LME24

ATHENS, GREECE• 14-16 May 2025

24th ANNUAL CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON

LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND COASTAL PARTNERS (LME24)

14 -16 May 2025

Athens, GREECE

Summary Report

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List of Acronyms

ABNJ	Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ATSEA	Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action
BBNJ	Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction
BGI IP	Blue and Green Islands Integrated Program
BNA	Blue Nature Alliance
BSC	Black Sea Commission
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization
CBD	Convention for Biological Diversity
CHO IP	Clean and Healthy Ocean Integrated Program
COBSEA	Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia
COP	Conference of the Parties
DIM	Data and Information Management
EBM	Ecosystem-Based Management
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECOPs	Early-career ocean professionals
EEZs	Exclusive Economic Zones
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
GCP	Global Coordination Project
GCRMN	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEFSec	GEF Secretariat
GESAMP	Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
GIA	Global Industry Alliance
HCMR	Hellenic Centre for Marine Research
ICPDR	International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
ICRI	International Coral Reef Initiative
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IMPAC	International Marine Protected Area Congress
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INMS	International Nitrogen Management System
IPs	Integrated Programs
ISA	International Seabed Authority
IUU	Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated
IW	International Waters
IW:LEARN	International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network.
IWC11	11th International Waters Conference
KM	Knowledge Management
LBS	Land-Based Sources
LMEs	Large Marine Ecosystems
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MOU	Memoranda of Understanding
MPAs	Marine Protected Areas
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
NAPs	National Action Plans

NbS	Nature-based Solutions
NBSAPs	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OECMs	Other Effective Conservation Measures
OFB	Office français de la biodiversité/French Office for Biodiversity
OFMP	Pacific Islands Oceanic Fisheries Management Project
PCBs	Polychlorinated biphenyls
PEMSEA	Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia
PM	Project Manager
RFMOs	Regional Fisheries Management Organizations
RSC	Regional Seas Convention
S2S	Source-to-Sea
SAP	Strategic Action Programme
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEDA	Socio-Ecosystem Diagnostic Analysis
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SOPM	Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management
SPA/RAC	Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas
TDA	Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP/MAP	UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO-IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNOC	UN Ocean Conference
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
URN	Underwater Radiated Noise
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Executive Summary

1. The **24th Large Marine Ecosystems (LME24)** consultation convened members of the LME community for its annual gathering, strengthening the global network of institutions and leaders responsible for managing marine ecosystems. The meeting serves as a key platform for enhancing cooperation, building connections among coastal and marine professionals, and promoting the sharing of knowledge, scientific methods, and innovative solutions. The title of this year's meeting was **"Thirty years of LME Collaboration: Advancing Policy Coherence and Integration"**.

2. The two-and-half-day meeting took place on 14-16 May 2025 at the Divani Hotel, Athens, Greece. Seventy-eight (78) participants attended the meeting, representing the GEF portfolio, implementing and executing agencies, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. The meeting set-up included presentations, facilitated panel discussions, and roundtable discussions.

3. The **specific objectives** of the LME24 meeting were to:
    - To highlight achievements and progress in regions through GEF-funded marine and coastal projects, disseminating best practices, discussing common challenges and emerging issues requiring common responses;
    - To foster engagement and new partnerships with a broader range of stakeholders, including the private sector;
    - To brainstorm on how to mainstream the LME concept;
    - To explore ways how to enhance policy coherence in the management LMEs and align LME-based initiatives with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs);
    - To further elaborate on the integrated approaches in the management of LMEs, such as the Source-to-Sea (S2S) and the Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (SOPM) approaches;
    - To consult the LME community on the GESAMP's work on LME designation and the enhancements of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Programme (TDA/SAP) methodology;
    - To inform of the status Integrated Programmes (IPs) and other programmes, including cross-cutting topics such as indicator frameworks and knowledge management platforms;
    - To inform on the strategic priorities for the GEF-9 replenishment cycle;
    - To consolidate inputs to key global dialogue events, namely 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3), the 11th International Waters Conference (IWC11) and the 6th International Marine Protected Area Congress (IMPAC 6).

4. During the opening session, the participants were warmly welcomed through a series of opening remarks acknowledging the longstanding LME community and portfolio and underscoring the enduring **value of the LME community as a collaborative platform** for advancing ecosystem-based, science-driven ocean governance in a

rapidly evolving global context. The growing relevance of the LME approach in responding to emerging international frameworks and commitments, including new ocean treaties, global biodiversity targets, climate action, and the sustainable blue economy agenda was highlighted. Strong emphasis was placed on the role of partnerships - among countries, GEF agencies, regional seas conventions, scientific institutions, and communities - in translating global commitments into regional and national action. Reflecting on **three decades of progress**, speakers called for deeper integration across sectors and governance scales, strengthened science–policy–society interfaces, sustained financial and institutional support, and renewed collective engagement to ensure that LMEs continue to deliver benefits for biodiversity, livelihoods, and sustainable development.

5. A recurring and powerful theme throughout the meeting was the value of **partnerships and collaboration** at three critical levels: global, regional, and national Several LME projects have demonstrated effective approaches to strengthening regional partnerships, while also highlighting the inherent complexity of regional collaboration. These experiences underscore that successful outcomes depend on strong coordination across sectors and among participating countries.

6. Implementing the LME approach requires **collaboration across ministries and sectors**, a practice that has already been demonstrated through the establishment of interministerial coordination committees in several contexts. In addition, effective partnerships extend beyond government actors. An example presented by the IMO illustrated how **engagement with the private sector** and alignment with MEAs can add strategic value, underscoring the importance of broader stakeholder inclusion.

7. As the **LME approach marks 30 years of collaboration**, this milestone presents an opportunity to reframe and revitalize the concept to enhance inclusivity, innovation, and responsiveness to emerging challenges. To support this evolution, there is a recognized need for the global LME practitioner's community to enable regular exchange of knowledge, experience, and innovative practices. **The GEF's sustained commitment to LMEs** remains a central pillar of this work, with support continuing into the GEF-9 period.

8. A key theme identified is the critical role of **data, information and knowledge management** in guiding decision-making and actions. The use of data in the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) process continues to provide a foundational basis for LME activities. At the same time, there is a growing need to generate accessible, policy-relevant data products that can be readily used by decision-makers. Data sharing remains both a challenge and an opportunity. Strategic Action Programmes (SAPs) offer an effective mechanism for establishing regional data-sharing frameworks.

9. Looking ahead, there is an increasing focus on leveraging new technologies. **Artificial intelligence and advanced data systems** are recognized as promising tools for enhancing marine ecosystem management and governance.

