success for this project. We are also particular grateful also for the outstanding support and valuable input by Ambassador Peter Thomson, United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean.

Furthermore we would like to acknowledge with much appreciation the crucial role of the project team at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) and TMG – Think Tank for Sustainability (TMG): Klaudija Cremers, Kanako Hasegawa, Nora Hirsch, Kim Schmidt, Thando Tilmann, and Nicole Wienrich, as well as to other colleagues at IASS, IDDRI and TMG who contributed to the success of this project, including Brigitte Béjean, Corinna Bobzien, Ben Boteler, Sabine Christiansen, Carole Durussel, Jana Fasheh, Rainer Franke, Stefanie Hansen, Stefanie Karuppan, Patrizia Nanz, Nina Poccioni, Bianca Schröder, Isabel Seeger, Pradeep Singh, Matthias Tang, Torsten Thiele, Sébastien Treyer, and Luise von Pogrell.

We also would like thank all participants of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 conference and of the 2021 online workshop for their valuable input and contributions in the run-up, during and in the aftermath of the events. Special thanks should also be given to the conference co-hosts from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, the

German Environment Agency, the European Commission, and the co-organisers Patricia Ballester, Marisa Cabello, and Alba Olmos from GOPA Com., as well as to the session-co-hosts and conference-partners, the Stockholm Environment Institute, the Ocean and Climate Platform, the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, ARTPORT\_making waves, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, CORDIO East Africa, the Ministry for the Environment of Sweden, the Ministry of the Ecological Transition of France, Kiel University, MeerWissen African-German Partners for Ocean Knowledge, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, University of Oldenburg, WWF Germany, Future Earth Coasts, and eco-union.

Finally, the Marine Regions Forum would not have been possible without financial support by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety through the German Environment Agency, the European Union through the European Maritime Fisheries Fund, as well as the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (FONA Research for Sustainable Development) and the Ministry for Science, Research and Culture of the Land Brandenburg.

### **Abstract: Marine Regions Forum**

The transboundary nature of the marine environment, along with the complexity of ocean issues and constraints arising from the current governance system, requires collaborative action across sectors and territorial boundaries. Cooperation among stakeholders and coordination of policies and actions within and between marine regions are important levers to achieve ocean sustainability, yet are far from being widely implemented. Employing a transdisciplinary process, the *Marine Regions Forum* was setup in responses to these needs, as a new participatory space for dialogue that brings together decision-makers, scientists, civil society representatives and other actors from diverse marine regions to exchange outside of formal governance processes. Through exchange, joint learning, and showcasing of existing collaborative efforts, the *Marine Regions Forum* aims to enable collective responses and support the development of governance solutions that catalyse transformative change towards the sustainable use and conservation of the ocean, and ultimately the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The first larger-scale event held under this new platform was set up as an international conference and hosted in 2019 in Berlin, Germany, under the theme “*Achieving a healthy ocean – Regional ocean governance beyond 2020*” and was attended by 200 international ocean actors. The outcomes of this first phase show that, by complementing existing processes, facilitating multi-stakeholder exchanges across sectors, and disseminating emerging recommendations to the formal policy processes, dialogue spaces such as the *Marine Regions Forum* have the potential to facilitate progress in ocean governance and sustainability transformations.

### **Kurzbeschreibung: Marine Regions Forum**

Der grenzüberschreitende Charakter der Meeresumwelt sowie die Komplexität der meeresbezogenen Probleme und die Einschränkungen, die sich aus dem derzeitigen System der Governance ergeben, erfordern gemeinsames Handeln über Sektoren und Gebietsgrenzen hinweg. Zusammenarbeit zwischen Akteurinnen und Akteuren und Koordinierung bei der Umsetzung von Strategien und Maßnahmen in Meeresregionen sind wichtige Ansatzpunkte, um eine nachhaltige Nutzung der Meere sicherzustellen, werden jedoch noch lange nicht auf breiter Ebene umgesetzt. Vor diesem Hintergrund wurde in einem transdisziplinären Prozess das *Marine Regions Forum* entwickelt, das als partizipative Dialogplattform Vertreterinnen und Vertreter aus Politik und Verwaltung, Wissenschaft und Zivilgesellschaft aus unterschiedlichen Meeresregionen für einen offenen Austausch außerhalb formaler Governance-Prozesse zusammenbringt. Durch Austausch, gemeinsames Lernen und das Aufzeigen beispielhafter Zusammenarbeit will das *Marine Regions Forum* die verstärkte Kooperation und die Entwicklung von Governance-Ansätzen unterstützen, die einen transformativen Wandel hin zu einer nachhaltigen Nutzung und Erhaltung des Ozeans und damit für die Umsetzung der Agenda 2030 für nachhaltige Entwicklung befördern. Die erste größere Veranstaltung im Rahmen dieser neuen Plattform wurde 2019 in Berlin unter dem Motto „*Achieving a healthy ocean - Regional ocean governance beyond 2020*“ als internationale Konferenz mit 200 teilnehmenden Meereseexpertinnen und -experten ausgerichtet. Die Ergebnisse dieser ersten Phase zeigen, dass Dialogräume wie das Marine Regions Forum durch die Komplementarität zu bestehenden Prozessen, die Förderung des sektor übergreifenden Austauschs zwischen Stakeholdern und die Weiterleitung von Empfehlungen an formelle politische Prozesse in der Lage sind, Fortschritte in Bezug auf die Meeres-Governance und Nachhaltigkeitstransformationen zu ermöglichen.

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## List of abbreviations

2030 Agenda	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
ABNJ	Areas beyond national jurisdiction
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nation
BMU	German Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COA	Communities of Ocean Actions
COFI	Committee on Fisheries
COP	Conference of the parties
DOALOS	Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
EC	European Commission
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ENB	Earth Negotiations Bulletin
EU	European Union
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FAO	The Food and Agriculture Organization
GDSR	Global Sustainable Development Report
GOBI	Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IASS	Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies e.V.
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
IDDRI	Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISA	International Seabed Authority
ITLOS	International tribunal for the Law of the Sea
LME	Large Marine Ecosystem
MARPOL	International Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Ships
MPA	Marine protected area
MSP	Marine spatial planning
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NWP	Nairobi Work Programme
PICES	North Pacific Marine Science Organisation
PROG	Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance
PSMA	Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
R&D	Research and development

RFB	Regional Fisheries Bodies
RS	Regional Seas Programme
RSN	Regional Fisheries Body Secretariat Network
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SeyCCAT	Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust
SOI	Sustainable Ocean Initiative
SOLAS	International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea
STRONG High Seas	Strengthening Regional Ocean Governance for the High Seas
TMG	Think Tank for Sustainability
UBA	German Environment Agency
UN	United Nations
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
UNGS	United Nations Secretary-General
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
VR	Virtual Reality
WIOMSA	Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association
WMO	World Meteorological Organisation
WP	Work package
WWF	World Wide Fund For Nature

## Summary

Effective conservation and management of the marine environment is a complex challenge that requires renewed efforts to strengthen governance, foster regional cooperation, and increase exchange between marine regions and regional and global governance bodies. Cooperation among stakeholders and coordinated action are important levers to achieve ocean sustainability. The current system of ocean governance, however, is often described as fragmented and not fit for tackling these issues (Young et al. 2007; Rochette et al. 2015; Blanchard 2017; Grip 2017; Watson-Wright and Luis Valdés 2019). The critical status of ocean health and a highly complex human-ocean system hampers efforts to provide more effective management (Kelly et al. 2019; Franke et al. 2020) – and call for new approaches.

The overarching goal of the research and development (R&D) project "*Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance: International Forum to Strengthen Regional Ocean Governance (PROG-Forum)*" was to develop, implement and assess an impactful cross-sectoral communication and collaboration platform on regional ocean governance. The main output of this project, which ran from November 2017 until February 2021, is the *Marine Regions Forum*. This new platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue and exchange at the science-policy-society interface also is the result of voluntary commitments pledged by Germany and the European Union (EU) in 2017. The Marine Regions Forum strives to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations (2030 Agenda) with its ocean goal, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, and other ocean-related goals and targets. Given that several targets under SDG 14 are maturing and less than 10 years left on the agenda, it aims to build a bridge to a post-2020 pathway towards ocean health. In response to the characteristics of the ocean with its transboundary nature and need for joint action in order to achieve impacts the regional dimension plays a specific role in this.

### Why a Marine Regions Forum?

Healthy ocean and coasts are fundamental for achieving global sustainability as envisioned in the 2030 Agenda. The world's ocean accounts for 71% of the surface of our planet, and its vast water body is home to more than 2 million species (Mora et al. 2011). The rich biodiversity of the ocean supports the provisioning of ecosystem services that are essential for human life (Costanza 1999; Drakou et al. 2017). For example, more than 3.3 billion people rely on fish for at least 20% of their average per capita animal protein intake (FAO 2020: 5). The ocean is a source of economic activities and provides livelihoods for millions of people in the world. But increasing impacts from human uses and compounding effects such as climate change are putting marine ecosystems under enormous pressure, compromising both ocean health and human well-being (Franke et al. 2020). See chapter 1.1.1.

In addition, the transboundary nature of the ocean poses a unique challenge for implementing effective measures: fish stocks or marine pollution are not bound by national borders. Action must therefore be coordinated - not only between multiple States, but also by non-governmental actors from science, civil society, the private sector and international organisations. The current system of ocean governance relies on a patchwork of different organisations, each with a particular structure and specific mandate, such as shipping, fishing, or the conservation of marine ecosystems. These sectoral bodies operate at various scales and levels of governance from global to regional, national and even local, which adds further complexity. See chapter 1.1.2.1.

Various initiatives and arrangements have been established to achieve more policy coherence and enhance collaboration and cooperation between the different institutions and organizations

involved, from the global to the regional and national level (Grip 2017). But despite the multitude of efforts, unsustainable practices continue and the health of ocean ecosystems continues to decline (Inniss et al. 2016; IPBES 2019b; Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity 2020). To reverse this trend, a shift towards integrated governance and enhanced participation of relevant stakeholders is needed, including at the regional level. Many experts emphasise that regional efforts can effectively respond to the multiple challenges and complexity of the human-ocean system (Rochette et al. 2015; Billé et al. 2016; Wright et al. 2017; Mahon and Fanning 2019b). Action at the regional level can be more flexible (van Tatenhove 2013), and “closer, further, faster” (Billé et al. 2016: p. 51) than at the global level. But traditional sector- or issue-specific governance arrangements also dominate at the regional level (Mahon et al. 2015), hampering efforts to coherently manage marine regions. Collaborative governance approaches that bring together public and private actors, e.g. in collective forums, are emerging (Ansell and Gash 2007). But effective stakeholder integration and fruitful knowledge exchange are far from being widely implemented in the ocean realm (Cvitanovic, Hobday, van Kerkhoff, Wilson, et al. 2015; Bednarek et al. 2018; Morf et al. 2019). See chapter 1.1.2.2.

As demands on the ocean and its resources continue to increase (Winther et al. 2020), a paradigm shift is required to move towards more integrated ocean governance. Integrated and adaptive governance approaches are better positioned to address the multiple threats to the health of the ocean. Regionally focussed processes can play a key role in delivering the needed level of integration. For the transition towards integrated, regional ocean governance to occur, the underlying drivers and pressures determining the current fragmented system of ocean governance need to be understood and addressed. A problem analysis conducted for the project identified four main challenges of the current governance system: (1) weak institutions, (2) weak legal frameworks, (3) weak monitoring and enforcement mechanisms of the instruments, and (4) lack of knowledge on the ocean. These challenges result in insufficient coordination between actors, limited participation in policy making, and weak science-policy interactions. This impedes effective implementation and leads to uncoordinated policies and overlaps in action and decision-making, and to overall insufficient action to prevent further degradation of ocean health. The following is therefore required to overcome the above challenges: (1) improving of coordination and exchange between actors, (2) enhancing of funding to support coordinated actions, (3) enhancing of capacities to realize cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation, (4) co-creation of knowledge for evidence-based decision-making, and (5) improving of stakeholder participation at different scales and along the full spectrum of stakeholders. See chapter 1.1.2.3 and Figure 2.

A platform for open discussion and dialogue amongst diverse experts, stakeholders and regions could support the co-creation of knowledge, the development of new approaches, or the establishment of partnerships and collaborations. But existing mechanisms are generally bound to formal policy or governance processes, inhibiting open exchange and solution-oriented dialogue. Recognising the need for a new, informal platform that provides such a dialogue space, Germany announced in 2017 at the UN Ocean Conference<sup>1</sup> in New York, and then together with the EU at the Our Ocean Conference<sup>2</sup> in Malta, to set up by 2020 “a cross-sectoral and cross-boundary multi-stakeholder platform for regional ocean governance” (European Commission 2017a, 2017b). The objective of this new platform, which was named “PROG-Forum” at the time of pledging, should be to strengthen cooperation and develop solutions for integrated ocean

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<sup>1</sup> Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance: International Forum for Advancing Regional Ocean Governance (#OceanAction18439), URL: <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/?id=18439>. Last accessed 8 January 2021.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.ourocean2017.org/our-ocean-commitments>. Last accessed 8 January 2021.

governance at the regional level, thereby contributing to the 2030 Agenda with its ocean-goal SDG 14 and other related goals and targets. The platform should bring together actors and experts from different stakeholder groups such as governments, intergovernmental (IGOs) and non-governmental (NGOs) organisations, academia and the private sector for exchange of good practices and joint learning. The Forum should draw on expertise from actors and experts that are not traditionally involved in discussions and allow for new perspectives on marine issues. As a space outside of formal arrangements, it would be well positioned to bring different types of knowledge together and enable the creation of new knowledge on an equal footing. Furthering the co-creation of knowledge and provision of (new) knowledge, the Forum would support knowledge-based decision making and the promotion of integrated approaches to ocean governance. And it would provide a space to jointly develop policy responses and recommendations, as well as support the development of new actions and solutions, including through new initiatives, partnerships or funding mechanisms for regional activities. See chapter 1.1.3 and Figure 3.

### **From idea to implementation – A co-creative approach to the Marine Regions Forum**

The Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) and TMG - Think Tank for Sustainability (TMG) were tasked by Germany with realizing the initial proposal and developing the Marine Regions Forum as a new participatory and knowledge-based dialogue platform at the science-policy-society interface. The EU, represented by the Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries of the European Commission (EC), contributed to the development and implementation of the project and provided additional funding for the hosting of the first conference.

A transdisciplinary and co-creative approach was at the heart of the development of the Marine Regions Forum. From the beginning, the project team from IASS, IDDRI and TMG set out for engagement with and participation of experts and stakeholders in order to ensure knowledge integration, acceptance and fit for purpose. There is a growing recognition that environmental problems require a new type of knowledge production and decision making processes, and that co-design of concepts, co-production of knowledge and co-dissemination of results help produce high impact outcomes (Mauser et al. 2013; Stafford-Smith et al. 2017). The following elements were thus included in the work programme of the project and the concept of the Marine Regions Forum itself to deliver on this promise: (1) Setting up of a Steering Group with representatives from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), the German Environment Agency (UBA) and the European Commission (EC), and a representative from UN Environment and the governments of Sweden and France, (2) establishing of an international Advisory Board, and (3) direct exchange with and involvement of ocean governance actors and experts throughout the project. The project itself consisted of five work packages with a defined set of key milestones and deliverables, which were implemented by the project team from IASS, IDDRI and TMG in close cooperation with the established advisory bodies and approached experts. This co-creative work process involved the definition of an outcome framework and the development of a comprehensive concept for the Marine Regions Forum and culminated in the actual hosting of the first international multi-stakeholder conference held under this new platform, the Marine Regions Forum 2019. See chapter 1.2.1 as well as Figure 4 and Figure 5.

An essential part of the concept development process was to determine the thematic orientation of the Marine Regions Forum – in general, and in specific for the first conference held in autumn 2019. A preparatory analysis was conducted to understand the missing links between ongoing ocean governance processes and existing platforms, which included a literature and document review as well as a consultation process. The analysis revealed, for example, that formal ways to

submit outputs are often missing in these processes. The analysis also pointed towards barriers such as limited coordination between relevant organisations, e.g. between UNEP's Regional Seas programmes and Regional Fisheries Bodies. Further impediments that were identified include a lack of consideration of cross-linkages in the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs, as well as a lack of coordination of capacity building and financing across different policy processes. The insights gained through this review and consultation process, which included an expert workshop<sup>3</sup> with members of the Steering Group, Advisory Board and further external experts, then built a basis for the further development of the overall concept of the Marine Regions Forum and the 2019 conference. See chapter 1.2.2.

## **The Marine Regions Forum 2019**

### ***Conceptual framing***

The central component of the R&D project was the conceptual development, organisation and hosting of the Marine Regions Forum 2019, which should bring together 200 international ocean experts for discussing pressing challenges in ocean governance, developing recommendation and fostering of regional approaches. An important starting point in the development of the concept was an outcome framework, which was developed jointly by the project team and Steering Group and included the following components: (1) a conceptual framing, (2) a vision statement, (3) a statement of uniqueness, and (4) a set of goals, objectives and expected outcomes. The outcome framework (see also text box below) speaks to the actions that were identified as points of leverage for the governance challenges presented in chapter 1.1. The framework formed the basis for the implementation concept that guided the planning, organisation and hosting of the Marine Regions Forum 2019. See chapter 2.1.1.

Further conceptual criteria served as instructive elements for the implementation and hosting of the conference. These should ensure delivery on the defined outcomes and goals, and to maximise buy-in from actors. For example, considerations were made regarding the selection of participants to ensure representation of experts along the full spectrum of stakeholders, including generally underrepresented groups and across marine regions, as well as their fit to the conference programme. Further, an appropriate selection of themes and session topics was established as a key determinant of success for the Marine Regions Forums 2019. Conference themes and session topics should thus be identified according to their relevance (transformative need), opportunity to affect change (transformative potential), and whether critical barriers as well as enabling conditions to overcome these are addressed. See also chapter 2.1.2.

### **Outcome framework for the Marine Regions Forum**

- **FRAMING:** The Marine Regions Forum is an innovative knowledge-driven dialogue space that brings together a broad range of experts, stakeholders and decision-makers from different sectors, disciplines and organisations. The Forum follows recommendations and demands voiced at the UN Ocean Conference 2017, the Our Ocean conference 2017 and other occasions. It builds on voluntary commitments by the German Government and the EU. It investigates policy, management and governance innovations and facilitates collaborative work to develop new solutions that trigger transformative change for current ocean sustainability challenges. The Marine Regions Forum aims to facilitate cooperation and collaboration within and between marine regions, and the development of new approaches to regional ocean governance through joint learning processes on specific issues.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.iass-potsdam.de/en/news/marine-conservation-new-dialogue-forum-strengthen-cooperation>. Last accessed 30 January 2021.

- **VISION:** The Marine Regions Forum strives to facilitate transformations towards integrated ocean governance for marine regions. By advancing multi-stakeholder dialogue, exchange of good-practices, and cooperation between regions, the Marine Regions Forum supports the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems.
- **UNIQUENESS:** The Marine Regions Forum is unique in that: (1) It is a knowledge-driven Forum, developed by independent research institutes together with experts from policy-making and civil-society through a participatory process, (2) it uses innovative formats to catalyse multi-stakeholder dialogue, and (3) it provides a space outside of formal governance arrangements where participants engage in outcome-oriented discussion as individual experts rather than representatives of specific organisations.
- **GOALS, OBJECTIVES and EXPECTED OUTCOMES:** The overall aims of the Marine Regions Forum, including the events or activities conducted, are to be measured against a set of long-term goals and medium-term objectives (Table 2) and expected outcomes as defined for specific elements such as the first Marine Regions Forum conference held in 2019 (Table 3).

### ***Implementation and hosting***

The Marine Regions Forum 2019 was held from 30 September until 2 October 2019 in Berlin, Germany. It brought together over 200 leading experts from 50 countries with diverse regional and professional backgrounds from academia and research, policy and decision-making, IGOs and NGOs, industry, the arts and media. It took the form of a dialogue-oriented conference with a mix of workshops and plenary discussions and was rounded up by a side program that aimed to provide a creative space for open and productive exchange. It was held under the overarching theme “Achieving a healthy ocean – Regional ocean governance beyond 2020” which set the frame for the conference session by (1) addressing obstacles and pathways to achieve SDG 14 as well as other ocean-related goals and accelerate progress, and (2) emphasising the importance of the regional level in coordinating actions and delivering on the SDGs. See chapter 2.2.1.

Three themes were selected to structure the conference programme at the Marine Regions Forum 2019: “Achieving SDG 14” (Theme 1), “Underpinning global processes” (Theme 2), and “Knowledge for ocean action” (Theme 3). Eighteen dialogue sessions on defined topics were held under these themes. For each the three conference days, daily foci were set as additional points of reflection for the individual sessions: “Understanding challenges and achievements” (day 1), “Developing solutions” (day 2), and “Accelerating progress and creating new pathways” (day 3). Both the conference themes and the daily foci then were used to structure the discussions in the plenary sessions. See chapter 2.2.1 and Figure 6, conference agenda (Annex B.1) and conference report (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019).

The conference programme (chapter 2.2.3) entailed the following elements:

- **Plenary sessions on each of the three conference days (chapter 2.2.3.1):** These were designed to set the scene for the conference, deepen the debate on the main conference themes, reflect on ways forward and provide linkages to key ongoing ocean policy process. High-level speakers and representatives from key actor groups were invited to short keynotes or panel discussions.
- **Workshop-type dialogue sessions on selected and well-defined governance challenges (chapter 2.2.3.2 and Table 4):** These were offered in parallel topical strands. The individual sessions were geared to facilitate the in-depth exploration and discussion of key topics. Facilitation techniques employed to stimulate exchange, open discussions and create an overall productive atmosphere include World Café or fish bowl formats.

- ▶ Social events (chapter 2.2.3.3): An evening reception and conference dinner were organised to welcome participants in a more informal atmosphere and offer space for networking and warming up for the conference. The evening reception featured an artistic intervention of school students together with a Berlin artist and the arts collective *Artport\_making waves* to stimulate exchange.
- ▶ Under the title “*The Ocean Realm*”, a creative and engaging supporting program was organised to inspire participants, but also to engage actors that may usually not participate in this type of events such as e.g. artists and youth (chapter 2.2.3.4). This included graphic recordings of sessions, a Meet & Greet space, and a board game on Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), a virtual reality corner, a photo exhibition, and a daily debriefing for young ocean professionals.
- ▶ A public side event was hosted on day 3 of the conference in cooperation with the arts collective ARTPORT\_making waves, the IASS and the Futurium science museum in Berlin (chapter 2.2.3.5). Titled “*Berlin am Meer / Berlin by the sea*”, the event foresaw an interactive intervention by school students from Berlin who presented their thoughts and questions on climate change and ocean protection to the audience and a panel of experts and visitors, followed by an open discussion in a fish bowl-style dialogue.
- ▶ An informal networking lunch was hosted by the BMU and organised together with the IASS at the side-lines on the second day of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 (chapter 2.2.3.6). Taking place in the executive lounge of the conference venue, this meeting provided an opportunity for selected high-level participants to exchange with the German Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety on key challenges and opportunities in ocean governance.

The implementation and facilitation approach employed for the Marine Regions Forum 2019 built on year-long expertise of the project team in conducting dialogue- and outcome oriented events at the science-policy-society interface. It was informed by a preparatory analysis of co-creative facilitation techniques and criteria for open and results-oriented dialogue spaces. Besides involving of the Steering Group, Advisory Board and further external experts in the programme planning and hosting, the various programme elements were carefully tailored along the defined criteria and towards the desired outcomes. See chapter 2.2.2.

The Marine Regions Forum 2019 conference was planned and organised by the project team from IASS, IDDRI and TMG together with GOPA Com, a contracted EU service provider, and event staff from the venue. The 2019 Forum was hosted together with BMU, UBA and EC. GOPA Com took on large parts of the participant management and venue organisation and administered the financial contributions of the EU to the conference which came through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). The EU funding also included travel and accommodation grants for 58 participants with active roles in the event and 10 speakers from developing countries for a balanced participation to the event. Further funding for the conference came through the R&D project and IASS which supported specific programme elements. The actual selection of participants, though, was in the hands of the project team as it was considered one of the key processes of the conference organisation. Participant invitation and registration procedures for general participants were largely handled by GOPA Com in communication with the project team. For high-level speakers, BMU and EC provided personalised invitations that were jointly signed and sent out. See chapter 2.2.4.

To inform interested parties and participants before, during and after the Marine Regions Forum 2019 about the conference programme and facilitate interaction, the following conference

materials were put in place: (1) a conference website ([www.prog-ocean.org](http://www.prog-ocean.org)) and (2) a conference programme which was distributed in advance of the conference via email as PDF document and available from the website for download<sup>4</sup>, (3) a printed conference notebook that was handed out to participants at the venue, and (4) a mobile conference app for participant to use during the conference for information, navigation and networking. See chapter 2.2.5.

Outreach activities on the Marine Regions Forum 2019 as well as monitoring of impacts and outcomes were defined through a designated communication strategy. The strategy was co-designed with members of the Steering Group and Advisory Board, who also aided in the dissemination of the outreach and communication products. It aimed to ensure participation and support of key stakeholders as well as to provide information on the development, outputs and outcomes of the Marine Regions Forum 2019. A core element of the communication strategy was the development of a corporate design including a logo and tag line (“connecting people to protect one ocean”). Communication products and channels that were targeted for outreach include digital media such as social media posts via Twitter, contributions to the newsletter of the Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance (PROG) and on the conference website, and multi-media products such as a conference trailer and a conference film capturing impressions from the conference. In addition to flyers and presentations at conferences, press releases and press coverage were targeted throughout the project. See chapter 2.2.6.

### ***Outputs and outcomes***

The outputs of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 include (1) a Key Messages document, (2) a comprehensive Conference Report and (3) reporting by IISD Reporting Services including photography for dissemination of the conference results, (4) graphic recordings of plenaries and selected sessions, and (5) video filming and recording of interviews for a conference film. Building on an outline that was developed in advance of the conference, the Key Messages document compiles consolidated recommendations from the individual sessions and aims to feed these into relevant governance processes at the regional and global level. A first draft of this document was prepared by the conference organisers during the event and presented at the closing plenary, and participants were invited to comment in the follow-up. The final Key Messages were reported to the Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations 2020 Ocean Conference<sup>5</sup> that took place 4–5 February 2020 in New York and disseminated further. The Conference Report was prepared by the conference organisers in the follow-up of the Marine Regions Forum 2019. It provides a summary presentation of the conference and the individual programme elements. The report was published as digital PDF file and is available for download from the conference website<sup>6</sup>. An important reporting element was provided through IISD Reporting Services. On-site IISD staff reported from the venue and captured the discussions from the plenaries and selected sessions. These were published online through daily reports and a summary report via the IISD’s Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB) series<sup>7</sup>. These reports enabled participants to recap the discussions of the day. They were also disseminated by IISD through their networks to the wider ocean-policy community. See also chapter 2.3.

Besides these direct outputs, several tangible outcomes from the Marine Regions Forum 2019 were recorded in the follow-up of the conference, such as a grant by the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) awarded to the Seychelles Conservation and Climate

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<sup>4</sup> See [http://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/Programme-overview\\_rev16\\_2019903-v2\\_mailing-website.pdf](http://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/Programme-overview_rev16_2019903-v2_mailing-website.pdf). Last accessed 10 November 2020.

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/2020/02/04/key-messages-from-the-marine-regions-forum-2019-at-un-2020-ocean-conference-preparatory-meeting/>. Last accessed 20 November 2020.

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/resources/>. Last accessed 19 March 2021.

<sup>7</sup> See <https://enb.iisd.org/events/marine-regions-forum-2019>. Last accessed 19 March 2021.

Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT)<sup>8</sup> to support the development of knowledge management tools. An IISD opinion editorial<sup>9</sup> featuring Ambassador Peter Thomson, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, as co-author was released by the project team (Thomson et al. 2020). The project team also submitted recommendations from Key Messages to the UN Ocean Conference's Stakeholder Online e-Consultation<sup>10</sup>. See chapter 2.3.5.

The Marine Regions Forum was registered by BMU at the UN Ocean Conference's registry as a voluntary commitment in 2 June 2017 under #OceanAction18439<sup>11</sup>. On behalf of BMU, the project team has delivered and uploaded several progress reports to the official website of the registry since then. See chapter 2.4.

### ***Evaluation and analysis of the Marine Regions Forum***

As a basis for the further development of the Marine Regions Forum, but also to inform the development of novel participatory approaches in ocean governance, a range of evaluation procedures have been included in the R&D process of the project. These aimed to analyse the approach taken and results achieved through the first conference against the stated goals and objectives, but also to assess the overall conceptual approach and implementation in relation to other initiatives. The assessment of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 conference included an analysis of participant regional and stakeholder representation, and a participant survey conducted during the conference. These showed that there is room for improvements e.g. in terms of stakeholder representation and geographical balance, but that overall participants perceived the conference as highly positive, especially regarding how it promoted dialogue across sectors and between regions and encouraged participants to incorporate such processes in their own work. Further, a press and media analysis was commissioned to an external company in order to evaluate the outreach of the Marine Regions Forum 2019, including of the reporting conducted by IISD Reporting Services. See chapter 3.1.

In order to understand whether the Marine Regions Forum 2019 met its objectives as defined in the outcome framework, critical reflections were conducted through debriefings with the project team and the co-hosts of the 2019 conference including the Steering Group and the Advisory Board, also considering the results of the participant survey. Reflexivity is considered an important element of transdisciplinary working modes, especially with regard to the potential future development of the Marine Regions Forum. The team and co-organisers reflected upon the preparatory processes and implementation of the Marine Regions Forum 2019. Regarding the preparatory process, it was noted that the balance between logistical work and content-related work was sometimes skewed towards logistical and organisational needs. But overall the event was perceived as highly successful especially regarding the engagement of participants. It was noticed that the event bridged a gap in regional ocean governance through fostering stakeholder dialogue across marine regions. See chapter 3.2.

Furthermore, the achieved outputs and outcomes were assessed along the defined outcome framework. For example, with the release of a Key Messages document, a conference report, press releases and the accomplished media coverage, key outputs were achieved as envisaged in the forefront. Impacts are usually understood to occur later than, and as a result of, facilitated outcomes. For example, achieving of joint-learning amongst participants as one of the desired

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<sup>8</sup> See <https://seyccat.org/wiomsa-awards-seyccat-a-grant/>. Last accessed 14 January 2021.

<sup>9</sup> See <http://sdg.iisd.org/commentary/guest-articles/no-ocean-super-year-without-marine-regions/>. Last accessed 12 November 2020.

<sup>10</sup> See <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/ocean2020/preparation/stakeholders>. Last accessed 12 November 2020.

<sup>11</sup> See <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/?id=18439>. Last accessed 13 January 2021.

facilitated outcomes of the Marine Regions Forum might occur before the intended final impact of improved cooperation and collaboration and/or contribute to it. The responses and information gathered during and after the conference as well as through expert interviews (see below) provide an indication of the intermediate outcomes. See chapter 3.3.

In the follow-up of the 2019 conference, empirical qualitative research was conducted in order to evaluate the overall conceptual approach of the Marine Regions Forum and its value for knowledge exchange. The aim of this research was to (1) understand the challenges and opportunities for cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder dialogue processes in marine regions, (2) exemplify experiences from the Marine Regions Forum 2019 as a case study for joint-learning across marine regions, and (3) understand how to ensure knowledge integration within ocean governance practices and how the Marine Regions Forum adds value to formal governance processes. The research entailed conducting interviews with 12 selected participants of the Marine Regions Forum 2019. The interview data was transcribed and analysed through a latent content analysis. Preliminary results from this research are presented in chapter 3.4. The interview data confirmed that the Marine Regions Forum 2019 conference achieved to add value and position the Forum within formal governance processes. The Forum provided regional contextualising of global frameworks, agreements, and target. Further, it emphasised how regional mechanisms can cooperate and collaborate to facilitate the implementation of global goals. This in turn reduced the usual competition between the regional mechanisms and placed them on equal footing to each other. See chapter 3.4.

In summary it can be concluded that the value added of the Marine Regions Forum, as an example for a platform to facilitate knowledge exchange, lies not only in the creation of knowledge for action, but also in the use of actionable knowledge within practices. The Forum positioned participants on an equal playing field and allowed actors who are usually unlikely to interact with each other to build trust and engage. It provided the needed regional dialogue of global frameworks, such as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Marine Regions Forum fills a gap in the ocean governance landscape by providing an inclusive dialogue space for a diversity of actors, sectors, and marine regions. In turn, this facilitated exchange also ensures the delivery of outcomes as envisaged in the Marine Regions Forum outcome framework. See chapter 3.5.

### **The Marine Regions Forum Online Workshop 2021**

The final phase of the R&D project was overshadowed by the global COVID-19 pandemic and its dramatic consequences most parts of the world. Marine regions and ocean-dependent livelihoods were severely impacted, as were ocean governance processes at all scales. Following up on consultation with the Advisory Board on the effects of the pandemic for ocean sustainability and related processes, it was proposed that the Marine Regions Forum, serving as a newly established dialogue platform for key actors in regional ocean governance, should facilitate the exchange of experiences between affected actor groups on ways for building back and improving long-term resilience of marine regions. The work plan of the Marine Regions Forum project was adapted accordingly and an online workshop was organised on 28 January 2021 *“Ocean Governance and COVID-19 – Building resilience for marine regions”*, by IASS, IDDRI and TMG together with UBA, BMU and EC. This workshop also served as a closing workshop of phase 1 of the Marine Regions Forum. See chapter 4.

### **Where next? A development strategy for the Marine Regions Forum**

After successfully delivering phase one of the Marine Regions Forum through the R&D project and establishing the Marine Regions Forum through its first conference in 2019, a strategy for the further development of the Marine Regions Forum was elaborated by the project team in

close collaboration with the Steering Group. This strategy foresees the Marine Regions Forum being an ongoing platform to facilitate the development of integrated and transformative ocean governance by providing a space for dialogue, exchange of good practice, and cooperation within and between regions. See chapter 5.1.

The strategy details not only the need for advancing and further establishing the Marine Regions Forum, it also outlines objectives and possible thematic entry points for a second phase. By that, it also responds to the experiences made during the first phase and the results of the evaluations conducted. As already stated during the initial phase of the Marine Regions Forum, the further development of the Marine Regions Forum should also be based on the assumption that regionally coordinated approaches will be required to achieve effective advances in the marine environment. By tapping into the wealth of knowledge and experiences at the regional level, phase 2 of the Marine Regions Forum should focus on the development of novel tools and new modes of cooperation within marine regions. Further, the second phase would have much more of a regional focus and be co-designed and co-produced more closely with actors from a specific marine region, e.g. the Western Indian Ocean, Caribbean or South Asian Seas. But while focussing on exchange within a specific region, the Marine Regions Forum would still continue to actively engage with key global ocean and sustainability processes. Recommendations and conclusions emerging from the Marine Regions Forum through the various activities including a second conference will be fed into relevant global meetings and processes to bridge the gap between the global and the regional and national level. See chapter 5.2.

The second phase would build on the results of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 also with regard to the selection of thematic entry points, and it is informed by the recommendations made through the 2019 Key Messages document. Experiences and learning made in the first phase should guide the further conceptual advancement and implementation during phase 2, e.g. with regard to collaborative approaches and fostering of engaging and results-oriented dialogues. For example, a lesson learned has been that involving industry and the private sector is crucial for developing novel types of partnerships and actionable solutions, and that securing their involvement requires different approaches than getting IGOs or NGOs on board. For the second phase, it is not only proposed to hold a second Marine Regions Forum within a specific marine region, but also to include further elements for exchange and discussion in the work programme such as a series of online workshops. See chapter 5.3.

## Conclusions

To achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires nothing less than stopping and subsequently reversing the ongoing trend of the decline of ocean health. At the same time, the related challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss have to be addressed. Integrated governance and ecosystem-based approaches could better align the fragmented framework with the interconnected natural and social systems, yet effective implementation is often still lacking. Strengthened regional cooperation has the strong potential to achieve the needed cooperation and coordination between relevant actors across territorial and sectoral boundaries.

Cooperation and coordination are critical for the implementation of robust conservation measures and to ensure their long-term sustainability. To make transitions possible, the weaknesses of the current system(s) need to be addressed. The Marine Regions Forum through its first conference held in 2019 has been established as a participatory dialogue platform that aims to bring actors together to exchange and jointly develop solutions and ways forward. It successfully promoted collaboration and cooperation, with participants taking home new insights and practices to consider in their daily work. To boost the urgent delivery of the global ocean and linked biodiversity and climate agenda in the future, the Marine Regions Forum could

support marine regions in developing tailor-made cross-sectoral ocean governance approaches and transformative strategies. If taken forward the Marine Regions Forum will undoubtedly mature during the next years to continuously foster stakeholder exchange out of formal structures and provide a platform for ocean actors from all over the world. See also chapter 6.

## Zusammenfassung

Die wirksame Erhaltung und Bewirtschaftung der Meeresumwelt ist eine komplexe Herausforderung, die neue Anstrengungen zur Stärkung der Governance, zur Förderung der regionalen Zusammenarbeit und zum verstärkten Austausch zwischen Meeresregionen oder regionalen und globalen Organisationen erfordert. Die Zusammenarbeit zwischen Stakeholdern und koordiniertes Handeln sind wichtige Hebel, um Nachhaltigkeit für die Meere zu erreichen. Das derzeitige System der Meeres-Governance wird jedoch oftmals als fragmentiert beschrieben und als nicht geeignet zur Bewältigung dieser Themen (Young et al. 2007; Rochette et al. 2015; Blanchard 2017; Grip 2017; Watson-Wright and Luis Valdés 2019). Der kritische Zustand der Meere und ein hochkomplexes Mensch-Ozean-System erschweren die Bemühungen um ein effektiveres Management (Kelly et al. 2019; Franke et al. 2020) - und erfordern neue Ansätze.

Entwicklungsprojekts (F&E) "*Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance: International Forum to Strengthen Regional Ocean Governance (PROG-Forum)*" war es, einen wirkungsvolle Plattform für Sektor übergreifende Kommunikation und Zusammenarbeit zur regionalen Meeres-Governance zu entwickeln. Das Hauptprodukt des Projektes, das von November 2017 bis Februar 2021 lief, ist das *Marine Regions Forum*. Diese neue Plattform für den Multi-Stakeholder-Dialog und -Austausch an der Schnittstelle von Wissenschaft, Politik und Gesellschaft ist auch das Ergebnis von Selbstverpflichtungen, die Deutschland und die Europäische Union (EU) im Jahr 2017 eingegangen sind. Das Marine Regions Forum verfolgt das Ziel, die Umsetzung der Agenda 2030 für nachhaltige Entwicklung der Vereinten Nationen (Agenda 2030) mit ihrem Ozeanziel, dem Nachhaltigkeitsziel (Sustainable Development Goal, SDG) 14, und anderen ozeanbezogenen Zielen und Unterzielen zu unterstützen. Insbesondere da mehrere Ziele unter SDG 14 fällig sind oder werden und weniger als 10 Jahre zur Erfüllung der Agenda verbleiben, soll für den Zeitraum nach 2020 der Weg hin zu einer gesunden Meeresumwelt aufgezeigt werden. Angesichts der besonderen Eigenschaften des Ozeans mit seiner grenzüberschreitenden Natur und der Notwendigkeit gemeinsamen Handelns für das Erzielen von Ergebnissen spielt die regionale Dimension eine besondere Rolle.

### Warum ein Marine Regions Forum?

Gesunde Meere und Küsten sind von grundlegender Bedeutung für das Erreichen einer globalen Nachhaltigkeit, wie sie mit der Agenda 2030 angestrebt wird. Der Ozean macht 71% der Oberfläche unseres Planeten aus und bietet mit seinem enormen Wasservolumen mehr als 2 Millionen Arten einen einzigartigen Lebensraum (Mora et al. 2011). Die große Artenvielfalt des Ozeans unterstützt die Bereitstellung von Ökosystemleistungen, die für das menschliche Leben unerlässlich sind (Costanza 1999; Drakou et al. 2017). So sind beispielsweise mehr als 3,3 Milliarden Menschen bei mindestens 20% ihrer durchschnittlichen Pro-Kopf-Zufuhr an tierischem Eiweiß auf Fisch angewiesen (FAO 2020: 5). Der Ozean ist eine wichtige Quelle für wirtschaftliche Aktivitäten und bietet Millionen Menschen auf der Welt eine Lebensgrundlage. Doch die Folgen der Nutzung durch den Menschen und zusätzliche Effekte, wie der Klimawandel, setzen die Meeresökosysteme unter enormen Druck und gefährden sowohl die Gesundheit der Meere als auch das menschliche Wohlergehen (Franke et al. 2020). Siehe Kapitel 1.1.1.

