



## IUCN's contribution to Transforming Our World

### Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources

*The new Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) sets the roadmap for integrated management approaches of natural systems, including oceans and coasts (Goal 14), as solutions to overcome poverty and foster social and economic development.<sup>1</sup>*

This information paper highlights critical IUCN efforts and contributions to achieving SDG 14. IUCN is working with many IUCN members and partners towards the conservation and sustainable use of our oceans.

#### 14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution

Through the project "Close the Plastic Tap" IUCN created a platform for private sector and civil society stakeholders to share best practices and promote **innovative cooperation** to fight marine plastic pollution at the global level. The resulting **Framework for Action** defined a set of recommendations and gathered a growing number of stakeholders committed to address and reduce plastic pollution in the oceans. The [Plastic Debris in the Ocean](#) analysis drew on existing expertise to characterize the environmental impacts associated with plastic pollution and existing initiatives to combat the problem.

IUCN is currently preparing a global study on Primary Microplastics in the Oceans: A Global Evaluation of Sources, which contributes to a better understanding of worldwide sources and tactics for preventing microplastics from entering the ocean. IUCN has built an **extensive scientific network** facilitating discussion to tackle this issue and to provide informed scientific knowledge to decision makers.

#### Recommendations for the Call for Action

- **The public sector:** Develop and promote strategies for plastic waste management; Engage in collaborative scientific research; Deposit schemes to encourage recycling;
- **Civil society:** Develop and promote plastic footprint tools; Make the plastic linkages in supply chains visible; Campaign to make plastic litter socially unacceptable; Identify and expose the largest plastic polluters;
- **The private sector:** Disclose plastic footprint; Improve plastic waste management; Reduce and recycle; Label plastic content;
- **Multi-stakeholders:** Scale up industry-wide solutions; Highlight and promote successful interventions; Campaigns to raise awareness; Educate consumers across the supply chain.

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<sup>1</sup> This document contains hyperlinks to various resources and publications.

**14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans**

Marine and coastal ecosystems provide a vital basis for the livelihoods of many coastal communities and all island communities. The recognition of the need for a combination of conservation, sustainable development and resilience is not yet formalized, even though the relationship between resilience and sustainable development is mentioned. Further **integration between the UN conventions** is needed.

The [restoration of mangroves](#) not only supports climate change adaptation but also generates nature-based solutions to climate mitigation. As does the restoration and conservation of other blue carbon ecosystems such as saltmarshes and seagrasses. IUCN is partnering with several governments, NGOs and other stakeholders through the International Partnership for **Blue Carbon**, [The Blue Carbon Initiative](#) (with Conservation International and IOC-UNESCO) and the [UNEP/GEF Blue Forest project](#). [Coastal “blue” carbon](#) – this revised guide discussed climate finance and other **financial mechanisms** to support coastal wetland programs and projects. Another report highlights the need and opportunities to include [coastal blue carbon ecosystems](#) in Nationally Determined Contributions as part of the UNFCCC. The [National Blue Carbon Policy Assessment Framework](#) helps countries identify which policy and financing mechanisms most suit their national context.

Holistic approaches to management of marine environments from the coastal zone to the outer boundary of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) are key. IUCN provides technical support towards more **integrated ocean management** through the [MACBIO project](#) in partnership with GIZ, SPREP and the governments of Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. The latter launched their first [Ocean Policy](#) in August 2016 and is now initiating its implementation. The Solomon Islands Cabinet decided (April 2016) to pursue integrated ocean governance, including marine spatial planning, to address the threats to their marine environment.

The European Commission’ [BEST initiative](#), supported by IUCN, promotes the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystem services as a basis for sustainable development in the **Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)**. Increasing the visibility of OCTs as **key contributors to the achievement of EU and global biodiversity targets** (e.g. EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and the CBD Aichi Targets) is achieved through the maintenance and restoration of biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystem services. They also act as demonstration sites for ecosystem-based approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as low-carbon economic models, all attained through **genuine partnerships**. Projects promote and support the integration of local-community knowledge for supporting a more up-to-date and efficient national natural resource management regulatory framework (PISUNA BEST project), and the adaptive management of fisheries and marine conservation in the face of climate change (BIOPELAGOS BEST project).