10. The importance of **integration and the adoption of systemic approaches** was highlighted as essential for addressing the interconnected challenges facing LMEs. Programmatic approaches, rather than fragmented projects, were recognized as particularly valuable. Integration is considered central to the success of an enhanced TDA/SAP process, as well as to the implementation of emerging tools such as Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and Source-to-Sea (S2S) approaches. These tools contribute to improved coordination across sectors and facilitate more effective management of upstream–downstream and land–sea interactions. Moving forward, continued efforts are needed to embed systemic approaches within both national and regional strategies

11. This year's meeting put specific attention to **mainstreaming the LME approach** into global policy initiatives and processes. The connections between the LME framework, LME projects, and global processes were discussed, highlighting how LME initiatives support regions and countries in achieving targets under MEAs at global, regional, and national levels. This demonstrated the value of the LME approach in translating international commitments into practical, on-the-ground action, emphasising the need for synergies and opportunities to mainstream LME approach wider.

12. Representatives of the private sector discussed what their role in managing LMEs is or can be, providing know-how and high-end services for better understanding, mapping, valuating, serving, cleaning and protecting LMEs. The role of the private sector as partner, knowledge broker and/or as co-financier can be further explored in existing and new LME projects.

13. During the meeting, four new **twinning exchanges** between LME projects under the IW:LEARN twinning program, were officially launched, aiming to enhance cross-project learning, knowledge exchange, and collaboration among LMEs, projects, and regions. In addition, the agenda also included the soft launch of the **Clean and Healthy Ocean Integrated Program (CHO IP)**, one of the 11 Integrated Programs under the GEF-8 cycle. The CHO IP focuses on strengthening integration across focal areas and addressing the global drivers of marine ecosystem degradation due to nutrient pollution, through more coordinated and holistic approaches.

14. In the last informative session, attention shifted to **upcoming global dialogues** where the LME community will play an important role. These included the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3, June 2025), One Ocean Science congress (June 2025), the Ocean and Climate Dialogue (June 2025), IMPAC6 (Senegal, 2027), as well as updates on the GEF-9 strategic directions.

15. The closing remarks reaffirmed the strength of the LME community, highlighting its extensive experience, commitment to science-based management, and openness to innovation. The outcomes of the meeting underscore the importance of building on this momentum to further strengthen partnerships, enhance data and knowledge management systems, and scale integrated approaches. Special tribute was paid to

Vladimir Mamaev (UNDP) for his decades of outstanding leadership and dedication to the LME process, from pioneering the first projects in the early 1990s to fostering strong partnerships globally, as he retires from his current role

16. The meeting was closed on 16 May 2025 at 12:00 hours.

Introduction

The Consultation Meeting on Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) and Coastal Partners plays a crucial role in the maintaining and developing collaborative efforts and partnerships within the framework of LMEs. This gathering serves as a dynamic platform for knowledge exchange and strategic discussions by actively engaging leaders in coastal management, marine science and biodiversity conservation. It provides a global forum for Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded and other marine and coastal practitioners, partner organizations and institutions, including Regional Seas organisations and Fisheries Management Organizations, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and regional community leaders. The primary goal is to exchange experiences and insights related to ecosystem-based management (EBM) of LMEs and effective ocean governance.

Specific objectives of the LME24 Meeting

The LME24 meeting focused on “Thirty years of LME Collaboration: Advancing Policy Coherence and Integration”. The specific objectives included:

- To highlight achievements and progress in regions through GEF-funded marine and coastal projects, disseminating best practices, discussing common challenges and emerging issues requiring common responses;
- To foster engagement and new partnerships with a broader range of stakeholders, including potential donors;
- To brainstorm on how to mainstream the LME concept;
- To explore ways how to enhance policy coherence in the management LMEs and align LME-based initiatives with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs);
- To further elaborate on the integrated approaches in the management of LMEs, such as the Source-to-Sea (S2S) and the Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (SOPM) approaches;
- To consult the LME community on the GESAMP’s work on LME designation and the enhancements of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Programme (TDA/SAP) methodology;
- To inform of the status Integrated Programmes (IPs) and other programmes, including cross-cutting topics such as indicator frameworks and knowledge management platforms;
- To inform on the strategic priorities for the GEF-9 replenishment cycle;
- To consolidate inputs to key global dialogue events, namely 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3), the 11th International Waters Conference (IWC11) and the 6th International Marine Protected Area Congress (IMPAC 6).

Agenda-at-a-glance

The overall agenda for the three days is shown below. The detailed agenda can be found in Annex i and the list of participants in Annex ii.

	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	14 May 2025	**15 May 2025**	**16 May 2025**
09.00-09.30	**Session 1: Opening**	Reporting Day 1 (Sessions 2B & 4B)	**Session 9: Mainstreaming the LME approach into global environmental and policy processes and initiatives** (panel)
09.30-10.00	**Session 2A**: **Progress in LME Implementation** (panel)	**Session 5A**: **Data, Information and Knowledge Management Strategies** (panel)	
10.00-10.30			**Session 10: Extending cooperation with the private sector** (panel)
10.30-11.00		Coffee break	
11.00-11.30	Coffee break	**Session 5B**: **Data, Information and Knowledge Management Strategies** (Round table discussions)	Coffee break
11.30-12.00	**Session 2B: How to advance the existing LME partnerships and overcome challenges they face** (Round table discussions)		**Closing**
12.00-12.30		**Session 6: Launch of twinning programmes**	
12.30-14.00	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
14.00-14.30	**Session 3: Supporting LME implementation** (panel)	**Session 7A**: **Science generation, uptake and communication** (panel)	Second LME Advisory Committee meeting
14.30-15.00			
15.00-15.30	**Session 4A**: **Towards more integrated approaches** (panel)	**Session 7B: How to communicate science better**	
15.30-16.00			
16.00-16.30	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	
16.30-17.00	**Session 4B: Supporting LME implementation and integration** (Round-table discussions)	**Session 7B: How to communicate science better (workshop cont.)**	
17.00-17.30		**Session 8: Engagement of the LME community in global dialogues**	
17.30-18.15	**Curbing land-based pollution to address marine hypoxia**: soft launch of the GEF-8 Clean and Healthy Ocean Integrated Program (CHO IP)	Reporting (5B & 7B) & wrap up	
18.15-19.15	Welcome cocktail		

Summary of the sessions

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY 14 MAY 2025

Session 1 - Opening

Session Chair: Julian Barbière (UNESCO-IOC)		
Objectives: To open the meeting, welcome the participants and set the scene for the subsequent sessions and discussions.		
Time	**Description**	**Name**
09.00-09.25	Welcome	• Tatjana Hema (Barcelona Convention Secretariat) • Muhammad Abdi Suhufan (Special Envoy of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia) • Ines Benabdallah (GEFSec) • Adnan Awan (UNDP) • Hartwig Kremer (UNEP) • Konstantina Toli (UNESCO-IOC, IW:LEARN)
09.25-09.30	Structure and objectives of LME24 meeting	• Claudette Spiteri (UNESCO-IOC,IW:LEARN)