Darüber hinaus stellen die Meere aufgrund ihres grenzübergreifenden Charakters eine einzigartige Herausforderung für die Umsetzung effektiver Maßnahmen dar: Fischbestände oder Meeresverschmutzung sind nicht an nationale Grenzen gebunden. Maßnahmen müssen daher koordiniert werden - nicht nur zwischen mehreren Staaten, sondern auch von nichtstaatlichen Akteurinnen und Akteuren aus Wissenschaft und Zivilgesellschaft, der Privatwirtschaft und von internationalen Organisationen. Das derzeitige System der Meeres-Governance beruht auf einem

Flickenteppich unterschiedlicher Organisationen, die jeweils einen bestimmten Aufbau und ein spezifisches Mandat haben, wie z.B. im Bereich der Schifffahrt, der Fischerei oder des Meeresschutzes. Diese sektoralen Gremien arbeiten auf verschiedenen Skalen und Ebenen der Governance von global über regional und national bis hin zu lokal, was die Komplexität weiter erhöht. Siehe Kapitel 1.1.2.1.

Von der globalen bis zur regionalen und nationalen Ebene wurden zahlreiche Initiativen und Vereinbarungen getroffen, um mehr politische Kohärenz zu erreichen und die Zusammenarbeit und Kooperation zwischen den verschiedenen beteiligten Institutionen und Organisationen zu verbessern (Grip 2017). Doch trotz der Vielzahl an Bemühungen werden nicht nachhaltige Praktiken fortgesetzt und die Gesundheit der Meeresökosysteme nimmt weiter ab (Inniss et al. 2016; IPBES 2019b; Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity 2020). Um diesen Trend umzukehren, ist auch auf regionaler Ebene ein Wandel hin zu einer integrierten Governance und einer verstärkten Beteiligung relevanter Interessengruppen erforderlich. Viele Expertinnen und Experten betonen, dass überregionalen Bemühungen den vielfältigen Herausforderungen effektiver begegnet und auf die Komplexität des Mensch-Ozean-Systems eingegangen werden kann (Rochette et al. 2015; Billé et al. 2016; Wright et al. 2017; Mahon and Fanning 2019b). Die regionale Ebene kann flexibler (van Tatenhove 2013) und "näher, weiter, schneller" agieren (Billé et al. 2016: p. 51) als die globale Ebene. Aber traditionelle, sektor- oder themenspezifische Governance-Regelungen dominieren auch auf der regionalen Ebene (Mahon et al. 2015) und behindern die Bemühungen um ein kohärentes Management innerhalb von Meeresregionen. Es entwickeln sich neue Governance-Ansätze, die öffentliche und private Akteure und Akteurinnen beispielsweise in kollektiven Foren zusammenbringen (Ansell and Gash 2007). Aber eine wirkungsvolle Integration von Stakeholdern und ein ergiebiger Wissensaustausch sind im Bereich der Meeres-Governance noch weit von einer breiten Umsetzung entfernt (Cvitanovic, Hobday, van Kerkhoff, Wilson, et al. 2015; Bednarek et al. 2018; Morf et al. 2019). Siehe Kapitel 1.1.2.2.

Da die Beanspruchung des Ozeans und seiner Ressourcen weiter steigt (Winther et al. 2020), ist ein Paradigmenwechsel hin zu einer stärker integrierten Meeres-Governance unabdingbar. Abgestimmte und anpassungsfähige Governance-Ansätze sind eher in der Lage, die vielfältigen Bedrohungen einer gesunden Meeresumwelt anzugehen. Regional ausgerichtete Prozesse können dabei eine Schlüsselrolle einnehmen, um das erforderliche Maß an Integration zu erreichen. Damit der Übergang zu einer integrierten, regionalen Meeres-Governance erfolgen kann, müssen die zu Grunde liegenden Triebkräfte und Faktoren, die das derzeitige fragmentierte Governance-System bestimmen, verstanden und angegangen werden. Durch eine Problemanalyse, die im Rahmen dieses Projektes durchgeführt wurde, wurden folgende Herausforderungen für das derzeitige Governance-System: (1) schwache Institutionen, (2) schwache rechtliche Rahmenbedingungen, (3) schwache Überwachungs- und Durchsetzungsmechanismen der Instrumente und (4) mangelndes Wissen über den Ozean. Diese Herausforderungen führen zu einer unzureichenden Koordination zwischen involvierten Akteurinnen und Akteuren, einer begrenzten Beteiligung an der Politikgestaltung und einer wenig ausgeprägten Zusammenarbeit zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik. Dies behindert eine effektive Umsetzung und führt zu unkoordinierten Politiken, Überschneidungen bei Maßnahmen und Entscheidungen sowie zu insgesamt unzureichenden Maßnahmen, um einer weiteren Verschlechterung der Meeresgesundheit erfolgreich entgegenzutreten. Folgendes ist daher erforderlich um die genannten Herausforderungen zu überwinden: (1) Verbesserung von Koordination und Austausch zwischen Akteuren, (2) Aufstockung der finanziellen Mittel zur Unterstützung koordinierter Maßnahmen, (3) Ausbau der Kapazitäten um Sektor übergreifende Koordination und Kooperation zu ermöglichen, (4) gemeinsames Erarbeiten von Wissen für faktengestützte Entscheidungsfindungen, und (5) verbesserte Beteiligung von

Interessengruppen auf verschiedenen Ebenen und über alle Gruppierungen hinweg. Siehe Kapitel 1.1.2.3 und Abbildung 2 (S. 45).

Eine Plattform für offene Diskussionen und Gespräche zwischen Experten und Expertinnen, Interessengruppen und Regionen könnte die gemeinsame Erarbeitung von Wissen, die Entwicklung neuer Ansätze oder den Aufbau von Partnerschaften und Kooperationen unterstützen. Bestehende Mechanismen sind jedoch in der Regel an formale Politik- oder Governance-Prozesse gebunden, die einen offenen Austausch und lösungsorientierten Dialog behindern. Da Deutschland die Notwendigkeit einer neuen, informellen Plattform zur Bereitstellung solcher Dialogräume erkannte, kündigte die Bundesregierung 2017 auf der UN-Ozeankonferenz<sup>12</sup> in New York und anschließend gemeinsam mit der EU auf der Our Ocean-Konferenz<sup>13</sup> in Malta an, bis 2020 "eine sektor- und grenzübergreifende Multi-Stakeholder-Plattform für regionale Meeres-Governance" einzurichten (European Commission 2017a, 2017b). Ziel dieser neuen Plattform, die zum Zeitpunkt der Zusage den Namen "PROG-Forum" trug, sollte es sein, die Zusammenarbeit zu stärken und Lösungen für eine integrierte Meeres-Governance auf regionaler Ebene zu entwickeln. Damit sollte diese neue Plattform einen Beitrag zur Agenda 2030 mit ihrem Ozean-Ziel SDG 14 und anderen damit verbundenen Zielen und Unterzielen leisten. Die Plattform sollte involvierten und fachlich versierten Personen aus verschiedenen Stakeholder-Gruppen wie Regierungen, zwischenstaatlichen (IGOs) und nichtstaatlichen (NGOs) Organisationen, Wissenschaft und Privatwirtschaft für den Austausch von Praktiken und gemeinsames Lernen zusammenbringen. Das Forum sollte sich auf die Expertise von Personen stützen, die traditionell nicht an den Diskussionen beteiligt sind, und neue Perspektiven auf Meeresfragen ermöglichen. Als Raum außerhalb formeller Vereinbarungen wäre das Forum gut aufgestellt, um verschiedene Arten von Wissen zusammenzubringen und die Schaffung neuen Wissens auf gleicher Augenhöhe zu ermöglichen. Indem es die gemeinsame Wissensgenerierung und die Bereitstellung von (neuem) Wissen fördert, würde das Forum wissensbasierte Entscheidungsfindungen und integrierte Ansätze in der Meerespolitik fördern. Und es würde den Raum bieten, um gemeinsam politische Antworten und Empfehlungen zu erarbeiten und die Entwicklung neuer Maßnahmen und Lösungen zu unterstützen, unter anderem durch neue Initiativen, Partnerschaften oder Finanzierungsmechanismen für regionale Aktivitäten. Siehe Kapitel 1.1.3 und Abbildung 3 (S. 49).

#### **Von der Idee zur Umsetzung – Ein ko-kreativer Ansatz für das Marine Regions Forum**

Das Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), das Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) und TMG - Think Tank for Sustainability (TMG) wurden daraufhin von Deutschland beauftragt, den eingereichten Vorschlag umzusetzen und das Marine Regions Forum als neue partizipative und wissensbasierte Dialogplattform an der Schnittstelle zwischen Wissenschaft, Politik und Gesellschaft zu entwickeln. Die EU, vertreten durch die Generaldirektion Maritime Angelegenheiten und Fischerei der Europäischen Kommission (EU-Kommission), trug zur Entwicklung und Umsetzung des Projekts bei und stellte zusätzliche Mittel für die Ausrichtung der ersten Konferenz zur Verfügung.

Ein transdisziplinärer und ko-kreativer Ansatz stand bei der Erarbeitung und Umsetzung des Marine Regions Forum im Mittelpunkt. Das Projektteam von IASS, IDDRI und TMG setzte von Anfang an auf die Einbindung und Beteiligung von Experten und Expertinnen und Stakeholdern, um Wissensintegration, Akzeptanz und Zweckmäßigkeit zu gewährleisten. Es setzt sich zunehmend die Erkenntnis durch, dass Umweltprobleme eine neue Art von Wissensproduktion

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<sup>12</sup> Siehe <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/?id=18439> (19. März 2021).

<sup>13</sup> Siehe <http://www.ourocean2017.org/our-ocean-commitments> (8. Januar 2021).

und Prozessen zur Entscheidungsfindung erfordern und dass Ko-Design von Konzepten, Ko-Produktion von Wissen und Ko-Verbreitung von Ergebnissen dabei helfen, Ergebnisse mit hoher Wirksamkeit zu erzielen (Mausser et al. 2013; Stafford-Smith et al. 2017). Daher wurden folgende Elemente in das Arbeitsprogramm des Projekts und das Konzept des Marine Regions Forum aufgenommen: (1) Einrichtung einer Lenkungsgruppe mit Vertreterinnen und Vertretern des Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit (BMU), des Umweltbundesamtes (UBA) und der EU-Kommission sowie der Regierungen Schwedens und Frankreichs und des UN-Umweltprogramms, (2) Einrichtung eines internationalen Beirats, und (3) direkter Austausch mit und Einbindung von Akteuren und Expertinnen im Bereich Meeres-Governance während des gesamten Projekts. Das Projekt selbst bestand aus fünf Arbeitspaketen mit definierten Meilensteinen und Arbeitsergebnissen, die durch das Projektteam in enger Zusammenarbeit mit der eingerichteten Gremien und involvierten Expertinnen und Experten umgesetzt wurden (siehe 1 Abbildung 5, S. 52). Dieser Ko-kreative Arbeitsprozess beinhaltete die Festlegung eines Ziel- und Ergebnisrahmens und die Erarbeitung eines umfassenden Konzeptes für das Marine Regions Forum und fand seinen Höhepunkt in der Ausrichtung der ersten internationalen Multi-Stakeholder-Konferenz im Rahmen dieser neuen Plattform stattfand, dem Marine Regions Forum 2019. Siehe Kapitel 1.2.1 sowie Abbildung 4 (S. 51) und Abbildung 5 (S. 52).

Ein wesentlicher Teil der Konzeptentwicklung war die Festlegung der thematischen Ausrichtung des Marine Regions Forum im Allgemeinen und für diese erste Konferenz, die im Herbst 2019 stattfand. Um Lücken in der Zusammenarbeit zwischen den verschiedenen Governance-Prozessen und bestehenden Plattformen zu identifizieren, wurde eine vorbereitende Analyse durchgeführt. Diese umfasste eine Literatur- und Dokumentenrecherche sowie einen Konsultationsprozess. Dabei zeigte sich zum Beispiel, dass in diesen Prozessen oft formale Wege zur Einreichung von Arbeitsergebnissen fehlen. Die Analyse verwies außerdem auf Hemmnisse wie beispielsweise mangelnde Koordination zwischen relevanten Organisationen oder Programmen, z.B. zwischen regionalen Meeresprogrammen unter UNEP und regionalen Fischereiorganisationen. Weitere Hindernisse stellen demnach auch eine fehlende Berücksichtigung von Querverbindungen im Nachverfolgungs- und Überprüfungsprozess der Agenda 2030 und der SDGs dar sowie eine mangelnde Koordination beim Aufbau von Kapazitäten und Finanzierungsfragen über verschiedene politische Prozesse hinweg. Die Erkenntnisse aus diesem Sichtungs- und Konsultationsprozess, zu dem auch ein Expertenworkshop<sup>14</sup> mit Mitgliedern der Lenkungsgruppe, des Beirats und weiteren externen Experten gehörte, bildeten dann die Grundlage für die Ausarbeitung des Gesamtkonzepts des Marine Regions Forum und der Konferenz 2019. Siehe Kapitel 1.2.2.

## **Das Marine Regions Forum 2019**

### ***Der konzeptionelle Rahmen***

Zentraler Teil des F&E-Projektes war die konzeptionelle Entwicklung, Organisation und Durchführung Marine Regions Forum 2019. Diese Konferenz sollte 200 internationale Meeresexperten und-expertinnen zusammenbringen, um drängende Herausforderungen der Meeres-Governance zu diskutieren, Empfehlungen zu erarbeiten und regionale Ansätze zu fördern. Ein wichtiger Ausgangspunkt bei der Entwicklung des Konzepts war ein sogenannter Ziel- und Ergebnisrahmen, der gemeinsam von Projektteam und Lenkungsgruppe vorab entwickelt worden war und folgende Komponenten umfasste: (1) ein konzeptionelles Leitbild (FRAMING), (2) eine Zukunftsvision (VISION), (3) eine Darlegung der Besonderheiten

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<sup>14</sup> Siehe <https://www.iass-potsdam.de/en/news/marine-conservation-new-dialogue-forum-strengthen-cooperation> (30. Januar 2021).

(UNIQUENESS) und (4) Zielsetzungen und angestrebte Ergebnisse. Dieser Ziel- und Ergebnisrahmen (siehe auch Textkasten unten) bezieht sich auf Maßnahmen, die als Ansatzpunkte zur Bewältigung der in Kapitel 1.1 dargestellten Governance-Herausforderungen identifiziert wurden. Dieser Rahmenplan bildete die Grundlage für die Entwicklung eines Umsetzungskonzepts für die weitere Planung, Organisation und Ausrichtung des Marine Regions Forum 2019. Siehe Kapitel 2.1.1.

Weitere konzeptionelle Kriterien dienten als Leitfaden bei der Umsetzung und Durchführung der Konferenz). Diese sollten sicherstellen, dass die gewünschten Ergebnisse und Ziele erreicht werden und größtmögliche Akzeptanz bei den Akteurinnen und Akteuren sichergestellt ist. Die Kriterien umfassen beispielsweise Überlegungen zur Auswahl der Teilnehmenden um sicherzustellen, dass alle relevanten Stakeholder-Gruppen vertreten sind und die Passfähigkeit in Bezug auf das Konferenzprogramm gegeben ist. Insbesondere üblicherweise unterrepräsentierte Gruppen sollten angesprochen werden und dies über die verschiedenen Meeresregionen hinweg. Des Weiteren wurde festgelegt, dass die adäquate Auswahl der Konferenz- und Sitzungsthemen ein Schlüsselfaktor für den Erfolg des Marine Regions Forum 2019 sei. Die Konferenz- und Sitzungsthemen sollten daher nach ihrer Relevanz (transformativer Bedarf) ausgewählt werden, nach der Möglichkeit, Veränderungen zu bewirken (transformatives Potenzial), und danach, ob kritische Hindernisse sowie förderliche Bedingungen zu deren Überwindung angesprochen werden. Siehe auch Kapitel 2.1.2.

#### **Ziel- und Ergebnisrahmen für das Marine Regions Forum**

- **FRAMING:** Das Marine Regions Forum ist ein innovativer, wissensbasierter Dialograum, der ein breites Spektrum von Experten, Interessenvertreterinnen und Entscheidungsträgern aus verschiedenen Sektoren, Disziplinen und Organisationen zusammenbringt. Das Forum folgt den Empfehlungen und Forderungen, die auf der UN-Ozeankonferenz 2017, der Our Ocean-Konferenz 2017 und bei weiteren Gelegenheiten geäußert wurden. Es baut auf Selbstverpflichtungen der deutschen Regierung und der EU auf. Es untersucht Innovationen im Bereich von Politik, Management und Governance und fördert gemeinschaftliches Arbeiten zur Entwicklung neuer Lösungen, die einen transformativen Wandel für aktuelle Herausforderungen der Nachhaltigkeit im Bereich der Meere bewirken. Das Marine Regions Forum zielt darauf ab, durch gemeinsame Lernprozesse die Kooperation und Zusammenarbeit innerhalb und zwischen den Meeresregionen sowie die Entwicklung neuer Ansätze für die regionale Meeres-Governance zu fördern.
- **VISION:** Das Marine Regions Forum strebt an, die Transformation hin zu einer integrierten Meeres-Governance für Meeresregionen zu unterstützen. Das Marine Regions Forum fördert den Schutz und die nachhaltige Nutzung der Meeres- und Küstenökosysteme, indem es Multi-Stakeholder-Dialoge, den Austausch von guten Praxisbeispielen und die Zusammenarbeit zwischen Regionen unterstützt.
- **UNIQUENESS:** Das Marine Regions Forum ist einzigartig, weil es: (1) ein wissensbasiertes Forum ist, das von unabhängigen Forschungsinstituten in einem partizipativen Prozess gemeinsam mit Expertinnen und Experten aus Politik und Zivilgesellschaft entwickelt wird, (2) innovative Formate nutzt, um Multi-Stakeholder-Dialoge zu fördern, und (3) einen Raum außerhalb formeller Governance-Arrangements bietet, in dem sich die Teilnehmenden als Individuen an ergebnisorientierten Diskussionen beteiligen und nicht als Vertreter und Vertreterinnen bestimmter Organisationen.

- ZIELE, ZIELSETZUNGEN und ERWARTETE ERGEBNISSE: Die Gesamtziele des Marine Regions Forum, einschließlich der durchgeführten Veranstaltungen und Aktivitäten, sollen an den definierten langfristigen Zielen und mittelfristigen Zielsetzungen (Tabelle 2, S. 58) und den erwarteten Ergebnissen gemessen werden, wie sie für die jeweiligen Elemente wie die erste Konferenz des Marine Regions Forum in 2019 definiert wurden (Tabelle 3, S. 58).

### **Umsetzung und Durchführung**

Das Marine Regions Forum 2019 fand vom 30. September bis 2. Oktober 2019 in Berlin, Deutschland, statt. Es brachte über 200 führende Expertinnen und Experten aus 50 Ländern, mit unterschiedlichen regionalen und beruflichen Hintergründen aus Wissenschaft und Forschung, Politik und Politikgestaltung, IGOs und NGOs, Industrie, Kunst und Medien zusammen. Als dialogorientierte Konferenz mit einer Mischung aus Workshops und Plenardiskussionen wurde das Forum durch ein Rahmenprogramm abgerundet, das einen Resonanzraum für offenen und produktiven Austausch schaffen sollte. Die Konferenz stand unter dem übergreifenden Thema "Achieving a healthy ocean - Regional ocean governance beyond 2020" abgehalten. Mit diesem Konferenzthema wurde der Rahmen für die Konferenz abgesteckt: (1) Hindernisse und Wege zur Erreichung von SDG 14 sowie anderer ozeanbezogener Ziele ansprechen und den Fortschritt beschleunigen, und (2) die Bedeutung der regionalen Ebene bei der Koordinierung von Maßnahmen und der Erreichung der SDGs betonen. Siehe Kapitel 2.2.

Das Konferenzprogramm des Marine Regions Forum 2019 war in drei Themenfelder gegliedert: "Achieving SDG 14" (Thema 1), "Underpinning global processes" (Thema 2), und "Knowledge for ocean action" (Thema 3). Insgesamt wurden im Rahmen dieser Themenfelder achtzehn Dialogsitzungen zu definierten Themen angeboten. Für jeden der drei Konferenztage waren außerdem Schwerpunktthemen als zusätzliche Reflexionspunkte für die jeweiligen Sitzungen gesetzt worden: "Understanding challenges and achievements" (Tag 1), "Developing solutions" (Tag 2), und "Accelerating progress and creating new pathways" (Tag 3). Sowohl die Konferenzthemen als auch die Tagesschwerpunkte wurden zur Strukturierung der Diskussionen in den Plenarsitzungen verwendet. Siehe Kapitel 6 und Abbildung 6 (S. 62), Konferenzagenda (Anhang B.1) und Konferenzbericht (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019).

Das Konferenzprogramm (Kapitel 2.2.3) umfasste folgende Elemente:

- Plenarsitzungen an jedem der drei Konferenztage (Kapitel 2.2.3.1): Diese dienten dazu, den Rahmen für die Konferenz abzustecken, die Diskussionen zu den Hauptthemen der Konferenz zu vertiefen, über Lösungswege zu sprechen und Verbindungen zu wichtigen aktuellen ozeanpolitischen Prozessen herzustellen. Hochrangige Rednerinnen und Vertreter wichtiger Akteurs-Gruppen waren zu kurzen Leitvorträgen oder zur Teilnahme an Podiumsdiskussionen eingeladen.
- Dialogsitzungen in Form von Workshops zu ausgewählten und genau definierten Governance-Herausforderungen (Kapitel 2.2.3.2 und Tabelle 4, S. 68): Diese wurden in zeitlich parallel laufenden thematischen Strängen angeboten. Die einzelnen Sitzungen waren darauf ausgerichtet, die vertiefte Erkundung und Diskussion von Schlüsselthemen zu ermöglichen. Spezielle Moderationstechniken wie World-Café oder Fishbowl-Formate wurden eingesetzt, um den Austausch anzuregen, Diskussionen zu öffnen und eine insgesamt produktive Atmosphäre zu schaffen.
- Abendveranstaltungen (Kapitel 2.2.3.3): Ein Abendempfang und ein Konferenzdinner wurden angeboten, um die Teilnehmer in einer informelleren Atmosphäre zu begrüßen und Möglichkeiten zur Kontaktpflege und Vorbereitung auf die Konferenz zu bieten. Während

des Abendempfangs wurde in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Kunstkollektiv *Artport\_making waves* und einer Berliner Künstlerin eine interaktive Intervention von Schülerinnen und Schülern dargeboten, um den Austausch anzuregen.

- Unter dem Titel "*The Ocean Realm*" wurde ein kreatives und ansprechendes Rahmenprogramm organisiert, welches die Teilnehmer zu inspirieren suchte. Hier wurden auch Personen eingebunden, die normalerweise nicht an dieser Art von Veranstaltungen teilnehmen, wie z.B. Künstlerinnen und Jugendliche (Kapitel 2.2.3.4). Dazu gehörten auch gezeichnete Dokumentationen der Sitzungen, ein Meet & Greet-Raum, ein Brettspiel zur Meeresraumplanung, eine Virtual-Reality-Ecke, eine Fotoausstellung und tägliche Nachbesprechungen für den Berufseinsteiger und fachlichen Nachwuchs.
- Am dritten Tag der Konferenz wurde in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Kunstkollektiv ARTPORT\_making waves, dem IASS und dem Wissenschaftsmuseum Futurium in Berlin ein öffentliches Side-Event durchgeführt (Kapitel 2.2.3.5). Unter dem Titel "*Berlin am Meer / Berlin by the sea*" sah die Veranstaltung eine weitere interaktive Intervention von Berliner Schülerinnen und Schülern vor, die ihre Gedanken und Fragen zu Klimawandel und Meeresschutz dem Publikum und einem Experten- und Besucherpanel präsentierten, gefolgt von einer offenen Diskussion im Fishbowl-Stil.
- Ein informelles Networking-Lunch wurde durch das BMU ausgerichtet und gemeinsam mit dem IASS am zweiten Tag des Marine Regions Forum 2019 organisiert (Kapitel 2.2.3.6). Dieses Treffen, das in der Executive Lounge des Konferenzhotels stattfand, bot ausgewählten hochrangigen Teilnehmenden die Möglichkeit, sich mit der Bundesministerin für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit über zentrale Herausforderungen und Chancen der Meeres-Governance auszutauschen.

Der Umsetzungs- und Moderationsansatz, der für das Marine Regions Forum 2019 gewählt wurde, baute auf der langjährigen Expertise des Projektteams in der Durchführung von dialog- und ergebnisorientierten Veranstaltungen an der Schnittstelle von Wissenschaft, Politik und Gesellschaft auf. Eine vorbereitende Analyse zu ko-kreativen Moderationstechniken und Kriterien für die Gestaltung offener und ergebnisorientierter Dialogräume unterstützte die Umsetzung. Die Lenkungsgruppe, der Beirats und weitere externe Expertinnen und Experten wurden in die Programmplanung und -durchführung einbezogen, und die unterschiedlichen Programmelemente wurden unter Berücksichtigung der definierten Kriterien und gewünschten Ergebnissen sorgfältig umgesetzt. Siehe Kapitel 2.2.2.

Das Marine Regions Forum 2019 wurde vom Projektteam von IASS, IDDRI und TMG gemeinsam mit GOPA Com, einem von der EU beauftragten Dienstleister, und dem Veranstaltungspersonal des Veranstaltungsortes geplant und organisiert. Es wurde gemeinsam mit BMU, UBA und EC ausgerichtet. GOPA Com übernahm große Teile des Teilnehmermanagement und der Veranstaltungsorganisation vor Ort und verwaltete die finanziellen Mittel, welche die EU für die Konferenz über den Europäischen Meeres- und Fischereifonds (EMFF) bereitgestellt hatte. Die EU-Finanzierung umfasste auch Zuschüsse für Reise- und Unterkunftskosten für 58 Teilnehmende, die sich aktiv an der Veranstaltung beteiligten, sowie für 10 Teilnehmende aus Entwicklungsländern. Dies sollte eine ausgewogene Beteiligung gewährleisten. Weitere finanzielle Mittel für die Konferenz kamen über das F&E-Projekt und das IASS, welches bestimmte Programmelemente unterstützte. Die Auswahl der Teilnehmenden lag jedoch in den Händen des Projektteams, da dies als einer der Schlüsselprozesse der Konferenzorganisation angesehen wurde. Das Einladungs- und Anmeldeverfahren für allgemeine Teilnehmende wurde weitgehend von GOPA Com im Austausch mit dem Projektteam abgewickelt. Hochrangige

Teilnehmende wurden mittels personalisierter Einladungsschreiben angesprochen, die gemeinsam von BMU und EC unterzeichnet und versandt wurden. Siehe auch Kapitel 2.2.4.

Um Interessierte und Teilnehmende vor, während und nach dem Marine Regions Forum 2019 über das Konferenzprogramm zu informieren und die Kontaktaufnahme zwischen Teilnehmenden zu erleichtern, wurden folgende Konferenzmaterialien zur Verfügung gestellt: (1) eine Konferenz-Website ([www.prog-ocean.org](http://www.prog-ocean.org)) und (2) ein Konferenzprogramm<sup>15</sup>, das im Vorfeld der Konferenz per E-Mail als PDF-Dokument versandt wurde und auf der Website zum Download zur Verfügung stand, (3) ein gedrucktes Konferenzheft, das vor Ort ausgehändigt wurde, sowie (4) eine mobile Konferenz-App, welche die Teilnehmenden während der Konferenz zur Information, Orientierung und Vernetzung nutzen konnten. Siehe Kapitel 2.2.5.1.

Für die Öffentlichkeitsarbeit zum Marine Regions Forum 2019 sowie zur Erfassung von Zielerreichung und Ergebnissen wurde vorab eine Kommunikationsstrategie ausgearbeitet. Diese wurde gemeinsam mit den Mitgliedern der Lenkungsgruppe und des Beirats entwickelt, welche auch bei der eigentlichen Öffentlichkeitsarbeit und der Erstellung von Kommunikationsprodukten Beiträge leisteten. Die Strategie zielte darauf ab, die Beteiligung und Unterstützung der wichtigsten Interessengruppen sicherzustellen sowie Informationen über die Entwicklung, die Arbeitsergebnisse und die Wirkungserfolge des Marine Regions Forums 2019 bereitzustellen. Ein zentrales Element der Kommunikationsstrategie war die Entwicklung eines Corporate Designs einschließlich eines Logos und eines Slogans („connecting people to protect one ocean“). Für die Öffentlichkeitsarbeit wurde auf digitale Medien gesetzt: Social-Media-Posts über Twitter, Beiträge im E-Mail-Newsletter der Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance (PROG) und auf der Konferenz-Website sowie Multimedia-Produkte wie ein Konferenztrailer und ein Konferenzfilm wurden erstellt und über die genannten Kanäle verbreitet. Zusätzlich zu Broschüren und Präsentationen auf Konferenzen wurden außerdem gezielte Pressemitteilungen und Presseberichte während des gesamten Projektes veröffentlicht. Siehe Kapitel 2.2.6.

### **Arbeitsergebnisse und Wirkungserfolge**

Zu den direkten Arbeitsergebnissen des Marine Regions Forum 2019 zählen: (1) ein Dokument mit Kernbotschaften (Key Messages), (2) ein detaillierter Konferenzbericht und (3) die Berichterstattung durch IISD Reporting Services einschließlich Fotografie zur Verbreitung der Konferenzergebnisse, (4) gezeichnete Dokumentationen der Plenarsitzungen und ausgewählter Sessions sowie (5) Videoaufnahmen und die Aufzeichnung von Interviews für einen Konferenzfilm. Das Dokument mit den Kernbotschaften (Key Messages) baut auf einer im Vorfeld der Konferenz entwickelten Gliederung auf und stellt gemeinsame Empfehlungen der einzelnen Sitzungen zusammen, um diese im Weiteren in relevante Governance-Prozesse auf regionaler und globaler Ebene einfließen zu lassen. Ein erster Entwurf dieses Dokuments wurde unter Zuarbeit der Sitzungsleitungen während der Veranstaltung von den Konferenzorganisatoren erstellt und auf der abschließenden Plenarsitzung vorgestellt. Die Teilnehmenden waren eingeladen, das Dokument im Nachgang der Konferenz zu kommentieren. Die konsolidierten Kernbotschaften wurden beim Vorbereitungstreffen für die UN Ozean-Konferenz 2020<sup>16</sup>, welches vom 4. bis 5. Februar 2020 in New York stattfand, vorgelegt und bekannt gemacht. Der Konferenzbericht wurde im Nachgang des Marine Regions Forum 2019 durch die Konferenzorganisatoren erstellt (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019). Dieser bietet eine zusammenfassende Darstellung der Konferenz und der einzelnen Programmelemente. Der Bericht wurde als digitale PDF-Datei veröffentlicht und steht auf der

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<sup>15</sup> Siehe [http://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/Programme-overview\\_rev16\\_201903-v2\\_mailing-website.pdf](http://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/Programme-overview_rev16_201903-v2_mailing-website.pdf) (10. November 2020).

<sup>16</sup> Siehe <https://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/2020/02/04/key-messages-from-the-marine-regions-forum-2019-at-un-2020-ocean-conference-preparatory-meeting/> (20. November 2020).

Konferenz-Website<sup>17</sup> zum Download bereit. Ein weiteres wichtiges Medium der Berichterstattung wurde durch die IISD Reporting Services bereitgestellt. IISD-Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter berichteten während der Konferenz von vor Ort und hielten die Diskussionen der Plenarsitzungen und ausgewählter Sitzungen fest. Hierzu wurden Tagesberichte und ein zusammenfassenden Bericht in der Reihe Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB)<sup>18</sup> des IISD online veröffentlicht. Diese Berichte ermöglichten es den Teilnehmenden, die Diskussionen des Tages zu rekapitulieren. Zudem wurden die Berichte durch den IISD über eigene Netzwerke an die breitere ozeanpolitische Öffentlichkeit verteilt. Siehe auch Kapitel 2.3.

Neben diesen direkten Ergebnissen konnten weitere Wirkungserfolge des Marine Regions Forum 2019 im Nachgang der Konferenz festgehalten werden. Hierzu zählt eine finanzielle Zuwendung der Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) an den Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT)<sup>19</sup>, um diese bei der Entwicklung von Wissensmanagement-Tools zu unterstützen. Ein IISD-Meinungsartikel mit Botschafter Peter Thomson, Sondergesandter des UN-Generalsekretärs für den Ozean, als Co-Autor konnte durch das Projektteam lanciert werden (Thomson et al. 2020). Das Projektteam reichte außerdem Empfehlungen aus den Key Messages bei der Stakeholder Online e-Konsultation der UN Ozean-Konferenz<sup>20</sup> ein. Siehe Kapitel 2.3.5.

Das Marine Regions Forum wurde am 2. Juni 2017 durch das BMU unter #OceanAction18439<sup>21</sup> im Register der UN Ozean-Konferenz als freiwillige Selbstverpflichtung registriert. Seitdem wurden durch das Projektteam im Auftrag des BMU mehrere Fortschrittsberichte geliefert und auf der offiziellen Website des Registers hochgeladen. Siehe Kapitel 2.4.

### **Evaluierung und Analyse des Marine Regions Forum**

Als Grundlage für die Weiterentwicklung des Marine Regions Forum, aber auch um die Entwicklung neuartiger partizipativer Ansätze in der Meeres-Governance zu unterstützen, wurde eine Reihe von Evaluierungsverfahren in den F&E-Prozess des Projekts einbezogen. Diese zielten darauf ab, den Ansatz und die Ergebnisse der ersten Konferenz im Hinblick auf die erklärten Ziele zu analysieren, sowie den konzeptionellen Ansatz an sich und die Umsetzung im Vergleich zu anderen Initiativen zu bewerten. Die Evaluierung des Marine Regions Forum 2019 umfasste eine Analyse der Teilnehmenden bzgl. Herkunft und nach Stakeholder-Gruppen sowie eine Teilnehmerbefragung, welche während der Konferenz durchgeführt wurde. Die Auswertung ergab, dass beispielsweise in Bezug auf die Repräsentation der Stakeholder-Gruppen und die geografische Ausgewogenheit noch Verbesserungsbedarf besteht, die Teilnehmenden die Konferenz aber insgesamt als sehr positiv wahrgenommen haben. Diese Einschätzung bezog sich insbesondere darauf, wie die Konferenz den Dialog zwischen Sektoren und Regionen gefördert und die Teilnehmenden ermutigt hat, solche Prozesse in ihre eigene Arbeit zu integrieren. Des Weiteren wurde durch ein externes Unternehmen eine Presse- und Medienanalyse durchgeführt, um die Reichweite des Marine Regions Forum 2019 einschließlich der Berichterstattung durch IISD Reporting Services zu evaluieren. Siehe Kapitel 3.1.

Um nachzuvollziehen, ob das Marine Regions Forum 2019 die im Ziel- und Ergebnisrahmen definierten Ziele erreicht hat, führte das Projektteam gemeinsam mit den Mitveranstaltern der Konferenz 2019 im Rahmen von Nachbesprechungen eine Reihe von kritische Reflexionen

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<sup>17</sup> Siehe <https://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/resources/> (13. März 2021).

<sup>18</sup> Siehe <https://enb.iisd.org/oceans/marine-regions-forum/2019/> (20. November 2020).

<sup>19</sup> Siehe <https://seeyccat.org/wiomsa-awards-seeyccat-a-grant/> (14. Januar 2021).

<sup>20</sup> Siehe <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/ocean2020/preparation/stakeholders> (12. November 2020).

<sup>21</sup> Siehe <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/?id=18439> (13. Januar 2021).

durch. Diese schlossen auch die Gespräche mit der Lenkungsgruppe und dem Beirat ein und berücksichtigte die Ergebnisse der Teilnehmerbefragung. Reflexivität wird als ein wichtiges Element transdisziplinärer Arbeitsweisen angesehen und ist insbesondere im Hinblick auf die mögliche zukünftige Entwicklung des Marine Regions Forum von Bedeutung. Das Team und die Mitveranstalter diskutierte die Vorbereitungsprozesse und die Durchführung des Marine Regions Forum 2019. In Bezug auf den Vorbereitungsprozess wurde festgestellt, dass das Gleichgewicht zwischen logistischer und inhaltlicher Arbeit gelegentlich unausgewogen war und logistisch-organisatorische Aufgaben überwogen. Insgesamt aber wurde die Veranstaltung als sehr erfolgreich wahrgenommen, insbesondere im Hinblick auf das Engagement der Teilnehmenden. Weiterhin wurde festgestellt, dass die Veranstaltung durch die erfolgreiche Förderung von Stakeholder-Dialogen über Meeresregionen hinweg eine Lücke in der regionalen Meeres-Governance geschlossen hat. Siehe Kapitel 3.2.

Weiterhin wurden die direkten Arbeitsergebnisse und erzielten Wirkungserfolge entlang des definierten Ziel- und Ergebnisrahmens geprüft und bewertet. So sind zum Beispiel mit der Veröffentlichung des Key-Messages-Dokuments, des Konferenzberichts und der Pressemitteilungen sowie mit der erzielten Medienberichterstattung wesentliche, gemäß Ziel- und Ergebnisrahmen angestrebte Ergebnisse erzielt worden. Langfristige Effekte (impacts) werden in der Regel später erreicht als Wirkungserfolge (outcomes) oder sind als Folge dieser zu verstehen. Zum Beispiel würde gemeinsames Lernen der Teilnehmenden, als eines der angestrebten Wirkungserfolge des Marine Regions Forum, zeitlich vor langfristigen Effekten wie verbesserte Kooperation und Zusammenarbeit eintreten und/oder zu diesen beitragen. Die Rückmeldungen und Informationen von Teilnehmenden, die während und nach der Konferenz sowie durch die Experteninterviews (siehe unten) gesammelt wurden, weisen auf das Erreichen von derartigen intermediären Wirkungserfolgen hin. Siehe Kapitel 3.3.

Im Nachgang zur Konferenz 2019 wurden mittels empirischer qualitativer Forschung der konzeptionelle Gesamtansatz des Marine Regions Forum und der darüber erreichte Mehrwert für Wissensaustausch evaluiert. Das Ziel dieser Forschung war es, (1) die Herausforderungen und Möglichkeiten für Sektor übergreifende Multi-Stakeholder-Dialogprozesse in Meeresregionen zu erfassen, (2) die Erfahrungen, die mit dem Marine Regions Forum 2019 in Bezug auf gemeinsames Lernen über Meeresregionen hinweg gesammelt wurden, als Fallstudie zu veranschaulichen und (3) zu verstehen, wie Wissensintegration innerhalb von Praktiken der Meeres-Governance sichergestellt werden kann und wie das Marine Regions Forum einen Mehrwert für formelle Governance-Prozesse schafft. Die Forschung beinhaltete die Durchführung von Interviews mit 12 ausgewählten Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmern des Marine Regions Forum 2019. Die Interviewdaten wurden transkribiert und mittels qualitativer Inhaltsanalyse ausgewertet. Erste Ergebnisse dieser Forschung werden in Kapitel 3.4 vorgestellt. Die Interviewdaten haben bestätigt, dass die Konferenz 2019 den gewünschten Mehrwert generieren und das Forum innerhalb formeller Governance-Prozesse positionieren konnte. Das Forum lieferte eine regionale Kontextualisierung globaler Rahmenwerke, Vereinbarungen und Ziele. Darüber hinaus zeigte es auf, wie regionale Mechanismen kooperieren und zusammenarbeiten können, um die Umsetzung globaler Ziele zu erleichtern. Dies wiederum verringerte die oftmals beobachtete Konkurrenz zwischen regionalen Mechanismen und stellte sie auf eine gleichberechtigte Ebene. Siehe Kapitel 3.4.

Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, dass der Mehrwert des Marine Regions Forum, als ein Beispiel für eine Plattform zur Förderung des Wissensaustauschs, nicht nur in der Schaffung von Handlungswissen liegt, sondern auch in der Anwendung dieses Wissens in der Praxis. Das Forum stellt die Teilnehmenden auf eine gleichberechtigte Ebene und ermöglicht es Akteuren und Akteurinnen, die normalerweise nicht miteinander interagieren, Vertrauen aufzubauen und

sich einzubringen. Und es bot die Möglichkeit, globale Rahmenwerke wie beispielsweise zur Umsetzung der 2030-Agenda in Bezug auf die regionale Ebene zu diskutieren. Das Marine Regions Forum füllt eine Lücke in der Meeres-Governance, indem es einen inklusiven Dialograum für eine Vielfalt von Akteurinnen und Akteuren, Sektoren und Meeresregionen bietet. Dieser verbesserte Austausch stellt wiederum sicher, dass die mit dem Marine Regions Forum angestrebten Ergebnisse erzielt werden. Siehe Kapitel 3.5.

#### **Der Marine Regions Forum Online Workshop 2021**

Die Schlussphase des F&E-Projekts wurde überschattet von der globalen COVID-19-Pandemie und ihren dramatischen Folgen für die Welt. Meeresregionen und vom Meer abhängige Existenzgrundlagen wurden stark beeinträchtigt, ebenso wie Prozesse der Meeres-Governance. Im Anschluss an eine Konsultation des Beirats zu den Auswirkungen der Pandemie auf die Nachhaltigkeit der Meere und damit zusammenhängende Prozesse wurde vorgeschlagen, dass das Marine Regions Forum als neu eingerichtete Dialogplattform den Erfahrungsaustausch zwischen betroffenen Akteur-Gruppen über Möglichkeiten zum Wiederaufbau und zur Verbesserung der langfristigen Resilienz von Meeresregionen ermöglichen soll. Der Arbeitsplan des Projekts Marine Regions Forum wurde entsprechend angepasst und ein Online-Workshop am 28. Januar 2021 zum Thema "*Ocean Governance and COVID-19 - Building resilience for marine regions*" veranstaltet. Der Workshop wurde von IASS, IDDRI und TMG gemeinsam mit UBA, BMU und EC organisiert und diente auch als Abschlussworkshop der Phase 1 des Marine Regions Forum. Siehe Kapitel 4.