IUCN also leads a project in the Indian Ocean (MASPAWIO) that sets out to support the development of marine spatial planning in the region combining modelling for better taking into account the necessary **adaptive and iterative approach of MSP** in the face of climate change.

[Mangroves for the Future \(MFF\)](#), co-chaired by IUCN and UNDP, is a unique partner-led initiative to promote investment in coastal ecosystem conservation for sustainable development. MFF provides a **platform for collaboration** among the many different agencies, sectors and countries which are addressing challenges to coastal ecosystem and livelihood issues. The goal is to promote an integrated ocean-wide approach to coastal management and to building the resilience of ecosystem-dependent coastal communities. Mangroves are the flagship of the initiative, but MFF is inclusive of all types of coastal ecosystem, such as coral reefs, estuaries, lagoons, sandy beaches, seagrass and wetlands.

### Recommendations for the Call for Action

- Systematically integrate knowledge concerning **blue natural assets** and their contributions to sustainable development in the decision-making process; including
  - scenarios and insights on projected coastal and marine ecosystem development, highlighting vulnerabilities;
  - ecosystem and ecosystem services mapping
- Fast-track the implementation of **integrated and holistic ocean management actions through area-based tools** such as marine spatial planning, to address the multiple and conflicting uses;
- Include, in a synergistic and programmatic approach, **coastal and marine nature-based mitigation and adaptation** efforts into national strategies for blue sustainable development;
- Define a **Blue Strategy of Investment**, covering *inter alia* the Green Climate Fund (GCF), for better supporting resilience strategies and actions in SIDS and islands territories;
- Build on existing dialogues, such as the **CBD Sustainable Ocean Initiative**, that allow High-Level dialogues between States, the UN CBD Convention and UN Bodies., Build capacity to achieve better coordination of frameworks at national level, biodiversity mainstreaming in all sectors, and a connection with other relevant agendas (e.g. climate change);

### 14.3 Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels

IUCN continues to chair the Ocean Acidification international Reference User Group (OAIrUG) on behalf of the international community. The past three years have consolidated OAIrUG as a key **global knowledge exchange** and knowledge product body for **ocean acidification** ([Acting on Ocean Acidification](#)), bringing together leading scientists with policy advisers, decision makers, intergovernmental bodies and end users in a unique collaborative and global process. The future emphasis will be one of strengthening a **multi-stakeholder platform** that will continue the tradition of communicating the science of ocean acidification but now in the context of supporting effective mitigation and adaptation responses to ocean acidification within the growing 'blue alliance' of countries willing to take action.

IUCN is [explaining ocean warming](#): causes, scale, effects and consequences in its most recent report. This in-depth compilation explains why **ocean warming** should matter to everyone explaining what has happened as a result of the ocean warming since the 1970s. It catalogues the impacts on ocean ecosystems, species, and benefits derived from the seas, as well as the deep ocean. It sets out the likely nature and scale of changes yet to come as a major contribution to future thinking on this subject by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as well as governments, agencies and experts around the world.

Marine Protected Areas and climate change: Adaptation and mitigation synergies, opportunities and challenges; Simard, F., Laffoley, D. and J.M. Baxter (editors), IUCN, 2016

### Recommendations for the Call for Action

- **Better recognition of the scientific evidence** of global impacts on key marine and coastal organisms, ecosystems, and services.
- **Join up action across global conventions** with respect to climate change and environmental protection. The state of multilateral law is only now showing a growing "cross-fertilization" of ideas and concepts. More than dialogue between UN conventions, further integration of the issues have to be translated into joint programmes for avoiding duplication and improving effectiveness, including through the UNEP Regional Seas convention;

- **Fill gaps in protective regimes** under a new Implementing Agreement under the Law of the Sea, as well as expand global conventions to be truly ‘global’;
- **Re-evaluate the risks** that impacts from ocean warming and other stressors pose to humanity, species and ecosystems and their goods and services;
- **Update economic analysis** on the scale, nature and effects of ocean warming impacts.
- **Put forward rapid and substantial reductions of greenhouse gases**, and consider ocean impacts in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) (Paris Agreement);

**14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics**

**Rebuilding marine fishery stocks** to the minimum level required by the Law of the Sea Convention and the UN Fish Stock Agreement has become a priority. IUCN, through the [Fisheries Expert Group](#), is collaborating with FAO to develop a Fisheries Technical Paper on this subject, providing a synthesis as well as numerous case studies of rebuilding efforts with the view to extract lessons learned and policy guidance.