Julian Barbière, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (UNESCO-IOC), opened the 24th Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) and Coastal Partners Annual Consultative Meeting by welcoming participants to Athens. He highlighted the meeting's long-standing tradition as a collaborative "family" gathering focused on knowledge exchange and strategic dialogue. He acknowledged the contributions of the advisory committee and partner agencies, emphasizing the growing relevance of the LME concept amid recent developments in ocean governance. These include the new High Seas Treaty, global biodiversity targets, and the integration of ocean issues into the climate agenda. He underscored the importance of ecosystem-based management (EBM) grounded in the best available science. Mr. Barbière noted the meeting's role as a platform for initiatives funded the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and collaboration with regional seas and fisheries management organizations. He thanked the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan and Barcelona Convention Secretariat for hosting the event, and reaffirmed IOC's commitment, as convener since 1995, to supporting countries through science-based and knowledge-driven approaches to ocean management.

Tatjana Hema, Barcelona Convention Secretariat, welcomed participants to Athens and expressed sincere appreciation to the LME community for accepting the invitation to host the meeting. She emphasized the global importance of LMEs for biodiversity, food security, livelihoods, and climate regulation, while noting the increasing threats they face

from pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss. UNEP's role as a key Implementing Agency for GEF-funded LME initiatives was highlighted, with particular pride in the Mediterranean Sea's role as a laboratory for innovation in integrated environmental management under the Mediterranean Action Plan and Barcelona Convention. The Mediterranean was presented as uniquely positioned in global marine governance, functioning simultaneously as one of the Regional Seas and a LME. Ms. Hema also outlined the Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea LME, launched in 2008, which includes multiple projects addressing EBM, the TDA, and cross-sectoral partnerships, offering lessons of global relevance. Her remarks concluded by underscoring that the health of LMEs is inseparable from the wellbeing of economies, communities, and the planet, and by reaffirming the hosts' commitment to sharing Mediterranean experiences, including successes, lessons learned, and challenges, to inform LME implementation worldwide.

Muhammad Abdi Suhufan, Special Envoy of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia, conveyed appreciation to the LME community for the invitation to participate in the LME24 meeting and expressed regret that the Minister could not attend in person. His statement highlighted Indonesia's engagement through the GEF-6 Common Fisheries Initiative Indonesia project, implemented in collaboration between the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries and GEF partners as part of the global LME program. He highlighted key achievements, including the establishment of new marine conservation areas in line with the 30×30 commitment, empowerment of fisherwomen and small-scale fishers in eastern Indonesia, recognition of indigenous peoples' conservation areas, creation of sustainable financing mechanisms for protected areas, and support for blue economy initiatives. The blue economy was presented as a national priority encompassing conservation expansion, community-based fisheries, sustainable aquaculture, and marine plastic reduction, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). While acknowledging ongoing challenges in implementing the blue economy in Indonesia, he emphasized the need for continued international and GEF support, including under future GEF cycles. Finally, he reaffirmed the commitment to sharing lessons learned from GEF-6 implementation, contributing to regional and global dialogue, and supporting preparations for the UN Ocean Conference to inspire improved marine and fisheries management at all levels.

Ines Benabdallah, GEF Secretariat, addressed the meeting and noted that this was her first LME consultation meeting. Speaking on behalf of the GEF Secretariat, she emphasized the shared commitment of participants to the conservation and sustainable use of LMEs during a pivotal year for ocean action. She highlighted GEF's long-standing investment in LMEs since its establishment in 1992 and its leadership in fostering transboundary cooperation in International Waters (IW). She reaffirmed GEF's commitment to supporting projects that protect the global commons as preparations begin for the GEF-9 replenishment toward 2030. Ms. Benabdallah stressed that this work is made possible through strong partnerships with agencies, governments, civil society, and the private sector, pointing to the LME community as a prime example of effective collaboration. She encouraged active engagement during the meeting to share knowledge, exchange experiences, and explore new avenues for cooperation. She concluded by thanking UNEP/MAP, UNESCO-IOC, and IW:LEARN for their support and

hospitality, expressing confidence that valuable outcomes would emerge from the consultation.

Adnan Awad, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), welcomed participants and highlighted that the meeting marks the celebration of 30 years of collaboration on LMEs. He emphasized that the meeting agenda provides an important opportunity to reflect on the significant contributions of the LME approach to ocean governance at international, regional, and national levels, including the role of science in informing policy, the science–policy interface, and the establishment of mechanisms for transboundary cooperation. Mr. Awad also stressed the importance of looking forward, noting sessions focused on addressing complex questions about the future of the LME framework and welcoming the formal establishment of the LME Advisory Committee since the previous meeting, which will play a key role in guiding future efforts. Acknowledging the uncertain global context, he emphasized the importance of strong partnerships, continued cooperation, and community support as essential to achieving SDG 14 and sustaining success over the coming decades. He closed his address by reaffirming UNDP's commitment to supporting the LME community and wishing participants productive deliberations and a successful meeting.

Hartwig Kremers, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), thanked the Mediterranean Action Plan for hosting the meeting in Athens. He highlighted several forthcoming global milestones of relevance to the LME community, including the upcoming United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7; 8 -12 December 2025) with discussions on a plastics agreement, the development of a new Medium-Term Strategy 2026-2029 and the 2026-2027 Programme of Work, continued support for the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Treaty, the upcoming UNOC3, and growing attention to ocean finance and transformational pathways toward sustainable blue economies. Drawing on recent discussions under the GEF-supported MedProgramme, Mr. Kremers reflected on 30 years of progress in science–policy interfaces and emphasized the growing importance of a broader science–policy–society interface that actively engages local communities, governments, and stakeholders across the full source-to-sea continuum. He called for deeper reflections during the LME24 meeting on what integration truly means, including the stakeholders involved, governance scales, and mechanisms needed to connect them effectively. The LME approach, together with Regional Seas Conventions (RSCs) and action plans, was underscored as pivotal in translating UNEP's normative work into operational practice through GEF partnerships, enabling concrete implementation at regional and national levels, and positioning the LME community as a key driver of evidence-based action in a year marked by critical global ocean-related decisions.