#### **Wie geht es weiter? Eine Entwicklungsstrategie für das Marine Regions Forum**

Nach der erfolgreichen Durchführung der ersten Phase des Marine Regions Forum durch das F&E-Projekt und der Etablierung des Forums mit der in 2019 durchgeführten ersten Konferenz hat das Projektteam in enger Zusammenarbeit mit der Lenkungsgruppe eine Strategie für die weitere Entwicklung des Marine Regions Forum ausgearbeitet. Diese Strategie sieht vor, dass das Marine Regions Forum als Dialogplattform fortlaufend die Entwicklung hin zu einer integrierten und transformativen Meeres-Governance unterstützt. Dies erfolgt vor allem dadurch, dass mit dem Forum einen Raum für den Austausch von guten Praktiken und die Zusammenarbeit innerhalb und zwischen den Regionen angeboten wird. Siehe Kapitel 5.1.

Die Strategie beschreibt nicht nur die Notwendigkeit der Weiterentwicklung und des weiteren Etablierung des Marine Regions Forum, sondern skizziert auch Ziele und mögliche thematische Ansatzpunkte einer zweiten Phase. Sie greift damit sie auch die in der ersten Phase gemachten Erfahrungen und die mittels der durchgeführten Evaluierungen gewonnenen Erkenntnisse auf. Wie bereits für die erste Entwicklungsphase des Marine Regions Forum dargelegt, sollte auch die weitere Entwicklung des Marine Regions Forum auf der Annahme basieren, dass nur mit Hilfe regional koordinierter Ansätze wirkliche Fortschritte für die Meeresumwelt erzielt werden können. Durch die Erschließung des Wissens- und Erfahrungsschatzes auf regionaler Ebene sollte sich Phase 2 des Marine Regions Forum auf die Entwicklung neuartiger Instrumente und neuer Formen der Zusammenarbeit innerhalb von Meeresregionen konzentrieren. Weiterhin sollte die zweite Phase einen deutlich stärkeren regionalen Fokus haben und enger mit Akteuren aus einer bestimmten Meeresregion, z.B. dem westlichen Indischen Ozean, der Karibik oder aus Südostasien, entwickelt und durchgeführt werden. Aber auch wenn sich das Marine Regions Forum auf den Austausch innerhalb einer bestimmten Region konzentriert, sollte sich das Forum weiterhin aktiv in wichtige globale Meeres- und Nachhaltigkeitsprozesse einbringen. Empfehlungen und Schlussfolgerungen, die mittels der die verschiedenen Aktivitäten des Marine Regions Forum erarbeitet werden, einschließlich im Rahmen einer zweiten Konferenz, sollen in

relevante globale Treffen und Prozesse eingebracht werden, um bestehende Lücken zwischen der globalen, der regionalen und der nationalen Ebene zu überbrücken. Siehe Kapitel 5.2.

Die zweite Phase wird auch im Hinblick auf die Auswahl der thematischen Einstiegspunkte auf den Ergebnissen des Marine Regions Forum 2019 aufbauen und die Empfehlungen des Ergebnisdokumentes "Key Messages 2019" aufgreifen. Erkenntnisse und Erfahrungen aus der ersten Phase sollten die weitere konzeptionelle Entwicklung und Umsetzung in Phase 2 lenken, beispielsweise im Hinblick auf kollaborative Ansätze und die Förderung engagierter und ergebnisorientierter Dialoge. Eine Lehre ist beispielsweise, dass die Einbeziehung von Industrie und Privatsektors entscheidend für die Entwicklung neuartiger Partnerschaften und umsetzbarer Lösungen ist, dass aber das Engagement dieser Akteure einer andere Herangehensweise bedarf als die Einbindung von IGOs oder NGOS. Für die zweite Phase wird nicht nur vorgeschlagen, ein zweites Marine Regions Forum innerhalb einer bestimmten Meeresregion abzuhalten, sondern auch weitere Elemente für Austausch und Diskussion in das Arbeitsprogramm aufzunehmen, wie z. B. eine Reihe von Online-Workshops. Siehe auch Kapitel 5.3.

### **Fazit**

Um die Agenda 2030 für nachhaltige Entwicklung zu erreichen ist es unabdingbar, den fortwährenden negativen Trend in Bezug auf die Gesundheit der Meere zu stoppen und umzukehren. Gleichzeitig müssen die damit verbundenen Herausforderungen des Klimawandels und des Verlusts der biologischen Vielfalt angegangen werden. Integrierte und ökosystembasierte Ansätze sind eher in der Lage, den Herausforderungen der eng miteinander verbundenen natürlichen und sozialen Systeme zu begegnen als das gegenwärtige fragmentierte Governance-System, doch fehlt es oft noch an einer effektiven Umsetzung. Über verstärkte regionale Zusammenarbeit kann die erforderliche Kooperation und Koordination zwischen relevanten Akteurinnen und Akteuren und über territoriale und sektorale Grenzen hinweg erreicht werden. Kooperation und Koordination sind entscheidend für die Umsetzung von Schutzmaßnahmen und die Sicherstellung einer langfristigen Nachhaltigkeit. Um Transformationen zu ermöglichen, müssen die Schwächen des bzw. der derzeitigen Systeme angegangen werden. Das Marine Regions Forum hat sich mit seiner ersten Konferenz im Jahr 2019 als partizipative Dialogplattform für den Austausch und das gemeinsame Erarbeiten von Handlungsansätzen etabliert. Das Forum konnte erfolgreich den durch Zusammenarbeit und Kooperation entstehenden Mehrwert aufzeigen, und die Teilnehmenden konnten neue Einblicke und Praktiken mitnehmen und in ihre tägliche Arbeit einbinden. Um die drängende Umsetzung der globalen Ozeanagenda und der damit eng verbundenen Biodiversitäts- und Klimaagenda in Zukunft voranzutreiben, könnte das Marine Regions Forum Meeresregionen dabei unterstützen, maßgeschneiderte Sektor übergreifende Governance-Ansätze und transformative Strategien zu entwickeln. Wenn das Marine Regions Forum weitergeführt wird, wird es sich in den nächsten Jahren zweifellos dahin entwickeln, den Austausch von Stakeholdern außerhalb formaler Prozesse stetig zu fördern und eine Plattform für Meeres-Akteurinnen und –Akteure aus der ganzen Welt zu bieten. Siehe auch Kapitel 6.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Why a Marine Regions Forum?

Impacts from human uses and compounding effects such as climate change are putting marine ecosystems under enormous pressure. Ocean health and human well-being are at risk in this closely entangled human-ocean system (Franke et al. 2020). With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations (UN) (United Nations 2015; henceforth the 2030 Agenda), the global community has committed under the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 to address these challenges for the ocean, recognising the relevance of the ocean for humankind (Visbeck et al. 2013). But the way forward is hampered by the complexity of the issues and an ineffective and fragmented governance system (Rochette et al. 2015; Blanchard 2017; Grip 2017; Kelly et al. 2019; Watson-Wright and Luis Valdés 2019). Finding adequate response to these challenges will be key to sustaining healthy marine ecosystems and human well-being. Establishing a participatory exchange platform could be one such response, as discussed in the following chapters.

### 1.1.1 The state of the ocean: Growing impacts in a changing world

Accounting for 71% of the surface of our planet, the ocean is home to more than 2 million known species and yet many more species are still to be described (Mora et al. 2011). The ocean's rich biodiversity supports the provisioning of ecosystem services that are essential for human being (Costanza 1999; Drakou et al. 2017). For example, more than 3.3 billion people rely on fish for at least 20% of their average per capita animal protein intake (FAO 2020: 5). But increasing fishing efforts and unsustainable fisheries practices are leading to declining fish stocks (Anticamara et al. 2011). In 2017, 34.2% of global fish stocks were fished at biologically unsustainable levels in 2017, recording large regional differences (FAO 2020: 47). Fisheries activities also have other unintended environmental impact such as habitat destruction, bycatch and changes in ecosystem structure (Pikitch et al. 2004).

The ocean is also a source of economic activities and provides livelihoods for millions in the world including through shipping, oil and gas, telecommunication and tourism sectors. If compared to land-based economies, the ocean would make the 7<sup>th</sup> strongest economy worldwide after the U.S., China, Japan, Germany, France and the UK in terms of annual gross production with up to 2.5 trillion US \$ per year (Hoegh-Guldberg 2015). While it is easier to associate the ocean with economic activities by the marine sectors, the ocean is also crucial for human activities on land. Over 80% of global trade volume is carried out through maritime shipping (UNCTAD 2017), providing goods and materials to support socioeconomic as well as cultural activities on land. Coastal tourism is an important economic activity for many countries, not only for the tourism sector but also associated industry such as food, housing, and infrastructure sectors supporting coastal development (Hall 2001). For Small Island Developing States, the integrity of coastal landscapes and seascapes is a major tourism factor (Ballance et al. 2000; UNEP 2009; Neumann et al. 2017), which renders the health of the ocean a key factor for the long-term sustainability of many human activities and well-being.

And there is growing interest in the potential of the ocean for supporting economic growth as demonstrated for example by the recent report of the European Commission on EU's "blue economy" (European Commission 2020). But the effects of the manifold human activities on the ocean and its ecosystems, including through pollution from land and sea, habitat destruction or overfishing, are threatening ocean health at a growing degree (Halpern et al. 2019; Jouffray et al. 2020). Recent reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (IPCC 2019),

the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES 2019b) and the UN's Global Biodiversity Outlook (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity 2020; Stokstad 2020) highlight the continuing degradation of coastal and marine ecosystems and report alarming rates of biodiversity loss. Given the alarming rate of change and impacts, and competing interests for ocean resources, Jouffray et al. (2020) coined the term "blue acceleration". In addition, new economic activities such as energy generation in the ocean and deep-sea bed mining are increasingly discussed while little is known about potential environmental impacts (Christiansen et al. 2020; Levin et al. 2020). Similarly, the effects of procedures such as ocean fertilization or other emerging ocean-based technologies to remove carbon-dioxide from the atmosphere are unclear (Gattuso et al. 2018; Gore et al. 2018; Boyd and Vivian 2019; Gattuso et al. 2021).

Climate change exacerbates the pressures on the health of the ocean. Since 1955, the ocean has absorbed 90% of excess heat trapped in the Earth due to the greenhouse effect (Cheng et al. 2017). This has led to ocean warming and, as the IPCC (2019) states, marine heatwaves have significantly increased in frequency and become more intense. It is estimated that sea-surface temperatures will continue to rise as sea ice and ice sheets are further reduced and more is heat taken up by the ocean (IPCC 2019). Further effects of climate change on the ocean include changes in ocean circulation and salinity, and an increased incidence of deoxygenation (Bindoff et al. 2019; IPCC 2019). The surface layer of the ocean is acidifying due to an increased absorption of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the atmosphere. According to the IPCC (2019), the ocean has taken up 20–30 % of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted into the atmosphere from human activities since the 1980s. These and further effects on the physical and biological properties of the ocean result in a wide range of negative impacts on marine and coastal ecosystems such as changes in species distribution or degradation of habitats - and by that on human well-being (Bindoff et al. 2019; Harding 2019; Singh et al. 2019; Doney et al. 2020). Recent research finds that about 60 % of the ocean is under pressure from cumulative impacts due to climate change, fishing, land-based pollution and shipping (Halpern et al. 2019).

In addition to the complexity of impacts on the ocean from human activities, the transboundary nature of the ocean and its ecosystems and species, which include migratory species travelling long distances throughout their lifetimes, poses additional challenges. For example, marine species that are exploited for fisheries - to a large extent - move through the ocean irrespective of maritime boundaries defined by States or treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS; United Nations 1982). Their distribution and abundance is determined by a variety of biotic and abiotic factors, not by human-made boundaries that define regulatory competence (Palacios-Abrantes et al. 2020). As climate change is expected to increase the number of transboundary stocks, new or enhanced governance approaches are needed to tackle overfishing and halt further degradation of coastal and marine ecosystems, and to reduce conflicts and the decline of livelihoods (Pinsky et al. 2018).

Any measures taken to conserve the ocean and coasts, sustainably manage human activities such as fisheries, or target effects such as marine pollution have to take into account the characteristic of the ocean. Furthermore, the ocean is changing as the world changes, and the challenges are complex. Ocean governance and management practices need to be responsive and adaptive in order to protect the health of the ocean and provide the conditions for sustainable development, and build on cooperation and collaboration.

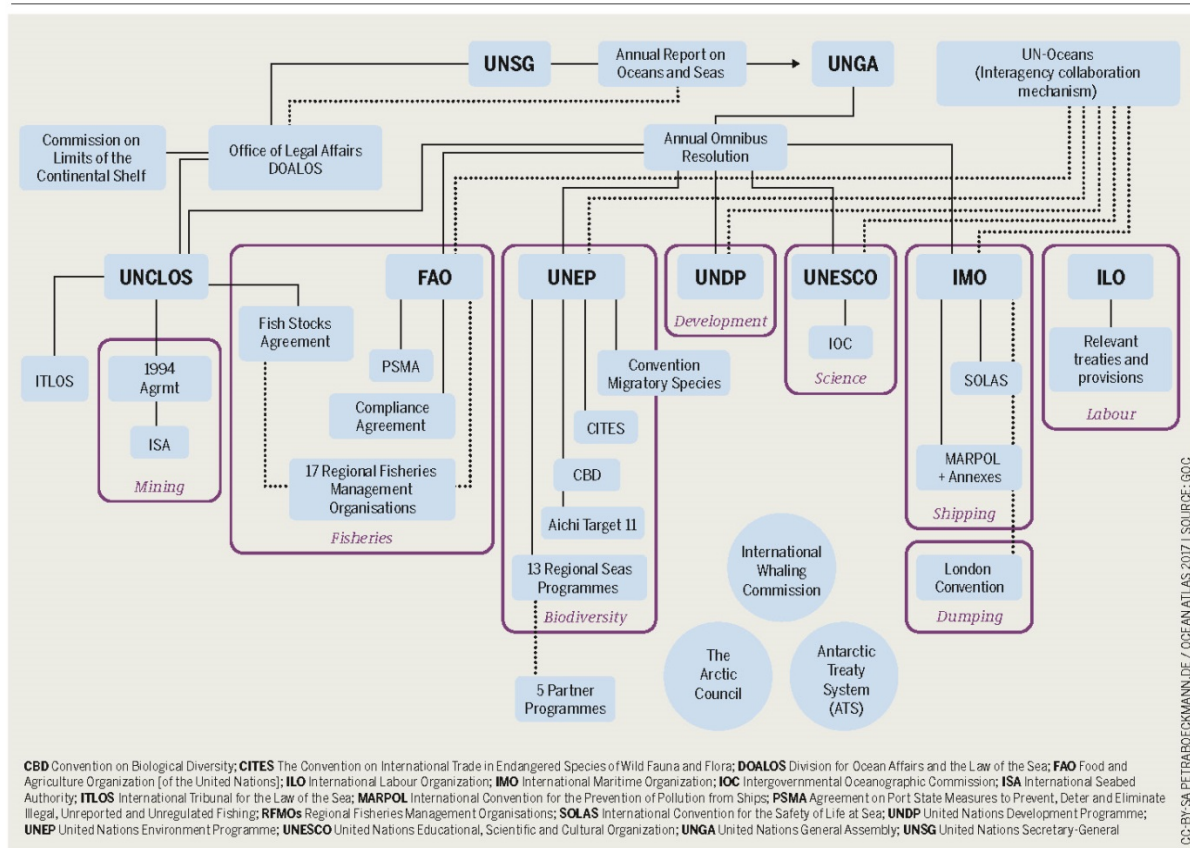
## 1.1.2 Ocean governance: Towards integrated regional approaches

### 1.1.2.1 The current system of ocean governance

The international governance system for the ocean, as established, is commonly referred to as fragmented (Young et al. 2007; Watson-Wright and Luis Valdés 2019): building on a range of legal frameworks including UNCLOS as the “constitution of the sea” (Wright et al. 2016) or “constitution of the “ocean” (Watson-Wright and Luis Valdés 2019), it is multi-layered and dominated by sectoral approaches occurring at multiple levels and scales to manage activities in the ocean and their consequences (Mahon et al. 2015; Grip 2017; Watson-Wright and Luis Valdés 2019). As shown in Figure 1, various organisations are involved and work in parallel to govern resource extraction from the ocean, control shipping or support biodiversity conservation at international level, and the picture is similar at national levels. Furthermore, not all issues are dealt with at the same governance level. For example, while decisions about commercial shipping are often made at the international and national levels, coastal tourism is generally handled at the national and local levels (Van Tatenhove 2011). These sectoral governance regimes and the different scales of governance add further complexity to the governance of the ocean, especially in light of the multiple issues facing the ocean as outlined in chapter 1.1.1.

**Figure 1: Sectoral structure of the international ocean governance system – overview of regulations, programmes and organisations involved**

#### International Governance Structures for the Ocean—Multi-sectoral Approach and a Plethora of Organizations



Source: The Ocean Atlas, International Governance Structures for the Ocean – Multi-sectoral Approach & Plethora of Organizations (Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung / Ambsdorf et al. 2017: p. 45). Design: petraboeckmann.de. Licence: CC-BY-SA 4.0, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en>.

As Grip (2017) explains, various initiatives and arrangements have been established to achieve more policy coherence, collaboration and cooperation between the different institutions and organizations involved, from the global to the regional and national level. Often, the regional level is described as more appropriate to effectively respond to the multiple challenges facing the ocean and the complexity of the human-ocean system (Rochette et al. 2015; Billé et al. 2016; Wright et al. 2017; Mahon and Fanning 2019b). Similar to the international level, there is a wide range of hard and soft legal instruments and other informal mechanisms supporting actions on different issues in respective marine regions. But as the current regional governance frameworks are also largely built on a matrix of traditional sector-based or issue-based mechanisms (Mahon et al. 2015), there is a growing recognition that at the regional level, this has hampered efforts to sustainably manage marine regions (Rochette et al. 2015).

### **1.1.2.2 The need for integrated and regional approaches**

Despite the multitude of efforts under the existing instruments, initiatives, projects and partnerships, unsustainable practices persist, and the health of the ocean and its ecosystems continues to decline (Inniss et al. 2016; IPBES 2019a, 2019b; Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity 2020). To reverse the observed trend of declining ocean health, a shift towards integrated governance is needed at multiple governance scales, including at the regional level. As opposed to the traditional sector-based approach, an integrated governance approach brings together diverse sectors, disciplines and stakeholder groups to collectively work for the sustainable management of the ocean. Such an integrated governance framework needs to be adaptive rather than static in order to address uncertainties and complex changes within a given ecosystem (Brodie Rudolph et al. 2020; Stenseth et al. 2020; Winther et al. 2020).

Integrated approaches for sustainable governance of the ocean should also entail the aspect of participation (Van Tatenhove 2011). Participation of different stakeholder groups such as policy-makers, governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or science is not only crucial for creating legitimacy, it also provides opportunities for better outcomes through shared learning, co-production of knowledge and solutions, and fostering of collaboration in environmental governance (Reed 2008; de Vente et al. 2016; Kochskämper et al. 2016). Collaborative governance approaches that bring together public and private actors, e.g. in collective forums, are emerging (Ansell and Gash 2007). But effective stakeholder integration and fruitful knowledge exchange are far from being widely implemented in the ocean realm, and a lot of learning is still to be done to overcome barriers and challenges (Cvitanovic, Hobday, van Kerkhoff, Wilson, et al. 2015; Bednarek et al. 2018; Morf et al. 2019).

While this shift needs to occur at all governance levels, the regional level provides an opportunity for catalysing such transition. The regional level can address transboundary issues within ecosystems through integrated management and policy actions – which is paramount given the ecologically and biophysically connected nature of marine ecosystems. Compared to the global approach, action at the regional level can be more flexible (van Tatenhove 2013), and, as stated by Billé et al. (2016: p. 51), “closer, further, faster”. Regional arrangements and mechanisms are better set to take account of the characteristics of marine ecosystems when defining management tools, they can set ambition higher and act faster than at the global level since the number and range of stakeholders and interests are more contained (Billé et al. 2016). While there are different functions and a strong complementarity between the global, regional and national governance levels, the regional level provides an opportunity for intervention to facilitate the transformation in the current ocean governance framework.

Starting with the UN Environment Programme’s (UNEP) Regional Seas Programme established in 1973, multiple institutional and legal arrangements have been established at the regional

level, including through institutional mechanisms such as Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs) and Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) (Rochette et al. 2015; Wright et al. 2017). Other sector-based or issue-based institutional arrangements for the management of ocean and seas at regional level are UN Economic Commissions such as the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Regional Commissions under the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Regional Sub-Commissions of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), regional scientific organizations such as the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), regional centres, offices and coordinating centres of the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions, and regional development banks such as the African Development Bank. Table 1 provides an overview of sectoral or issue-related programmes and arrangements and of the organisations or parties responsible for their implementation.

**Table 1: Overview of regional sectoral programmes and arrangements for the management of the ocean and the organisations responsible**

Sector or issue	Programmes or arrangement (organisation responsible, or related convention)
Environmental protection / conservation	Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, Large Marine Ecosystems (UN Environment Programme, UNEP)
Oil spill preparedness and response	Regional Activity Centres (International Maritime Organization, IMO), Regional Agreements (e.g. under the Bonn Agreement)
Fisheries	Regional Fisheries Bodies (UN Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO)
Tourism	Regional Commissions, United Nations World Tourism Organization (United Nations World Tourism Organization, UNWTO)
Ocean science	Regional Sub-Commissions, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, IOC-UNESCO) North Pacific Marine Science Organization, PICES International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, ICES
Scientific laboratories	Ocean Acidification International Coordination Centre, OA-ICC (International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA)
Climate change	Regional Coordination Centres (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC)
Chemical and organic pollutants	Basel Convention Regional and Coordinating Centres (UNEP) Stockholm Convention Regional Centres (UNEP) Rotterdam Convention Regional Offices (UNEP)
Economic affairs	UN Economic Commissions
Financing	Regional development banks

In addition to these sectoral arrangements, political blocs such as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) play a role in formulating regional ocean policies. For example, ASEAN is considering a regional instrument on marine litter. In the Pacific, the Pacific Islands Forum has led the development of a regional ocean policy. The Arctic Council as intergovernmental platform aims to promote cooperation in the Arctic, including on marine environmental

protection and Sustainable Development. It brings together eight Arctic States, permanent participants representing the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic and observers from further non-Arctic States and organisations in an effort to initiate agreements and cooperation, exchange data and knowledge, conduct assessments and monitoring and provide recommendations.

Through coordination of national actions, a regional approach could help countries achieve the goals set under the 2030 Agenda, including SDG 14 and other related goals and targets. But while increasing efforts have been made to enhance cooperation and coordination across regional organisations (UN Environment 2017), the fragmentation of the governance system at the regional level continues to further uncoordinated and sometimes even contradicting policies for ocean activities.

A paradigm shift is required to move towards more integrated ocean governance, especially in light of the ever-increasing demand for marine resources (Winther et al. 2020). Regional ocean governance has a key role to play in delivering the needed level of integration, and integrated and adaptive governance is better positioned to address the multiple threats to the health of the ocean. Regional governance mechanisms and arrangements that foster integration and coordination between States, sectors and actors, building on regional multi-lateral agreements or by adopting holistic multi-level governance perspectives, have been discussed and exemplary cases put forth (Mahon et al. 2014; Pinsky et al. 2018; Mahon and Fanning 2019a, 2019b; Fanning and Mahon 2020).

#### **1.1.2.3 Challenges and possible responses**

For the transition towards integrated, regional ocean governance to occur, the drivers and pressures leading to the current fragmented system of ocean governance need to be understood and addressed. Through problem analysis investigating relevant literature (e.g. Mahon et al. 2015; McConney et al. 2016; UN Environment 2017; Wright et al. 2017), four general causes were identified as common challenges (pressures) to the current ocean governance framework, hampering efforts towards integrated ocean governance (Figure 2): (1) *weak institutions*, (2) *weak legal frameworks*, (3) *weak monitoring and enforcement* mechanisms of the instruments, and (4) *lack of knowledge* on the ocean. Lack of political will, limited human and financial resources and lack of awareness are often considered to be drivers of these four common challenges. These pressures may impact differently from regions to regions and not all factors may be relevant to all regions. The analysis, as illustrated in Figure 2 and outlined in the following, thus aims to present a generic argumentation framework on the current governance challenges at the regional level, the potential impacts on policy implementation and goal attainment, and possible responses.

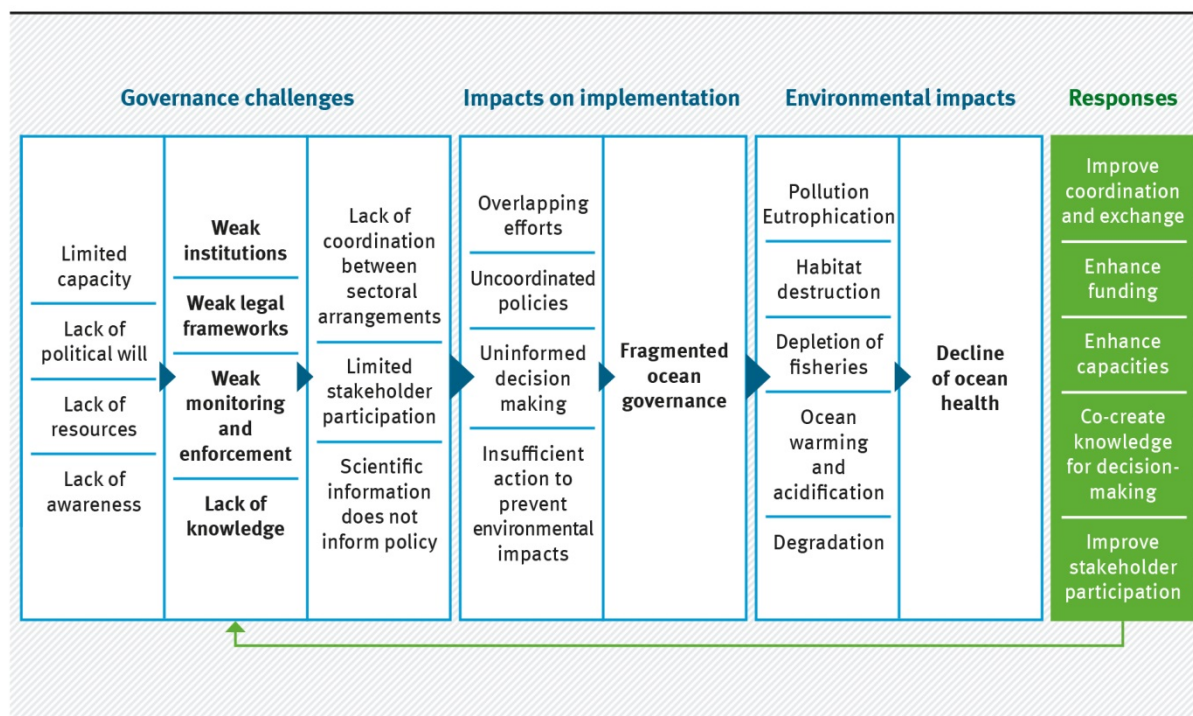
First, *weak institutions* and a lack of capacity of regional mechanisms lead to insufficient cooperation and coordination between regional actors as well as limited coordination with international and national processes. Lack of coordination can result in uncoordinated policies across sectors. Inter-sectoral coordination should occur not only within the ocean sectors but also with sectors that are based on land. For example, marine litter is a cross sectoral issue that engages diverse stakeholders including the plastic industry, waste management and tourism sector (Veiga et al. 2016). Lack of coordination and cooperation between different sectors and actors may result in overlaps of activities or even contradicting policies and actions, preventing integrated approaches. In addition, weak institutional capacity in each regional actor limits the participation of stakeholders in the formulation of regional ocean policies as participatory processes are often time and resource intensive. Financial and human resource constraints also tend to result in limited stakeholder participation. This further leads to uncoordinated activities

by different bodies including regional organizations, NGOs and the private sector as they are not necessarily informed of ongoing activities within the region.

Second, the existing *legal frameworks* may not always effectively address human activities impacting on the ocean or even show geographical or thematic gaps. For example, there is no regional agreement for the protection of the marine environment in the Southwest Atlantic region. Not only the geographical coverage but also the coverage of issues could be an issue. In the North East Pacific region e.g. land-based sources of pollution are not addressed through a regional legal instrument (Billé et al. 2016). Also for most parts of the ocean that are located in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), there are no competent regional management organisations marine conservation and environmental protection (Freestone et al. 2014; Durussel et al. 2017).

Third, a *lack of monitoring and enforcement* mechanisms limits the effectiveness of legal instruments even when sufficient legal frameworks exist. Effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) of fishing activities is specifically challenging in areas beyond national jurisdiction (Cremers et al. 2020), but also within the reach of coastal States, the need to enhance MCS capacities, technologies or political is a constant matter of discussion (Gilman et al. 2014; Wraith and Schofield 2018). Without effective mechanisms, it is not only challenging to achieve objectives of instruments or to formulate ways to improve the implementation of the instruments. Also the attainment of global goals e.g. as set out under the UN's 2030 Agenda or the upcoming Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework<sup>22</sup> of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which is to follow-up on the Aichi Targets<sup>23</sup> is difficult without appropriate monitoring and review mechanisms in place.

**Figure 2: From challenges and impacts to possible responses – argumentation framework of pressures, impacts and possible responses to the current governance system**



<sup>22</sup> See <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/post2020>. Last accessed 8 January 2021.

<sup>23</sup> See <https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>. Last accessed 8 January 2021.

Source: own illustration, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies. // Graphic design: Sabine Zentek.

Fourth, a *lack of knowledge* or limited knowledge on the ocean leads to decision-making that is not based on scientific information or other relevant knowledge. Cvitanovic, Hobday, van Kerkhoff, Wilson, et al. (2015) identified a range of barriers for the managers and policy makers to use scientific information. Those barriers include cultural differences, institutional barriers, unavailability of science, and difference in world views. At the regional level, there may not always be formal mechanisms to link science with policy making processes. Often the time, developing regions face situations where there is a lack of scientific research, data and information.

These multiple challenges result in insufficient coordination between actors, limited participation of stakeholders in policy making and weak science-policy interactions, including at the regional level. This has impacts on the implementation of legal frameworks and arrangements, leading to a fragmented governance system with uncoordinated policies, overlaps in action and decision-making by different actors working in the same ocean area, and overall insufficient action to prevent further degradation of ocean health (Figure 2). Several actions are required for the much needed transformations of ocean governance in order to address the multiple challenges the ocean is facing:

First, it will be necessary to *improve coordination and exchange* of information, knowledge or data between organisations and actors. There are already ongoing efforts to enhance cooperation such as between the RFBs, Regional Seas Programmes and LMEs (Billé et al. 2016) but further coordination can be also sought with other institutional and sectoral arrangements (Table 1).

Second, *funding* including financial assistance from donors needs to be enhanced and streamlined to support coordinated actions rather than reinforcing traditional sectoral regimes. This does not mean that sectoral management is not necessary. On the contrary, sectoral management such as the ecosystem-approach to fisheries supports the implementation of ecosystem-based management (Bianchi et al. 2016). Improved sectoral management needs to be part of the transition to integrated regional ocean governance.

Third, institutional and technical *capacities* need to be further enhanced so that cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation can be realized (Shackeroff Theisen 2016). Evidently coordination requires additional time and human resources. Managers who are specialised in a certain sector may need to learn and understand the practice and processes of different sectors (NEAFC and OSPAR 2016).

Fourth, *co-creation of knowledge* for evidence-based decision making needs to be advanced or even mainstreamed at the regional level. Lessons could be learnt from cases in the Northwest Pacific, Northeast Atlantic regions and Western Indian Ocean where the PICES, ICES, and the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) respectively act as a boundary organisation between science and policy.

Fifth, *stakeholder participation* in processes has to be improved at different scales to move towards more integrated ocean governance. Ideally, governance initiatives should engage with the full spectrum of governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders in the respective region. Involvement of a diverse range of stakeholder is a matter of social justice (Bennett 2018) and attention needs to be paid to develop just and equitable ocean policies for everyone including women, youth, and indigenous communities. Co-creation of policies and management actions could be a useful tool to enhance the engagement of stakeholders especially at the regional level. Collaboration across scientific disciplines and stakeholders and between nations is a necessary

condition for appropriate actions (Stenseth et al. 2020). In addition, capitalizing on “niche innovations” that bring together stakeholders to collaborate such as the Seafood Business for Ocean Stewardship (SeaBOS)<sup>24</sup> initiative, could further support the much needed transformations towards a governance systems that builds on ocean stewardship (Brodie Rudolph et al. 2020).

### 1.1.3 The way forward: A multi-stakeholder platform for regional ocean governance

One leverage point to foster a transformation or paradigm shift towards integrated regional ocean governance (chapter 1.1.2) and to approach the outlined challenges, could be to build upon a substantive component of integrated governance: *participation and stakeholder engagement*. Participation of actors at different levels enables co-creation of knowledge, developing of new approaches, and establishing of partnerships and collaborations across sectors and actors. For ocean governance to become more inclusive and integrated across sectors and actors, there are three scales or dimensions at which such processes would be beneficial: (1) within individual marine regions to foster action for those regions, (2) between marine regions for exchange or joint learning, and (3) between the regional and the global level for better alignment of global policies with regional and national implementation. Yet, existing mechanisms that could deliver such in the ocean realm are usually bound to formal policy or governance processes, making open exchange between different actor groups and across vested interests more difficult, possibly inhibiting solution-oriented dialogue and governance innovation.

In response to this, Germany announced in 2017 at the UN Ocean Conference<sup>25</sup> in New York, and then together with the European Union (EU) at the Our Ocean Conference in Malta<sup>26</sup>, to set up by 2020 “a cross-sectoral and cross-boundary multi-stakeholder platform for regional ocean governance” (European Commission 2017a, 2017b) under the Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance (PROG) (see also Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance (PROG) 2018; Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019). The objective of this new platform should be to strengthen cooperation and develop solutions for integrated ocean governance at the regional level, and by that help attain global goals that aim to improve ocean health such as the 2030 Agenda and SDG 14 (see Figure 3). To achieve this, the platform, which was named *PROG-Forum* at the time of pledging, should bring together actors and experts from different stakeholder groups such as governmental and intergovernmental organisations, NGOs, academia and industry to exchange across the various sectors, identify ways to better coordinate efforts or establish new partnerships (Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance (PROG) 2018). Furthermore, this new platform should draw on expertise from actors that are not traditionally involved in ocean discussions in order to bring in new perspectives to marine issues. The commitment was also mentioned at the German Bundestag by Federal Minister Dr. Barbara Hendricks, Member of the Bundestag during the 122nd meeting (non-public) of the Committee for the Environment, BMU on Wednesday, June 21, 2017. It was stated that against the background of Germany's leading role in climate policy, it is expected that Germany will also take responsibility for marine protection and that the PROG-Forum would help to implement this process.

<sup>24</sup> See <https://seabos.org/>; SeaBOS was pledged as voluntary commitment at the UN Ocean Conference 2017 and is listed in the UN Ocean Conference's registry of voluntary commitments under #OceanAction16954, see also <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/?id=16954>.

<sup>25</sup> Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance: International Forum for Advancing Regional Ocean Governance (#OceanAction18439), URL: <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/?id=18439>.

<sup>26</sup> See <http://www.ourocean2017.org/our-ocean-commitments>. Last accessed 8 January 2021.

It was envisaged that the Forum would improve multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral collaboration and participation in and amongst marine regions by providing an informal space for *exchange of good practices and joint learning* (Figure 3). A space that is not bound to formal agreements or processes fosters open discussion and exchange of lessons learned and good practices between participants, brings different types of knowledge together, and enables the creation of new knowledge on an equal footing. The Forum should encourage involvement of stakeholders and other actors that do not always participate in policy making processes due to entry barriers to those platforms and by that support transformational process towards integrated ocean governance. Active participation of stakeholders is considered a central element of social innovation (Tummers et al. 2015), and sharing of policymaking competencies by different actors is understood as a core element for the transition to integrated ocean governance (Van Tatenhove 2011).

By furthering the *co-creation of knowledge and provision of (new) knowledge*, the Forum would support *knowledge-based decision making* and the *promotion of integrated approaches* to ocean governance (Figure 3). Co-creation in the public sector is generally understood as the process where people and public organisations work together to deal with societal issues. In this context, different actors are considered as a partner rather than a mere recipient of public policies. The process of co-creation is thus considered to be a learning process (Voorberg et al. 2017) and serves as a means to redistribute expertise (Whatmore 2009) from the experts to a wide range of stakeholders.

Also, the Forum would provide *policy responses and recommendations*, as well as support the development of *new actions and solutions* to specific issues including through *new partnerships or funding mechanisms* (Figure 3). In this manner, the Forum would aim to develop new thinking and specific solutions for the transition to integrated ocean governance in marine regions. By doing so, it would help move away from the current fragmented sector-based approaches. The Forum should also contribute to the dialogue and exchange with the international and national ocean governance arena and will feed the discussions into relevant platforms at different governance scales.

Finally, the Forum should help *generate new initiatives, partnerships, and activities in support of regional ocean governance* by providing space for exchange of ideas both during and outside of the official Forum sessions (Figure 3). These new initiatives and partnership ideas will further assist the needed transition for the sustainable management of the marine and coastal ecosystems.

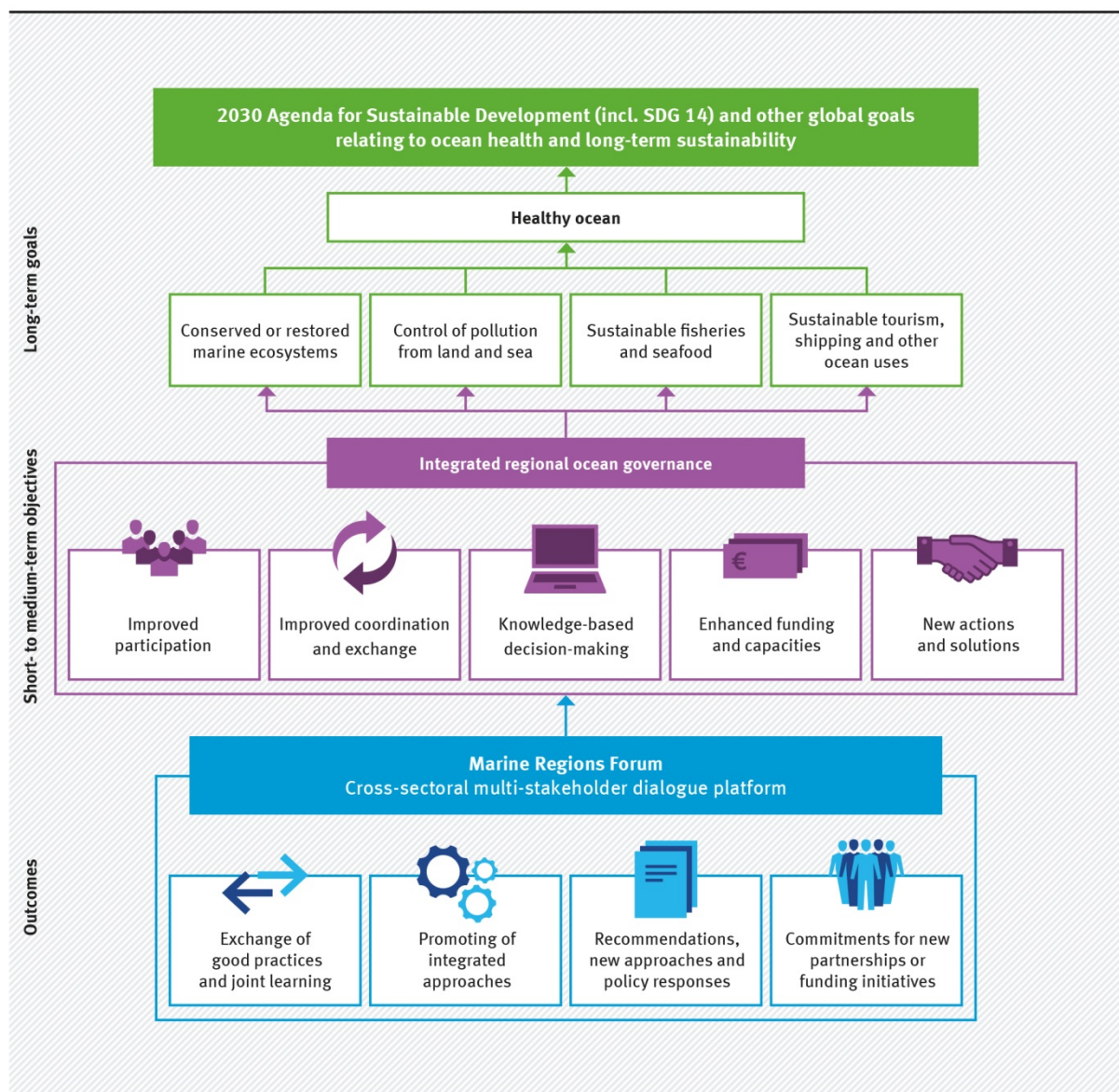
By that, the Forum aims to address not only SDG 14 and its targets to but also a range of other goals set out in the 2030 Agenda (United Nations 2015) that are closely linked to SDG 14 (Griggs et al. 2017; Schmidt et al. 2017; Singh et al. 2018; Singh et al. 2019; Nash et al. 2020). These include SDG 16 (“Peace, Justice and strong institutions”) and SDG 17 (“Partnerships”) as direct addressee, but also goals that have a more indirect link such as SDG 1 (“No poverty”), SDG 2 (“Zero hunger”), SDG 3 (“Good health and well-being”), SDG 8 (“Decent work and economic growth”), SDG 10 (“Reduced inequalities”), SDG 12 (“Responsible consumption and production”) or SDG 13 (“Climate action”)<sup>27</sup>. Healthy oceans are a critical enabler for these goals but also dependent on collaboration and alignment between policies to avoid trade-offs e.g. from nutrients and other contaminants washed into the ocean from intensified agriculture. The ocean goal SDG 14 is closely linked to most, if not all of the 17 SDGs. However, SDG 14 can only be achieved if these interlinkages are taken into consideration in the design and implementation of policies across these interlinked goals (Schmidt et al. 2017; Singh et al. 2018; Independent

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<sup>27</sup> See also here for the official short names of the individual Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General 2019; Nash et al. 2020). Furthermore, actions implemented towards SDG 14 can help to achieve other goals. It is therefore paramount to understand possible trade-offs between goal-related policies or measures while due consideration of possible co-benefits can help create positive outcomes under multiple goals. The new dialogue Forum could play an important role here by developing regional approaches for addressing critical interdependencies between goals such as combatting marine plastic pollution (SDG 14.1) and creating sustainable consumption and production patterns through circular economy approaches (SDG 12) or accelerating transformative change through synergies e.g. for biodiversity conservation and climate change through nature-based solutions for adaptation and mitigation (SDG 13) (Schmidt et al. 2017; Singh et al. 2018; Singh et al. 2019; Nash et al. 2020).