IUCN has been collaborating with US National Marine Fisheries Service economists since 2014 to **develop the use of financial instruments in the mitigation of by-catch impact on biodiversity** (book forthcoming). This represents a unique effort to match and harmonize fisheries management and biodiversity mitigation paradigms and processes, using economic instruments.

IUCN has been actively contributing in the implementation of the CBD Aichi Target 6 on achieving [sustainable fisheries](#) and towards the development of indicators for comprehensive reporting. Future work, as requested by the [CBD Secretariat](#), will also support the implementation of SDG 14.4.

#### **Recommendations for the Call for Action**

- Develop “slow fish” action with fishermen cooperatives to support local communities and alleviation of poverty. **Slow fish initiatives** such as the Chakai sustainable lobster farming in Sian Ka’an MAB reserve or the Cozumel marine protected area are good examples of smart solutions that meet both conservation and fisheries objectives. They are a tangible illustration that MPAs can also support economically valuable activities and have important social impacts.
- Tackle piracy with **regional remote surveillance teams** supporting national efforts to fight illegal fisheries.
- Support **improvement of legal frameworks** that ease judicial procedures and lead to arrests on the basis of satellite tracking and pictures.
- Set up a **regional platform** for joint actions between RFMOs and Regionals Seas;

**14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information**

IUCN and its World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) has long provided support to the implementation of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) “and other effective area based conservation measures” (Convention on Biological Diversity), including through its Strategy– [Towards networks of marine protected areas](#), guidance on [establishing resilient marine protected area networks, guidelines for applying the IUCN PA Management Categories to MPAs](#) and more recent work on [MPAs and climate change](#). To better meet global conservation targets, all types of MPAs must be used and combined with other area-based measures.

At the IUCN World Parks Congress 2014 in Sydney, governments made commitments towards enhancing ocean protection as a part of the Promise of Sydney. These included pledges by several small island states. Significantly, several of these countries made the case for embedding the **conservation of coastal and marine systems at the heart of their economic development strategies**. Last September, at the Pacific Ocean Summit held in Hawai'i, bold commitments have again been made highlighting the leading role of SIDS and Overseas Territories. Large oceanic entities are indeed key players in the global ocean governance arena and critical partners for the success of SDG 14. Examples include *Tainui Atea*, the large marine managed areas announced by French Polynesia, as well as work in Fiji, where the government is supported by IUCN in its efforts to implement **MPAs in 30% of** its ocean jurisdiction and in Tonga, where a multiple-use ocean plan is being implemented with IUCN's assistance through the [MACBIO](#) project.

IUCN engages to expand the scope of MPAs into the **High Seas** and for the World Heritage Convention to actually apply to the whole planet - [World Heritage in the High Seas: An Idea Whose Time Has Come](#). IUCN provides extensive [capacity building resources](#) and [support](#) to improve marine protected area governance, and partners in the **Blue Solutions Initiative** to promote sharing of knowledge for sustainable management and equitable governance of coastal and marine areas.

IUCN has established "[A Global Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas](#)" and supports implementation of the standard through the [Key Biodiversity Areas Partnership](#). Through the European BEST initiative more than 100 new coastal and marine KBAs have been identified in close collaboration with the local stakeholders; protected area coverage of marine Key Biodiversity Areas is used as the indicator to track progress towards SDG 14.5.

To date, marine protected areas within territorial waters had reached 12.7%<sup>2</sup>. The increasing MPA coverage should not however hide the fact that to be successfully achieved, the SDG target 14.2 implies effectiveness and enforcement of conservation efforts. IUCN has developed the [IUCN Green List](#) based on criteria that reflect sound planning and design, equitable governance, and effective management.

MPA effectiveness requires full participation by the communities living in and around them, and depends to a significant extent on the quality of management (of fisheries and the environment) around them.