Konstantina Toli, UNESCO-IOC; IW:LEARN, warmly welcomed distinguished guests, colleagues, partners, and friends, noting both the significance of the meeting and the personal honour of hosting it in Greece. Her remarks highlighted IW:LEARN's long-standing support for the annual LME consultations as a platform for collaboration, capacity development, knowledge sharing, and the advancement of EBM and ocean governance worldwide. Hosting the meeting in Greece and the Mediterranean was described as highly symbolic, given the country's deep maritime heritage and leadership

in shipping and regional cooperation, as well as the Mediterranean's ecological and geopolitical complexity and its history of cooperative responses through frameworks such as the Barcelona Convention and the Mediterranean Programme. Looking ahead, Ms. Toli outlined the meeting's focus on translating knowledge into action, strengthening data-informed decision-making, and building long-lasting partnerships, with discussions spanning integrated approaches, blue finance, artificial intelligence for sustainability, and private sector engagement. Participants were encouraged to actively engage in panels, roundtables, and dialogues, reinforcing that LME24 is not only a forum for sharing experience but also for shaping future collective action to safeguard LMEs for present and future generations.

After the series of opening remarks, **Claudette Spiteri**, UNESCO-IOC; IW:LEARN, welcomed participants to the meeting, thanked the Mediterranean Action Plan and its colleagues for hosting and organizing the event in Athens. She outlined the agenda and structure for the next two and a half days, with "A" sessions denoting panel discussions and "B" sessions roundtable discussions. She emphasized the more interactive format with fewer formal presentations and greater use of roundtable discussions to encourage engagement and collaboration. Key objectives for the meeting were highlighted, including marking the 30th anniversary of the LME initiative, strengthening implementation, partnerships, and collaboration, showcasing recent achievements, advancing policy coherence with multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and promoting integrated approaches such as source-to-sea (S2S) and sustainable ocean planning and management (SOPM). Additional focus areas include data, information, and knowledge management, updates on GEF-9, and upcoming global ocean-related events. The remarks concluded with practical information on logistics and social activities planned during the meeting.

Session 2A - Progress in LME Implementation

Session Chair: Vladimir Mamaev (UNDP)		
Objectives: To present latest key highlights from the GEF projects		
Time	**Description**	**Name**
09.30-11.00	Build back a blue and stronger Med (10685)	Romain Renoux (MedFund) Carole Martinez (MedPan)
	Blue Nature Alliance (10375)	Madeline Beattie (Conservation International)
	Common Fisheries Initiative Indonesia (9129)	Syahril Abd Rauf (CFI Indonesia; Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Indonesia)
	Sustainable management of the living marine resources of the WCPFC (10394)	Lisa Buchanan (OFMP; FFA)
	REBYC-III CLME+ (10857)	Nerissa Lucky (University of the West Indies)
	MedProgramme: ICZM, governance & climate change (9687) & SSCF (9670)	Djurdjina Bulatovic (Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development, Montenegro)
	Gulf of Mexico SAP LME (6952)	Margarita Garcia; Sergio Bernabe Garzon (GoM SAP; UNOPS)
	Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action (6920)	Handoko Adi Susanto (PEMSEA)

Vladimir Mamaev, UNDP, opened the session and introduced its main objective to showcase real achievements from active and recently completed LME projects. Eight projects were selected to present during this panel while others would contribute to subsequent sessions. He reflected on the early history of the LME process, noting that while 1995 is often cited as its starting point, the first GEF LME project was launched in the Black Sea in 1993. Finally, he acknowledged long-standing contributors present in the audience.

Romain Renoux (MedFund) and **Carole Martinez** (MedPan) jointly presented the *Build back a blue and stronger Med* project, highlighting an innovative partnership between a regional conservation trust fund and a network of marine protected area (MPA) managers operating within the framework of the Barcelona Convention. The project supports effective MPA management across six Mediterranean countries by financing day-to-day operational costs, strengthening governance, and building capacity among managers and stakeholders, while also contributing to fisheries management and regional and global conservation targets. Key achievements include support to multiple MPAs, training of managers, improved data for regional reporting, promotion of the Mediterranean MPA Roadmap through a call for commitments, and the development of a gender mainstreaming strategy, with lessons and approaches intended to be scaled up and shared beyond the Mediterranean region.

Madeline Beattie, Conservation International, presented an update on the *Blue Nature Alliance*, highlighting progress at the midpoint of implementation toward its goal of catalyzing large-scale and effective ocean conservation in support of the 30×30 target. Founded on a partnership-driven model led by Conservation International and The Pew Charitable Trusts, and supported by core partners including the GEF, the Alliance works globally to expand and improve the management of marine protected and conserved areas. To date, the initiative has grown to a network of more than 100 partners and is supporting over 160 conservation areas across 42 engagements, contributing to the expansion of more than 250 million hectares of new ocean conservation areas and improved management across an additional 125 million hectares. Ms. Beattie emphasized that strong, flexible partnerships with governments, communities, Indigenous leaders, NGOs, and funders are central to the Alliance's success, enabling tailored, site-based support and acting as a multiplier for conservation impact. She emphasized interest in further collaboration, learning exchanges, and twinning with the wider LME and IW:LEARN community.

Syahril Abd Rauf, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Indonesia, outlined progress under the GEF-6 *Coastal Fisheries Initiative (CFI) Indonesia* project, implemented since 2019 through the collaboration between the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries and multiple national and international partners, with completion expected in 2026. The project focuses on Fisheries Management Areas 715, 717, and 718 and is structured around four components addressing policy and enabling conditions, tools for effective MPA management and small-scale fisheries, and results-based knowledge management. Key achievements include the establishment and expansion of MPAs contributing to the 30×30 target, recognition of indigenous peoples' conservation areas through other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), development of value-added small-scale fisheries led by women, improvements in fisheries data and management systems, skills training for fishers, and pilot payment-for-ecosystem-services mechanisms. The project was presented as a replicable model for sustainable coastal fisheries management that integrates conservation, livelihoods, and good governance, with a call for continued collaboration and support, including under future GEF cycles, to advance SDG 14.

Lisa Buchanan, Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency, presented an overview of the long-standing work of the *Pacific Islands Oceanic Fisheries Management Project (OFMP)* supporting Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the sustainable management of highly migratory tuna stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. Now in its third phase since its launch in 2005, the project works closely with regional organizations and 14 Pacific countries to strengthen fisheries governance, science, and compliance. She highlighted a recently developed lessons-learned report capturing two decades of experience, emphasizing three key insights: i. the critical but challenging nature of regional collaboration, ii. the need for long-term investment in capacity building, and iii. the importance of adaptability and innovation in the face of climate change and evolving risks. Ms. Buchanan underscored that OFMP's success is driven by Pacific leadership and regional cooperation, contributing to global initiatives in reducing illegal fishing and ensuring sustainable tuna fisheries for future generations.