**Figure 3: Desired outcomes, short-to medium term objectives and long-term goals as defined for the Marine Regions Forum**



Source: own illustration, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies. // Graphic design: Sabine Zentek.

## 1.2 From idea to implementation: Co-creating the Marine Regions Forum

### 1.2.1 General approach and project structure

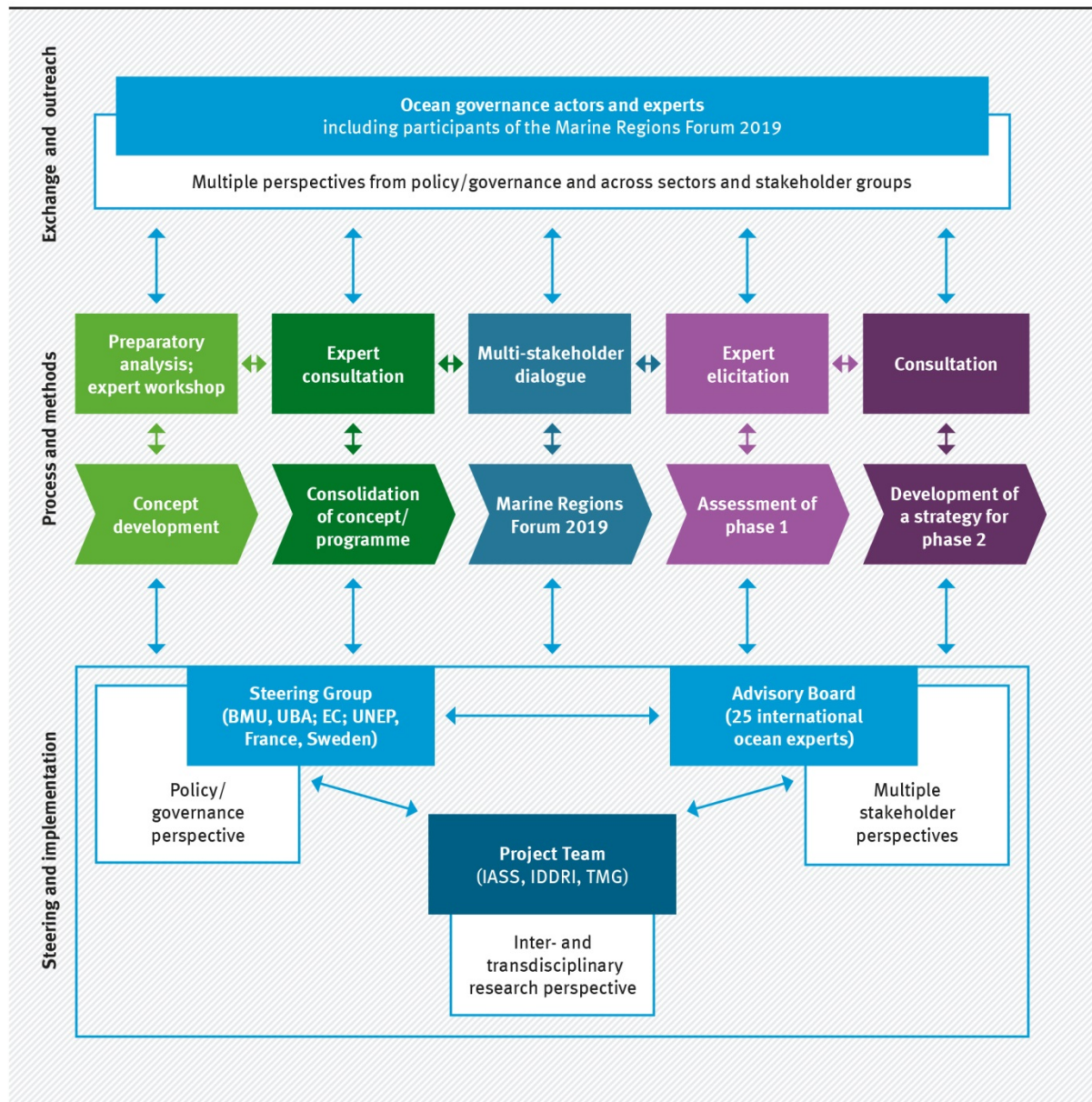
The proposal for a voluntary commitment to establish a new dialogue platform for regional ocean governance (see chapter 1.1.3) had been developed by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and the European Commission (EC) together with the PROG, an initiative of the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), TMG - Think Tank for Sustainability, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (see also Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance (PROG) 2018; Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019). For the implementation of the commitment, BMU together with its main environmental agency, the German Environment Agency (UBA), tendered a research and development (R&D) project. The IASS, IDDRI and TMG were tasked with delivering this commitment in collaboration with BMU and EC through the development of the *Marine Regions Forum* as a new participatory, knowledge-based dialogue platform at the science-policy-society interface. The EU, represented by the EC's Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, contributed to the development and implementation of the project and provided additional funding for the hosting of the first conference (see chapter 2.2.4.2).

From the beginning, the project consortium of IASS, IDDRI and TMG set out for a strong co-creative approach to the development and implementation of this new dialogue platform in order to ensure optimal incorporation of knowledge also in the set-up of the platform. There is a growing recognition that environmental problems require a new type of knowledge production and decision making processes (Mauser et al. 2013; Stafford-Smith et al. 2017). To respond to the need, transdisciplinary sustainability research aims to incorporate knowledge from scientists, practitioners and other relevant stakeholders outside of academia in order to address “real-world problems” and such of high complexity (Jahn et al. 2012; Lang et al. 2012; Cvitanovic, Hobday, van Kerkhoff, Wilson, et al. 2015; Norström et al. 2020). As explained in Mauser et al. (2013), the process starts with *co-design* of the concept through sectoral integration and joint-framing of sustainability issues. The second step involves *co-production of knowledge* and focuses on transdisciplinary scientific integration. Dialogue between stakeholders ensures the exchange of their respective knowledge and thereby societal relevance of the research. *Co-dissemination* involves open discussions on relevant, translatable outputs that produce high impact.

Following (Mauser et al. 2013), elements of co-design, co-production and co-dissemination were therefore introduced at several stages of the R&D project through which the Marine Regions Forum was developed and implemented (see Figure 4). These include:

- Setting up of a *Steering Group* with representatives from BMU, UBA and EC and a representative from UN Environment and the governments of Sweden and France each (see Annex A.1). The Steering Group guided the project as a whole in strategic matters, provided advice on progress and key deliverables and supported the development of a long-term strategy and the positioning of the Forum in relevant global ocean governance processes. The Steering Group members also supported the communication and outreach activities of the Marine Regions Forum.

**Figure 4: Co-creative approach to the development and implementation of the Marine Regions Forum**



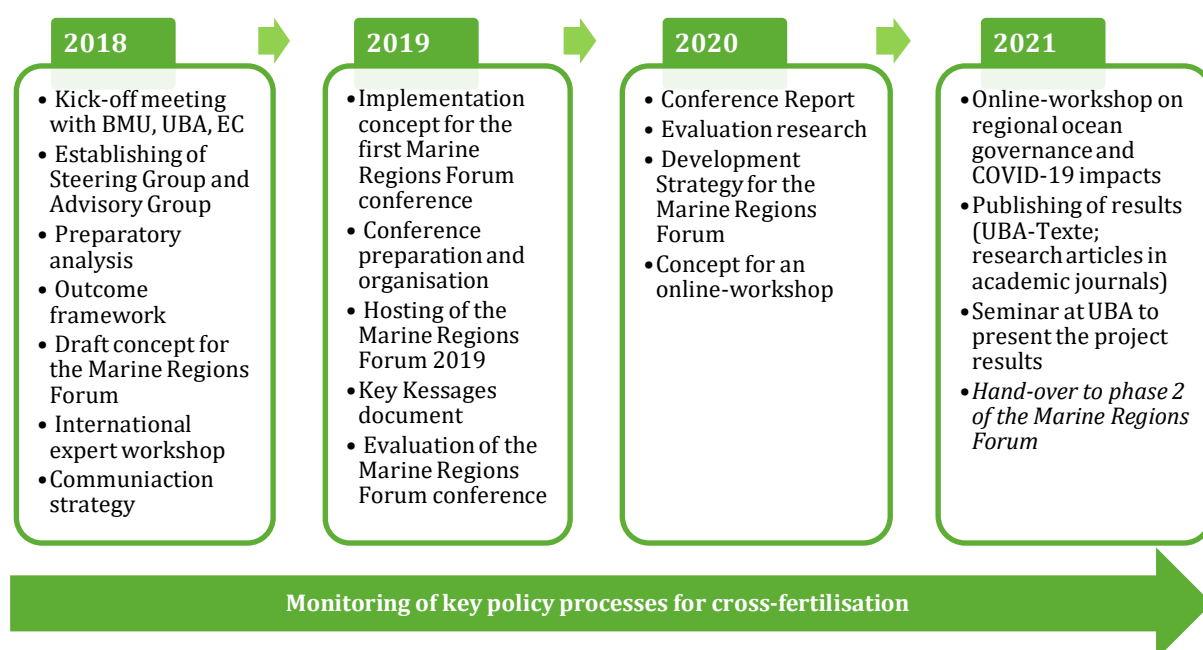
Source: own illustration, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies. // Graphic design: Sabine Zentek.

- Establishing of an international *Advisory Board* to provide additional strategic guidance and advice on the process towards the Marine Regions Forum and possible follow-up activities, including topics, regional focus, and format. It assisted the project in creating linkages to key international ocean policy processes, and should ensure buy-in from key stakeholders. The Advisory Board brought together 23 diverse representatives from international governmental organisations of relevance for regional ocean governance, from developing countries with leadership potential in regional ocean governance, and experts from different fields of marine sciences and related disciplines (see Annex A.2). The Advisory Board was consulted through regular annual meetings and workshops and members also helped as ambassadors to communicate on behalf of the Marine Regions Forum.
- Fostering exchange with *ocean governance actors and experts* at international level, including the *participants of the Marine Regions Forum 2019*, for co-creation of the Forum throughout

the project as well as to foster cross-fertilisation with on-going processes and outreach. This included an expert workshop and targeted expert consultation in the development phase of the Marine Regions Forum as well as through surveys and in-depth expert elicitation in the evaluation phase of the Marine Regions Forum.

The aim of the R&D project was twofold: (1) to establish the Marine Regions Forum through an international conference and initiate a longer-term dialogue process, and (2) to inspire research on regional ocean governance and the role of co-creation for catalysing transition towards integrated ocean governance. It consisted of five work packages (WP) with a defined set of key milestones and deliverables (see Figure 5), which were implemented by the project team from IASS, IDDRI and TMG in close communication with the Steering Group.

**Figure 5: Timeline with key milestones and deliverables of the R&D project**



Source: own illustration, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies.

A *draft concept* for the Marine Regions Forum and the first conference to be held under this platform was developed under WP 1 by building on a *preparatory analysis* of key issues faced by the oceans and policy and governance processes. This included a review of different formats for enhancing stakeholder communication and conducting a mapping of stakeholders relevant to the project. The structure of the draft concept included guidance on the development and implementation of the Forum. It further included the *outcome framework* which defined the expected outcomes, short- and medium-term objectives, and long-term objectives (see Figure 3 and chapter 2.1.1). To discuss the draft concept for the first conference, the Marine Regions Forum 2019, and co-develop the thematic framing of the conference, a 2-day *expert workshop*<sup>28</sup> was held at the IASS in Potsdam, Germany, on 8-9 October 2018 with the Steering Group, Advisory Board and further invited experts. In Annex B.2.1 a link to a video with impressions from the workshop is provided.

<sup>28</sup> See <https://www.iass-potsdam.de/en/news/marine-conservation-new-dialogue-forum-strengthen-cooperation>. Last accessed 30 January 2021

The draft concept was then further advanced incorporating the input received through the workshop process, and a detailed *implementation concept* was developed in preparation of the actual organisation and hosting the *Marine Regions Forum 2019* (WP 2). This encompassed a detailed conference programme with plenary and dialogue sessions framed along elaborated conference themes and topics (see chapters 2.2.1 and 2.2.3). Besides the formal conference programme, further elements were included in the programme to offer an inclusive 3-day event such as a designated social programme, side events and an informal networking lunch (see chapter 2.2.3). The implementation concept also foresaw organisational matters relating to the preparation and hosting of the conference (see chapter 2.2.4). Elements considered here include conference materials and reporting (chapter 2.2.5) and a communication strategy (chapter 2.2.6). It further entailed the logistical matters relating to the funding of the conference (chapter 2.2.4.2) and of participants (chapter 2.2.4.3), the participant management including invitation procedures and registration management (chapter 2.2.4.4), and the overall event planning and hosting (chapter 2.2.4.5). WP 2 also included the actual organisation and hosting of the Marine Regions Forum 2019, which is described in chapter 2.2.4, and the preparation and delivery of outputs such as an outcome document with key messages and a detailed Conference Report for dissemination of the conference results (chapter 2.3).

WP 3 provided the *evaluation* of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 conference and overall concept, the presentation of the results at relevant conference and meetings, and the *development of a strategy* to further consolidate the Marine Regions Forum and prepare a concept for a second phase. A side event that was originally planned to be held at the 2020 UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal, could not take place as the conference was cancelled for 2020 due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Instead of this, and as a stepping stone towards a second phase, an online workshop was held in January 2021 (see chapter 4).

WP 4 was conducted in parallel to all other activities and aimed at providing background and cross-fertilisation by monitoring the implementation processes of the 2030 Agenda and other relevant international policy processes such as the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). And last but not least, reporting to the contracting authority UBA was foreseen under WP 5.

### **1.2.2 The Marine Regions Forum voluntary commitment: #OceanAction18439**

At the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14, “The Ocean Conference”, held in June 2017 at UN headquarters in New York, close to 1,400 voluntary commitments were submitted for concrete action to advance implementation of SDG 14 (Division for Sustainable Development et al. 2017; Neumann and Unger 2019a). The Marine Regions Forum was registered as such as commitment by Germany to the UN Ocean Conference on 2 June 2017, under #OceanAction18439 “*Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance: International Forum for Advancing Regional Ocean Governance*”<sup>29</sup>. Several progress reports have been delivered and uploaded to the official website which include information on the Marine Regions Forum achievements, next steps, time frame, and which other SDG’s are addressed through this platform (see also chapter 1.1.3). The progress reports were delivered on 10 April 2019 and 1 March 2020. A final update of the progress report will be made in March 2021.

### **1.2.3 Towards a thematic orientation of the Marine Regions Forum**

As outlined in the previous chapters, the Marine Regions Forum was envisioned to establish a new participatory space for dialogue that can bring together diverse range of stakeholders to

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<sup>29</sup> See <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/?id=18439>. Last accessed 13 January 2021.

develop solutions for integrated ocean governance at the regional level. The overall concept and the thematic framing of the first conference, the Marine Regions Forum 2019, were developed in an iterative co-creative process together with the Steering Group, Advisory Board and additional external experts. It built on a mapping of on-going international ocean policy processes relevant to ocean governance, which was a crucial initial step in order to establish the positioning and ensure complementarity of efforts.

The review and consultation process highlighted missing links between ongoing ocean governance processes and existing platforms. While it is possible for delegations or meeting participants to connect discussions at an individual level, formal ways to submit outcomes are often missing. One example is the lack of formal coordination between the UN Ocean Action activities including the Ocean Conference<sup>30</sup>, the Our Ocean conference series<sup>31</sup>, and World Ocean Summit<sup>32</sup> which hold regular meetings<sup>33</sup>. However, these conferences tend to have similar participants and the processes are considered to be informally linked by those participants.

The review identified further challenges and gaps in these processes that were considered to be of relevance when developing a concept and thematic orientation for the new Forum, such as:

- ▶ There is only limited coordination between the UN Economic Commissions and other regional mechanisms such as the Regional Seas programmes and RFBs for the follow-up and review of SDGs, and further information and data sharing on the implementation of SDGs across sectoral organizations is desirable.
- ▶ Mandated through the 2030 Agenda, the UN's High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)<sup>34</sup> is responsible for follow-up and review of 2030 Agenda and SDGs, which is based on voluntary national reviews (VNR) submitted by Member States, as well as thematic reviews on cross-cutting issues (Beisheim 2020). But to many observers, the interlinked and universal nature of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs is not sufficiently accounted for in these processes, resulting in one-sided or incomplete reviews of progress and false interpretations including on SDG 14 (Beisheim 2020; Nash et al. 2020).
- ▶ Ocean policy processes are not always well-linked with those for climate change. While attention for the ocean and climate change nexus has grown recently, there are only limited formal links to provide inputs into policy formulation on climate change such as under UNFCCC.
- ▶ To enhance coordination with the international processes under UNWTO and IMO, cooperation and coordination at the regional level can be further developed on issues related to shipping and tourism respectively. This includes topics such as green shipping and the management of ports which should be of interests to multiple sectors.
- ▶ The role of regional and cross-sectoral cooperation under a future legal instrument for the conservation and sustainable use marine biological diversity beyond national jurisdiction as well as under Regional Environmental Management Plans established by the International Seabed Authority (ISA) need to be further advanced.

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<sup>30</sup> See <https://oceanconference.un.org/oceanaction>. Last accessed 14 November 2020.

<sup>31</sup> See <https://ourocean2019.no/> for Our Ocean 2019. Last accessed 14 November 2020.

<sup>32</sup> See <https://www.woi.economist.com/world-ocean-summit-2019/>. Last accessed 14 November 2020.

<sup>33</sup> Note: in 2020, all three conferences were postponed due to the restrictions on meetings and travel experienced through the global COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>34</sup> See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>. Last accessed 13 January 2021.

- ▶ The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)<sup>35</sup> provides an opportunity for the regional organisations to provide inputs to the development of the decade, to address existing gaps and strengthen global and regional capacities to improve marine scientific knowledge and ocean observation for sustainable ocean management.
- ▶ Capacity building and financing associated with or generated from different processes are not always well coordinated across different policy processes. Funding provided to national and regional organisations may be uncoordinated across sectors, issues, time frame and the range of stakeholders.
- ▶ Not all fora produce outcome documents, and little is known to the public with regards to the discussions held in those forums, leaving open as to how these fora have contributed and will contribute to international ocean policy processes. This is also an issue of transparency.

The analysis also revealed potential overlaps in terms of topics addressed, which requires consideration when defining the thematic direction of the Marine Regions Forum 2019:

- ▶ Some topics such as pollution and blue economy are popular topics that are discussed in multiple fora, pointing to the possibility that similar discussions could be repeated in multiple fora. Some topics also have issue-specific conferences such as on marine protected areas (MPAs) where the International Union for Conservation of Nature organises the International Marine Protected Area Congress<sup>36</sup>.
- ▶ On the process to enhance integrated regional ocean governance, there could be a certain degree of overlap between the meetings of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI)<sup>37</sup> and LME:Learn<sup>38</sup>. In the past, the two meetings converged in terms of the participants as well as the objective to enhance cooperation between the Regional Seas Programmes, the RFBs and the LME projects.
- ▶ On the business-led fora, the World Ocean Summit<sup>39</sup> and the Sustainable Ocean Summit<sup>40</sup> seem to have overlapped topics. They are also alike in that they are geared towards participants from the private sector.

The review further showed an increasing number of regional workshops and regional processes under global initiatives which could potentially benefit from streamlining across different initiatives. Also, it is unclear as to what extent different regional organizations and regional processes are coordinating across sectors. For example, the level of coordination and cooperation between Regional Collaboration Centres (RCC) of UNFCCC, Regional Seas Programmes and RFBs is not well documented. Greater information exchange is needed across sectors and across governance scales.

Concluding, the following themes were identified for which discussion and coordination with the regional level would be particularly useful:

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<sup>35</sup> See <https://www.oceandecade.org/>. Last accessed 30 January 2021.

<sup>36</sup> See <https://www.impac5.ca/> for information on the upcoming Fifth International Marine Protected Area Congress (IMPAC5), scheduled for 23-29 June 2022. Last accessed 30 January 2021.

<sup>37</sup> See <https://www.cbd.int/soi/>. Last accessed 30 January 2021.

<sup>38</sup> See <https://iwlearn.net/resolveuid/808aedc5-a66f-4c95-abe7-1b0db11c74b5> for a report of the 2017 meeting of LME:Learn: Building international partnerships to enhance science-based ecosystems approaches in support of regional ocean governance. Last accessed 14 November 2020.

<sup>39</sup> See <https://www.woi.economist.com/>. Last accessed 30 January 2021.

<sup>40</sup> See <https://www.sustainableoceansummit.org/>. Last accessed 30 January 2021.

- ▶ Role of regional organizations and mechanisms for deep seabed mining especially in relation to the environmental aspects;
- ▶ Future role of regional organizations for the conservation and sustainable of biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction ;
- ▶ Enhancing of coordination between regional organizations and UN Economic commissions for the review and follow-up of SDGs, and fostering of integrated implementation and reviewing of the SDGs;
- ▶ Role of the regional ocean governance for future climate change policy formulation;
- ▶ Sustainable tourism through regional cooperation;
- ▶ Coordination for green shipping;
- ▶ Enhancing the regional dimensions of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development;
- ▶ Enhancing coordination for capacity building and financing at the regional level.

The insights gained through the review of international ocean policy processes and topics discussed then built a basis for the further development of the overall concept of the Marine Regions Forum and the implementation of the first for conference held in 2019, which is presented in detail in chapter 2.

### **1.3 How this report is structured**

Chapter 2 of this report provides an overview of the framing and criteria developed for the Marine Regions Forum platform and the first conference which was held in 2019 in the form of an international, dialogue-oriented expert conference under the title *Marine Regions Forum 2019*. The chapter further describes how the first Forum was implemented and what outcomes were achieved as monitored until so far. An assessment and evaluation of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 as main deliverable of the Marine Regions Forum platform in this first phase is presented in chapter 3. Chapter 4 provides a brief account of the first online workshop held under this new platform in January 2021. The workshop invited experts to exchange on impacts and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to ocean governance. A strategy for further advancing the Marine Regions Forum and taking it into a second phase is described in chapter 5 of this report. In chapter 6, conclusions from the first phase of the Marine Regions Forum platform are drawn and recommendations are made to guide the future of the Forum.

In the Annex, additional materials to support the report are provided.

## 2 The Marine Regions Forum 2019: Concept, implementation, hosting and results

As first event of the newly developed Marine Regions Forum platform, a conference with over 200 international ocean experts was developed, implemented and hosted by the project team in collaboration with the Marine Regions Forum's Steering Group and Advisory Board, and further external experts that were involved at several stages of the project as outlined in chapter 1.2. The concept development and implementation of this first lighthouse event, the Marine Regions Forum 2019, was developed on the basis of the arguments established in chapter 1.1 and a conceptual framing including outcome framework (chapter 2.1). The following sections aim to provide an overview of the concept, the implementation and the achieved outputs and outcomes.

### 2.1 The conceptual framing

#### 2.1.1 Outcome framework for the Marine Regions Forum

An important starting point in the development of the concept for the Marine Regions Forum was the formulation of an outcome framework. The framework applies to both the general Marine Regions Forum platform and the conference. It was developed jointly by the project team and Steering Group and entails as follows (see also text box below): (1) a conceptual *framing*, (2) a *vision* statement, (3) a statement of *uniqueness*, and (4) a set of *goals, objectives and expected outcomes*.

#### Outcome framework

- ▶ **FRAMING:** The Marine Regions Forum is an innovative knowledge-driven dialogue space that brings together a broad range of stakeholders and decision-makers from different sectors, and multi-disciplinary scientific communities. The Forum follows recommendations and demands voiced at the UN Ocean Conference and ocean governance workshops. It builds on commitments by the German Government and the EU. It investigates policy, management and governance innovations and facilitates collaborative work to develop new solutions that could trigger transformative change for current ocean sustainability challenges. The Marine Regions Forum aims to facilitate cooperation and collaboration within and between marine regions, and the development of new approaches to regional ocean governance through joint learning processes on specific issues.
- ▶ **VISION:** The Marine Regions Forum strives to facilitate transformations towards integrated ocean governance for marine regions. By advancing multi-stakeholder dialogue, exchange of good-practices, and cooperation between regions, the Marine Regions Forum supports the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems.
- ▶ **UNIQUENESS:** The Marine Regions Forum will be unique in that: (1) It is a knowledge-driven forum, developed by independent research institutes and think-tanks together with experts from policy-making and civil-society through a participatory process, (2) it uses innovative formats to catalyse multi-stakeholder discussions, and (3) it provides a space outside of formal governance arrangements where stakeholders engage in outcome-oriented discussion as individual experts rather than representatives of organisations.

- **GOALS, OBJECTIVES and EXPECTED OUTCOMES:** The overall aims of the Marine Regions Forum, including the first and future follow-up events or activities, are to be measured against a set of long-term goals and medium-term objectives (Table 2), and against expected outcomes as defined for specific elements such as the first Marine Regions Forum conference held in 2019 (Table 3).

And last but not least, a set of *critical conditions* to enable the delivery of results through Marine Regions Forum 2019 conference was defined:

- Create an overall engaging space for exchange and development of new ideas and solutions, networks and partnerships,
- Ensure open dialogue and constructive discourse between stakeholders, and
- Tailor individual session topics and themes to support high impacts outputs and tangible outcomes through an appropriate concept, programme and set-up, a participatory preparation and implementation process, and engaging formats and professional facilitation.

**Table 2: Long-term goals and medium-term objectives as defined for the Marine Regions Forum**

Category	Description
Long-term goals	The Marine Regions Forum aims to generate new knowledge in regional ocean governance that catalyses transformative change towards the sustainable use and conservation of marine and coastal ecosystem. Thereby the Forum supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDG 14 and helps building a bridge to a post-2020/30 pathway for ocean health
Short- to medium-term objectives	Integrated approaches within regions, between regions, and between the regional and the global level are strengthened and recognised as a key for delivering SDG 14 and the 2030 Agenda as a whole. Good practices for cross-sectoral and cross-boundary ocean governance frameworks at the regional scale are identified and facilitated to support coordination of policymaking and implementation. New cross-sectoral partnerships in support of SDG 14 facilitated. Frameworks for knowledge-driven policy responses and informed actions to halt ocean decline at the regional level are established.

**Table 3: Expected outcomes as defined for the Marine Regions Forum 2019 conference**

No	Description of deliverables	Means of verification	Delivery process
1	The Marine Regions Forum is launched as an international platform that brings together and harnesses leading ocean expertise from science, society and policy for developing transformative knowledge and facilitating collaboration, cooperation and new approaches for regional ocean governance through multi-stakeholder dialogues.	A press release is released on 30 September 2019. At least 3 coverages are made by the media.	Project team and press and communication departments to draft, release and disseminate a press release. Project team and participants to disseminate the press release.

No	Description of deliverables	Means of verification	Delivery process
2	A conference outcome document is prepared during the conference to disseminate targeted recommendations on regional approaches for implementing SDG 14 and on the specific themes/session topics discussed.	A 1-2 page outcome document is produced including the future role of regional ocean governance and discussions at the Forum.	Project team to draft an outline in preparation to the conference in correspondence with session hosts. Participatory process during the conference to collect input. Session chairs or other defined spokespersons to share recommendations/summary at the plenary.
3	A conference report is produced compiling impactful good practice examples and recommendation from the sessions with the potential to trigger regional transformation towards sustainability and helping to reverse the cycle of decline in ocean health.	At least 1 report on good-practices is produced based on the exchanges and discussions at the Forum.	Participants to write up their experience notes / session chairs to collect. IASS/IDDRI to compile, layout and edit for publication. Produce and present the report in a format that facilitates the uptake of good practices.
4	Commitments for new partnerships are developed through the Marine Regions Forum.	At least 1 new partnership is announced at the Forum.	Project team and session hosts to support the establishment of a partnership prior to the Forum. Provide space to facilitate possible further partnerships during the conference (match-making). Announcements made at the conference.
5	Possible announcement of new funding for regional projects or initiatives are made.	At least 1 new project funding is announced at the Forum.	Project team and session hosts to support the establishment of possible announcement prior to the conference. Provide space to facilitate the development of new partnerships during the conference. Announcements made at the plenary.
6	Publications are released in open-access academic journals and other appropriate formats (e.g. Policy Briefs).	At least 1 publication is released based on the process, discussions, and outcomes of the Forum.	Record the process of developing the Forum. Record the discussions and outcome at the Forum. Analyse and prepare publications.

### 2.1.2 Conceptual criteria guiding the Marine Regions Forum

As outlined in chapter 1.2, concept development and implementation of the Marine Regions Forum platform and the 2019 conference followed a *participatory and co-creative approach* to create an engaging platform, deliver desired outcomes and achieve the goals set, but also to maximise buy-in from relevant actors. In developing the first large-scale dialogue meeting held under this initiative, the *Marine Regions Forums 2019*, the project team therefore aimed for:

- ▶ An engaging and open preparatory process by involving Steering Group, Advisory Board members and external experts throughout the project from concept development, implementation and hosting to the development and dissemination of outcomes;
- ▶ Delivering a participatory and action-oriented conference format, e.g. through collaborative workshops with World Café sessions formats or round tables and interactive plenaries;
- ▶ An informal setting, e.g. by holding sessions under Chatham House rules and emphasising participants' expertise rather than their formal institutional position.

Further, developing of the conference programme and selection of participants went hand in hand in order to ensure *representation of experts* along the full spectrum of stakeholders, including generally underrepresented groups, and across marine regions, in specific:

- ▶ The community of experts and stakeholder groups from sectors relevant to the programme, i.e. plenary and session themes and topics, including representatives of States, regional and global organisations, NGOs, policy-making, academia and the private sector;
- ▶ Actors from stakeholder groups, sectors or disciplines that have an important role for ocean sustainability, e.g. by leading innovative initiatives aiming to tackle ocean issues, but are typically underrepresented in ocean governance policy processes; and
- ▶ Representatives from both pioneering marine regions and regions seeking to advance their cooperative governance efforts; the world's diversity of marine regions should be well-represented to provide appropriate regional contextualisation and best possible exchange between regions.

Actors from regions that have well-established histories of regional ocean governance can provide valuable lessons. They can inform of the challenges and opportunities they have encountered or provide momentum by being a starting point for interregional cooperation. It is equally important to invite representatives from marine regions where such processes can be further developed and actors can be further empowered.

It was further established that the *selection of themes and session topics* is a key factor of success for the Marine Regions Forums 2019 and that the topics addressed by the Forum should have a strong relevance for marine regions and their governance processes. Thus, in addition to the gaps and possible topics identified in the review (see chapter 1.2), the following criteria were set to guide the selection of topics for the plenaries and dialogue sessions:

- ▶ Transformative need (i.e. relevant problem/issue);
- ▶ Transformative potential (i.e. opportunity to affect change through ocean governance);
- ▶ Addressing critical obstacles and barriers for ocean governance;
- ▶ Enabling conditions for effective ocean governance and for overcoming challenges/obstacles.

All these elements guided the development of a concept for the Marine Regions Forum 2019 conference including thematic framing and programme development, side events, choices made on formats, venue and setting, and inviting of speakers and participants.

## 2.2 Implementing and hosting the Marine Regions Forum 2019

The Marine Regions Forum 2019 which was held from 30 September until 2 October 2019 in Berlin, Germany, brought together over 200 leading experts from 50 countries with diverse regional and professional backgrounds, from academia and research, policy and decision-making, NGOs and industry, the arts and media (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019; Tsioumani et al. 2019). It took the form of a dialogue-oriented conference with a mix of workshops and plenary discussions and rounded up by a side program that aimed to provide a creative space for open and productive exchange. The following chapters provide a summary of how the conference was structured and organised.

### 2.2.1 General structure and thematic framing

The Marine Regions Forum 2019 was held under the overarching theme “*Achieving a healthy ocean – Regional ocean governance beyond 2020*” and set out to encourage participants to jointly explore obstacles and pathways to achieve SDG 14 and accelerate progress (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019; Tsioumani et al. 2019). As the regional level plays a significant role in coordinating national actions to conserve and sustainably manage the ocean and as such is crucial for delivering on the SDGs (see chapter 1.1.2), emphasis was placed on bringing the discussions onto a regional perspective. The attainment of SDG 14 is of considerable concern; it is expected, that five of the seven targets under SDG 14 are not met by the time they are due, which was the year 2020, and the remaining are seen as unlikely to be met by 2030 (Nash et al. 2020). Strengthening and integrating regional approaches are thus considered enablers to support or accelerate target attainment. With this framing, the *Marine Regions Forum 2019* was also aiming to reflect on ways to achieve transformations towards sustainability at the regional scale and examine areas for further improvement and actions beyond 2020.

The following three *conference themes* were thus selected to structure the discussions at the Marine Regions Forum 2019 under the overarching theme (see also Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019):

- Achieving SDG 14 (Theme 1)
- Underpinning global processes (Theme 2)
- Knowledge for ocean action (Theme 3)

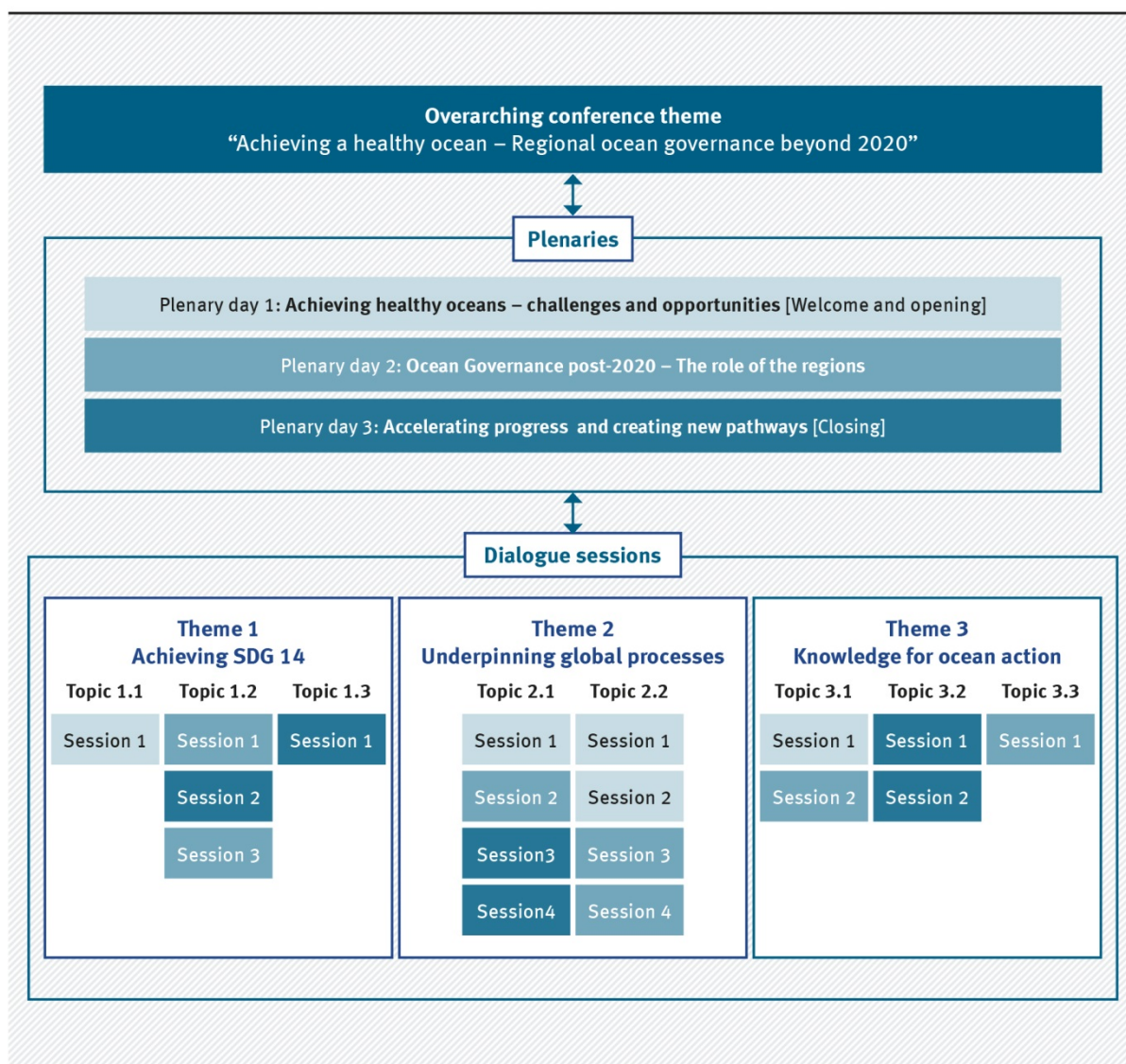
The conference themes were used to structure the session programme which foresaw multiple dialogue sessions held on defined sub-topics under each theme (see also chapter 2.2.3.2). They also corresponded with the plenary sessions that were held on each of the three conference days to reflect on the discussions of the multiple, workshop-style dialogue sessions (see chapter 2.2.3.1). Furthermore, the plenary sessions allowed participants to address specific problems and to jointly develop concrete and actionable recommendations and tangible outcomes. In Figure 6, the thematic framing and linkages made between plenary and dialogue session at the Marine Regions Forum 2019 is visualised.

Further, for each day of the conference, *daily foci* were set as additional points of reflection during the individual plenary and dialogue sessions (see also conference agenda in Annex B.1):

- Day 1: Understanding challenges and achievements
- Day 2: Developing solutions
- Day 3: Accelerating progress and creating new pathways

Both the *conference themes* and the *daily foci* then were used to structure the discussions in the plenary sessions (see chapter 2.2.3).

**Figure 6: Thematic framing and structuring of the Marine Regions Forum 2019**



See Table 4 (page 68) for a thematic overview of topics and sessions held.

Source: own illustration, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies. // Graphic design: Sabine Zentek.