### **Recommendations for the Call for Action**

During the last World Conservation Congress (WCC) IUCN members highlighted that "**scientific evidence supports full protection of at least 30% of the ocean as reviewed to reverse existing adverse impacts, increase resilience to climate change, and sustain long-term ocean health**".<sup>3</sup>

They also recalled the recommendation in the marine Cross-cutting Theme at the IUCN World Parks Congress (Sydney, 2014) to "*urgently increase the ocean area that is effectively and equitably managed in ecologically representative and well-connected systems of MPAs or other effective conservation measures. This network should target protection of both biodiversity and ecosystem services and should include at least 30% of each marine habitat. The ultimate aim is to create a fully sustainable ocean, at least 30% of which has no extractive activities.*"

- Make the safeguard of coastal and marine Key Biodiversity Areas through protected areas and other effective area-based conservation mechanisms a high priority;

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<sup>2</sup> update of the Protected Planet Report, December 2016, WCMC, IUCN

<sup>3</sup> <https://portals.iucn.org/congress/motion/053>

- Combine different MPA categories and better coordinate conservation efforts with other area-based management measures to ensure an integrated approach and supporting effectiveness of diverse MPAs (size, governance and regulation);
- Set up **common surveillance tools** for supporting enforcement both at the national and regional level, avoiding duplication of efforts and enabling SIDS to better access to remote sensing technology;
- Complete **legal frameworks for supporting investigation and enforcement** on the basis of remote sensing technology highly needed for fighting illegal activities in national waters and thus enforcing conservation efforts;
- Improve the **connectivity** based on the national and regional networks of MPA;
- Develop **climate proofing** of MPA networks in order to support resilience and adaptive management;
- Foster intra and interregional cooperation between **MPA networks**. The Transatlantic MPA project is in this regard a very interesting example for inspiring intercontinental dialogue and cooperation on marine conservation challenges.

#### 14.C Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of The Future We Want

IUCN has long been providing legal, scientific and policy expertise to the United Nations with respect to marine biodiversity in areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction (ABNJ). These contributions helped to lead, in 2015, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to adopt resolution 69/292 which launched a process to develop an international legally binding instrument under United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of ABNJ.

IUCN has provided extensive contributions to the two-year Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) process. With the assistance of its network of experts, IUCN has developed an **interactive Matrix of suggestions for a new instrument for ABNJ under UNCLOS**. The Matrix covers a range of options to assist government delegations with respect to: 1) Area-based Management Tools, including MPAs, 2) Environmental Impact Assessments and Strategic Environmental Assessments, 3) Marine Genetic Resources, including access and benefit sharing, and 4) Capacity Building and Technology Transfer. It also provides suggestions for: 5) General Principles, Obligations and Scope, and 6) Institution and Operational Aspects.

IUCN [Matrix](#) of options in an interactive format; [Submission](#) following the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee on the Development of an International Legally Binding Instrument under the UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of ABNJ; [Measures such as area-based management tool](#), including marine protected areas. Suggested responses to questions on area based management tools (ABMTs); [Cross-cutting issues](#). Suggested responses to questions regarding three cross-cutting issues based on the document entitled, "Chair's indicative suggestions of clusters of issues and questions to assist further discussions in the informal working groups at the second session of the Preparatory Committee"; [Lessons from the Sargasso Sea Challenges](#) to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction.

IUCN is leading a FFEM project on specific ecosystems ([seamounts, hydrothermal vents](#)) in ABNJ of the South West Indian Ocean (SWIO). The project seeks to increase the involvement of coastal states of the SWIO in **high seas governance**, which is essential to achieve conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of marine resources in ABNJ. Within the framework of this project



and in the broader context of international discussions, IUCN looks into **different approaches for the development of area-based management tools in ABNJ** at the regional level and developed possible scenarios for the SWIO.

### **Recommendations for the Call for Action**

At the World Conservation Congress, IUCN Members agreed to ask states to contribute to the work of the Preparatory Committee and to include the following measures in their recommendations to the General Assembly:

- the rapid identification, designation and effective management of an **ecologically representative and well-connected system of MPAs**;
- the assessment of the impacts of human activities, including **cumulative impacts** on ABNJ;
- the regulation of activities to prevent significant adverse impacts on the marine environment;
- effective **monitoring, compliance and enforcement**;
- **capacity building and the transfer of marine technology**; and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from marine genetic resources from ABNJ.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> WCC Resolution 47, Advancing conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.