Nerissa Lucky, University of the West Indies, presented *REBYC-III CLME+ project* and its approach to reducing bycatch and improving sustainability. This is done by working directly with fishers to modify fishing gear and adopt improved fishing practices that maintain livelihoods while reducing impacts on turtles, marine mammals, juvenile fish, and abandoned or lost gear. Implemented over four years in Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, and Ghana, the project tests practical, low-cost technologies for longline, gillnet, and troll fisheries with the intention of scaling successful solutions regionally. A case study from Trinidad and Tobago highlighted collaborative trials of green LED lights on gillnets to reduce sea turtle bycatch, showing promising reductions in turtle interactions alongside improved catches and strong fisher support due to safety and economic benefits. The project also promotes alternative and more selective gears, such as hook-and-line fishing, managed fish aggregating devices, and improved bait fisheries, with a focus on fisher-led adoption and scaling through demonstrated benefits.

Djurdjina Bulatovic, Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development, Montenegro, featured the first public presentation of a video showcasing results from the *MedProgramme Child Project 2.1*, implemented by PAP/RAC, highlighting the development of an integrated coastal management plan for the Boka Kotorska Bay /Bay of Kotor in Montenegro. The video illustrated how the project addresses the challenge of balancing coastal development with the protection of natural

and cultural ecosystems through strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and prioritization of actions. It emphasized the importance of defining clear implementation responsibilities, timelines, and funding sources to move from planning to action. The Boka Kotorska case was presented as a practical and replicable model for integrated coastal management that can be applied in other Mediterranean coastal areas.

Margarita Garcia and **Sergio Bernabe Garzon**, UNOPS, presented the *Strategic Action Programme for the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem* project, focusing on three core components: i. improving water quality through ecosystem-based pollution reduction, ii. rebuilding and sustainably managing marine living resources through strengthened fisheries governance, and iii. conserving and restoring coastal and marine ecosystems through community involvement and enhanced trilateral cooperation among Mexico, the United States, and Cuba. Key achievements include state-level water quality report cards, strengthened sustainable fisheries regulations, establishment of fishing refuges, development of public policies on land-based marine pollution, and expanded collaboration on MPA networks. The project emphasizes strong multi-agency coordination, stakeholder participation, regional knowledge exchange with other International Waters (IW) projects, and inclusive governance to address transboundary challenges while improving socio-economic conditions for coastal communities.

Handoko Adi Susanto, Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), gave an update on the Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action (ATSEA), highlighting its transition from a project-based initiative to a formal, long-term regional collaboration among Australia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste following the Sydney Ministerial Declaration in December 2024. He outlined the adoption of a 10-year Strategic Action Programme addressing four priority transboundary issues (marine plastics and ghost nets, oil spills, illegal and small-scale illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and the decline of endangered species and critical habitats), supported by cross-cutting objectives on governance, climate change, and mainstreaming. A regional governance mechanism has been established, with Indonesia committed to hosting the regional secretariat in Bali, and interim operations supported through country contributions and partners. Initial implementation has begun, particularly on addressing ghost nets with financial support from Australia, while further resource mobilization and partnerships are being sought to advance the remaining programme components.

Session 2B - How to advance the existing LME partnerships and overcome challenges they face

	Topic	Facilitator
11.30-12.30	i. Governance issues	Isabelle Vanderbeck (UNEP)
	ii. Project management issues	Vladimir Mamaev (UNDP)
	iii. Inclusion (youth, gender, Indigenous People)	Marialena Vyzaki (FAO) Senem Berber (MedProgramme)
	iv. Stakeholder Engagement	Dimitris Faloutsos (GWP)
	v. Partnerships	Michail Marios Scoullos (MIO-ECSDE; GWP-Med; WES-BCA)

i. Governance issues

Facilitator: Isabelle Vanderbeck (UNEP); **Rapporteur:** Eduard Interwies (InterSus)

Question 1: A multi-level water governance from national to regional is complex but essential for effective transboundary water resources management. What are key elements of **successful polycentric governance** in international waters management?

Main outcomes:

Inclusive coordination mechanisms:

- Establish high-level committees or platforms where authorities meet to discuss common issues and coordinate decision-making (national level)
- Integrate regional bodies like Regional Seas Conventions, RFMOs, or watershed authorities (international level)

Clear roles and financing:

- Define clear mandates across local, subnational and national levels re governance (while taking decisions at the lowest level possible/reasonable: subsidiarity)
- Implementing authorities need to be involved in decision-making; financing should follow the mandate (national-subnational level)

Stakeholder integration + communication:

- Engage all relevant actors through working groups at appropriate level - e.g., fisheries, ports, shipping—so sector-specific concerns are not overlooked
- Foster horizontal (inter-ministerial) and vertical (national-subnational) coherence

Soft coordination mechanisms:

- Invest in relationships, communities of practice, and informal networks to ensure resilience across political (and linked) institutional change

Knowledge exchange and data sharing:

- Ensure sharing of best practices and build (or foster is existing) communities of technical practitioners

Question 2: How would you describe the **main challenges** in transboundary cooperation?

Main outcomes:

Fragmentation and institutional silos:

- Lack of awareness or disconnect between national (and sub-national) institutions and regional mechanisms
- Ministries often act in isolation without coordinated interagency platforms

Engagement gaps:

- Local or subnational implementers are often excluded from decision-making processes; thus, decisions taken at regional or national levels may lack ownership or follow-through locally

Political instability:

- Changes in leadership or political priorities can jeopardize continuity and commitment (e.g. change of institutional structures/responsibilities/interaction, financing cuts etc.)

Communication misalignment:

- Generic or misdirected engagement efforts ("not all emails should go to everybody") reducing involvement of stakeholders

Question 3: What are **good practices and proven solutions** to ensure sustainability of transboundary governance mechanisms over time and beyond project life cycles?

Main outcomes:

Legal anchoring and regional frameworks:

- Embed project activities in legally binding agreements or policy instruments (e.g., Regional Seas SAPs)
- Ensure that project actions align with national and regional plans to outlive project cycles

Soft, dynamic mechanisms:

- Adaptable exchange platforms that can continue despite changing priorities or political leadership

Strengthen financing:

- Form/strengthen alliances with the private sector in order to strengthen financial flows beyond donor-supported phases

Fast-tracking + success through demonstration:

- Move ahead with implementation at subnational/local level with willing institutions (creating a pull-effect for other institutions)
- Leverage success stories at local/municipal levels to inspire replication and peer learning

Knowledge hubs and platforms (e.g. IW:LEARN):

- Strengthen/continue regional knowledge centers for best practice sharing, data exchange, and peer support.

Group
i
GOVERNANCE

ii. Project Management issues

Facilitator: Vladimir Mamaev (UNDP); **Rapporteur:** Richie Saville (Subsee AI)

Question 1: Key challenges faced in managing your projects?