## 2.2.2 Designing a co-creative dialogue space

Open dialogue and constructive discourse between stakeholders is critical for the successful delivery of solution-oriented results for the Marine Regions Forum. Creating and offering these conditions, including space for open exchange and development of new ideas and solutions, networks and partnerships, was at the heart of the Marine Regions Forum's concept. This was

fostered through professional implementation and facilitation of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 which included:

- ▶ The *consultation* of the *Marine Regions Forum's* Steering Group, Advisory Board, and further external experts on the setting of themes and topics, in the selection of the session topics and the programme planning, and the selection of participants; Steering Group and donors were closely involved at all steps of the process;
- ▶ A careful *tailoring of the various programme elements along the defined criteria* (see chapter 2.1) and through the engagement of experts from different sectors and organisations as partners in the design of sessions and as co-hosts during the conference;
- ▶ A *coordinated selection approach* that ensured a fit of participants to the session topics and in consideration of the objectives and criteria (see chapters 2.1), and coordination of the participant selection, invitation and travel logistics processes (chapter 2.2.4.3);
- ▶ A *transparent outreach process* providing co-hosts and participants with information on the conference in advance including through briefing notes (for speakers) and background materials (for session participants), and a *mobile conference app* and *conference notebook* for information sharing during the event;
- ▶ An overall *mindful selection of the conference venue* and side event locations pertaining to design, size and location of space (plenary and breakout rooms, lobby/hallways, restaurants) and defined sustainability standards;
- ▶ *Moderation* of the plenaries through experienced moderators with in-depth knowledge of the topics and facilitation of sessions by co-hosts from the organisers together with invited experts;
- ▶ *Design and facilitation of plenaries and dialogue sessions* in a way that allows participants to contribute, e.g. by tasking selected participants with reporting roles during the plenaries (daily theme ambassadors or spokespersons of the Young Ocean Professionals group), providing ample time for discussion at the plenaries and selecting formats for dialogue workshops that allow for interaction and dialogue such as World Café or Fish Bowls;
- ▶ *Feeding of session outputs* such as conclusions and recommendations into the Key Messages outcome document through *harvesting sheets* (administered by session co-hosts) and by sharing the draft outcome document with participants after the event for commenting;
- ▶ Providing *open space at the conference for networking and exchange* during the conference days, The Ocean Realm, with exhibitions, a Meet & Greet Space and a daily debriefing for Young Ocean Professionals;
- ▶ Offering social events for informal get-together and change of perspectives such as an *evening reception* with artistic intervention at the venue, a *conference dinner* outside of the venue, and an associated *public side event* under the title *Berlin am Meer / Berlin by the sea*.

### 2.2.3 Conference programme

The following chapters give an overview of the main programme elements of the Marine Regions Forum 2019. A detailed description of the conference programme as shared with the participants in advance of the conference is available for download from the Marine Regions

Forum conference website<sup>41</sup>. A tabular overview of the conference agenda is provided in Annex B.1 and as well available from the Marine Regions Forum website<sup>42</sup>. Some session slots were left open to leave room to manoeuvre and allow for a possible expansion of topics or proposals for additional sessions from the Advisory Board members or partners.

Noting the need for focused discussion during the event itself and limited capacities for hosting of parallel sessions during the conference, a balance had to be found between issues of general importance for regional ocean governance (e.g. the development of cross-sectoral approaches within marine regions, addressing land-ocean interactions, marine litter) and the focus on specific regional processes and case studies. Additional consideration was given to discuss emerging topics with regard to regional ocean governance, e.g. ocean literacy. The Conference Report<sup>43</sup> (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019), which was compiled in the follow-up of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 conference (see also chapter 2.3.2), provides a more detailed overview of the conference programme and summarises the discussions at the sessions and the key messages (chapter 2.3.1) derived at the Forum.

### 2.2.3.1 Plenary sessions

On each of the three conference days one plenary session was held. They were designed to provide space to set the scene for the conference, deepen the debate on the main conference themes, reflect on ways forward and linkages to key ongoing ocean policy process. Speakers were selected to present key actor groups, including decision-making and policy, science, civil society, and the private sector. Selection criteria included background and fit to the topic, purpose of the respective session, gender balance, and representation of different regions and key actor groups. The moderators Alexander Müller (TMG) and Sébastien Treyer (IDDRI) came from the group of organisers and were chosen by their experience in facilitating large conferences and discussion panels in the field of ocean governance, i.e. bringing together excellent facilitation skills and knowledge on the topic and on-going processes.

To frame and synthesize the central debates, ensure active dialogue among participants and infuse new ideas and ways of thinking, the plenaries combined short keynote talks and panel discussions to which participants were invited to share their views and input. A mix of high-level speakers, leading ocean experts and other inspirational personalities was invited to deliver their views and discuss with the audience on:

- Plenary day 1: Achieving healthy oceans – challenges and opportunities (Welcome and Opening Plenary)
- Plenary day 2: Ocean Governance post-2020 - The role of the regions
- Plenary day 3: Accelerating progress and creating new pathways (Closing Plenary)

Starting with a short inspirational conference trailer (see Annex B.2.5), the welcome and opening plenary featured opening remarks and welcome notes by representatives of the organisers and co-hosts including Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (Figure 7) (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019; Tsioumani et al. 2019). The plenary was dedicated to set the scene for the Marine Regions Forum 2019 and

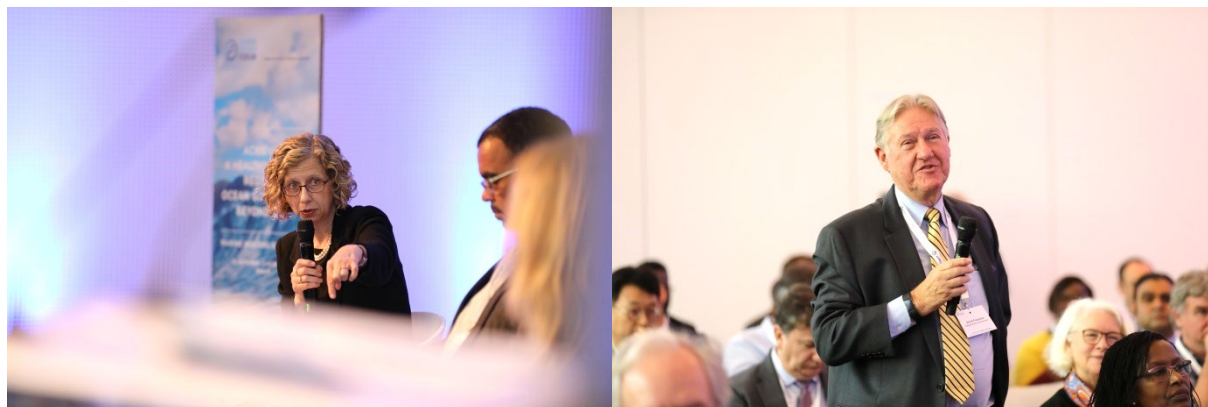
<sup>41</sup> See [http://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/MRF2019-conference-programme\\_d3\\_20190925\\_website.pdf](http://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/MRF2019-conference-programme_d3_20190925_website.pdf). Last accessed 10 November 2020.

<sup>42</sup> See [http://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/Programme-overview\\_rev16\\_201903-v2\\_mailing-website.pdf](http://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/Programme-overview_rev16_201903-v2_mailing-website.pdf). Last accessed 10 November 2020.

<sup>43</sup> See [http://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/02/MRF2019\\_Conference-Report\\_fin\\_04.02.2020.pdf](http://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/02/MRF2019_Conference-Report_fin_04.02.2020.pdf). Last accessed 19 January 2021.

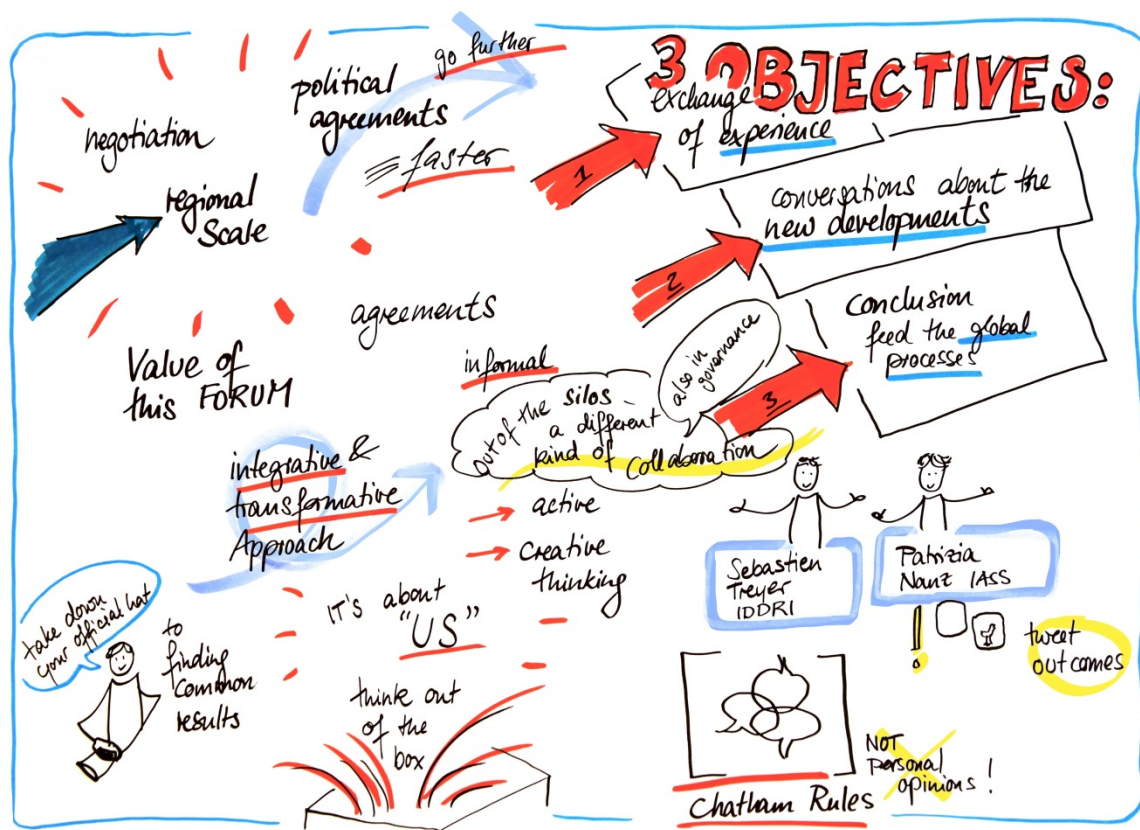
warm up participants for the discussions to come during the three days of conference both in terms of content and the objectives of the Marine Regions Forum (Figure 8).

**Figure 7:** Panel members and audience discussing during the welcome and opening plenary held on day 1 of the Marine Regions Forum 2019



Source: IISD/ENB | Mike Muzurakis.

**Figure 8:** Objectives of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 as presented by Sébastien Treyer (IDDRI) and Patrizia Nanz (IASS) during the opening plenary



Source: Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. (2019). © Sabine Soeder, CoCreativeFlow.

The central plenary session on day 2 particularly was set up to deepen the debate on the main conference theme “regional ocean governance”, brought together recommendations emanating from the parallel sessions, and provide the charge for the last day of the conference. For cross-fertilisation between sessions and plenaries, so-called theme ambassadors were invited to

provide brief reports from the dialogue sessions during the plenaries on day 2 (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019).

The closing plenary on the last day of the conference aimed to summarize the discussions of the three days and showcase ideas for ways forwards. Besides a key note by Svenja Schulze, German Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, high-level representatives from governments, intergovernmental organisations and NGOs and initiatives were invited for panel statements and discussion with the participants (Figure 9). Furthermore, a spokesperson of the Young Ocean Professionals daily debriefings group was invited to share their observations of the conference and discussions through an intervention speech during the plenary.

**Figure 9: Impressions from the closing plenary on day 3 of the Marine Regions Forum**



Left: key note address by Svenja Schulze, German Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety; right: discussion panel with high-level representatives from governments, international organisations and civil society. Source: IISD/ENB | Mike Muzurakis.

Summaries of the welcome speeches, key notes and discussions delivered at the plenaries including lists of speakers are provided in the Conference Report of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019).

### 2.2.3.2 Dialogue sessions

Along the three conference themes (see chapter 2.2.1), workshop-type sessions on selected and well-defined governance challenges were offered in parallel strands. These sessions were geared to facilitate the in-depth exploration and discussion of key topics. Different length of sessions slots allow for “deep dives” or shorter, explorative sessions, as needed. A range of facilitation techniques was employed in the sessions to stimulate exchange, open discussions and create an overall productive atmosphere such as World Café and fish bowl sessions. Facilitated by session co-chairs, participants were directed to work together to formulate actionable recommendations (Figure 10). For reporting back, providing of input for the Key Messages outcome document (chapter 2.3.1) and Conference Report (2.3.2), co-chairs were required to fill in harvesting sheets and assigning rapporteurs for taking of minutes. Chapter 2.2.5.2 provides an outline of the reporting procedures conducted.

The dialogue sessions were held in breakout rooms with an arranged maximum seating capacity of 30 to 45 participants each, depending on the number of registered participants and desired set-up. Table and seating arrangements as requested by session-co-hosts to match with the chosen facilitation format included table groups of 4-6 tables e.g. for World Café session formats, block arrangements, theatre-style arrangements, and semi-circle and circle-arrangements (see Figure 11 for an example of a fish-bowl style arrangement).

**Figure 10: Impressions of dialogue workshops held at the Marine Regions Forum 2019**



Source: IISD/ENB | Mike Muzurakis.

In total, eighteen dialogue sessions were held over the course of the three conference days with 3-4 sessions held in parallel. An overview of the individual dialogue sessions held under each topic among the three themes is presented in Table 4, and in more detail in the Conference Programme<sup>44</sup> that was shared with the participants in advance of the conference.

**Table 4: Overview of the dialogue sessions held under topics defined for each theme** <sup>45</sup>

<b>Theme 1 Achieving SDG 14</b>
Topic 1.1 Beyond the garbage patch: Achieving SDG 14.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Session 1.1.1 Putting plans into action: Implementing regional marine litter action plans</li> </ul>
Topic 1.2 Strengthening regional frameworks for SDG 14 implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Session 1.2.1 Creating synergies: Enhancing regional cooperation for ocean-related SDGs</li> <li>Session 1.2.2 Delivering the ocean SDG: Accelerating progress</li> <li>Session 1.2.3 Advancing implementation of the ocean SDG through ecosystem-based management</li> </ul>
Topic 1.3 Towards regional frameworks for sustainable tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Session 1.3.1 Sun, sea, sand and sustainability? Tourism in marine regions</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 2 Underpinning global processes</b>
Topic 2.1 Areas beyond national jurisdiction: Linking global and regional governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Session 2.1.1 Areas beyond national jurisdiction: Towards a collaborative approach in ocean governance</li> <li>Session 2.1.2 Keeping an eye on the high seas: Strengthening monitoring, control and surveillance</li> <li>Session 2.1.3 Towards coherent and connected MPA networks: From challenges to possible solutions in high seas governance</li> <li>Session 2.1.4 Deep seabed mining in the Area: The role of regional ocean governance</li> </ul>
Topic 2.2 Ocean and Climate Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Session 2.2.1 Our ocean in crisis: Key findings from the IPCC special report</li> <li>Session 2.2.2 Preparing marine regions for fisheries on the move</li> <li>Session 2.2.3 Tackling climate problems with ocean solutions</li> <li>Session 2.2.4 The “Blue COP”: Mobilising regional stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 3 Knowledge for ocean action</b>
Topic 3.1 Stronger together:- Enhancing regional science-policy practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Session 3.1.1: Building regional science-policy interfaces: Good practices, lessons learned and ways forward</li> <li>Session 3.1.2: Inclusive ocean governance: Weaving science with traditional ecological knowledge</li> </ul>
Topic 3.2 Strengthening global science-policy processes to support regional ocean governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Session 3.2.1 The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development: Engaging marine regions</li> <li>Session 3.2.2 Enhancing the role of regions in global ocean assessments</li> </ul>
Topic 3.3 Engaging with the next generation: Arts for ocean literacy and stewardship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Session 3.3.1 WE ARE OCEAN: Can the arts mobilise youth for ocean conservation?</li> </ul>

More complete summaries of the individual session including conclusions and recommendations made by the session participants are presented in the Conference Report (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019) which was compiled after the conference from notes taken by rapporteurs during the sessions. The report also features graphic recordings that were made during sessions by a contracted graphic artist, as shown in Figure 11.

<sup>44</sup> See [https://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/MRF2019-conference-programme\\_d3\\_20190925\\_website.pdf](https://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/MRF2019-conference-programme_d3_20190925_website.pdf). Last accessed 13 January 2021.

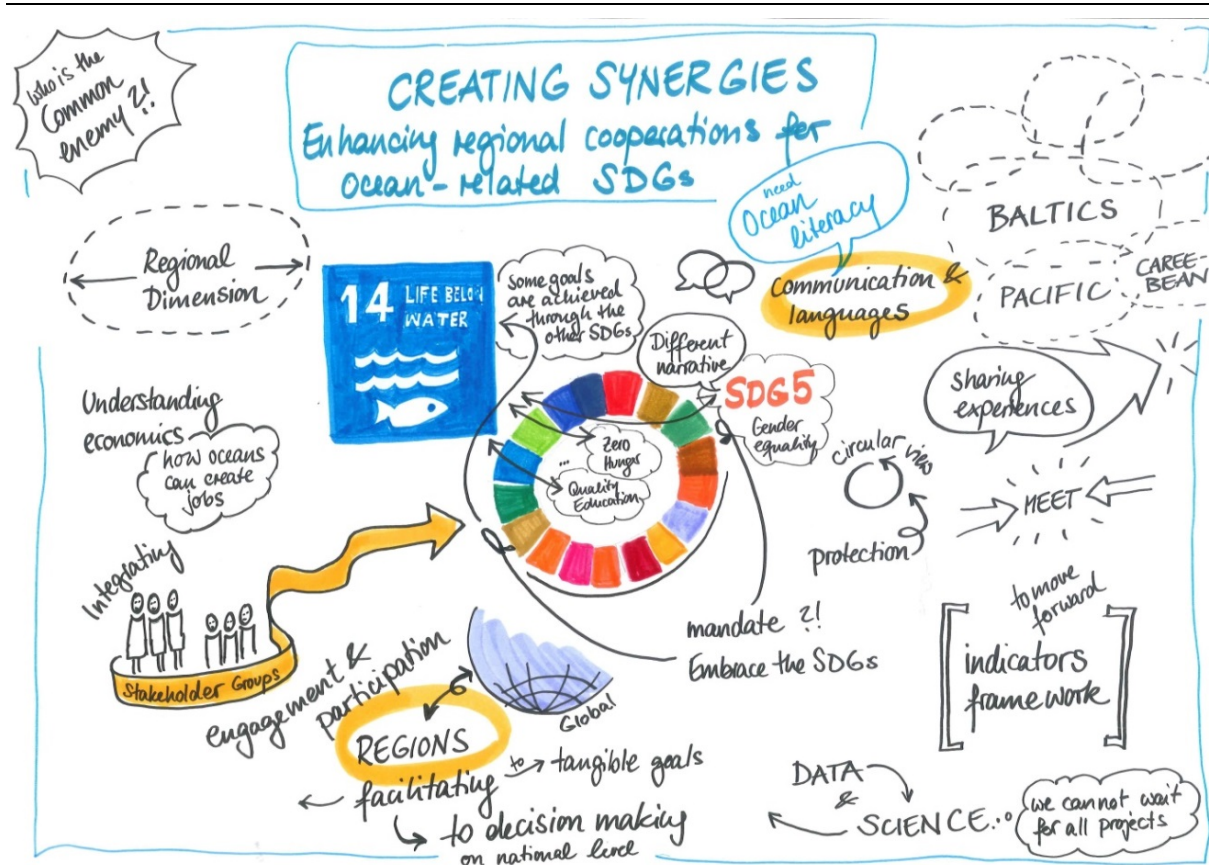
<sup>45</sup> See also Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. (2019).

**Figure 11: Fish bowl-style seating arrangements during session 3.3.1**



Source: IISD/ENB | Mike Muzurakis.

**Figure 12: Graphic recording capturing the discussion on regional cooperation for implementation of SDG 14 during session 1.2.1**



Source: Sabine Soeder, CoCreativeFlow.

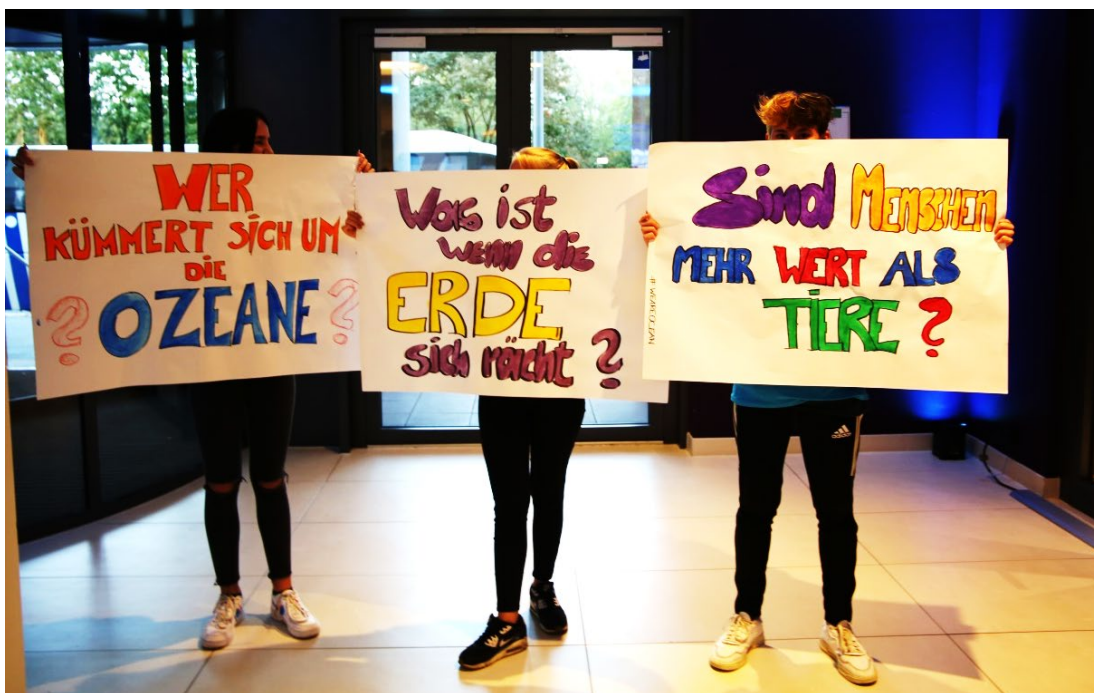
### 2.2.3.3 Social events

#### 2.2.3.3.1 Evening reception

An evening reception was organised on the first day of the conference to welcome participants in a more informal atmosphere and offer space for networking and warming up for the conference (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019). The evening reception took place in the main lobby of the venue which was arranged in an open floor-plan style with standing tables and sofa seating.

After a welcome note by the conference organisers through the Patrizia Nanz, scientific director of the IASS, an interactive intervention of school student together with the Berlin artist Lisa Rave was delivered. Like the associated public side event “Berlin am Meer / Berlin by the Sea” (chapter 2.2.3.5), the activity was part of the WE ARE OCEAN project which is facilitated by ARTPORT\_making waves<sup>46</sup> and the IASS. Here, school students from the Barbara-Zürner-Secondary School in Velten, Brandenburg, together with the artist Lisa Rave presented results from artistic workshops (Figure 13). Supported by Julia Moritz and Anne-Marie Melster from ARTPORT\_making waves, the students highlighted their concerns on the interdependence of humans and the ocean by creating a situation of direct exchange. After the intervention, a sustainably sourced buffet dinner invited participants to mingle and exchange in a relaxed atmosphere.

**Figure 13:** School students presenting their questions to the participants of the evening reception



Source: IISD/ENB | Mike Muzurakis.

#### 2.2.3.3.2 Conference dinner

On the evening of day 2 of the Marine Regions Forum 2019, a joint conference dinner allowed participants to network and continue discussions in a relaxed atmosphere (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019). The dinner took place at a restaurant to which bus transfer was offered from the hotel located at the river Spree in Berlin and close to historic and

<sup>46</sup> See <https://artport-project.org/>. Last accessed 13 January 2021

touristic Berlin sights, including the East Side Gallery and Oberbaum Bridge. Offering a locally sourced buffet menu, the dinner was well visited with over 150 participants joining and enjoying a lively exchange after a welcome address by Lilian Busse representing the UBA as co-host of the conference.

#### 2.2.3.4 The Ocean Realm – Exhibition and side events

A creative and engaging supporting program was organised for the Marine Regions Forum 2019 to facilitate dialogue and exchange and inspire participants, but also to engage actors that may usually not participate in this type of events such as e.g. artists and youth (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019). Understanding the need for intrinsic reflection and informal participant exchanges, the forum will be planned to allow for ample time for participants to take breaks and network amongst one another. For this purpose, lunch and tea/coffee breaks were offered at the venue throughout the three conference days, with tea/coffee breaks paired with a set of concurrent activities (see below) to create an overall pleasant and open atmosphere. The space at the conference venue allowed for hosting of different activities across the foyers in front of the plenary and breakout rooms which were situated on two floors connected through a wide staircase. Further details on the concurrent activities are available from the Conference Report (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019).

##### 2.2.3.4.1 Graphic recording

The plenaries and selected dialogue session of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 were recorded visually by a graphic artist, Sabine Soeder (see Figure 14). These graphic recordings were displayed on graphic walls in the foyer (ground floor) and continually updated over the duration of the conference (Figure 15) (see also Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019). Also, participants could interact with the graphic recorder and add their thoughts on related questions via post-its. Pictures of the graphic recordings were included in the Conference Report for documentation purposes.

**Figure 14:** Graphic recorder working on a visual recording during a session



Source: IISD/ENB | Mike Muzurakis.

**Figure 15: Graphic wall installed in the foyer of the venue**



Source: Nicole Wienrich, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (top) and Sabine Soeder, CoCreativeFlow (bottom).

#### 2.2.3.4.2 Meet & Greet Space

A Meet & Greet Space was arranged aside coffee break area on the first floor and designed for participants to relax, retreat for informal meetings and networking (Figure 16) (see also Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019). Through information displayed in the conference programme and via the Attendify conference app (see chapter 2.2.5.1), participants were encouraged to use the app to connect digitally with colleagues and arrange meetings at the Meet & Greet space. An array of brochures and leaflets that participants had been invited to bring along (as trial copy) were also on display in this area by partnering or participating organisations and initiatives such as WIOMSA, International Climate Initiative, Strengthening Regional Ocean Governance for the High Seas (STRONG High Seas), Future Earth Coasts, Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF).

**Figure 16: Impressions from the Meet & Greet Space**



Source: IISD/ENB | Mike Muzurakis.

#### **2.2.3.4.3 MSP Challenge board game**

As a co-creative side activity, participants had the chance to participate in the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Challenge board game, a table top strategy game with a fictitious sea basin and different maritime activities (see also Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019). The board was also put up on the first floor close to the coffee break area and participants were invited to join for a facilitated game during the 2-hour lunch break on day two. The game, developed by the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment in the Netherlands and the NHTV University of Breda, was presented and facilitated by the developers. Around 20 conference participants joined the board game simulation and created marine spatial plans for three different fictive countries which shared a water body as representatives of different stakeholders, e.g. shipping, fisheries, tourism, energy, nature protection.

#### **2.2.3.4.4 VR corner**

A selection of seven 360 degree stories and documentaries of the ocean and the life that it sustains was presented as *VR corner - Take a virtual plunge into the ocean* (Figure 17). For a change of perception, participants could immerse themselves into tropical reef ecology, lives of fishermen or refugees crossing the seas at a virtual reality (VR) corner that was installed in the lobby (see also Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019). The 3D goggles were rented from the conference venue while the movies were downloaded from the official websites or received through direct contact with the producers. The following movies were offered:

- ▶ Arctic 360 (The Guardian VR Films);
- ▶ Baltic Sea Life (Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union);
- ▶ Camilla Plastic Ocean Plan (Alfred Wegener Institute; Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF; Institut für künstlerische Forschung);
- ▶ Out of the Blue (VR for Good; Pelagic Life and Reelfx);
- ▶ Sea Prayer (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; Google; Guardian VR Films);
- ▶ Valen's Reef (Conservation International);
- ▶ 3D Virtual Reef (Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research).

The VR corner was accessible on all conference days during the lunch, coffee and afternoon breaks.

**Figure 17: A project team colleague and participant taking a VR plunge into the ocean**



Source: IISD/ENB | Mike Muzurakis.

#### **2.2.3.4.5 Photo exhibition**

To create an ocean-related atmosphere as well as to offer impetus for discussion and exchange, photographs and descriptive posters were displayed on the walls of the lobby and staircase from ground floor to first floor. For this purpose, photographer and artist Barbara Dombrowski was invited to exhibit pictures and texts from her art project “*Tropic Ice\_Dialog between places affected by climate change*” (see also Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019). For the *Marine Regions Forum 2019*, she showed pictures from her visits to Greenland and Kiribati, two marine regions representing two rather different extreme climate zones, creating a visual dialogue between people and landscapes from these two countries and emphasising the connection between humans, the ocean and climate change in these regions. Explanatory texts on mangroves, sea walls and marine litter were displayed aside to encourage participants to reflect on these themes. Barbara Dombrowski also held a talk in the conference foyer, introducing the rationale and inspiration for the exhibition, during the lunch break of the first day of the conference.

#### **2.2.3.4.6 Young Ocean Professionals Daily debriefing**

Since the plenary programme involved mostly high-level speakers or senior experts, a special feature was introduced to bring together early career participants for exchange, the *Young Ocean Professionals daily debriefing*” (see also Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019). In an informal setting and facilitated by early career researchers from the organising institutes IASS and IDDRI, around 12-16 participants met daily during the afternoon break and exchanged their impressions of the conference and sessions, but also general views on ocean conservation and their work. A spokesperson from this group was further asked to share the group’s views and input during the plenary of day 3.

**Figure 18: Impressions of the photo exhibition at the Marine Regions Forum 2019 by Barbara Dombrowski**



Source: IISD/ENB | Mike Muzurakis.

#### 2.2.3.5 Public side event

Under the title “*Berlin am Meer / Berlin by the sea*”<sup>47</sup>, a public side event was organised and hosted on day 3 in cooperation with the Anne-Marie Melster from the arts collective ARTPORT\_making waves, Manuel Rivera and Oscar Schmidt from the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, and the *Futurium* science museum in Berlin ” (see also Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019). In an interactive intervention, school students from Berlin presented their thoughts and questions on climate change and ocean protection which they had developed during artistic workshops at their school together with the Berlin artist Lisa Rave and ARTPORT\_making waves. Following this, a fishbowl dialogue was organised with experts from science, art and politics interacting with the students and guests from the audience.

The event was part of the project “*We Are Ocean / Wir Sind Meer Berlin*” by ARTPORT\_making waves. It was open to the public and had been announced by the Futurium and ARTPORT\_making waves in addition to advertisement through the Marine Regions Forum conference programme. Participants of the Marine Regions Forum were also invited and made their way to the event.

#### 2.2.3.6 Informal networking lunch

An informal networking lunch was hosted by the BMU at the side-lines on the second day of the Marine Regions Forum 2019. The event was organised jointly organised between BMU and IASS and brought together 20 invited participants of the conference including ambassadors and other high-level representatives of governments, international organisations and science institutions. The lunch meeting provided an opportunity for informal exchange with Svenja Schulze, German Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, addressing key challenges and collaborative opportunities in ocean governance and related processes. After a welcome address by Minister Schulze, Hon. Bernhard Esau (Minister of Fisheries and Marine

<sup>47</sup> See <https://artport-project.org/portfolio/futurium/>. Last accessed 30 January 2021.

Resources, Namibia) and Jens Frølich Holte (State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway) gave short statements highlighting the importance of regional cooperation and opportunities for future collaboration. This provided input for the ensuing get-together. The event took place in the executive lounge of the venue and was moderated by Alexander Müller, TMG.

## **2.2.4 Conference organisation and hosting**

The different organisational matters that were part of the overall conference organisation are described briefly in the following chapters.

### **2.2.4.1 Organisers and hosts**

The *Marine Regions Forum 2019* was planned and organised by the PROG through IASS, IDDRI and TMG together with GOPA Com, a contracted EU service provider taking large parts of the participant registration, travel logistics and venue organisation, and the event staff of the venue, the *Vienna House Andel's Berlin*. The conference was hosted together with the BMU, the UBA and the EC.

The Marine Regions Forum organisers and hosts strived to meet the highest possible sustainability standards for an environmentally sound and socially compatible organisation of the conference. Sustainability criteria were considered in all fields, including the procurement of products and services, catering and conference materials.

### **2.2.4.2 Funding of the conference**

The Marine Regions Forum 2019 was funded by the German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Nuclear Safety through the German Environmental Agency, as well as by the EU through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). The financial contributions of the EU to the conference was administered by GOPA Com, an external service provider, and organised in close cooperation with the *Marine Regions Forum's* project team. The IASS provided additional in-kind contributions through funding from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture of the State of Brandenburg.

### **2.2.4.3 Funding of participants**

According to the arrangement with the European Commission, funding was available for 58 participants based on their active role in the event, and for 10 speakers from developing countries to ensure balanced participation to the event. The total number of participants that finally requested and received support for travel and hotel was 45, with four participants requesting funding for hotel only. Travel arrangements for funded participants were organised and funded through GOPA Com.

### **2.2.4.4 Participant management**

A management procedure had been setup to handle the processes relating to invitations and participants. The components and steps of the invitation and participant management process are described in brief in the following chapters.

#### **2.2.4.4.1 Participant selection**

Participant selection was one of the key processes of the conference organisation. Participation was upon invitation only and as established in the criteria for the Marine Regions Forum 2019 (see chapter 2.1.2). An iterative participant selection process was set up which started with (1) the project team and session co-hosts identifying potential participants including high-level

speakers that could contribute to the sessions and plenaries, and (2) establishing their possible roles in plenaries and dialogue sessions. Participants were proposed on the basis of their background and area of expertise as applicable to the conference as a whole and to individual sessions. Further criteria considered were gender, coverage of different marine regions as well as across sectors and actors. In addition, potential funding needs were identified for participants having a specific role in the Marine Regions Forum, e.g. delivering a presentation or co-hosting a session.

The compiled proposals were jointly reviewed and checked e.g. for double requests and relevance of participants across sessions. An initially set ceiling of 150 participants was increased to 200 in the course of the process to ensure best possible fit of participants and representation across the defined criteria.

#### **2.2.4.4.2 Participant invitation and conference registration**

For the invitation procedure, an online registration page was contracted through GOPA Com using XING, which included fields that would collect basic information from registered participants such as full names, affiliation, if they would be attending the social events, and if funding was required. For general participants, invitations were sent out as personalised e-mails through COBRA, a database-run mailing software to the selected participants (n=218) in June 2019, inviting them to register for the Marine Regions Forum 2019. A conference agenda and draft program was attached and participants received a link to the registration page. A reminder for registration was sent via COBRA in the beginning of July 2019. Participants who were identified at a later stage or invited as replacements were sent registration e-mails directly via the Marine Regions Forum account. After registering through the link provided in the invitation emails, participants received an automated confirmation e-mail.

Keynote speakers and plenary panellist participants received personalized emails, which included a personalized letter that also specified the foreseen role in the Marine Regions Forum 2019. These letters were signed by the European Commissioner Environment Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella, and the German Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Svenja Schulze. The letters were drafted by the project team in coordination with the respective authorities under a joint letterhead, signed by both authorities and sent out to the recipients in June 2019 by BMU (as printed letters) and through the Marine Regions Forum's e-mail account as PDF documents for fast delivery.

Participants list were updated on a weekly basis and cross checked with the registration list to keep an overview of participants that registered, declined, or had not responded to the invitation yet. This also included monitoring of funding requests, declines and approvals. In the case of a declined invitation, replacements were identified for specific individuals and invited. If needed, friendly reminders were sent by the co-host for the session that the individual had been identified for. On 23 September, the registration list had 138 non-funded participants registered and 52 funded participants registered; 79 participants had declined the invitation. As recorded with the on-site registration, a total of 203 participants had participated in the conference; this included 15 support staff from GOPA Com, IASS, IDDRI, TMG, IISD, concurrent activities segments, and room managers.

#### **2.2.4.4.3 Session registration of participants**

Participants were requested to sign up for sessions in order to ensure that the participant numbers and the room capacities matched well, and in order for the session co-hosts to have an overview of who was going to attend their session. Participants who had accepted their invitation to attend the Marine Regions Forum 2019 received a COBRA mailing in early September 2019, inviting them to pre-register for sessions via the established XING registration

page, with an agenda and draft conference program attached to the mailing. Participants could further indicate if they were planning to attend the social events and conference dinner, or if they were not attending specific day(s) of the conference. An automated XING mailing containing an overview of their selection was returned after session registration. A reminder for session registration was sent by mid of September 2019. Late registrations received the same requests via e-mail through the Marine Regions Forum account.

The option existed to close the session registration for specific sessions once a session had reached its maximum carrying capacity. This was not necessary though since none of the sessions reached its maximum carrying capacity during the online registration. Session registration reports were filed frequently and shared with the project team and session co-hosts. In total, 115 participants pre-registered for sessions and around 10 participants signed up for sessions on-site. The registration lists were printed out for this purpose and hung up on pin boards in the foyer.

#### **2.2.4.5 Event planning and organisation**

Event planning and organisation was shared between the project team with the IASS leading the process, and the EU's event planning service provider GOPA Com. It was conducted in close in collaboration with the conference venues and their event management and in-house technical teams, and in close communication with the session co-hosts.

The event planning included the following elements:

- ▶ Scouting and contracting of event locations for the conference venue and conference dinner, and conducting of site visits at during the planning phase;
- ▶ Tendering and organising of services and conference materials including IISD reporting, the mobile conference app and materials such as the conference notebook;
- ▶ Planning and organising of plenary and session room set-up and technic including the defining of technical requirements for the different conference segments and programme elements;
- ▶ Planning and organising of catering during lunch and coffee/tea breaks, of the social events (evening reception and conference dinner), and of the concurrent activities;
- ▶ Organising of the participant invitation and registration processes including developing of information notes for participants (see also chapter 2.2.4.3);
- ▶ Management of accommodation and travel logistics for funded participants (see also chapter 2.2.4.3);
- ▶ Contracting and organising of supporting staff for on-site registration and room management; and
- ▶ Developing and organising of branding and design elements for the conference.

Throughout the planning and implementation of the Marine Regions Forum 2019, an oversight of the complete event planning was kept, which included all elements of the event and the individual(s) responsible for the various components. It commenced in autumn 2018 with the scouting of a suitable venue. The venue for the Marine Regions Forum 2019 was selected in coordination with the Steering Group, and contracted in autumn 2018 after establishing the date for the conference with the Steering Group. The venue, the *Vienna House Andel's Berlin* in Berlin,

Germany, was chosen based on the overall working atmosphere, space, availability, environmental standards and estimated costs.

One day prior to the conference, team members from IASS and IDDRI, GOPA Com staff, exhibitors, and other relevant contributors organised on-site preparations together with the hotel staff. This included setting up the plenary room and dialogue session rooms for the first day of the conference, of The Ocean Realm, the registration desk and a press desk, including their respective technical requirements. Other items to setup included the conference materials (conference notebook, wooden pens, and cardboard banners etc.), branding stickers, consent forms, floral displays. The branding was based on the corporate design developed for the Marine Regions Forum. The conference registration and entrance space was decorated with a timeline of key ocean exploration dates and international ocean governance processes which was designed and arranged as stickers on the floor to set the scene for the participants. Throughout the following three days of the conference, the project team continuously oversaw the set-up of the conference space with all its elements and management requirements.

Furthermore, the project team held daily briefings to discuss the upcoming tasks and reflect on the previous day. Daily team briefings were also held with the IISD reporting team (see also chapter 2.3.3), the videography team (see also chapter 2.2.6.3.3), the hired room managers, and the plenary moderators.

## **2.2.5 Conference materials and reporting**

### **2.2.5.1 Conference materials to inform participants**

Technical solutions used to inform interested parties and participants before, during and after the *Marine Regions Forum 2019* and facilitate interaction were a conference website (see chapter 2.2.6.3.1) and a mobile app. The conference website was developed under the website of the PROG ([www.prog-ocean.org](http://www.prog-ocean.org)). It provided background information regarding the Marine Regions Forum project, promoted the upcoming *Marine Regions Forum 2019* conference, and highlighted the conference outcomes once the conference was over.

A mobile app called Attendify<sup>48</sup> was used to facilitate the exchange of information with and among the conference participants. This conference app allowed for the reduction of paper consumption by putting information such as the agenda, personalized schedules, floor plan, and background documents for the sessions, speaker profiles and logistics into a digital format. It could be accessed via smartphone, tablet or laptop and was used by participants to exchange private messages with each other as well as the project team. Furthermore, news from the conference was posted by the Marine Regions Forum hosts through the conference app (see Figure 19).