Main outcome

Coordination and Communication is the key challenge facing Project Managers (PMs)

- between government departments/ministries (e.g. fisheries and environment)
- between countries and regions
- address overlap between departments, and political agendas

Key source of friction for project delivery:

- slows the time to get decisions
- different processes for decision-making/approvals
- bottlenecks for key project pathways

Much of the solution relies on the experience of PMs - knowing how to avoid the problem sources (see also outcome 2 below which can help with this)

Question 2: What help is needed, can GEF/IWLearn provide?

Main outcome

Access to Project Management expertise (a key ask from the PMs):

- to get fast answers to questions
- for twinning/mentoring
- for getting direct assistance

Solutions discussed included:

- online forum - to post questions and get answers
- access to roster of specialists/consultants (both online direct help on ground)
- access to other PMs facing similar issues (LME and regional meetings provide this)

GEF can provide access to a pool of experienced former PM; also potential help on costs -e.g. IW:LEARN can offer 50:50 support for twinning with existing similar projects

Question 3: Other issues/comments (general discussion vs. specific question)

Main outcome

Understanding of GEF methods and language:

- esp. getting up to speed/learning for newer PMs
- takes time, esp. at start of project
- again access to and meeting with other PMs helps here

Optional training for PMs:

- could be required but do not want to over-burden PMs
- this need can also be met by access to experts
- need to tap existing IW:LEARN resources, e.g. the PM Manual (being updated later this year)

Specific mention of challenge related to the *duration* of projects:

- 3 years is too short (comment that this was to fit GEF cycles) so very common request for extensions
- suggested any project over 5M budget should be minimum 5 year
- avoid being pushed to spend budget

iii. Inclusion (youth, gender, Indigenous People)

Facilitator: Marialena Vyzaki (FAO) & Senem Berber (MedProgramme); **Rapporteur:** Carole Martinez (MedPan)

Question 1: How can we accelerate gender inclusion in biodiversity protection of LMEs?

Main outcome

- Understand that the cultural dimension is not the same across all regions, so need to address certain beliefs that prevent women from participating in biodiversity protection in LMEs (e.g. women not allowed to go on a boat, based on traditional beliefs).
- Introduce mixed teams of patrol officers, because fishermen are less aggressive when they see women patrol officers.
- Promote women's economic empowerment as traditional household managers to spread the concept of "sustainable fisheries" (e.g. in Morocco)
- Encourage women to work in MPAs through diversification of economic activities, and not just on local small-scale fisheries, but also through eco-tourism
- Encourage women to train their children to become "environmental ambassadors" through an inter-generational approach.
- Develop case studies to highlight the local context
- Strengthen collaboration with local government, fisheries union, businesses to enhance women's participation in decision-making processes; emphasize on women leaders/entrepreneurs.
- Launch studies on women's cooperatives, Fair Trade etc.
- Disseminate women's stories through social media to promote women's inclusion.

Question 2: What can women do to drive climate change adaptation approaches from reactive to proactive? What barriers do women encounter and how can these be tackled?

Main outcome

- Promote artisanal women fisheries delta in Senegal (Saloum Delta) in parallel with mangrove restoration.
- Key barriers: lack of access to decision-making bodies, women feel removed from decision-making centers/power; also, women are more affected by climate impacts as compared to men; limited access of land by women; women need access to finance mechanisms.

Question 3: Can you share your experience from designing and monitoring gender indicators?

Main outcome

- Projects usually adopt a rather simplistic “blind” approach, often focusing on women/men beneficiaries
- Limited use of qualitative indicators, which, however, can tell a better story and enhance our understanding of gender disparities
- Based on our experience from water quality monitoring: we need to ask the question “what are the consequences for women involved in those activities?” (limited school attendance, time poverty)

iv. Stakeholder Engagement

Facilitator: Dimitris Faloutsos (GWP-Med)

Question 1: What are the elements that a stakeholders engagement plan should contain to so as it creates the conditions for (i) achieving the envisaged projects’ outcomes/results (ii) sustaining these outcomes/achievements?

Main outcome

Know your stakeholders

- Identify key stakeholders and understand their priorities, needs, and influence.
- Maintain regular communication and build strong, trust-based relationships.
- Pay attention to “champions” who can support and sustain the project outcomes.

Design from the stakeholders’ perspective

- Ensure that engagement plans consider stakeholders’ expectations and benefits.
- Include mutually beneficial arrangements that clarify “what’s in it for them.”

Integrated and cross-cutting approach

- Embed stakeholder engagement throughout all project components rather than as an add-on (“parking lot” activity).
- Treat it as an ongoing activity aligned with project objectives.

Co-leadership and shared ownership

- Share responsibility with stakeholders to increase buy-in and sustain long-term impact.

Structured rules of engagement

- Clearly define engagement protocols, responsibilities, and expectations from the start.

Question 2: What are the main issues related to stakeholders engagement in the Project implementation phase?

Main outcome

- Gap between project design and implementation: Documents may be outdated or irrelevant due to time gaps (e.g., three years) or different teams involved in writing and implementing the project.
- Complexity of multi-sectoral and intersectoral arrangements: Projects often operate in “International Waters” with cross-cutting issues, creating challenges in coordination and alignment among stakeholders.

Question 3: What does it take to create scaled partnerships for action including stakeholders from different sectors?

Main outcome

- Structured engagement: Develop clear rules of engagement for all stakeholders, including government, private sector, and community representatives.
- Emphasize mutual benefits: Identify and communicate the value proposition for each stakeholder to encourage collaboration.
- Share responsibility and co-lead: Promote shared ownership of outcomes to strengthen commitment and sustainability.
- Build relationships and maintain champions: Focus on long-term relationship management with key stakeholders to ensure ongoing support.
- Take examples from strong models: The International Maritime Organization (IMO) provides an example of a structured approach to engaging private sector stakeholders.

v. Partnerships

Facilitator: Michail Marios Scoullos (MIO-ECSDE; GWP-Med; WES-BCA); **Rapporteur:** Konstantina Toli (UNESCO-IOC, IW:LEARN)

Question 1: To advance the existing LME partnerships, we need to first recognise, know and understand how the challenges they face can be properly addressed. The parallel sessions are addressing some of these challenges. How can we turn related weaknesses into opportunities and strengths?

Main outcome

- Many current weaknesses stem from fragmented coordination — this can be addressed by promoting complementarities and clearer role division among actors.
- Building trust through consistent collaboration and shared ownership can help turn competition into cooperation.
- Moving beyond formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to co-created and adaptive programming is essential for sustained engagement.
- RSCs are well-positioned to convene and align multiple initiatives across sectors and geographies.
- Holding joint meetings among all projects operating in the same LME helps synchronize actions and build synergies.
- National-level intra-country coordination must be strengthened before expecting cross-country coherence.
- Weak private sector involvement can become a strength if we shift the view of businesses from "donors" to strategic partners with mutual benefits.
- Gaps in understanding and technical alignment should be addressed through targeted capacity building efforts for all partners.

Question 2: How can we achieve effective cooperation and continuity among the different components of the partnership? (ex. agencies, states, NGOs/CSOs, etc.)

Main outcome

- Foster buy-in and ownership from the beginning of project and partnership design, rather than post-hoc consultation.
- Flexibility in project design is key to accommodate diverse actors and changing priorities.

- Invest in neutral regional dialogue platforms that facilitate ongoing discussion and alignment without bias toward any one agency.
- Promote regional twinning approaches (e.g., between Marine Protected Areas) as concrete, scalable partnership models.
- Emphasize coordination within countries to ensure national actors present unified positions in regional and international settings.
- Ensure representation and inclusion of non-state actors, while addressing challenges around standards and procedures (e.g., due diligence for private sector actors).
- Recognize that partnerships take many forms: regional frameworks, project-based coalitions, and thematic or "thought" partnerships. All are valid and need tailored coordination.

Question 3: Who can undertake the responsibility of ensuring this cooperation (e.g. a partnership Standing Committee)?

Main outcome

- A **Steering Committee or coordinating body** with **equal representativity** from sectors and regions could ensure continuity and accountability.
- Rather than placing responsibility with a single agency, a **shared architecture with "circles of responsibility"** could ensure layered and adaptive oversight.
- Such a body must be empowered to guide dialogue, not just administrate—acting as a **neutral convener** rather than a project implementer.
- To be effective, this mechanism must be matched with **flexible funding** and **long-term political support**

Key Recommendations:

1. Promote partnerships beyond individual projects — foster long-term regional frameworks and communities of practice.
2. Ensure good design and co-creation of projects from the outset to align expectations and resources.
3. Establish a coordinating body or standing committee with balanced representation (agencies, states, civil society, private sector).
4. Engage the private sector as a partner, not just a donor — identify co-benefits, shared goals, and strategic contributions beyond funding.
5. Focus on matching capacities to needs, acknowledging that these vary across actors and levels (local, national, regional).

Session 3 - Supporting LME implementation

Session Chair: Ines Benabdallah (GEFSec)		
Objectives: To inform on the latest processes and activities in support of the LME implementation		
Time	**Description**	**Name**
14.00-15.00	Update on GESAMP Scoping Paper on Scientific Support to LMEs	David Vousden (GESAMP) (online)
	TDA/SAP enhancements (S2S & MSP/SBE)	Ruth Mathews (Currents Converge) Louise Lieberknecht (GRID-Arendal)
	Leverging expertise and contribution from the industry/private sector expertise in support of LMEs	Lilia Khodjet El Khil (IMO)
	IW:LEARN activities	Claudette Spiteri (UNESCO-IOC; IW:LEARN)

David Vousden, GESAMP, provided an update on a GESAMP-led scoping exercise initiated at 50th annual session of GESAMP (September 2023; Kingston, Jamaica) to assess how GESAMP could better support the LME community of practice, following a request from UNDP and formal adoption by the GESAMP Executive Committee. The presentation outlined five areas of review: i. progress on recommendations from the 2017 LME report, ii. the adequacy of data and emerging issues in the TDA/SAP process, iii. stronger integration of the LME approach into global ocean agreements, iv. reassessment of LME designation criteria, and v. potential long-term advisory roles for GESAMP. Key findings emphasized the critical importance of ecological connectivity, including across Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and into areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), and the need to better align LME processes with global frameworks such as Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD), regional seas, and the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement). Proposed next steps include exploring the designation of LMEs in ABNJ (potentially piloted in areas such as the Sargasso Sea) and reviewing existing high seas mandates to ensure coherence with current international agreements.

In reaction to the presentation, a participant raised a question regarding the integration of underwater radiated noise reduction into regional action plans. Mr. Vousden noted that GESAMP has a dedicated task team (possibly upgraded to working group) focusing on underwater noise and light, with a close link to IMO, but indicated that current SAPs may not specifically address noise - also referring to the 2017 report where it was not a major focus.

Another question referred to the recent announcement by US to begin seafloor mineral extraction in high seas/international waters. Mr. Vousden highlighted potential repercussions for LME projects, noting that such actions could challenge international law

and UNCLOS principles, possibly encouraging other countries to act similarly. He emphasized the uncertainty regarding how the International Seabed Authority (ISA) would respond and the broader implications for deep sea governance.

Ruth Mathews, Currents Converge, gave a presentation focusing on integrating a source-to-sea (S2S) management perspective into the TDA/SAP methodology, emphasizing a holistic approach connecting land, freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems. Key points included defining system boundaries to account for upstream-downstream linkages, collecting data to understand these connections, and identifying transboundary stressors affecting the entire system. The approach encourages inclusive stakeholder engagement across sectors, analysis of policy and legal frameworks, and prioritization of actions that generate system-wide benefits. Additional guidance covers finance, capacity building, and monitoring to ensure sustainable management, while case studies and practical tools are provided to support implementation and adaptive management of S2S systems within TDA/SAP processes.

In reaction to the presentation, a participant addressed concerns about the practical challenges of integrating S2S management with LME management, given differences in stakeholders, legal frameworks, and focus areas. Ms. Mathews emphasized that S2S integration does not require managing everything, but rather prioritizing actions in the LME while considering upstream river basin impacts that could affect LME goals. The approach ensures that potential opportunities or risks from upstream activities, such as changes in water quality, pollutants, or sediment, are not overlooked, thereby supporting more effective achievement of LME objectives.

During the discussion, participants raised concerns about managing large river basins and the challenges of addressing vast catchment areas, using the Mississippi River and its impact on the northern part of the Gulf of Mexico hypoxia as an example. Ms. Mathews emphasized that S2S management does not require handling the entire basin but encourages forming upstream-downstream partnerships. She cited the Danube–Black Sea collaboration as an example, suggesting that the Gulf of Mexico could similarly engage stakeholders and develop cooperative frameworks to manage upstream inputs effectively, fostering healthier outcomes for the LME without shouldering the entire burden alone.

The discussion emphasized the importance of defining clear entry points when applying S2S and system thinking approaches in LMEs. While integrating the entire system may seem overwhelming, practical entry points, such as the LME itself or the relevant river basin affecting coastal communities, allow for targeted and manageable action. The initial step of defining the system was underscored as critical, as it shapes stakeholder engagement, policy alignment, and institutional coordination. Ongoing efforts in the MedProgramme, in collaboration with PAP/RAC, UNIDO, and UNESCO, aim to develop a S2S management plan and establish criteria for defining the system boundaries.