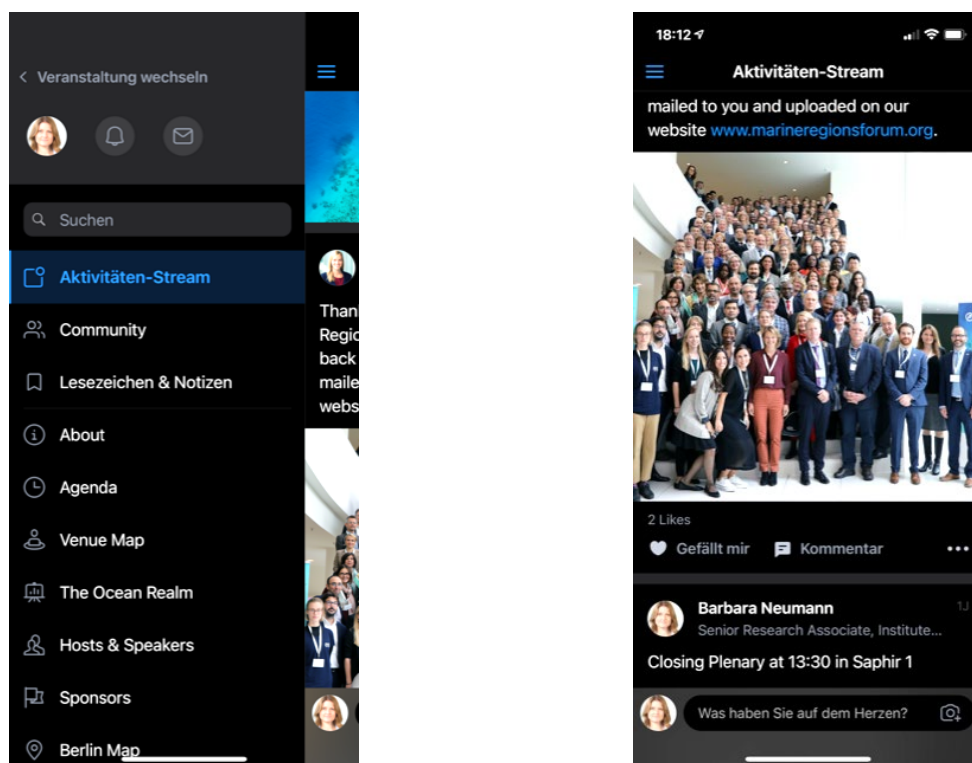
Further conference materials that were shared with participants before or during the Marine Regions Forum 2019 include a conference programme which was distributed in advance of the conference as PDF document and available from the website for download<sup>49</sup>, and a printed conference notebook that was handed out to participants when registering at the venue. The notebook was kept in A5 format and contained a reduced overview of the programme since detailed information on each session could be shared with participants through the digital conference app. It also contained blank pages for participants to use it notepad.

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<sup>48</sup> See <https://attendify.com/> for more information.

<sup>49</sup> See [http://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/Programme-overview\\_rev16\\_2019903-v2\\_mailing-website.pdf](http://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/Programme-overview_rev16_2019903-v2_mailing-website.pdf). Last accessed 10 November 2020.

**Figure 19: Screenshots of the Attendify conference app for the Marine Regions Forum 2019**



These two screenshots from a mobile phone show the content list programmed of the Attendify conference app (left) and the landing page of the Attendify app with activity stream (“Aktivitäten-Stream”; right).

Source: Barbara Neumann, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies.


Throughout the conference, participants were able to access a dedicated free Wi-Fi network at the venue.

### 2.2.5.2 Summarizing of results and reporting

For summarizing of results and cross-fertilisation during the conference, to inform the development of the conference outputs (chapter 2.3) and for reporting, comprehensive steps were taken:

- ▶ Reporting back in plenary during the conference through theme ambassadors (day 2) and a spokesperson of the Young Ocean Professionals daily debriefing group (day 3)
- ▶ Note-taking by organisers during the plenaries and assigning of rapporteurs to the dialogue sessions for reporting back to the organisers on the discussions and on conclusions and recommendations made;
- ▶ Filling in of prepared harvesting sheets (see Figure 20) by session co-hosts at or after their sessions; these were forwarded on the day to the conference organisers. The purpose of the harvesting sheet was to capture the discussions of each individual session and inform the plenaries and theme ambassadors, the drafting of the messages document and the Conference Report. Co-hosts noted the topics’ challenges, good-practice examples, actionable solutions and recommendations post-2020. A selection of the sheets was exhibited in the foyer for the participants to view;

**Figure 20: Harvesting sheets used to collect outputs from the dialogue sessions**



Session number and name:

Session rapporteur / contact person:

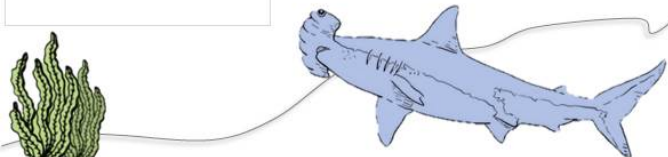
Date:

1. Challenges

2. Best practice examples

3. Actionable solutions

4. Recommendations post-2020



Other points of interest:

Source: own illustration, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies.

**Figure 21: Impression from the plenary set-up with panel staging, semi-circular seating arrangement of the audience and IISD reporting desk in the back**



Source: IISD/ENB | Mike Muzurakis.

- ▶ Daily reporting by IISD reporting services including photography during the event at the venue and the production of a summary report (see Figure 21 and chapter 2.3.3);
- ▶ Graphic recordings of plenaries and selected sessions (see chapter 2.2.3.4.1);
- ▶ Filming and recording of interviews to produce a conference film featuring impressions from the conference, voices of participants and best-practice examples (see chapters 2.2.6.3.3 and 2.3.4);
- ▶ Drafting of a Key Messages document during the conference which was then further developed in the follow-up to feed recommendations into relevant processes (see chapter 2.3.1); and
- ▶ Compiling of a comprehensive Conference Report with the Key Messages included (see chapter 2.3.2) for dissemination of the conference results.

## **2.2.6 Communication strategy**

In line with the participatory approach of the conference, the communication strategy was co-designed with members of the Steering Group and Advisory Board, who also aided in the dissemination of the outreach and communication products. Active engagement of the Advisory Board and Steering Group members in the communication activities was crucial for successful outreach of the Marine Regions Forum 2019. As “ambassadors” to the Marine Regions Forum, they engaged with relevant stakeholders to generate interest in the Forum and contribute to the following activities:

- ▶ Sharing information on the Marine Regions Forum within their respective organisations;
- ▶ Attending and delivering presentations on the Marine Regions Forum at relevant events; and
- ▶ Posting information about the Marine Regions Forum on relevant website and social media accounts.

### **2.2.6.1 Objectives and monitoring plan**

The communication strategy of the Marine Region Forum 2019 has the following two main objectives:

- ▶ To ensure key stakeholder participation in and support for the Marine Regions Forum 2019; and
- ▶ To provide information on the development, outputs and outcomes of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 and thematic discussions to relevant stakeholders.

Target audiences for the communication on the Marine Regions Forum 2019 conference are categorized into primary and secondary audiences (Table 5). The primary audience are the 200 conference participants including experts, media representatives and artists, while the secondary audience are those who will not attend but may be interested in the discussion at the conference, including decision-makers and multipliers such as media representatives.

**Table 5: Category and types of target audiences**

Category	Types
Primary	Invited participants to the Marine Regions Forum 2019, e.g.: Active participants Steering Group members Advisory Board members Media representatives
Secondary	Non-invited stakeholders working for organisations with relevance to the ocean and other stakeholders interested in the marine environment including media, youth, artists and decision-makers, e.g.: Decision-makers Wider ocean community Media representatives Exhibitioners Broader public

To measure progress of the communication strategy objectives, a monitoring plan with quantitative indicators (Table 6) was developed. The indicators are evaluated against the means of verification to assess the level of implementation.

**Table 6: Monitoring plan for the Marine Regions Forum 2019 communication strategy**

Communication strategy objective	Indicator	Target
To ensure participation of stakeholders in the Marine Regions Forum	Number of confirmed participants	At least 150 invited people confirm their participation by the end of the First Forum
	Number of participants per region and per sector	Regional and sectoral balance of the participants are assured
To provide information on the development and outcome of the Marine Regions Forum and thematic discussions	Number of hits on the Marine Regions Forum page	The Marine Regions Forum website receive 3,000 hits until the end of the Forum
	Number of likes, shares or plays recorded	More than 5,000 likes, shares or plays received on social media products until the end of the project
	Number of people subscribed to newsletter	More than 100 people subscribe to the newsletter by the end of the project
	Number of media coverage	At least 3 articles are developed by the media
	Number of followers on social media	More than 500 people follow the @PROG_Ocean twitter handle

### 2.2.6.2 Corporate design

To provide a project identity that is unique, all communication and technical products produced under the Marine Regions Forum platform are branded in a coherent manner. A logo for the Marine Regions Forum was designed (Figure 22), providing the basis for the corporate design.

Apart from the logo, the claim or tag line “*Connecting People to Protect One Ocean*” is one of the prominent elements of the corporate design (see also Annex B.2.2). The corporate design elements were used in as many communication products (see Table 7) as possible, as well as for the design elements of the conference (see also chapter 2.2.4.5).

**Figure 22: Logo of the Marine Regions Forum**



Source: own picture, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies. // Graphic design: Eugen Schmierer.

### 2.2.6.3 Communication products and channels

The project team conceptualised and produced several communication products, including outreach materials and conference outputs for dissemination to the target audiences. A list of these can be found in Table 7. For further details on the conference outputs, please see chapter 2.3.

**Table 7: Type of communication products produced for the Marine Regions Forum**

Group	Communication product
Outreach material	Social media posts (i.e. twitter) PROG and Marine Regions Forum website Flyer and PROG newsletter Presentations at conferences and workshops Press releases and coverage
Conference outputs	Key Messages Conference Report Peer-reviewed paper IISD-ENB reporting Guest article Conference videography and video messages

These products were disseminated through a range of channels, as outlined in the following sections.

#### 2.2.6.3.1 Website

A central communication channel for the Marine Regions Forum is a dedicated website<sup>50</sup> on the PROG website, also accessible via <http://www.marineregionsforum.org>, a separately registered website. The website provides background information regarding the Marine Regions Forum initiative, promoted the development of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 conference, and highlights the conference results such as key output documents and multi-media materials. The website, a joint PROG newsletter, as well as social media channels (Twitter) have been used to share project outcomes and relevant information with interested parties. In addition, an official

<sup>50</sup> Marine Regions Forum conference website: <https://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/>. Last accessed 13 January 2021

E-mail account was created in order to provide a central communication point for participant management (chapter 2.2.4.4) and output dissemination. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, online communication channels have gained even more significance for the dissemination of information and outputs.

#### **2.2.6.3.2 Social media**

To ensure the diffusion of the project outcomes and outputs to a broad and interested audience, the use of social media was significant. Particularly the use of Twitter was employed to ensure that the conference announcements and outputs were further disseminated. The Twitter handle @PROG\_Ocean now has 1,131 followers and the hashtag #MarineRegionsForum has been used to promote the Marine Regions Forum 2019 and subsequent activities.

Other hashtags that were also employed include the following: #PROG-Ocean, #SDG14, #regionalgovernance, #oceangovernance, #biodiversity, and #ocean. Relevant twitter handles from the project team members include the following: @Umweltbundesamt, @EU\_MARE, @bmu, @IASS\_Potsdam, @IDDRI\_ThinkTank, and @TMG\_think.

#### **2.2.6.3.3 Multi-media products**

Several multi-media products were produced in advance and during the Marine Regions Forum:

- ▶ The project team developed a *conference trailer* which was played during the opening plenary. The trailer intended to set the stage, conveying the importance of the health of the ocean and encouraged the participants to be engaged, present, and conduct a fruitful exchange over the course of the conference days.
- ▶ The UN Secretary General's Special Envoy of the Ocean, Peter Thompson, and EU Commissioner for Environment Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella, provided *video messages* for the opening plenary as a source of inspiration and encouragement while also pressing the urgency for transformative action to protect the ocean. The video messages were played on the first day to all participants.
- ▶ During the conference, a professional camera team was also in attendance, interviewing participants and capturing the overall *conference impressions*. The film was played on the last day of the conference to all participants and was later refined and edited for official publication on social media.

Links to the multi-media outreach products are available from Annex B.2.5.

#### **2.2.6.4 Press coverage**

In the lead up to the conference, the project team together with their press and communication departments prepared the press work surrounding the Marine Regions Forum 2019 in collaboration with BMU and UBA and their respective press departments. A joint save-the-date invitation was sent to a list of over 200 selected international journalists. This also led to the dissemination of a joint press release by the press departments from the UBA and BMU on 30 September 2019<sup>51</sup>, and by the IASS press department on 30 September 2019<sup>52</sup>. On World Oceans Day 2019 on 8 June, a blog post was published on the IASS blog page on this year's theme

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<sup>51</sup> See <https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/marine-regions-forum-diskutiert-loesungen-fuer-den>. Last accessed 12 November 2020.

<sup>52</sup> See <https://www.iass-potsdam.de/en/news/first-marine-regions-forum-develops-solutions-ocean-health>. Last accessed 12 November 2020.

*“Gender and the Ocean”*<sup>53</sup>, highlighting the Marine Regions Forum contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Journalists who attended the conference were in close contact with the press and communication department of IASS. Due to the limited time in the conference program and of key speakers, it was decided not to host a press conference at the Marine Regions Forum. Instead, journalists were invited to interview participants and take part in the plenary sessions. This allowed for a closer, targeted and more personal interaction between participants and journalists. A press desk was installed and a press kit was developed and provided to support media during the conference, which included background information about the conference, agenda, and relevant speakers. An analysis of the press and media coverage can be found under chapter 3.1.3.

#### **2.2.6.5 Representation at international events**

The project team members attended conferences and events to provide information on the development and outputs of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 conference. First ideas on the Marine Regions Forum were presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Global Dialogues with Regional Seas Organisations and Regional Fisheries Bodies<sup>54</sup> on “Accelerating Progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Sustainable Development Goals”, held in Seoul, republic of Korea, from 10-13 April 2018. Information on the development of the Forum was shared by the project team at the Meeting of the Communities of Ocean Action on “From Commitments to Action: Implementing SDG14”<sup>55</sup>, held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, on 31 May 2019. The meeting aimed to share best practices and experiences amongst the members of different Communities of Ocean Action.

The Key Messages were reported to the UN Ocean Preparatory Meeting in New York on 4–5 February 2020, and the Conference Report was launched at the same occasion. The outcomes from the Marine Regions Forum were also presented in a session at the European Parliament on 19 November 2019.

The project team intended to present the Marine Regions Forum as an interregional learning platform in a talk at the Meeresumwelt-Symposium in Hamburg on 28 May 2020, but due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the symposium was cancelled. The project team had also intended to attend and present at the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies in Busan, the 2020 UN Ocean Conference, and the 6th International Marine Conservation Congress, 6th International Marine Conservation Congress. However, attendance was not possible due to COVID-19 restrictions and cancellations.

### **2.3 Conference outputs and outcomes**

#### **2.3.1 Key messages**

The proposal to publish a concise document with key messages from the Marine Regions Forum 2019 was discussed and an outline developed together with the Steering Group and Advisory Board in the lead up to the conference. The aim of this document was to summarize key take away messages that can be easily communicated in order to feed recommendations from the Marine Regions Forum into global and regional ocean governance processes. A draft Key

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<sup>53</sup> See <https://www.iass-potsdam.de/en/blog/2019/13/ocean-we-need-future-we-want>. Last accessed 12 November 2020.

<sup>54</sup> See <https://enb.iisd.org/oceans/soi2/>. Last accessed 12 November 2020.

<sup>55</sup> See [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24364Incheon\\_COA\\_meeting\\_report\\_24\\_07\\_2019.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24364Incheon_COA_meeting_report_24_07_2019.pdf). Last accessed 20 November 2020.

Messages document titled “*Achieving a Healthy Ocean – Regional Ocean Governance beyond 2020*” was then prepared by the conference organisers during the conference and presented as a draft at the closing plenary. The document was based on conclusions from the discussions held at the plenaries and outputs from the dialogues sessions as collected through harvesting sheets (see chapter 2.2.5.2) and features central recommendations on the main topics discussed during the conference.

In the follow-up from the conference, the Key Messages document was circulated amongst the conference participants for additional input and commenting via e-mail, upon which revisions were made by the project team. The final Key Messages were reported to the Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations 2020 Ocean Conference<sup>56</sup> that took place 4–5 February 2020 in New York and disseminated widely among participants and on social-media. A list of the Key Messages is provided below. The complete document, including more detailed description of the Key Messages, is available from the resource list of the Marine Regions Forum conference website<sup>57</sup>. Further information on the dissemination of the Key Messages at events can be found under chapter 2.2.6.5.

#### Key Messages at a glance<sup>58</sup>

- ▶ Address climate change, deoxygenation and ocean acidification in marine regions through ocean-based solutions and adaptive governance.
- ▶ Adopt a strong and comprehensive agreement for biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction.
- ▶ Develop coherent networks of effective and well-managed MPAs, including in ABNJ, which are coordinated at the regional level.
- ▶ Combat all sources of marine pollution through regionally coordinated strategies across sectors and governance levels.
- ▶ Make tourism compatible with a healthy ocean.
- ▶ Accelerate action for achieving the ocean dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including SDG 14, through cooperative and coordinated regional ocean governance.
- ▶ Scale up science-policy-society interfaces for marine regions and promote integration of all kinds of relevant knowledge in decision-making.
- ▶ Develop a robust global post-2020 ocean governance framework supported by strengthened regional bodies.

### 2.3.2 Conference report

One of the key outputs from the Marine Regions Forum 2019 is the Conference Report which is integrated with the consolidated Key Messages document (chapter 2.3.1). The report provides a summary presentation of the overall conference and the programme elements including the plenary and dialogue sessions. It is illustrated with graphic recordings and photographs to

<sup>56</sup> See <https://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/2020/02/04/key-messages-from-the-marine-regions-forum-2019-at-un-2020-ocean-conference-preparatory-meeting/>. Last accessed 20 November 2020.

<sup>57</sup> See <https://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/resources/>. Last accessed 20 November 2020.

<sup>58</sup> The full Key Messages document is available here: [https://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/02/MRF2019\\_Key-Messages\\_fin\\_03.02.2020.pdf](https://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/02/MRF2019_Key-Messages_fin_03.02.2020.pdf). Last accessed 30 January 2021.

provide impressions from the conference. It was prepared by the conference organisers (i.e. the project team) in correspondence with the session hosts after the conference from the various materials collected and compiled at the conference. The draft of the report was shared with the co-hosts and participants of the 2019 conference for commenting and revised on the basis of this input. The final product of the Conference Report was professionally designed and is available both as PDF document and print product for dissemination.

The Conference Report is published in the name of the conference organisers IASS, IDDRI and TMG (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019) and is publicly available for download from the conference website<sup>59</sup> (see also Annex B.2.3 for web links to the different materials). A link to this resource was shared with the participants of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 in February 2020 upon launching together with the Key Messages document during the Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations 2020 Ocean Conference<sup>60</sup> in New York. Further dissemination of the Conference Report at events can be found under chapter 2.2.6.5.

### **2.3.3 IISD reporting**

The Reporting Services Division of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) had been commissioned to cover the Marine Regions Forum through daily reports and a final report published in their Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB) series<sup>61</sup>. A team of three reporters and one photographer was present during the three days of the Marine Regions Forum 2019. The IISD reporting team covered all plenaries and eleven of the 18 dialogue sessions with their reporting. Due to the parallel nature of the dialogue sessions, not all sessions could be covered by the reporting team. The photographs that were taken during the conference were used to illustrate the Conference Report.

### **2.3.4 Conference videos**

Besides written outputs and the conference trailer that was shown at the welcome and opening plenary, two videos were produced from the Marine Regions Forum 2019 and published on YouTube to capture impressions from the conference (see also Annex B.2.5). The concepts of the videos were co-produced with the professional camera and editing team. High value was placed on producing an informative video that would also provide an impression of the event, by not only capturing discussions and concurrent activities, but also gaining deeper insights. To attain this, interviews were conducted with various conference participants, in which they were asked about the importance of the conference, how it relates to other examples of regional processes, and what they hope to achieve by attending. More information on the productions of these videos is provided in chapter 2.2.6.3.3.

The conference impressions videos were disseminated to the conference participants and a wider audience through social media and the Marine Regions Forum website.

### **2.3.5 Exchange and cooperation outcomes**

This section showcases some examples of outcomes from the Marine Regions Forum 2019, where the development of exchange and cooperation opportunities have been facilitated. Information on these outcomes were obtained through engagement of project team members, as

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<sup>59</sup> See [http://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/02/MRF2019\\_Conference-Report\\_fin\\_04.02.2020.pdf](http://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/02/MRF2019_Conference-Report_fin_04.02.2020.pdf). Last accessed 20 November 2020.

<sup>60</sup> See <https://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/2020/02/04/key-messages-from-the-marine-regions-forum-2019-at-un-2020-ocean-conference-preparatory-meeting/>. Last accessed 20 November 2020.

<sup>61</sup> See here for IISD daily reports and summary report on the Marine Regions Forum 2019: <https://enb.iisd.org/oceans/marine-regions-forum/2019/>. Last accessed 20 November 2020.

well as through regular monitoring of online resources and direct feedback from the actors involved. Concrete exchange and cooperation outcomes of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 include the following:

- ▶ In the follow-up of the Marine Regions Forum 2019, the Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT) was awarded grant by WIOMSA to support SeyCCAT in developing knowledge management tools to inform about the projects and key themes of the Trust and share their experiences with other countries of the Western Indian Ocean region<sup>62</sup>.
- ▶ PROG-affiliated researchers of the STRONG High Seas project<sup>63</sup> co-authored and presented a policy brief on Regional Ocean Governance in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework at the Convention on Biological Diversity's 2020 Ocean Pathways Week<sup>64</sup> that took place from 11-15 November 2019 in Montreal, Canada. The policy brief incorporated findings from the Marine Regions Forum 2019 recommendations. The team also presented the findings at the European Parliament event "Key environmental challenges & the role of the Sustainable Development Goals" 19 November 2019<sup>65</sup>. The input included stating the importance of facilitating research and knowledge sharing platforms, such as the Marine Regions Forum, and the involvement of regional governance levels for effective ocean governance and achieving the SDGs. The STRONG project team also plans to reference the Marine Regions Forum at the IGC4 Intergovernmental Conference<sup>66</sup>; however, this event has been postponed.
- ▶ The project team was invited to provide a statement to the Preparatory Meeting for the 2020 UN Ocean Conference, New York 4-5 February 2020. The statement provided suggestions on which urgent overarching issues should be addressed at the 2020 UN Ocean Conference, as existing actions for the implementation of SDG 14 are insufficient.
- ▶ An IISD opinion editorial<sup>67</sup> featuring Ambassador Peter Thomson, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, as co-author was released by the project team (Thomson et al. 2020). The article highlighted the Marine Regions Forum 2019 and its support to strengthen the role of marine regions for the conservation and sustainable use of the Ocean (Thomson et al. 2020). The publication of the IISD article on 4 February 2020 coincided with the preparatory meeting for the UN 2020 Ocean Conference to produce greater visibility and outreach opportunities. The article was published on the IISD, IASS, IDDRI, and Marine Regions Forum websites and accompanied by outreach on twitter.
- ▶ The co-facilitators overseeing the preparatory process and the intergovernmental consultations on the declaration for the 2020 United Nations Conference (H.E. Ms. Ngedikes Olai Uludong, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Palau, and H.E. Mr. Martin Bille Hermann, Permanent Representative of Denmark) submitted a zero draft conference declaration on 2 March 2020. In line with the Key Messages from the Marine Regions Forum 2019, the declaration highlights the need to strengthen cooperation at the global, regional

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<sup>62</sup> See <https://seyccat.org/wiomsa-awards-seyccat-a-grant/>. Last accessed 14 January 2021.

<sup>63</sup> See <https://www.prog-ocean.org/our-work/strong-high-seas/>. Last accessed 12 November 2020.

<sup>64</sup> See here for a compilation of background briefs submitted the 2020 Ocean Pathways Week: <http://www.prog-ocean.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Policy-brief-compilation.pdf>. Last accessed 12 November 2020.

<sup>65</sup> See event summary report here: <http://ebcd.org/event/key-environmental-challenges-the-role-of-the-sustainable-development-goals/>. Last accessed 12 November 2020.

<sup>66</sup> See <https://www.un.org/bbni/>. Last accessed 12 November 2020.

<sup>67</sup> See <http://sdg.iisd.org/commentary/guest-articles/no-ocean-super-year-without-marine-regions/>. Last accessed 12 November 2020.

and sub-regional levels in order to strengthen mechanisms for collaboration, knowledge-sharing and exchange of best practices with regard to science and innovation.

- ▶ As a result of the marine litter session at the Marine Regions Forum 2019 (session 1.1.1), the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment invited IASS to commission a study on the role of regional instruments in combating marine plastic pollution. The report produced under this study discusses (1) the opportunities and challenges of regional initiatives and instruments in combatting marine plastic litter, and (2) their possible roles and contributions as part of a strengthened international framework including a potential future global agreement to combat marine plastic litter. The results of this research report will contribute to inform international discussions and efforts, including the work of the United Nations Environment Assembly and its Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics.
- ▶ The release of a Research Topic<sup>68</sup> “Challenges and Opportunities in Regional Governance of Ocean Ecosystems” in the scientific journal *Frontiers in Marine Science*, chapter Marine Affairs and Policy. Topic editors include Lucia Fanning (Dalhousie University), Robin Mahon (The University of the West Indies), and Sebastian Unger (IASS).
- ▶ The European Commission released a joint report to the European parliament and the council on “Improving international ocean governance – two year progress”<sup>69</sup>. It takes stock of the activities and achievements undertaken by the Commission's departments, including the Marine Regions Forum, which is included under Action point 3 “Improving coordination and cooperation between international organisations and launching Ocean Partnerships for ocean management”.
- ▶ In March 2019, the project team submitted recommendations from the Marine Regions Forum 2019 to the UN Ocean Conference's Stakeholder Online e-Consultation<sup>70</sup> and compiled input for the nine dialogue sessions that are based on the UN Ocean Conference's nine Communities of Ocean Actions (COAs). All of the responses and inputs from the project team and other authors are sorted according to topics, and can be accessed under the following links:
  - Addressing Marine Pollution: <http://bit.ly/MarinePollutionResponses>
  - Managing, Protecting, conserving and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems: <http://bit.ly/CoastalEcosystemsResponses>
  - Minimizing and Addressing ocean acidification, deoxygenation and ocean warming: <http://bit.ly/OceanAcidificationResponses>
  - Making Fisheries sustainable and providing access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets: <http://bit.ly/SustainableFisheriesResponses>
  - Increasing scientific knowledge and developing research capacity and transfer of marine technology: <http://bit.ly/ScientificKnowledgeResponses>

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<sup>68</sup> See <https://www.frontiersin.org/research-topics/12902/challenges-and-opportunities-in-regional-governance-of-ocean-ecosystems>. Last accessed 12 November 2020.

<sup>69</sup> See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019SC0104&from=EN>. Last accessed 12 November 2020.

<sup>70</sup> See <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/ocean2020/preparation/stakeholders>. Last accessed 12 November 2020.

- Enhancing 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: <http://bit.ly/InternationalLawoftheSeaResponses>
  - Leveraging Interlinkages between Sustainable Development Goal 14 and other Goals towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda: <http://bit.ly/InterlinkagesResponses>
- At the 11<sup>th</sup> WIOMSA Symposium in Mauritius, the Nairobi Convention, WIOMSA and IASS jointly hosted a “Special Session on Ocean Governance in the Western Indian Ocean Region”<sup>71</sup>, which was held on 05 July 2019. The outcomes of the Western Indian Ocean regional ocean governance strategy process, which were part of the discussions at this session, were then presented at the Marine Regions Forum 2019 as an example of how regions are developing integrated cross-sectoral approaches and working to deal with the complexities of ocean governance.

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<sup>71</sup> See <https://nairobiConvention.org/clearinghouse/sites/default/files/FINAL%20Session%20Report%20%20-%20Ocean%20Governance%20Special%20Session%20%2805%20July%202019%29.pdf>. Last accessed 13 January 2021.

### 3 Evaluation and analysis of the Marine Regions Forum

As a basis for the further development of the Marine Regions Forum towards a second phase and beyond (see chapter 5) as well as to inform the development of novel participatory approaches in ocean governance, a range of evaluation procedures have been included in the R&D process. These aimed to analyse the approach taken and results achieved through the first Forum against the stated goals and objectives, but also in relation to other initiatives. These include:

1. An assessment of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 conference through:
  - a. Analysis of stakeholder representation;
  - b. A participant survey conducted during the conference;
  - c. Press and media analysis.
2. Reflections on the outcome framework and conceptual criteria of the Marine Regions Forum.
3. An assessment of the achieved outputs and facilitated outcomes of the Marine Regions Forum 2019.
4. An assessment of the Marine Regions Forum conceptual approach and implementation through qualitative research conducted in the follow-up of the conference.

The following chapters provide an overview of these assessments and conclusions drawn from the insights gained through the assessments.

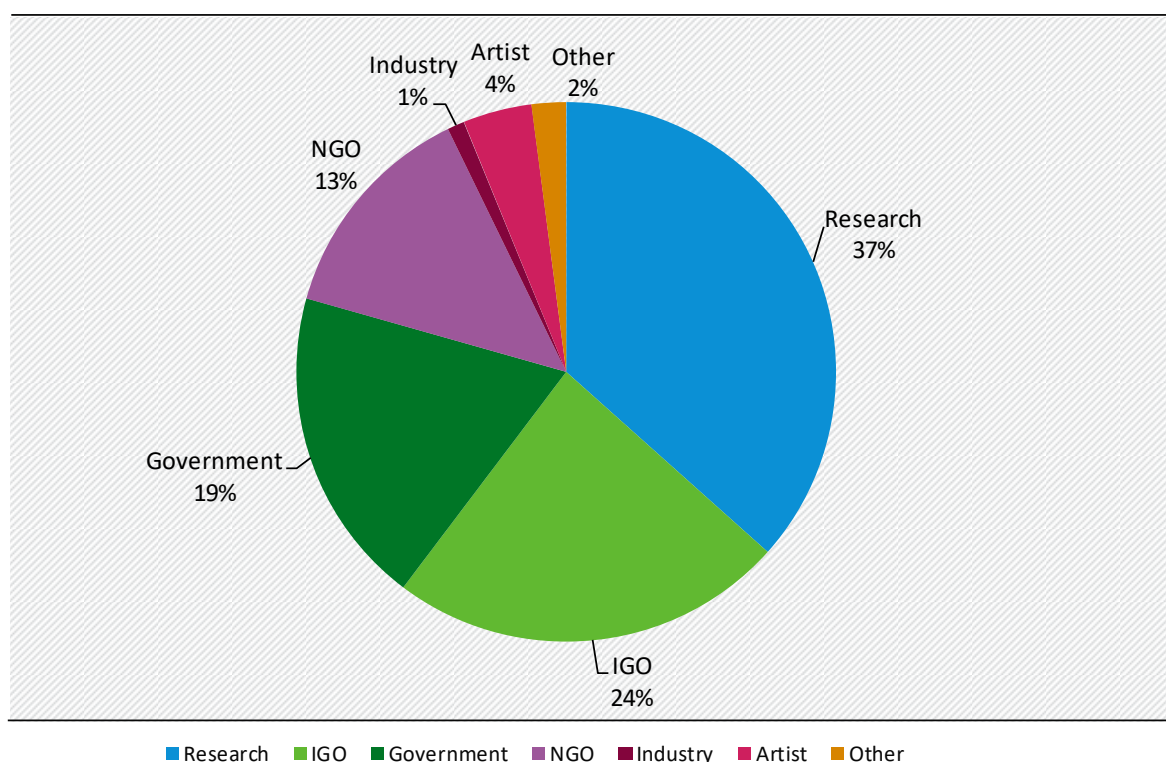
#### 3.1 Assessment of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 conference

##### 3.1.1 Analysis of participant and stakeholder representation

The aim of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 was to facilitate dialogue on how to strengthen regional ocean governance for SDG 14 and other ocean-related goals between participants from a range of different disciplines, backgrounds, sectors, and political perspectives. Over 200 participants from more than 50 countries attended the conference (see Annex B.3 for a list of organisations present). The majority of the participants were from research (37%), followed by intergovernmental organisations (24%), government (19%), and NGOs (13%). About 1% of the participants were from industry (e.g. from the tourism and deep sea mining sector) and 4% were categorized as Artists (see Figure 23). Although a considerable number of invitations was extended to industry, only few industry representatives participated, indicating room for improvement to involve this sector.

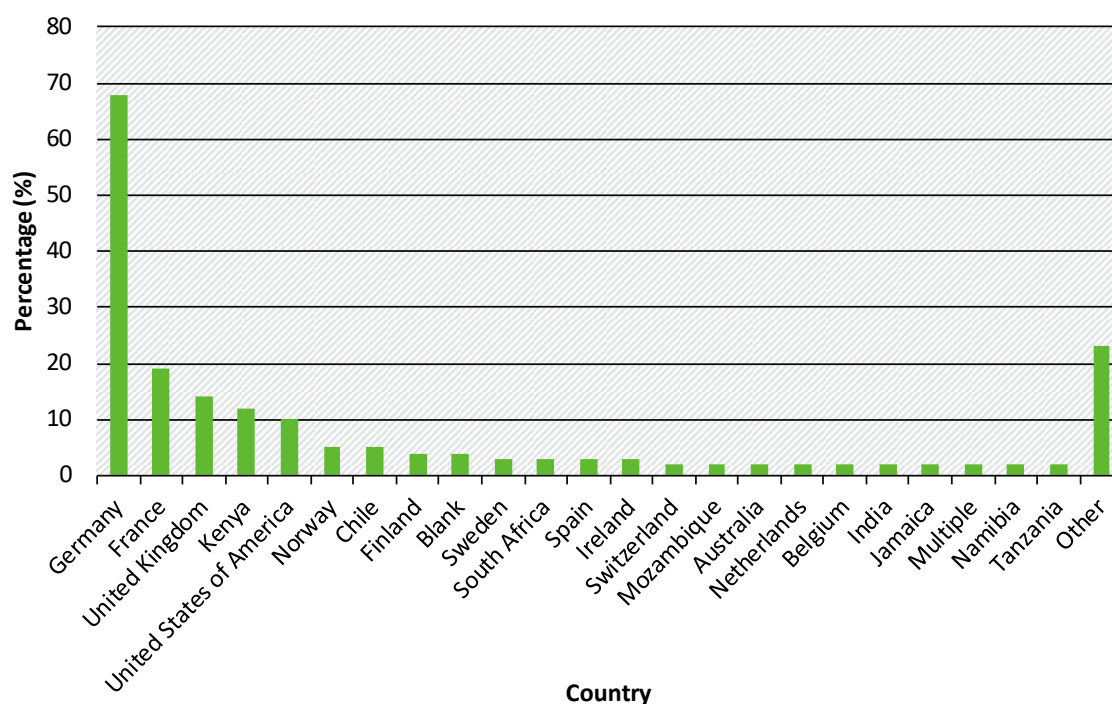
With regards to gender representation, 55% were male and 45% were female, while most of the session speakers and plenary panellists were also purposefully balanced in terms of gender. Geographically, the majority of institutions represented were from the host country (34%), followed by France (19%), the UK (7%), and Kenya (6%), as shown in Figure 24. The geographical expertise of the participants was mostly at the global level (50%), while others were specifically specialised on particular marine regions, such as the Western Indian Ocean, South East Atlantic, Pacific, or Arctic.

**Figure 23: Participants of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 by stakeholder group**



Source: own illustration, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies.

**Figure 24: Participants of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 by country**



Source: own illustration, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies.

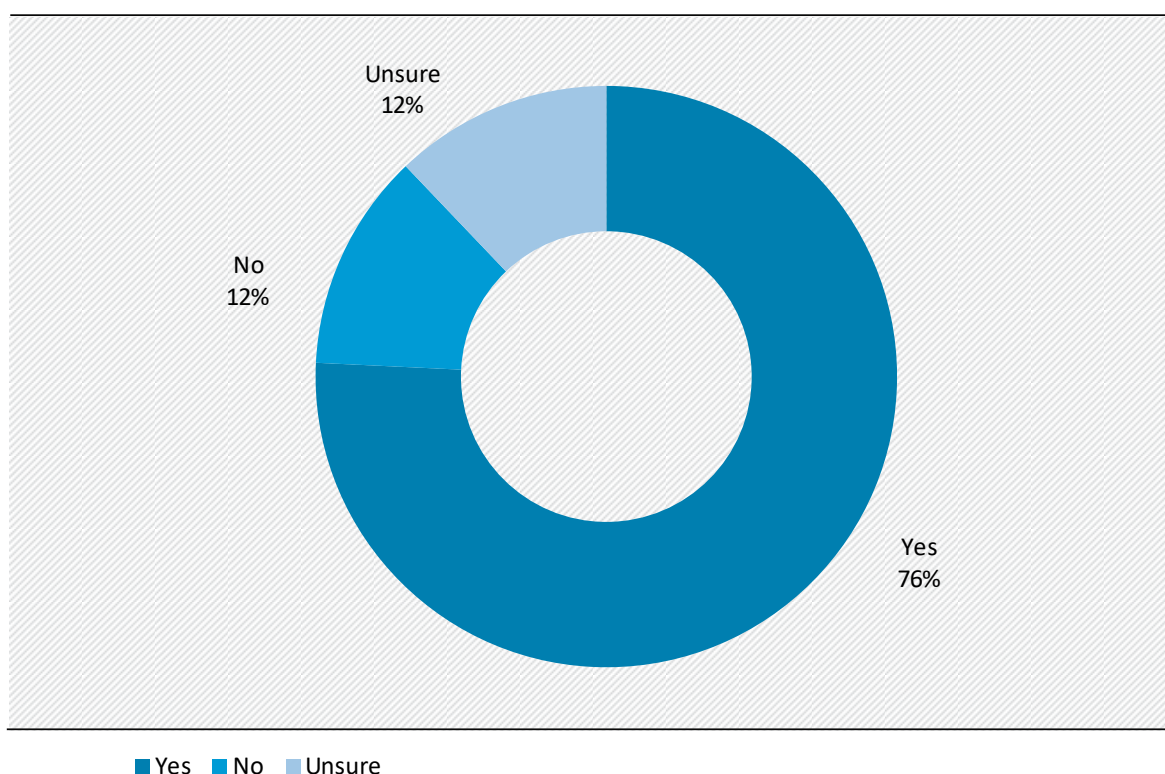
### 3.1.2 Participant survey

How was the Marine Regions Forum perceived by its participants and what are the lessons learned? This chapter draws upon responses to a feedback form completed by conference participants. On the whole, reviews from the conference participants were positive and comments indicated that they see significant value in promoting dialogue and cross-sectoral cooperation between marine regions and that this conference emphasized the need for such interregional exchanges. However, as detailed below, comments from participants also indicated room for improvement.

Overall, 38 of the participants fully completed and returned the questionnaire, the majority of which had positive feedback. On a scale of 1 (poor) – 5 (excellent), over 70% of the survey participants rated the overall quality with a 4 or 5, especially amongst stakeholders from academia and intergovernmental organisations. Other aspects of the conference that received positive feedback included networking possibilities, relevance of the thematic topics, and overall organisation of the conference.

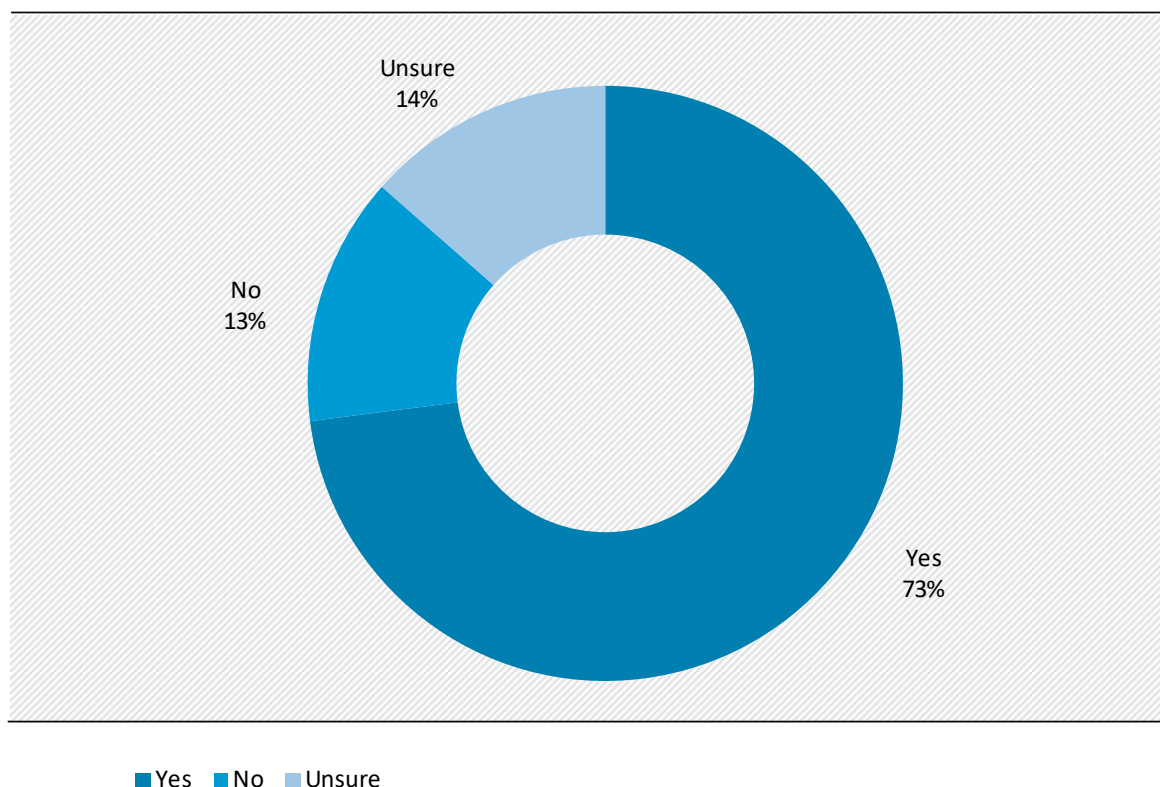
When the survey participants were asked if they are “planning to replicate, adapt or implement best practices presented at the conference to their current work”, 76% answered with a yes, 12% were unsure, and 12% answered with a no (see Figure 25). This indicated an overall positive and valuable experience of the conference and provides encouragement that the lessons learned by the participants has transformative potential for their own work. Comments left regarding this questions included: “YES: Promote dialogue between coastal states is crucial and this platform emphasized that” and “UNSURE: The exchange of best practices should be gathered; I am not aware of lots of them”.

**Figure 25: Responses to the question “Are you planning to replicate, adapt or implement best practices presented at the conference to your current work?”**



Source: own illustration, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies.

**Figure 26: Responses to the question “Has your participation in the Marine Regions Forum moved you to take actions to enhance cross-sectoral cooperation in your current work?”**



Source: own illustration, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies.

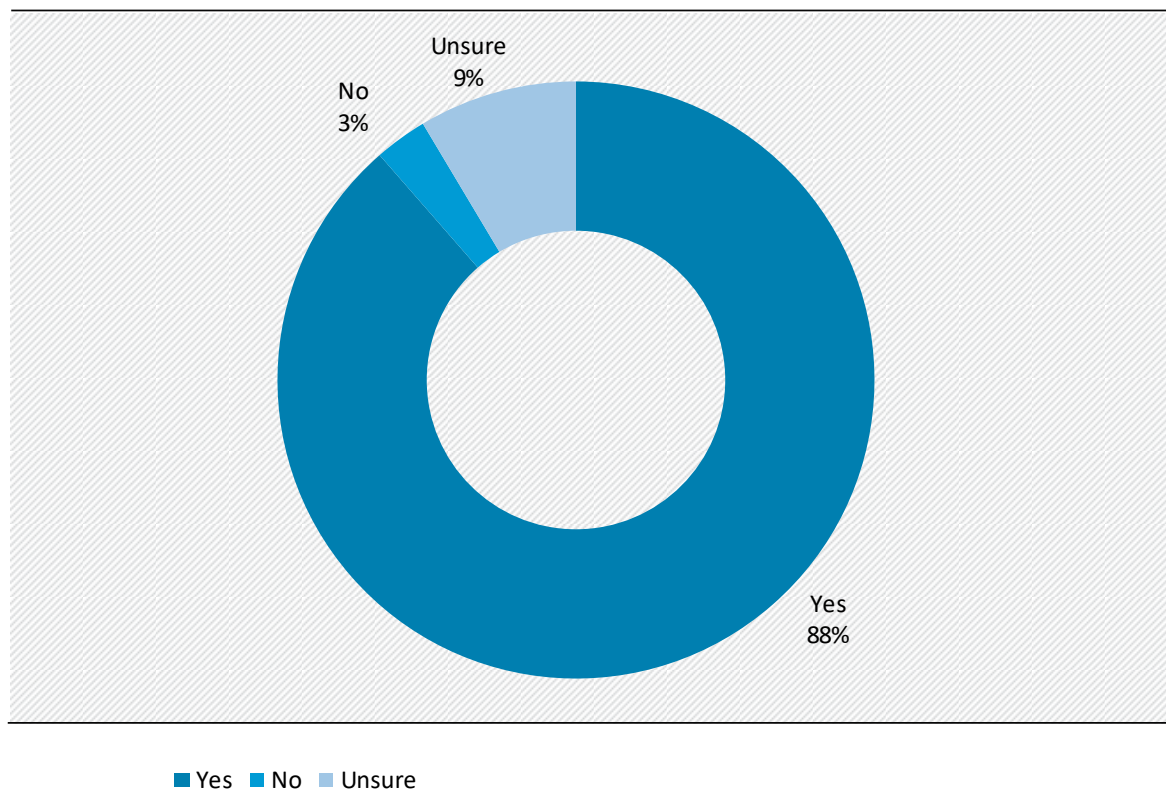
For the question “Has your participation in the Marine Regions Forum moved you to take actions to enhance cross-sectoral cooperation in your current work?” the majority answered with a yes (73%), while 14% were unsure, and 13% answered with a no (see Figure 26). Another survey question asked was “Would you recommend your colleagues to attend the next Marine Regions Forum?”. The results for this question are shown in Figure 27. Survey respondents commented with the following: “YES: We are already supporting cross-sectoral cooperation, but the [Marine Regions Forum] has reinforced my understanding and conviction on the need to invest in it”, “YES: Good platform for policy and science dialogue”, and “YES: Extremely informative to build capacity of regional thinking”.

Survey participants also left open comments which indicated that the content of the presentations remained too basic in some sessions and could have gone into more depth as seen in other sessions; that more focus should be placed on on-the-ground solutions; and that the overall objective of the conference outcome was not clear enough, such as if the intention was to go beyond a discussion forum; and lastly that having parallel sessions is difficult for when all sessions are relevant and interesting so participants had to make choices regarding which session they would attend. On the whole however, most feedback recognised that this was the first event of its kind and could only see the event maturing.

In general, participant comments indicated that attendees acknowledged efforts to achieve a diverse regional representation. However, they also noted that some regions had a stronger representation than others, such as the high attendance of European countries (in particular Germany) in comparison to the underrepresentation of e.g. the Pacific nations. Although the

conference organisers placed high value on regional diversity and invited representatives from the Pacific and other regions to take an active role at the event, the invitees could not attend the conference, likely due to distance for travel. Actors from the Western Indian Ocean region were in comparison well-represented, thanks in part to pre-existing collaborations and a preparatory process in the region in cooperation with the conference co-hosts and organisers.

**Figure 27: Responses to the question “Would you recommend your colleagues to attend the next Marine Regions Forum?”**



Source: own illustration, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies.

Beyond regional representation, the daily debriefings by the Young Ocean Professionals (see chapter 2.2.3.4.6) provided a space and encouragement for early-career researchers to take a more active role, discuss their work, the conference, and also provide an intervention speech at the closing plenary. This part of the program was met with positive enthusiasm by the early-career researchers involved.

### 3.1.3 Press and media analysis

The project team conducted public and targeted outreach to disseminate information about the Marine Regions Forum 2019 and about the key outputs of the conference. To evaluate the potential reach of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 against the communication strategy (chapter 2.2.6), an online news and social media analysis was conducted. The analysis is focused on the online and social media coverage which emerged from 20 September to 22 October 2019 - one week prior to and three weeks after the Marine Regions Forum 2019 took place. During this monitoring period, 16 articles were found in online media with an estimated reach of 1.8 million potential readers. In addition to online media, the analysis highlighted two print articles in local

newspapers (Bühler 2019; Neumann and Unger 2019b) and one radio show<sup>72</sup> covering the Marine Regions Forum 2019 (Wildermuth 2019). Further, 1509 social media posts were published on the Marine Regions Forum 2019 during this period, reaching 4.2 million potential media contact points predominantly published on Twitter. The top Twitter posts about the Marine Regions Forum 2019 were published by the reporting service of the IISD and its ENB series via @IISDRS, followed by the BMU via @bmu and the UBA via @Umweltbundesamt.

The IISD Reporting Services covered all three days of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 (See also chapter 2.3.3). The reporting service published daily reports<sup>73</sup> and a summary report<sup>74</sup> (Tsoumani et al. 2019) of the conference, detailing the side activities, session content, and plenary discussions. Highlights regarding the reach and potential impact of the IISD reporting include the following:

- ▶ The IISD-ENB Marine Regions Forum online page<sup>75</sup> was viewed 1657 times;
- ▶ The summary report<sup>76</sup> was downloaded 538 times;
- ▶ The IISD-ENB sent the Marine Regions Forum reports to 24,973 targeted IISD-ENB subscribers; at least a fifth of these people opened the email (almost 5,000 subscribers);
- ▶ People from 95 countries viewed the reports; and
- ▶ IISD-ENB tweeted about the Marine Regions Forum 16 times which were retweeted 169 times and also had 3 Facebook posts on the conference which reached 1,493 persons.

Beyond the three weeks covered by the above media analysis, the Marine Regions Forum 2019 was mentioned in the following channels:

- ▶ Online news article by the initiative<sup>77</sup> “stop illegal fishing” (stop illegal fishing 2019);
- ▶ Printed press article in a newspaper supplement of Prowissen Potsdam e.V. in the local newspaper Potsdamer Neueste Nachrichten (PNN), authored by the project team and with an interview of the director of the IASS, Patrizia Nanz (Neumann and Unger 2019b);
- ▶ The Nairobi Work Programme (NWP) released a scoping paper on “Closing Knowledge Gaps and Advancing Action”<sup>78</sup> as a background paper for the NWP 13<sup>th</sup> Focal Point Forum held at COP25, Madrid, Spain; in this paper, the Marine Regions Forum was reflected upon as an example of a regional initiative in support of global action (Nairobi Work Programme 2019);

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<sup>72</sup> See <https://www1.wdr.de/mediathek/audio/wdr5/quarks/topthemen-aus-der-wissenschaft/audio-ozeane-muessen-sauberer-werden---marine-regions-forum-100.html>. Last accessed 13 January 2021.

<sup>73</sup> See <https://enb.iisd.org/oceans/marine-regions-forum/2019/about.html>. Last accessed 14 January 2021.

<sup>74</sup> See <https://enb.iisd.org/download/pdf/sd/enbplus186num18e.pdf>. Last accessed 14 January 2021.

<sup>75</sup> See <https://enb.iisd.org/oceans/marine-regions-forum/2019/about.html>. Last accessed 14 January 2021.

<sup>76</sup> See <https://enb.iisd.org/download/pdf/sd/enbplus186num18e.pdf>. Last accessed 14 January 2021.

<sup>77</sup> See <https://stopillegalfishing.com/news-articles/marine-regions-forum-provides-multi-stakeholder-platform-for-regional-ocean-governance/>. Last accessed 14 January 2021.

<sup>78</sup> See [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Scopingpaper\\_Final%20version.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Scopingpaper_Final%20version.pdf). Last accessed 19 January 2021.

- ▶ The IISD<sup>79</sup> and the Pacific Islands News Association<sup>80</sup> published an online guest article of the opinion-editorial co-authored by the project team and Ambassador Peter Thomson, , UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, see also chapter 2.3.5;
- ▶ The 2018 – 2019 printed report from the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS) highlighted the Marine Regions Forum 2019 and provided an overview of their presence at the event.

### 3.2 Reflections of the outcome framework and conceptual criteria

Did the Marine Regions Forum 2019 meet its objectives as defined in the outcome framework? To be able to answer this question, the *uniqueness* criteria, as defined in chapter 2.1.1., is assessed as it provides the most distinct characteristics regarding if the Forum reached its overall *long-term goal*. The uniqueness of the Forum was central to the development and implementation phase of the first Marine Regions Forum as these features set it apart from other initiatives and also foster the transition towards integrated ocean governance through cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder exchanges (see chapter 1.1.3). These criteria are reflected upon below by drawing upon responses to the feedback form completed by conference participants, internal discussions held with the Steering Group, Advisory Board, and Project Team, and partially from the interviews conducted (see chapter 3.4).

**Long-term goal:** *The Marine Regions Forum aims to generate new knowledge in regional ocean governance that catalyses transformative change towards the sustainable use and conservation of marine and coastal ecosystem. Thereby the Forum supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDG 14.*

Given that this is a long-term goal, it precludes the ability to assess it fully and can only occur after a longer period of time from when the Marine Regions Forum 2019 was hosted. The project team nonetheless attempted to reflect on this goal continuously throughout the whole process, from project implementation to its conclusion. It is important to reflect upon after the projects conclusion and especially with regard to the potential future development of the Marine Regions Forum (see also development strategy in chapter 5).

Transformative change for the sustainable use and conservation of marine and coastal ecosystem is mostly realized at the national or local level. However, regional dialogue is in a unique position to coordinate cross-sectoral knowledge exchange and facilitate the process of transforming common agreed-upon global frameworks, such as the SDGs, into action on the ground. Regional dialogue platforms, such as the Marine Regions Forum 2019, can also strengthen the recognition of the need for common goals and collective harmonised action as well as coherence of indicators used to measure or monitor their progress. The Marine Regions Forum can also be used as a platform and tool to generate greater commitment and accountability in marine regions, especially as many agreements, such as the SDGs, are voluntary and no formal mechanisms or sanctions are in position to ensure the achievement of targets (Bowen et al. 2017).

According to the participants, attending the conference increased their conviction of the need for inter-regional experience sharing and improved understanding of regional topics and policy processes. A diversity of regional processes, mechanisms and platform opportunities were

<sup>79</sup> See <https://sdg.iisd.org/commentary/guest-articles/no-ocean-super-year-without-marine-regions>. Last accessed 19 January 2021.

<sup>80</sup> See <http://www.pina.com.fj/index.php?p=pacnews&m=read&o=7142740975e3cb8dad8c4122188f97>. Last accessed 19 January 2021.

shared between participants through the informal dialogue, indicating an inter-regional co-learning process. This further consolidates the regional discussion and emphasises the potential of inter-regional collaboration and cooperation. In addition, the recognition of regional governance in global processes was amplified in subsequent processes (e.g. the EU International Ocean Governance Forum<sup>81</sup>, or the draft conference declaration for the 2020/21 UN Ocean Conference as shared by co-chairs in 2 March 2020, see chapter 2.3.5), indicating further alignment of the core messages and outputs of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 with related processes.

**Uniqueness (1):** *It is a knowledge-driven forum, developed by independent research institutes and think-tanks together with experts from policy-making and civil-society through a participatory process.*

Applying a participatory and co-creative approach was central to the conceptualisation and implementation of the Marine Regions Forum. To achieve the knowledge driven character, the Forum was designed in a co-creative approach and also followed a participatory approach in the preparing, conducting, and deriving results from the first conference held in 2019, to foster joint-learning amongst participants. The Marine Regions Forum set out for a strong co-design, co-production, and co-dissemination approach in order to facilitate optimal incorporation of knowledge during development and implementation processes (see chapter 1.2). A participatory and co-creative approach was applied throughout: for the conceptual development through preparatory analyses and expert workshops; the consolidation of the concept through expert consultation; and for the implementation and analysis for the Forum through multi-stakeholder dialogue, expert elicitation and consultation (see Figure 4: Co-creative approach to the development and implementation of the Marine Regions Forum).

This process was facilitated through regular meetings and workshops such as a 2-day expert workshop in October 2018 (see chapter 1.2.1 and Annex B.2.1) which was organised by the project team with the Steering Group and Advisory Board in the concept development phase of the Marine Regions Forum in autumn 2018 (see also link to a video on the workshop in Annex B.2.1). During these preparatory workshops, inclusive and interactive formats were used to efficiently generate consensus and gather feedback from all members. This in turn allowed for the defining of topics and selection of participants (See chapter 2.1.2) with a broad group of experts, whom provided access to a vast spectrum of relevant stakeholders across marine regions including generally underrepresented groups. The interdisciplinary expertise facilitated the process of developing and selecting topics that have a strong relevance to current international and regional processes. This was especially important in order for the Marine Regions Forum 2019 to bridge knowledge and implementation gaps in current regional ocean governance processes.

**Uniqueness (2):** *It uses innovative formats to catalyse multi-stakeholder discussions.*

The Marine Regions Forum 2019 was geared to support the transition towards integrated ocean governance by implementing a new format for solution-oriented learning and exchange among different marine regions at the marine science-policy interface. To facilitate this, the project team worked to integrate opportunities for interaction and networking into the programme through applying the principles for knowledge co-production (Mauser et al. 2013; Norström et al. 2020). Research aimed at addressing sustainability challenges is most effective when “co-produced” by academics and non-academics, but the high context-specificity associated with co-production impedes a prescriptive definition (Norström et al. 2020). However, in general the

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<sup>81</sup> <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/frontpage/1469>. Last accessed 14 January 2021.

Marine Regions Forum 2019 followed the four general principles that Norström et al. (2020) identified for high quality co-production of knowledge in sustainability contexts, including:

- ▶ Context-based – taking into account the different needs, interests and beliefs of the different social groups who are invested in or affected by regional ocean governance challenges;
- ▶ Pluralistic, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary – entails bringing together academics (from different disciplines) and people from other sectors (government, private sector, civil society, local and indigenous communities) to generate knowledge and catalyse change;
- ▶ Goal-oriented – develop a collective understanding among all participants of the opportunities and current challenges for regional approaches to ocean governance); and
- ▶ Interactive – active engagement through frequent interactions and repeated conversations to build trust through dialogue).

On the whole, participants shared positive feedback regarding the format of the conference (chapter 3.1.2 and 3.4.2). As is the case with most conferences, many of the participants found that the breaks and social events were the most conducive to making new connections. The more interactive sessions and plenaries were also mentioned as useful opportunities to network and engage with those from a different community of knowledge or practice. Overall, the majority of survey respondents indicated that they were completely satisfied with the opportunities to make new connections at the conference (chapter 3.1.2).

During the planning process, the organisational team retained more influence over the format of sessions to ensure an interactive nature of the sessions. Despite efforts being made to encourage non-traditional session formats, a couple of the sessions convened used a traditional conference format: a series of presentations by experts, followed by short discussion or question and answer periods. However, most of the sessions did indeed include presentations along with interactive formats such as World Café style workshops, where the participants worked together to e.g. assess current regional processes or create new solutions looking forward. The circumstance that some formats were not conducive to participation could reflect the decisions by some session convenors to adhere to more standard academic session formats, or may also indicate that there is room for improvement in the selection of interactive session formats going forward. Otherwise, the organisers received particularly positive feedback on the less traditional sessions that involved a lot of interaction, movement and innovative thinking but also establishing networks.

Regarding the sessions and plenaries, the team agreed that the plenaries could have galvanised the session content more, such as through the three pre-selected theme ambassadors, who were responsible for collecting and reporting back about the session for each theme during the closing plenary. In hindsight, this useful activity could have been done across all three conference days. Furthermore, the harvesting sheets (see chapter 2.2.5.2) intended to inform the plenaries and were hung up in the foyer for public display, however, given the already high workload and time capacities at the event, not all co-hosts managed to fill out a harvesting sheet. Consequently, there was only limited use of this instrument by plenary hosts and moderators. On the other hand, the project team did find the harvesting sheets of particular support during the write-up of the Conference Report.

**Uniqueness - objective (3):** *It provides a space outside of formal governance arrangements where stakeholders engage in discussion as individual experts rather than representatives of organisations.*

During formal meetings or negotiations, informal dialogue spaces are usually rare and participants represent a political position with limited manoeuvrability. The conference aimed to provide a space outside of formal governance arrangements where stakeholders engage in discussion as individual experts and where different types of knowledge can be brought together on an equal footing. Informal dialogue and “hanging-out” is crucial to building trust and rapport between stakeholders across marine regions and sectors. Informal spaces can foster a common understanding amongst participants and facilitate dialogue needed to reach consensus.

Participants of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 were actively encouraged through frequent reminders that the dialogue is inclusive and informal, and to talk from the perspective of their own expertise, rather than their institutional position. Feedback from the participants indicated that the informal networking with actors from other regions, sectors, and stakeholder groups was a core benefit of attending the forum, especially as these types of interactions are uncommon in marine regions and would usually take a long and arduous process to establish. Such interactions provided increased acknowledgment, trust, and appreciation of other stakeholder groups’ interests, needs, and gaps in capacity or knowledge. It was also valued that the conference placed the various regional representatives at eye-level, irrespective of their status regarding capacity, resources, and power.

### **3.3 Reflections of the outputs and outcomes of the Marine Regions Forum 2019**

As set out in the outcome framework (chapter 2.1.1), the Marine Regions Forum aimed to facilitate cooperation and collaboration within and between marine regions, and the development of new approaches to regional ocean governance through joint learning processes on specific issues. Undertaking such an effort requires continuous reflection on the project objectives, and also a review of the indirect and direct outcomes and impacts. It is important to distinguish between outputs, outcomes and impacts. To monitor outputs, the project team co-designed a set of deliverables to monitor specific objectives (see chapter 2.1.1). For example, the release of a Key Messages document with targeted recommendations from the conference, press releases and media coverage. Impacts are usually understood to occur later than, and as a result of, intermediate outcomes. For example, achieving the intermediate outcomes of the Marine Regions Forum of joint-learning amongst participants might occur before, and contribute to, the intended final impact of improved cooperation and collaboration in marine regions. It should also be noted that some outcomes may be emergent, and thus, cannot be set as components to evaluate.

#### **3.3.1 Outputs**

The outputs of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 are evaluated based on the deliverables (see Table 3 in chapter 2.1.1). Most of the anticipated deliverables were successfully accomplished, including producing a conference outcome document such as the Key Messages document (chapter 2.3.1) which made targeted recommendations on regional approaches for implementing SDG 14 and on the specific themes discussed at the conference. A Conference Report (chapter 2.3.2) was also produced by the project team, covering the key messages, conference structure, sessions, plenaries, and concurrent activities. The Conference Report and Key Messages were co-produced by the project team and the Key Messages were co-delivered at the conclusion of the conference to the participants. The participants were also given the opportunity to comment on these documents to foster a transparent and participatory approach to the co-delivery of the knowledge gained at the conference.

### 3.3.2 Outcomes

Regarding the *intermediate outcomes*, it is necessary to capture the influence of the conference many months after it took place. The discussions held by the project team during and after the conference took place, and also the written evaluation forms completed by participants on the last day of the conference led to significant insights as detailed in the above chapter (3.1.2 and 3.4.2). Exchange and cooperation outcomes were also important elements to monitor, as the conference aimed to facilitate exchange among different marine regions at the interface of science and marine policy. Concrete exchange and cooperation outcomes can be found in chapter (2.3.5).

However, such simple post-course reflection only provides one set of information associated with the feeling and attitudes of the participants, conference organisers, and co-hosts. Immediate feedback type of post-course assessment is commonly used, but it is limited in terms of the goal of the Marine Regions Forum 2019. The purpose of the conference was to facilitate interregional learning for improved cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder cooperation. Thereby actually improving the way in which the difference stakeholders utilise the knowledge in their work. Thus, an attempt was made to go beyond the information already collected and determine how the course had impacted upon the participants work and their knowledge. Eight months after the conference had taken place, 12 participants were asked to participate in interviews to ascertain the impact the school had had on both perceptions of the Marine Regions Forum as well as whether attendance had had any influence on work practices. The full details of this can be found in chapter 3.4.

The responses and information gathered prior to and as a result of the interviews provide an indication of the intermediate outcomes. The approach to regional learning adopted within the Marine Regions Forum project had a distinct influence on attendees in three linked areas:

- ▶ Conviction of the regional level in a work context:
  - Participants gained an insight and increased their conviction of how the regional level can facilitate processes between the global and national level;
  - The Forum demonstrated the opportunities to work across sectors and stakeholder groups;
  - Awareness increased for the need of policy frameworks that explicitly includes regional actors, vertically and horizontally.
- ▶ Influence multi-stakeholder cross-sectoral approaches to practices:
  - Participants grasped a better understanding of roles of regional actors and potential of regional processes, and the current lack of regional integration;
  - Participants gained insight to challenges and opportunities of regional cooperation and coordination through the sharing of lessons learned;
  - The conference forged relationships across disciplines and sectors at eye-level with stakeholders that would not occur otherwise.
- ▶ Understanding application of principles to practices:
  - The conference provided the space for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary exchanges and learning processes for the participants as a matter of practice;

- The conference fostered a joint-learning and share lessons learned experience for the and co-production knowledge for utility within practice;
- Complimenting, not replacing, existing regional ocean governance procedures or collaborative processes.

An example of intermediate outcomes, which relate to the mid-term objectives as set in the outcome frameworks, is the commitment to a new partnership and possible announcement of new funding for regional projects or initiatives. Although new cooperation's were indeed forged, such as between WIOMSA and SeyCCAT on a funding opportunity, these were not announced as initially intended as they were not fully concrete by the conclusion of the conference. Forging official partnerships and funding processes require time and their announcement can only occur if all parties involved are fully committed. Lastly, the project team aimed to deliver a peer-reviewed academic article to evaluate current collaborative efforts in marine regions and position the Marine Regions Forum within the context of these efforts. Further details on this deliverable can be found in chapter 3.4.

Impacts are regarded as primary and secondary long-term (+2 years) effects produced by the Marine Regions Forum, whether directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. Therefore, monitoring such impacts requires further, long-term and analysis and constant review and need to be built up and nurtured over time. Therefore, to ensure the sustainability of the Marine Regions Forum outcomes and to facilitate transformative impact and continuity, a development strategy is being implemented (see chapter 5 for further details.)

### **3.4 Assessment of the Marine Regions Forum through qualitative research**

As part of the evaluation of the overall concept developed for the Marine Regions Forum and its implementation through the first conference held in 2019, the project team has conducted qualitative research to assess regional knowledge exchange and the potential value of the conference. For this purpose, empirical data were collected through in-depth expert interviews with selected participants of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 conference to elicit deeper insights and understandings through qualitative, social-science based analysis. The results of this analysis are published in detail in Weiland et al. (2021). A summary overview of the evaluation research conducted is provided here.

The aim of this research is to: (1) understand the challenges and opportunities for cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder dialogue processes in marine regions, (2) exemplify experiences from the Marine Regions Forum 2019 as a case study for joint-learning across marine regions, and (3) understand how to ensure knowledge integration within ocean governance practices and how the Marine Regions Forum adds value to formal governance processes. Building on literature of relevant theories and frameworks on knowledge exchange and collaborative governance, this research employs semi-structured expert interviews to assess the potential of multi-stakeholder dialogue and exchange platforms - in general, and of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 specifically. Engaging with selected participants of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 as interview partners, this research provides an in-depth analysis of the Marine Regions Forum's conceptual approach, implementation, outcomes, and impacts. See also Weiland et al. (2021).

#### **3.4.1 Background and research approach**

As established in the scholarly literature, effective cooperation, coordination and implementation among stakeholders in marine regions are important levers to achieve ocean sustainability (Cvitanovic, Hobday, van Kerkhoff and Marshall 2015; Cvitanovic, Hobday, van

Kerkhoff, Wilson, et al. 2015; Mackenzie et al. 2019). Transparent and engaging stakeholder dialogue processes have the potential to provide guidance for the necessary transformation. The analysis thus elaborates on the potential of multi-stakeholder cross-sectoral dialogue and exchange processes to create the knowledge needed to accelerate action, building on knowledge exchange and collaborative governance literature, and on analyses of ocean-related science-policy platforms, such as the Marine Regions Forum. The following research questions guided the assessment: What are the factors that contribute to the *challenges and opportunities* of cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder processes in marine regions? How was the conference *received* by participants and how can processes such as the Marine Regions Forum *facilitate transformative action and add value* to formal processes, such as SDG 14 implementation?

The primary data collection for this analysis was conducted through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 12 interview participants during June 2020, after the Marine Regions Forum 2019 took place (Weiland et al. 2021). These were identified and selected based on a predetermined key criterion targeting participants deeply involved with the topic but also ensuring a diverse enough sample to capture the perspectives of different stakeholders. The interview questions were grouped into two main themes: a) challenges and opportunities of current multi-stakeholder cross-sectoral exchange processes in and amongst marine regions; b) the attendee's perception of the Marine Regions Forum; c) its potential to facilitate transformative action needed for ocean sustainability; and lastly d) the value added of the Marine Regions Forum to formal governance processes (Weiland et al. 2021). The interview data were investigated through latent content analysis (Hay 2010). A mixture of deductive and inductive coding techniques were adopted to build on current literature within the analytical framework of the study and to identify variables that may only manifest in this context. For further detail see Weiland et al. (2021).

### 3.4.2 Summary of the results and conclusions

#### 3.4.2.1 Challenges and opportunities for cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder dialogue

The first part of the assessment reviews current multi-stakeholders processes in marine regions, including the challenges of multi-stakeholder dialogue processes and how to overcome such barriers. Interviewees stated that in ocean sustainability processes, common starting scenarios which discourage cooperation are the traditional siloed approaches of sectors within marine regions. Underlying factors that contribute to challenges of multi-stakeholder dialogue processes in marine regions include the following (see also Weiland et al. 2021):

- ▶ Lack of co-design from the onset of the collaborative process - from problem identification, design of the response, to implementation of appropriate measures. This often results in token involvement and unfavourable conditions for marginalised stakeholders, further deepening power imbalances.
- ▶ Complex socio-economic variability of states, processes, and instruments in marine regions are a challenge for collaborative efforts as this can result in power imbalances among stakeholders. Power asymmetries vary across the regional and national level as some stakeholders lack capacity, status, or resources to participate on equal footing more than other stakeholders, potentially resulting in some collaborative processes (such as negotiations or cooperation) in marine regions to be skewed toward the stakeholders with more power and resources.
- ▶ Inaccessibility of the language used during international multi-stakeholder collaborative processes as some stakeholders, such as locally-based groups, may not have the expertise to

engage in technical or political discussions and their perspectives are consequently not accounted if they lack the ability to participate in a meaningful way.

- ▶ Technical knowledge (i.e. on the status of the environment, possible policy measures or management practices, and the assessment and implications of such policies) was considered a central contribution to dialogue processes, particularly for establishing common targets, criteria and standards (e.g. combatting marine pollution in a marine region). However, technical knowledge is distributed disproportionately among stakeholders and nations. Further, the complex socio-economic-political structures within and across marine regions make it challenging to decide which targets to prioritise, especially ones that all regional instruments and national governments can realistically commit to.

Key aspects to overcoming these challenges of multi-stakeholder dialogue processes raised during the interviews include the following (see also Weiland et al. 2021):

- ▶ Informal collaborative dialogue spaces need to be made available across marine regions in order for key stakeholders to actively contribute to decision processes, especially as collaborative spaces are considered uncommon thus far.
- ▶ High-quality collaborative efforts use a common goal orientation approach, where mutual understandings are fostered and the diversity of perspectives are acknowledged and taken into account by the actors involved in the process.
- ▶ Trust provides the foundations for high-quality collaborative efforts in marine regions, however, building trust is a long-term process which in itself requires commitment, time, and resources to foster.
- ▶ Collaborative processes should take the broad perspectives of all actors into account and foster an inclusive space, especially in an effort to empower representation of marginalised stakeholder groups. Inclusivity should be part of the commitment and strategy from the onset of the collaborative process.
- ▶ Further, collaborative dialogue spaces require reflexivity and a form of evaluation which captures the complexities of the process and allows the observation of successes and lesson-learned to provide scholarly and/or practice-based significance.

#### **3.4.2.2 The Marine Regions Forum 2019 as a case study**

This chapter reflects on the Marine Regions Forum 2019 to illustrate both the strengths and challenges by the 2019 Forum of efforts to co-produce practice-based solutions to complex problems. It explores participants' perceptions, the transformative potential of the platform, and the value added for formal political processes such as the 2030 Agenda, particularly SDG 14 (Weiland et al. 2021).

Interviewees were asked to share their experience of attending the Marine Regions Forum. Feedback from the participants indicated that the informal cross-sectoral and interregional networking with actors was a main benefit of attending the Forum, especially as these types of interactions are rare in marine regions and require long-term commitments to establish (see Weiland et al. 2021). Such interactions provided increased understanding and trust of other stakeholder groups' interests, needs, and gaps in capacity or knowledge. Informal exchanges also fostered stakeholders to engage in highly practical discussions on common interests with actors they may usually not be in contact with.

The interviewees also stated that it provided them with the generation of new knowledge and conviction of the regional level, as well as filling interregional knowledge gaps. At an individual level, gaining new viewpoints resulted in the shaping of research ideas toward a different school of thinking or adapting ocean management practices according to new perspectives that hadn't been considered. In general, responses indicated that the Forum filled a gap in regional ocean governance landscape by providing an inclusive dialogue space for a diversity of actors, sectors, and marine regions, and for them to share lessons learned, but also to look for possible synergies between their practices (see Weiland et al. 2021).

From an organisational perspective, interviewees wished for greater integration of the session discussion into the plenary panels, leveraging on the in-depth, dynamic discourse held during the workshop session. It was also noted that the attendance of high-level speakers is a necessity for such forums, but that these formalities drew attention and contributed to a lack of innovative impulses from stakeholders with novel and alternative perspectives. In this regard, interviewees also felt that the representation of less empowered stakeholder groups such as indigenous communities or Small Island Developing States could have been stronger. It was acknowledged that the geographic location of the Forum possibly contributed to this as the attendance of stakeholder groups from marine regions outside of Europe required greater effort in terms of resources and time for travel, despite the availability of financial support from the forum organisers.

Some interviewees wished for a more direct engagement with actors from other sectors and expressed that this could be improved upon by allocating more time for networking. It was however acknowledged that this was partly due to reconnecting with familiar participants or attending the usual sessions within their discipline relevant for their own work. However, it must be recognised that these interactions are also highly beneficial for established partnerships in marine regions as the value of meeting face-to-face lies in the important needs of deepening trust and more effectively communicating, coordinating and cooperating.

Participants also wished for greater integration of the plenary discussion (which often called for urgent action) into the sessions. For example, plenary panellists presented challenges (e.g. findings from the latest IPCC report or participation barriers faced by marginalised coastal communities) and called for the urgent transformative action, but some sessions didn't fully align as they were not explicitly related to those topics e.g. on deep seabed mining. Although aligning plenaries and sessions isn't always possible given the large diversity of topics and challenges, greater integration could improve the space for innovative dialogue to occur.

On the basis of these comments from participants, a useful way to address interconnected issues in future events could be through "regional thinking", where the key issues relevant to a marine region are in focus as these are often context-dependent. For example, the Western Indian Ocean region focuses fisheries dialogue on Tuna rather than on Salmon as these are not relevant to the region. Or in dialogue on deep seabed mining, the discussions focus on particular exploratory sites specifically located in that region. This can also help to provide more goal-oriented focus by highlighting the interconnectedness of topics within a region, how they are linked and what co-benefits or trade-offs might be regarding relevant resource management strategies.

#### **3.4.2.3 Ensuring transformation: knowledge integration for utility within practices**

Based on the interview data, several conclusions can be made on ensuring the transformation and knowledge integration within practices. The transformative potential of the Marine Regions Forum lies within the transdisciplinary approach and learning as a matter of practice (see Weiland et al. 2021). The creation of space which places value on multi-stakeholder and cross-

sectoral exchanges and collaborations can lead to, “new exchanges, perspectives, arrangements, and cooperation that allow for working fundamentally differently” (Weiland et al. 2021).

For interregional learning to take place, commonalities amongst regions need to be found so that the lessons learned are relevant and valuable to the other marine regions. This requires a high level of engagement amongst participants on a continuous basis, individual or intrinsic motivation, and a collective accountability. To ensure that co-produced knowledge facilitates action, the outputs should be communicated and feed into informal practices and formal processes. Such processes include the regional bodies, but they should also take into account the distribution of outputs to other key players i.e. NGOs and private sector stakeholders. One participant mentioned that attending platforms where the private sector is highly engaged, such as the World Economic Forum, could provide such an opportunity.

### **3.4.3 Value added of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 to formal processes**

The results of the interview-based assessment (chapter 3.4.2) and further reflections of the Marine Regions Forum (chapters 3.2 and 3.3) show that an important outcome from the Marine Regions Forum 2019 conference was the value it added to and its positioning in formal global processes. It provided regional contextualising of global frameworks, agreements, and targets. This was manifested by the project team co-producing concrete key recommendations highlighting the role, importance, and relevance of regional approaches to ocean governance. Participants mentioned that the value of the Marine Regions Forum was that it recognises and places value on the regional level, irrespective of the regional mechanism or sector, i.e. regional economic forums, RFBs, regional seas conventions or commission. It went beyond regional environmental bodies and fostered the inclusion of economic bodies in the context of achieving SDG 14. Further, it emphasised how regional mechanisms can cooperate and collaborate to facilitate the implementation of global goals. This created equal footing for regional instruments and reduced competitive tendencies.

It is within such informal processes, detached from institutional settings and values, where lessons learned are shared in small communities on issues that are entrenched across sectors and regions. And it is within these spaces that the Marine Regions Forum applies transdisciplinary learning, collaboration, and cooperation as a matter of practice, and where knowledge is co-produced and co-delivered for utility within practice.

Participants also stated that the interactive and informal dialogue spaces provided by the Marine Regions Forum filled a gap for formal arrangements. It provided an inclusive space for participants to improve their understanding of topics without the pressure of formal negotiations. This in turn creates trust, opportunities for innovative thinking, and building up networks to exchange views and discuss commonalities or controversies.

## **3.5 Summary analysis**

Regionally coordinated approaches will be required to achieve advances in the marine environment given the fragmented institutional and legal framework for dealing with the ocean and the accelerating pace of ocean decline. But collaborative processes in marine regions are subject to challenges and opportunities that can discourage or facilitate cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder interactions. To facilitate exchanges across different sectors and stakeholder groups, and provide knowledge-based guidance for use within practices, appropriate tools and platforms are needed.

The value added of platforms that aim to facilitate knowledge exchange, specifically the Marine Regions Forum, lies not only in the creation of knowledge for action, but to a large degree also in

the use of actionable knowledge within practices. It positioned participants on an equal playing field and allowed actors who are usually unlikely to interact with each other under conventional approaches to build trust and engage. It also provided the needed regional contextualising of global frameworks, such as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. As set out in chapter 1.2, the Marine Regions Forum fills a gap in the ocean governance landscape by providing an inclusive dialogue space for a diversity of actors, sectors, and marine regions. In turn, this facilitated exchange also ensures the delivery of outcomes as envisaged in the Marine Regions Forum outcome framework, exemplified in chapter 2.3.5 and 3.3.

In general, transparent and engaging regional stakeholder dialogue processes, such as the Marine Regions Forum, have the potential to provide guidance for the necessary transformation. However, these approaches need to be:

- ▶ Practiced *across* regional sectors and stakeholder groups in order to strengthen and enhance integration for more holistic solutions to regional ocean governance;
- ▶ Fundamentally utilised *within* practises of other relevant regional and global processes, rather than as an attached process; and
- ▶ Appropriately reflected upon within the context of informal and formal collaborative processes, which involves raising questions: How do you get different regional actors to work on regional ocean governance issues? How do you get them to collaborate in a very functional way? How can regional cross-sectoral spaces catalyse more cross-sectoral collaboration between?

## 4 Marine Regions Forum Online Workshop 2021: Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic

The end of the Marine Regions Forum R&D project was marked by the dramatic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Marine regions and ocean-dependent livelihoods were severely impacted, as were ocean governance processes at all scales. The project team wished to explore if and how the Marine Regions Forum could contribute to the post-pandemic recovery. An informal online discussion was first organised with the Advisory Board. At this meeting, the Advisory Board recommended that the Marine Regions Forum should consider this a priority, suggesting that the Marine Regions Forum would be an ideal platform for the exchange of experiences and discussion of how to “build back better” and improve the long-term resilience of marine regions.

Together with the Steering Group, it was therefore decided to adapt the work plan of the Marine Regions Forum project accordingly and to organise an online workshop on “*Ocean Governance and COVID-19 – Building resilience for marine regions*”<sup>82</sup>. The workshop also served as a closing workshop of phase 1 of the Marine Regions Forum. The workshop aimed to explore possible pathways to navigate the effects of the COVID-19 crisis in marine regions and brought together about 40 selected experts from science, governments, IGOS and NGOs and different marine regions. Within a 3.5 hours setting, the workshop included a welcome plenary with invited input statements and panel discussions, three parallel breakout group sessions for in-depth discussions among participants, and a joint closing plenary to recap the results from the workshops and conclude on key messages. Three topics guided the discussions in the breakout groups: (1) socio-economic and environmental impacts of COVID-19 in marine regions, (2) options for immediate responses and longer-term recovery, and (3) impacts on regional cooperation and possible consequences for ocean governance. The agenda of the workshop, which took place on 28 January 2021, is attached to Annex C.1. The workshop was organized by IASS, IDDRI and TMG together with UBA, BMU and EC.

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<sup>82</sup> See <https://www.prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/2020/11/26/online-workshop-on-ocean-governance-and-covid-19-building-resilience-for-marine-regions/>. Last accessed 30 January 2021.

## 5 Where next? A development strategy for the Marine Regions Forum

After successfully establishing the Marine Regions Forum and hosting the inaugural conference, a strategy for the further development of the Marine Regions Forum was elaborated by the project team in close collaboration with the Steering Group. This strategy foresees the continued development of the Marine Regions Forum post-2020, providing a unique means to facilitate integrated and transformative ocean governance. The following sections outline a development strategy which was shared with potential future donors and hosts. This process is still on-going at the time of writing and will seek to respond also to new or emerging challenges for marine regions, including the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 5.1 The Marine Regions Forum Phase 2: Fostering transformation for marine regions

Decisions taken in the next ten years will be critical for the future of the ocean (e.g. in IPBES 2019b; IPCC 2019). The global community will have to decide how to take forward ocean sustainability, and how this integrates with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in ABNJ, and the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change (see also Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019). Whilst updated and new sustainability and biodiversity goals are needed for the ocean, previous practice of setting ever-more ambitious targets for the distant future instead of achieving current targets must be avoided. Immediate and time-bound action is needed and updated ocean-related goals should be underpinned by a robust and implementation-focused post-2020 strategy. Regional ocean governance will have an important role to play in that endeavour. To this end, the *vision of the Marine Regions Forum in the period post 2020* is to facilitate the development of integrated and transformative ocean governance by providing a space for dialogue, exchange of good practice, and cooperation within and between regions.

The 2019 UN Global Sustainable Development Report (GDSR) pointed out that governance is one of the key levers for achieving the needed transformation towards sustainability (Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General 2019). However, to achieve successful transformative change, they emphasize that it needs to be developed together with other key levers, including “economy and finance, individual and collective action, and science and technology” (Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General 2019). The development of such an integrated approach is complex and a novel way of collaboration between relevant actors. Moreover the 2019 GDSR emphasizes that “the biggest transformative potentials of the 2030 Agenda do not lie in pursuing single Goals or targets but rather in a systemic approach that manages their myriad interactions” (Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General 2019).

Such a systemic approach requires a bold rethink of the way States and other actors cooperate and integrate different types of interests and knowledge when dealing with the ocean. There will be no “one-size fits all” solution for achieving these goals and transformations will unfold differently in the diverse marine regions and sea basins, according to the societal, economic and environmental characteristics, government priorities at the national and regional level, as well as their time frames and urgency. In every case, it will be critical to better understand the specific challenges, avoid trade-offs, and capitalize on synergies emerging from the different interventions (Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General 2019).

Although implementation of SDGs and biodiversity targets is first and foremost the responsibility of States, individual States cannot successfully address the inherently transboundary nature of ocean sustainability challenges without systemic cooperation at the regional level. Interventions in one part of a marine region with shared ecosystems and resources can lead to unintended consequences for the achievement of other goals (Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General 2019). Conversely, the successful implementation of one goal for one sector can depend on interventions made in other areas or sectors. Such interactions often bring about trade-offs, but may also give rise to co-benefits and provide a significant transformative potential.

Regional ocean governance holds a strong potential to capitalize on such co-benefits and minimize trade-offs to foster transformation towards sustainability, e.g. by enhancing cooperation and coordination between States and stakeholders across territorial and sectoral boundaries, and providing regional actors with support to set up science-policy-society interfaces, develop marine protected area networks or fight against marine and land-based pollution (Thomson et al. 2020). In light of the accelerating decline of ocean health and the urgency of taking effective action to change these trends, transformative governance approaches are urgently needed for a truly sustainable development of the world's different marine regions (see also chapter 1.1.2). As there is no uniform template for such a transformation, a collective and cooperative learning process is needed.

## 5.2 Objectives and thematic entry points for Phase 2

To capitalize on the transformative potential of regional ocean governance, the Marine Regions Forum will support the development of integrated approaches that consider the systemic interplay and relationships between sectoral policies and related interventions of different actors. Building on the experience of the Marine Regions Forum 2019, the following section will outline how this can be realized on the way to 2030.

The second phase of the Marine Regions Forum should be structured around *overarching main objectives and thematic entry points* that will facilitate and guide the future strategic, organisational and thematic development. Whereas the objectives characterize the intervention spaces that the Marine Regions Forum seeks to address, the thematic entry points reflect key challenges for ocean sustainability to be addressed by marine regions. These challenges have been identified with stakeholders through the Marine Regions Forum 2019 and serve as broad thematic orientations (see chapter 5.2.2). However, given the specific situations and priorities in different marine regions and the participatory approach of the Marine Regions Forum, the identified challenges to address will be refined and further specified in a co-creative manner with different actor groups and partners involved and in a concrete regional context.

### 5.2.1 Main Objectives

#### 5.2.1.1 Foster transformative modes of cooperation in marine regions

Marine regions have the potential to ensure the engagement and cooperation between relevant actors needed to translate global goals into concrete action on the ground. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and CBD goals is not on track (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity 2020), thus pressure is mounting for States to step-up their efforts post-2020 and ensure that ambitious and viable implementation pathways are at the heart of the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework currently under negotiation (IPBES 2019b). These challenges are further compounded by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on marine regions.

The complexity of ecosystems and species, as well as their interactions with human societies must be at the core of policies and implementation processes. A number of recent global reports and studies have highlighted the need to shift from narrow sectoral policy-making to holistic approaches (e.g. Griggs et al. 2017; Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General 2019). Yet while problem statements and overarching visions are abundant, there remain few concrete proposals as to how such holistic implementation can be achieved in practice. The further development of the Marine Regions Forum will be based on the assumption that regionally coordinated approaches will be required to achieve advances in the marine environment. However, against the backdrop of a fragmented institutional and legal framework for dealing with the ocean and the accelerating pace of ocean decline, novel tools are needed to facilitate dialogue across different sectors and provide knowledge-based guidance for policies and actions that contribute to multiple goals simultaneously (see chapters 1.1.2 and 3.4).

By tapping into the wealth of knowledge and experiences at the regional level, phase 2 of the Marine Regions Forum will focus on the development of novel tools and new modes of cooperation *within marine regions*. The Marine Regions Forum will facilitate holistic multisector and multi-actor approaches to ocean management that account for the interlinkages between different goals and sectoral interventions, e.g. through cross-sectoral ocean governance strategies or holistic action plans. Exchange between regions is also needed to *connect regional governance with the international policy context*. As actors from different marine regions currently have limited opportunities to exchange regularly, discuss common challenges, and develop new pathways for action, the interplay *between regions* will remain an important pillar in the future development.

Critical future steps of the Marine Regions Forum under this objective include:

- ▶ *Identify current and emerging cross-cutting challenges for marine regions*, e.g. related to contributions to and implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, High Seas negotiations, ocean-climate nexus, blue economy and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for marine regions;
- ▶ *Prepare and conduct a series of webinars* that will bring together regional actors from different marine regions, including from science, civil society, business and policy-making, to discuss possible pathways and concrete responses to address key challenges; and
- ▶ *Engage with relevant regional and global forums* to disseminate possible responses to challenges, including consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **5.2.1.2 Organise a regional Marine Regions Forum conference**

To facilitate regional transformations, phase 2 of the Marine Regions Forum must enable in-depth discussions of concrete issues with affected stakeholders, regional experts and decision-makers. Whilst participants welcomed the broad focus of the first Marine Regions Forum conference as an initial foundation, subsequent Marine Regions Forum events should support the development of concrete and actionable proposals tailored to specific regional contexts, e.g. the Western Indian Ocean, Caribbean or South Asian Seas. This will imply that the main deliverable of the Marine Regions Forum will be developed and co-designed together with key actors from the region, including from science, civil-society, business and policy-making, including the national, regional and international level. The co-design of the conference will include all key aspects and phases of the conference ranging from the identification of key challenges, mapping and engagement of relevant actors to be involved, to the concept and programme development, implementation, and subsequent evaluation.

The identification of the proposed hosting region should be done collaboratively with the existing Steering Group and the Advisory Board and based on the following criteria:

- ▶ *Dynamic of the regional cooperation*: the selected region should be an area of active collaboration between neighbouring States;
- ▶ *Limited geopolitical conflicts between regional States*: the regional collaboration should not be limited by too many conflicts between neighbouring States;
- ▶ *Existence of NGOs network*: the regional cooperation should be supported and facilitated by a strong NGOs networks;
- ▶ *Robustness of the scientific community*: there should be networks of scientists working on regional marine challenges;
- ▶ *Representativeness of regional challenges*: the selected region should be representative of other marine regions' challenges;
- ▶ *Previous involvement in PROG activities*: the selected region should be interested and familiar with the Marine Regions Forum and PROG activities;
- ▶ *Assets for organizational matters*: the time zone should be compatible with European work schedules and the PROG partners should already have several contacts with relevant stakeholders, both at the national and regional levels.

Once the second Marine Regions Forum conference has taken place successfully in a given region, it is envisaged to use this approach to identify the next possible host region of the conference. Critical future steps of the Marine Regions Forum under this objective include:

- ▶ Identify and prepare the ground for hosting and implementing the Marine Regions Forum conference with the host region;
- ▶ Identify key themes of the Marine Regions Forum conference in a co-creative and dialogue-oriented process;
- ▶ Develop the environmental, societal and policy rational of the Marine Regions Forum conference in the selected region;
- ▶ Conduct a preparatory engagement and dialogue process with key stakeholders, national and regional representatives;
- ▶ Organization and hosting of the regional conference, jointly with regional actors and organizations;
- ▶ Facilitate the uptake of outcomes from the Marine Regions Forum conference in key regional ocean governance processes;
- ▶ Ensure the further long-term continuity and sustainability of the Marine Regions Forum through a regular update of the development strategy.

#### **5.2.1.3 Support international efforts to strengthen ocean governance**

Strengthened frameworks for integrated ocean governance at the regional scale will be critical for achieving the ocean-related SDGs as well as targets related to biodiversity or ocean and climate. This insight was at the heart of the process that led to the first Marine Regions Forum conference that was held in 2019 (see also chapter 1.1). The lack of global progress towards the

global goals – now further complicated by the global COVID-19 pandemic - stresses the urgent need for accelerated action at all levels, from the local to the global level, and across boundaries and sectors.

The Marine Regions Forum will further strengthen its efforts to engage actively with key global ocean and sustainability processes. Recommendations and conclusions emerging from the Marine Regions Forum through the various activities including a second conference will be fed into relevant global meetings and processes to bridge the gap between the global and the regional and national level, including the UN Ocean Conferences or conferences of the parties (COPs) of the CBD and UNFCCC. Marine regions are well-placed to ensure the engagement and action that is needed across different sectors; however often not enough attention is given to the possible contributions but also challenges and capacity needs of regional ocean governance. As much as actors and institutions of regional ocean governance are embedded in the overarching legal and institutional framework at the global scale, also the Marine Regions Forum needs to engage actively and contribute to relevant international efforts.

Critical future steps of the Marine Regions Forum under this objective include:

- ▶ Liaise to and monitor key ocean governance processes with a relevance for marine regions; where key actors provide input from regional discussions and vice-versa;
- ▶ Ensure linkages between the Marine Regions Forum and other global processes addressing aspects of regional governance (e.g. SOI Global Dialogue, Global Meetings of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, RFBs Network, LME Annual meeting); and
- ▶ Reach out to key actors and processes, and communicate on outputs and lessons learned with the aim to advance joint learning and exchange on regional ocean governance.

## **5.2.2 Thematic entry points**

The following critical sustainability challenges have been discussed at the Marine Regions Forum 2019 and were highlighted through the Key Messages document (see chapter 2.3.1). They will be the thematic entry points for the further thematic development of the Marine Regions Forum in phase 2.

### **5.2.2.1 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

The implementation of SDG 14 and other ocean-related SDGs requires nexus thinking. For this a systemic approach that addresses synergies and trade-offs between different interventions, e.g. with regard to fighting marine pollution or developing sustainable blue tourism, is needed. The regional level has proven to be successful in bringing together different sectors, whilst operating at an appropriate ecosystem scale and addressing the varied priorities and needs of a range of actors and institutions. The regional level can build bridges between disconnected sectoral governance regimes and stakeholders, and help to achieve consistency across sectors, targets, and indicators. At the same time, regional cooperation has the potential to accelerate implementation and to develop more effective approaches and strategies that work across different sectors and boundaries.

### **5.2.2.2 Marine biodiversity and restoration of ecosystems**

One of the key challenges for marine regions will be to halt and turn trends of declining biodiversity. One of the key tools for marine biodiversity as contained in the Convention on Biological Diversity's Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is the development of coherent networks of effective and well-managed MPAs and other area-based management tools. Such

networks will be critical to ensure: the conservation and resilience of biodiversity; recovery of overexploited marine ecosystems; regeneration of degraded habitats; and re-naturalization of coastal and up-stream riverine systems. To reach global and regional biodiversity ambitions, it will also be necessary to work closely with competent management bodies to avoid destructive maritime practices whether they come from fishing, seabed extraction, offshore installations, telecommunication and energy cables, pipelines, coastal development or tourism.

#### **5.2.2.3 Zero pollution**

Marine pollution, including through litter, plastics, chemicals and nutrients, is a persistent challenge that stems from a multitude of sectors, from agriculture to waste management. Depolluting marine regions is a major task and “significantly reducing marine litter by 2025”, as envisaged by target SDG 14.1, requires a concerted approach involving business, government, and civil society; yet current governance strategies provide a fragmented approach and regional strategies face a range of barriers. The regional level is crucial to co-design the necessary tools and actions that are needed to reduce pollution at source, prevent pollution input, both at sea as well as from land-based sources, and to develop adequate circular economy approaches.

#### **5.2.2.4 Ocean climate agenda**

As concluded at the Marine Regions Forum 2019 and highlighted in the Key Messages document (chapter 2.3.1), decision-makers and stakeholders should embrace the conclusion of the IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (IPCC 2019) and develop effective responses to mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts on the ocean. Examples of mitigation and adaptation include the implementation of nature-based solutions and the development of regional strategies to adapt to moving fish stocks i.e. through participatory and co-management systems. Regional and sectoral organisations have the potential to foster resilience to climate change, e.g. by restoring degraded ecosystems or minimizing human pressures. Furthermore, Nationally Determined Contributions should also include marine components (in addition to ambitious land-based mitigation) and regional arrangements or dedicated initiatives could help to coordinate such responses at the scale of affected marine ecosystems.

#### **5.2.2.5 Sustainable blue economy and resilience**

Maritime activities constituting the blue economy such as renewable energy, food from the sea, coastal and maritime tourism, as well as many other activities are a major source of income and economic growth in many marine regions. Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic the blue economy is seen as a pathway to for coastal communities and ocean-dependent-livelihoods to come out of this crisis stronger and more resilient. However, often harmful subsidies supporting unsustainable practices and investments do still exist for some sectors and regions, partially offsetting the benefits from blue economy projects. In order to be truly sustainable, economic development needs to align with appropriate sustainability and conservation criteria in marine regions. This requires active engagement from relevant regional economic actors in such processes to ensure their transformative potential.

#### **5.2.2.6 Fostering resilience and responding to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic**

Systemic shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, can lead to unforeseen impacts for ocean governance and ocean dependent sectors and livelihoods within marine regions. It is crucial to learn from the current pandemic, and prepare for the impacts and risks of climate change within the ocean governance system. Regional ocean governance needs to be future proofed in terms of flexibility to enhance the resilience of ocean systems both from a societal/policy perspective as well as ecologically. This requires learning platforms such as the Marine Regions Forum and

adequate capacity to design and implement adaptive governance for addressing short-term impacts (e.g. for institutions and dependent actors) and overcoming medium- to long-term challenges.

### **5.3 The Marine Regions Forum Phase 2: Towards a new mode of cooperation**

The Marine Regions Forum starts from the assumption that new collaborative approaches that help to overcome sectoral divides are crucial for achieving the transformative vision of the 2030 Agenda (see chapter 1.1.3). Given the high interconnectedness of challenges and the need to reflect co-benefits between management measures while avoiding trade-offs, new modes of co-creative cooperation between ocean actors will be needed to move beyond the current sectoral divides. The following section will describe what types of actors and partnerships should be involved and the approaches taken that could drive the further development.

#### **5.3.1 Actors and partnerships**

The Marine Regions Forum should continue to bring together different actor groups in order to identify ways to better coordinate efforts at the regional level. In addition, the Marine Regions Forum should also draw expertise from actors that are not traditionally involved in ocean discussions in order to bring in new perspectives to marine issues, e.g. from agriculture, urban planning, or riverine communities. In this way, the Forum should provide space for exchanging of new ideas and views for enhancing cooperation and integration of policies. These different types of actors have been involved throughout the whole development of the concepts and approach of the Marine Regions Forum, including process design and identification of key issues and questions to be addressed, and phase 2 would continue this co-design approach. In order to achieve concrete partnerships for regional action, concerted efforts could be made to engage possible donors from States and international or regional organisations, e.g. to support the development of innovative financing tools and capacity development schemes.

A lesson learned from ongoing ocean governance processes has been the importance of fostering genuine engagement and collaboration with the private sector, which is crucial for developing novel partnerships and actionable solutions. In this regard, there have recently been encouraging efforts and notable successes, including in the context of the UN Ocean Conference 2017 and the Our Ocean Conferences, but overall progress is still limited and tenuous (Grorud-Colvert et al. 2019; Neumann and Unger 2019a). The assessment of the first phase of the Marine Regions Forum also concluded that the private sector should be actively involved in the activities of the Marine Regions Forum (see chapter 3.4.2). A particular focus should therefore be on ensuring close collaboration with the private sector during phase 2 e.g. by (1) inviting private sector representative(s) to sit on the Advisory Board, (2) co-organizing webinars to explore private sector engagement for regional ocean action, or (3) inviting private sector representatives to contribute to the preparation of the second Marine Regions Forum conference.

#### **5.3.2 Co-design, co-production and co-delivery**

Building on the outcome framework developed for the 1<sup>st</sup> phase (chapter 2.1.1), the Marine Regions Forum phase 2 will aim to improve the participation of stakeholders by providing an informal space where different types of knowledge can be brought together on an equal footing. By doing so, it encourages involvement of stakeholders and other actors that do not always participate in policy making processes due to entry barriers to those platforms. The Marine Regions Forum should be both designed and conducted in partnership between science, policy,

and society, as outlined by Mauser et al. (2013). As formulated by the authors, Integration is an iterative process that involves reflection among all stakeholders and consists of three stages: co-design, co-production and co-dissemination (see also chapter 1.2.1 in this report).

The participatory processes would catalyse incorporation of scientific knowledge in the development of solutions. This approach has been realized in all central stages and elements of the Marine Regions Forum, including the different stages of the method development, steering and process implementation (see Figure 4). As in the development phase of the Marine Regions Forum, phase 2 should build on a transdisciplinary Advisory Board that consist of key experts on ocean sustainability with different backgrounds, including from science, NGOs, business, as well as decision-making and policy, including from the national governments, regional and international organisations. The experts of the Advisory Board not only provide their expertise for the process design but also support outreach and tapping into other key ocean governance and sustainability processes.

While phase 1 took a broad perspective of the world's different marine regions; phase 2 should seek to support transformative change in a selected region, responding to its specific challenges and processes. A key component for co-designing the Marine Regions Forum in phase 2 should be a regional engagement process that could consist of *series of regional scoping events*. Given the COVID-19 pandemic but also to capitalize on positive experience with virtual workshops and webinars over the last year, these scoping events could take place through a series of online workshops. The main aim of these events would be to identify key regional priorities, generate enthusiasm and buy-in among regional stakeholders, and facilitate further collaboration. Results from these webinars could be presented and discussed at a regional co-design workshop to take place with stakeholders, scientists, industry and decision-makers within the region. This co-design workshop could serve as the main space for scoping and developing regional deliverables to be presented and discussed at the next Marine Regions Forum conference to take place as in-person event within a selected region. In the mid-term, this approach could be replicated in different regions, thereby advancing transformation in individual regions, while also encouraging interregional learning and exchange.

Complementary to this regional focus, the Marine Regions Forum should also take forward a continuous exchange between regions through online workshops on selected topics such as the consequences of the COVID-19 for regional ocean governance. In doing so the Marine Regions Forum would build its role as a global platform for regional actors to discuss contributions and experiences with regard to key sustainability challenges and global policy processes such as the 2030 Agenda, the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework of the Ocean and Climate Agenda. By providing an informal space that is located outside the formal governance arrangements and by incorporating ally types or relevant knowledge from different actor groups the Marine Regions Forum fills a crucial gap in the current governance landscape.

## 6 Conclusions

The complexity and urgency of the accelerating ocean crisis demands radical shifts in the way we govern the ocean, its precious wildlife and invaluable natural resources. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires us to reverse the decline of ocean health, while simultaneously addressing the interlinked challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss. This requires a bold rethink of the way how national governments, international organisations, industry, civil society and other stakeholders cooperate and integrate different types of interest and knowledge. Yet the existing ocean governance framework is fragmented and has proven inadequate in addressing the challenges facing the ocean. Longstanding calls for integrated governance and ecosystem-based approaches that better align regulatory frameworks with interconnected natural and social systems have not yet resulted in effective implementation.

Regional governance fosters cooperation and coordination between relevant actors across territorial and sectoral boundaries. It can provide regional stakeholders with essential support, for example by establishing science-policy-society interfaces, developing socio-ecologically resilient marine protected area networks, and taking action against marine and land-based pollution. Strengthened cooperation and coordination are critical for the implementation of robust conservation measures and to ensure their long-term sustainability. To make transitions possible, the weaknesses of the current system(s) need to be addressed. However, there will be no “one-size fits all”. Solutions for addressing the immense challenges facing the ocean and making progress in achieving global agreements such as the 2030 Agenda have to be tailored to the specific features of marine regions and their sea basins. This is a complex process requiring robust approaches for dialogue and participatory engagement of all relevant actors.

The Marine Regions Forum was initiated by Germany and the EU together with IASS, IDDRI and TMG as a global platform to address these needs by offering informal space for exchange and joint learning, developing approaches and collaboration across sectors and actors within and between marine regions, and between the regional and the global level. Implemented in a co-creative approach with a team of transdisciplinary ocean research institutes together with the European Commission and the German Federal Ministry of the Environment, BMU as well as the German Environment Agency, and a group of consulting and advising experts, a first conference under this platform was set up and hosted in 2019 in Berlin, Germany, under the theme *Achieving a healthy ocean – Regional ocean governance beyond 2020*.

Bringing together over 200 leading experts from 50 countries with diverse regional and professional backgrounds, the Marine Regions Forum 2019 demonstrated that co-creative dialogue processes across different sectors and relevant actors have the strong potential to inspire and support the development of innovative governance approaches and provide guidance for the needed transformation. The informal nature of the Marine Regions Forum where decision-makers, scientists, civil society representatives and other actors meet and exchange outside formal governmental processes is conducive to create common understanding of specific sustainability challenges and, ultimately, to facilitate collective responses. By bringing back key messages and emerging recommendations to the formal policy processes, the Marine Regions Forum has the potential to contribute to making real progress in ocean governance and sustainability transformations.

To boost the urgent delivery of the global ocean and linked biodiversity and climate agenda in the future, the Marine Regions Forum could support specific regions in developing tailor-made cross-sectoral ocean governance approaches and transformative strategies. Bringing together the wealth of knowledge of different regional ocean actors, priority issues in specific regions could be identified and addressed in order to learn from them, develop a common

understanding of possible synergies and trade-offs in related interventions, and to co-design novel responses. Moreover, exchanges between different marine regions and bringing forward lessons-learned and recommendations to the global level could help to further expedite the needed transformation towards sustainability.

Decisions taken in the next decade will determine the future of the ocean – and the attainment of the 2030 Agenda, the future Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework of the CBD, and other sustainability policy goals. Regional implementation of effective nature-based solutions and other action to combat ocean decline should be accelerated through engaging dialogue and co-creative development processes between different sectors and stakeholders. Based on the present concept and evaluations, the Marine Regions Forum can play a key role in facilitating transformation in ocean governance as it matures into an essential long-term platform for informal stakeholder exchange and mutual learning.

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## A Appendix

### A.1 Steering Group of the Marine Regions Forum

#### Members of the Steering Group as of November 2020

- ▶ Anne-France Didier, Ministry for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition, France
- ▶ Jacob Hagberg, Ministry for Environment and Energy, Sweden
- ▶ Heike Imhoff, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany
- ▶ Ingo Narberhaus, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany
- ▶ Matjaž Malgaj, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission
- ▶ Marijana Mance, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission
- ▶ Raphael Goulet, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission
- ▶ Stefanie Schmidt, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission
- ▶ Manuela Krakau, German Environment Agency
- ▶ Andrea Weiß, German Environment Agency
- ▶ Takehiro Nakamura, UN Environment

## A.2 Advisory Board of the Marine Regions Forum

### Members of the Advisory Board as of November 2020

- ▶ Joseph Appiott, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
- ▶ Abou Bamba, UN Environment - Abidjan Convention Secretariat
- ▶ Jessica Battle, World Wide Fund for Nature
- ▶ Julian Barbière, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO
- ▶ Meg Caldwell, David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- ▶ Darius Campbell, North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
- ▶ Maria Damanaki, SYSTEMIQ; The Paradise International Foundation
- ▶ David Freestone, Sargasso Sea Commission
- ▶ Kristina Gjerde, International Union for Conservation of Nature
- ▶ Fredrik Haag, International Maritime Organization
- ▶ Lorna Inniss, Caribbean Environment Programme
- ▶ David Johnson, Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative
- ▶ Markus Knigge, Blue Action Fund
- ▶ Kosi Latu, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
- ▶ Gaetano Leone, Barcelona Convention Secretariat
- ▶ Ronan Long, World Maritime University
- ▶ Piero Manini, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- ▶ Rashid Sumaila, University of British Columbia
- ▶ Kristian Teleki, World Resources Institute
- ▶ Dire Tladi, University of Pretoria
- ▶ Ambassador Ngedikes Olai Uludong, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Palau to the United Nations
- ▶ Osvaldo Urrutia, South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
- ▶ Ambassador Méntor Villagómez, Secretariat of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific
- ▶ Martin Visbeck, GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel
- ▶ Dixon G. Waruinge, Nairobi Convention Secretariat

## **B Appendix**

## B.1 Conference agenda of the Marine Regions Forum 2019



### Marine Regions Forum 2019

30 September - 02 October 2019, Vienna House Andel's Berlin, Berlin, Germany  
Conference Agenda as of 03 September 2019

Monday, 30 Sept 2019						
Day 1   Understanding challenges and achievements						
08:30 - 10:00	Registration and welcome coffee					
10:00 - 12:00	Welcome and Opening Plenary   Achieving healthy oceans – Challenges and opportunities					
12:00 - 12:30	Group photo					
12:30 - 14:00	Lunch The Ocean Realm   Open space for networking and exchange, with exhibitions and Meet & Greet Space 12:30 - 12:45 Introduction to the photo exhibition <b>Tropic Ice Dialog between Places Affected by Climate Change</b>					
14:00 - 17:30	Dialogue Sessions					
incl. coffee break	Theme 1   Achieving SDG 14		Theme 2   Underpinning global processes		Theme 3   Knowledge for ocean action	
14:00 - 15:30	1.1.1 From plans to action: Implementing regional marine litter action plans		2.1.1 Areas beyond national jurisdiction: Towards a collaborative approach in ocean governance	2.2.1 Our ocean in crisis: Key findings from the IPCC special report	3.1.1 Building regional science-policy interfaces: Good practices, lessons learned and ways forward	
16:00 - 17:30				2.2.2 Preparing marine regions for fisheries on the move		
17:30 - 18:00	Young Ocean Professionals   Daily debriefing					
17:30 - 18:30	The Ocean Realm   Open space for networking and exchange, with exhibitions and Meet & Greet Space Refresh					
18:30 - 21:00	Evening Reception   Welcome and get-together with artistic intervention WE ARE OCEAN_making waves. A floating conversation on ocean awareness and action					
Tuesday, 01 Oct 2019						
Day 2   Developing solutions						
09:00 - 13:00	Dialogue Sessions					
incl. coffee break	Theme 1   Achieving SDG 14		Theme 2   Underpinning global processes		Theme 3   Knowledge for ocean action	
09:00 - 10:45		1.2.1 Creating synergies: Enhancing regional cooperation for ocean-related SDGs	2.1.2 Keeping an eye on the high seas: Strengthening monitoring, control and surveillance	2.2.3 Tackling climate problems with ocean solutions		3.1.2 Inclusive ocean governance: Weaving science with traditional ecological knowledge.
11:15 - 13:00	1.2.3 Advancing implementation of the ocean SDG through ecosystem-based management				2.2.4 The "Blue COP": Mobilising regional stakeholders	
13:00 - 15:00	Lunch The Ocean Realm   Open space for networking and exchange, with exhibitions and Meet & Greet Space 14:00 - 15:00 MSP Challenge board game simulation					
15:00 - 17:00	Plenary   Ocean Governance post-2020 - The role of marine regions					
17:00 - 17:30	Young Ocean Professionals   Daily debriefing					
17:00 - 18:30	The Ocean Realm   Open space for networking and exchange, with exhibitions and Meet & Greet Space Afternoon coffee / Refresh					
18:30	Bus transfer to conference dinner					
19:00 - 22:00	Conference dinner   Eatside, Stralauer Allee 1, 10245 Berlin Arrival of guests from 18:30 – 19:00					
22:00	Bus transfer back to conference venue					
Wednesday, 02 Oct 2019						
Day 3   Accelerating progress and creating new pathways						
09:00 - 12:30	Dialogue Sessions					
incl. coffee break	Theme 1   Achieving SDG 14		Theme 2   Underpinning global processes		Theme 3   Knowledge for ocean action	
09:00 - 10:30	1.2.2 Delivering the ocean SDG: Accelerating progress	1.3.1 Sun, sea, sand and sustainability? Tourism in marine regions	2.1.3 Towards coherent and connected MPA networks: From challenges to possible solutions in high seas governance	2.1.4 Deep seabed mining in the Area: The role of regional ocean governance	3.2.1 The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development: Engaging marine regions	
11:00 - 12:30					3.2.2 Enhancing the role of regions in global ocean assessments	
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch The Ocean Realm   Open space for networking and exchange, with exhibitions and Meet & Greet Space					
13:30 - 15:30	Closing Plenary   Accelerating progress, creating new pathways					
15:30 - 16:00	Young Ocean Professionals   Daily debriefing					
15:30 - 16:30	Farewell coffee					
18:00 - 19:30	Berlin am Meer / Berlin by the sea   Futurium, Alexanderufer 2, 10117 Berlin Associated public event with intervention, dialogue and film (participation optional)					

Source: own illustration, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies.

## **B.2 Links to materials, documents and other resources on the Marine Regions Forum**

### **B.2.1 Video impressions from the expert workshop held in October 2018**

- ▶ Marine Regions Forum – High level international workshop 2018 ([long version](#))
- ▶ Marine Regions Forum – High level international workshop 2018 ([short version](#))

### **B.2.2 Corporate design and outreach materials**

- ▶ Marine Regions Forum [logo](#) and [claim](#)
- ▶ [PROG Marine Regions Forum logo \(light\)](#)
- ▶ [PROG Marine Regions Forum logo \(dark\)](#)
- ▶ [PROG Marine Regions Forum information note](#)

### **B.2.3 Conference materials and output documents of the Marine Regions Forum 2019**

- ▶ [Conference website](#)
- ▶ [Conference programme](#)
- ▶ [Conference agenda](#)
- ▶ [Key Messages from the Marine Regions Forum 2019](#)
- ▶ [Conference Report of the Marine Regions Forum 2019 \(Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies et al. 2019\)](#)

### **B.2.4 ENB+ report by IISD Reporting Services on the Marine Regions Forum 2019**

- ▶ [Web link](#) to daily reports and a summary report on the Marine Regions Forum 2019 by IISD Reporting Services

### **B.2.5 Conference trailer and videos from the Marine Regions Forum 2019**

- ▶ Marine Regions Forum 2019 – [Trailer](#)
- ▶ UN Secretary General's Special Envoy of the Ocean – [Welcome message for the Marine Regions Forum 2019](#)
- ▶ Marine Regions Forum 2019 – Conference impressions ([long version](#))
- ▶ Marine Regions Forum 2019 – Conference impressions ([short version](#))

### **B.3 List of organisations present at the Marine Regions Forum 2019**

- ▶ (TMG) - Think Tank for Sustainability GmbH
- ▶ AFB - French Biodiversity Agency
- ▶ Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz-Centre for Polar and Marine Research
- ▶ ARTPORT\_making waves
- ▶ Australian National University
- ▶ Barbara-Zürner Secondary School in Velten, Brandenburg
- ▶ Biodiversify
- ▶ BirdLife International
- ▶ Blue Action Fund
- ▶ Coastal Oceans Research and Development - Indian Ocean (CORDIO) East Africa
- ▶ Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation - CSIRO
- ▶ Convention on Migratory Species
- ▶ CSIR - National Institute of Oceanography
- ▶ Department of Environment, Zanzibar
- ▶ Eco Union
- ▶ Embassy of the Republic of Kenya, Berlin
- ▶ European Commission, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
- ▶ European Environment Agency
- ▶ Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, Germany
- ▶ Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany
- ▶ Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany
- ▶ Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany
- ▶ Finnish Environment Institute
- ▶ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations - FAO
- ▶ Forschungszentrum Jülich
- ▶ Freie Universität Berlin
- ▶ French Biodiversity Agency
- ▶ French Facility for Global Environment

- ▶ Future Earth Coasts
- ▶ GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel
- ▶ German Environment Agency
- ▶ German Marine Research Alliance
- ▶ GIZ - Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit
- ▶ Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative
- ▶ GRID-Arendal
- ▶ Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute
- ▶ Healthy Reefs Initiative, Smithsonian Institution
- ▶ HELCOM Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission
- ▶ High Seas Alliance
- ▶ Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies e.V.
- ▶ Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations - IDDRI
- ▶ Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO - IOC-UNESCO
- ▶ International Council for the Exploration of the Sea - ICES
- ▶ International Ocean Institute - IOI Southern Africa
- ▶ International Seabed Authority - ISA
- ▶ International Union for Conservation of Nature - IUCN
- ▶ Kiel University
- ▶ Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research
- ▶ Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research Warnemünde
- ▶ Mava Foundation
- ▶ Mediterranean Institute of marine and terrestrial Biodiversity and Ecology
- ▶ Mediterranean Protected Areas Network - MedPAN
- ▶ Ministry for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition, France
- ▶ Ministry of Climate and Environment, Norway
- ▶ Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Namibia
- ▶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, France
- ▶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chile
- ▶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Minister of International Development, Norway

- ▶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peru
- ▶ Ministry of Infrastructure and the Water Management - Rijkswaterstaat, the Netherlands
- ▶ Ministry of Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries, Mozambique
- ▶ Ministry of the Environment and Energy, Sweden
- ▶ Ministry of the Environment, Finland
- ▶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chile
- ▶ National Oceanography Centre
- ▶ National University of Ireland Galway
- ▶ Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union - NABU
- ▶ Network for Women in Marine Science
- ▶ Northwest Pacific Action Plan - NOWPAP
- ▶ Nova Southeastern University
- ▶ Ocean and Climate Platform
- ▶ Ocean Policy Research Institute, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation
- ▶ Oceanmind
- ▶ OSPAR Commission
- ▶ Pacific Community - SPC
- ▶ Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Kenya to UNESCO
- ▶ Plan Bleu
- ▶ REV Ocean
- ▶ Saami Council
- ▶ Sargasso Sea Commission
- ▶ Seascope Consultants
- ▶ Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme - SPREP
- ▶ Secretariat of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific - CPPS
- ▶ Seychelles' Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust
- ▶ South African Institute of International Affairs
- ▶ South African Permanent Mission to the United Nations
- ▶ South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation - SPRFMO
- ▶ Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center - SEAFDEC

- ▶ Stockholm Environment Institute - SEI
- ▶ Stop Illegal Fishing
- ▶ TBA21-Academy
- ▶ The Economist
- ▶ The Nature Conservancy
- ▶ The Ocean Foundation
- ▶ The Pew Charitable Trusts
- ▶ Tuna Compliance Network
- ▶ U.S. Department of State, Office of Marine Conservation
- ▶ UN Environment
- ▶ UN Environment - Abidjan Convention Secretariat
- ▶ UN Environment - Barcelona Convention Secretariat
- ▶ UN Environment - Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat
- ▶ UN Environment - Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia - COBSEA
- ▶ UN Environment - Nairobi Convention Secretariat
- ▶ UN Environment - The Tehran Convention Interim Secretariat - TCIS
- ▶ UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre - UNEP-WCMC
- ▶ UNFCCC Secretariat - UN Climate Change
- ▶ United Nations - ESCAP
- ▶ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs - UNDESA
- ▶ United Nations Development Programme - UNDP
- ▶ United Nations Office for Project Services - UNOPS
- ▶ Universidad Católica del Norte
- ▶ Universidade Eduardo Mondlane
- ▶ University College Cork
- ▶ University of British Columbia
- ▶ University of Helsinki
- ▶ University of Oldenburg
- ▶ University of São Paulo
- ▶ University of Strathclyde

- ▶ University of the South Pacific
- ▶ University of Vienna
- ▶ Utrecht University
- ▶ Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association - WIOMSA
- ▶ World Maritime University - WMU
- ▶ World Resources Institute
- ▶ World Wide Fund For Nature - WWF
- ▶ WWF Colombia
- ▶ ZUG - Zukunft Umwelt Gesellschaft

## C Appendix

### C.1 Marine Regions Forum Online Workshop

<b>Workshop title:</b>	Ocean Governance and COVID-19 – Building resilience for marine regions
<b>Date and time:</b>	28 January 2021, 14.00-17.30 (CET)
<b>Place:</b>	virtual meeting, facilitated through the video chat platform “zoom”

#### C.1.1 Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted millions of people, causing significant loss of human life and unprecedented economic and social disruption. Those who depend upon the ocean for their livelihoods are no exception - all marine regions have been affected by this crisis, requiring urgent responses from international, national and regional actors. Yet marine regions and regional ocean governance may also offer joint learnings about how to address some of the key impacts, e.g. through joint efforts in coastal and marine ecosystem restoration and community-led protection or cross-sectoral collaboration between neighbouring countries. Several initial assessments of the pandemic's impacts on the ocean economy and possible policy responses have already been published, but there have been few opportunities to share experiences and lessons learned from ongoing regional governance processes.

The aim of this workshop is to explore possible pathways to navigate the effects of the COVID-19 crisis in marine regions. It will bring together actors from different marine regions to (1) discuss the socio-economic and environmental impacts of COVID-19 in marine regions, (2) explore options for immediate responses and longer-term recovery, and (3) discuss impacts on regional cooperation and possible consequences for ocean governance.

This online workshop builds on the Marine Regions Forum 2019, which gathered over 200 international ocean actors to exchange experiences on inter-regional collaboration and discuss new approaches to advance and strengthen regional ocean governance processes. It is organized by the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), and TMG-Think Tank for Sustainability (TMG), together with the German Environment Agency (UBA), the German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the European Commission.

#### C.1.2 Agenda

*Check-in of participants: 13.45*

##### **Opening**

Moderators: Sébastien Treyer, IDDRI, and Alexander Müller, TMG

**14.00-14.15 Welcome and introduction by the moderators on behalf of IASS, IDDRI and TMG**

**14.15-14.30 Opening Statements**

- Lilian Busse, German Environment Agency (UBA)

- Veronika Veits, European Commission, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

#### **14.30-15.20 Setting the scene: the Ocean and the COVID-19 pandemic**

- Jane Lubchenco, Oregon State University and Co-Chair of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy Expert Group: Key note on ‘Sustainable and equitable blue recovery to the COVID-19 crisis’
- David Obura, Coastal Oceans Research and Development – Indian Ocean (CORDIO): Regional reflections from the Western Indian Ocean
- Panel discussants:
  - Kerstin Stendahl, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
  - Vera Agostini, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
  - Chip Cunliffe, AXA XL, Co-Chair Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance

#### **15.20-15.30 Break**

### **Group discussions**

#### **15.30-16.45 Parallel break-out group sessions**

Participants will be divided into three sub-groups that will be facilitated by co-chairs and a rapporteur. Output from the breakout groups will be further discussed and synthesized in a closing plenary.

- **Group 1: COVID-19 socio-economic impacts and environmental consequences in marine regions**

Session hosts: Barbara Neumann and Laura Weiland, IASS

Input statement by Maria Damanaki, The Paradise International Foundation / SYSTEMIQ

- What are the social and economic challenges facing marine regions due to COVID-19? How are ocean-dependent livelihoods and maritime sectors impacted? In this session, participants will jointly assess the socio-economic consequences of the current crisis on regional maritime sectors (e.g. tourism, fisheries, shipping) and discuss the consequences for the marine environment and environmental management (e.g. impacts on MPAs, monitoring control and surveillance, resource allocation).

- **Group 2: Exploring options for immediate responses and longer-term recovery**

Session hosts: Sebastian Unger, IASS and Glen Wright, IDDRI

Input statement by Charlotte Karibuhoye, MAVA foundation

- How could marine regions contribute to a “blue transformation” and drive the systemic change needed to build a sustainable ocean economy? This session will look into the state of play of the response plans being developed,

with a particular focus on sustainability and discuss possible opportunities for sustainable long-term recovery process.

— **Group 3: Regional cooperation in the time of pandemic and possible consequences for ocean governance**

Session hosts: Julien Rochette and Klaudija Cremers, IDDRI

Input statement by Lorna Inniss, Cartagena Convention Secretariat

- To what extent does the current crisis affect the regional cooperation, hamper the development of new activities, limit the cross-sectoral collaboration within regions, or lead to financial gaps? What actions should be taken to compensate these impacts? This group discussion will focus on the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for regional ocean governance frameworks and their institutions.

**16:45-17:00 Break**

*Closing*

Moderator: Alexander Müller, TMG

**17:00-17:30 Closing plenary**

- **Key messages from breakout groups by**
  - Maria Damanaki, The Paradise International Foundation / SYSTEMIQ
  - Charlotte Karibuhoye, MAVA foundation
  - Lorna Inniss, Cartagena Convention Secretariat
- **Key conclusions by the moderator and organisers**
- **Closing statements by**
  - Heike Imhoff, German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
  - Jacob Hagberg, Swedish Ministry of the Environment