Louise Lieberknecht, GRID-Arendal, updated the participants on the status of the work on enhancing the TDA/SAP guidance to better integrate considerations of marine spatial planning (MSP). The focus is on identifying points of contact and overlap between the TDA/SAP process and MSP, enabling practitioners to leverage existing MSP initiatives or

support new ones. Given practical challenges, including national sovereignty and differing scales of implementation, the proposed approach is to add an annex to the TDA/SAP manual, providing prompts and questions at each stage of the TDA and SAP. This annex aims to help users identify relevant MSP processes, data, goals, gaps, and whether spatial management is needed for transboundary issues, while offering guidance on influencing or establishing MSP initiatives. Feedback from participants was encouraged to refine this draft enhancement.

Lilia Khodjet El Khil, International Maritime Organization (IMO), presented on IMO's collaboration with the private sector through the Global Industrial Alliance (GIA) for marine biosafety. The GIA engages private companies to support IMO's guidelines on biofouling management, promoting best practices and raising awareness on threats to marine biodiversity. Established in 2020 with four members, the GIA now includes 15 companies, contributing funding, expertise, and technology for demonstration projects, policy support, and outreach activities. Key outputs include technical publications, pilot projects, and educational material linking biofouling management to greenhouse gas reduction. The GIA operates through a structured task force and secretariat managed by IMO, ensuring coordinated implementation and stakeholder engagement. Looking forward, the GIA is sustainable beyond the current project, continuing to support IMO initiatives in marine biosafety and environmental protection, and is expected to contribute to upcoming projects and new IMO conventions.

Claudette Spiteri (UNESCO-IOC, IW:LEARN) provided an overview of IW:LEARN's support to LMEs along its three main service lines: i. knowledge management and communication, ii. capacity development, and iii. networking and partnership building. Under knowledge management, IW:LEARN is updating manuals on project management and TDA/SAP, developing guidance notes on topics such as S2S and financing, compiling tool inventories, updating the LME bibliography, maintaining the Marine Hub and monthly portfolio bulletins. Capacity development includes targeted training on MSP, with sessions recently held in Panama and upcoming online training for West Africa, as well as the ongoing online LME course through the University of Cape Town and twinning programs with LME projects. The networking pillar involves regional ocean governance dialogues, the establishment of an LME Advisory Committee, and participation in global events such as the Ocean Decade Conference in 2024 and upcoming UNOC sessions to strengthen LME collaboration and knowledge sharing in June 2025.

Session 4A - Towards more integrated approaches

Session Chair: Isabelle Vanderbeck & Hartwig Kremer (UNEP)		
Objectives: To highlight progress and challenges in the application of more integrated approaches		
Time	**Description**	**Name**
15.00-16.00	S2S guidance (UNECE; IW:LEARN)	Ruth Mathews (Currents Converge)
	Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (SOPM)	Fanny Douvere (UNESCO-IOC)
	Clean and Healthy Oceans IP	Lorenzo Galbiati (FAO)
	Integrated management approaches from source to sea	Dimitris Faloutsos (GWP)
	South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand SAP (5538)	Margarita Victoria Caballa (COBSEA)
	From Common Oceans to ABNJ/BBNJ	Viktoria Varga Lencses (FAO)

After an initial interactive quiz as an icebreaker to the session, **Isabelle Vanderbeck**, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), gave the floor to **Hartwig Kremer**, UNEP, to introduce the session. He emphasized that integration is a shared effort and that the stage had already been set by previous presentations. He highlighted that system boundaries are central to integration and framed key questions about what integration should involve, including stakeholders, MEAs, as well as system boundaries, and flows of water, sediments, and pollutants. Mr. Kremer noted that these issues relate to planning and inclusion and should guide the upcoming discussion. The session then transitioned to Ms. Matthews, who was invited to present on the S2S guidance.

Building on the recent enhancements to the TDA/SAP methodology, **Ruth Mathews** outlined upcoming developments focusing on practical guidance for applying S2S management: a practitioners “How to” guidance by IW:LEARN on the application of the

six-step approach to IW projects, and a new guidance note under the UNECE Water Convention aimed at strengthening transboundary cooperation through S2S principles. The ”How to” guidance is designed to provide hands-on support for integrating S2S management throughout the project cycle, from design to monitoring and evaluation, with a strong emphasis on improving policy coherence. Ms. Mathews invited participants to contribute concrete, practice-based examples to inform and enrich this guidance, such as system-level analyses, stakeholder engagement, governance assessments, causal chain analyses, action plans, or monitoring frameworks.

Fanny Douvere, UNESCO-IOC, introduced the concept of sustainable ocean planning and management (SOPM) as a unifying, future-oriented framework being advanced by the IOC to support more holistic, science-based ocean governance. While existing approaches such as integrated water resource management (IWRM), integrated coastal zone management (ICZM), and MSP have delivered results, they are no longer sufficient to address increasingly complex and ambitious international commitments on biodiversity, climate, and ocean protection, alongside rapid growth of the ocean economy and continued ocean degradation. SOPM is positioned as an umbrella approach that integrates sectoral and spatial initiatives across government and society, strengthens the uptake of ocean science and data in decision-making, and supports long-term, strategic planning at national and transboundary scales. Ms. Douvere highlighted strong political momentum through the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, with multiple countries already developing or implementing national ocean plans, and outlined the IOC’s role in equipping Member States with the knowledge, data, and capacity needed to advance integrated, evidence-based ocean planning, including through enhanced cooperation across LMEs.

Lorenzo Galbiati, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), presented the Clean and Healthy Ocean Integrated Program (CHO IP), one of the 11 GEF-8 Integrated Programs. CHO IP is a global, S2S initiative to address hypoxia, which remains a major driver of marine ecosystem degradation. Recognizing that nutrient pollution, particularly nitrogen and phosphorus, cannot be effectively tackled at national or regional scales alone, the program adopts a global programmatic approach combining policy and regulatory reforms, infrastructure investments, and the promotion of nature-based solutions (NbS). The IP consists of a global coordination project (GCP) and 14 child projects operating across nine LMEs, and is structured around three core technical components: i. building awareness and knowledge to inform decision-making, ii. strengthening policy and investment frameworks to reduce nutrient loads, and iii. scaling up best practices including NbS, supported by a comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, and knowledge management framework. Implementation involves a wide range of GEF agencies and strategic partners, with strong engagement of water, ocean, industrial, scientific, and private-sector stakeholders to ensure broad integration and impact at national, regional, and global levels. Mr. Galbiati invited the participants to join the soft launch of the IP at the end of the day.

Dimitris Faloutsos, Global Water Partnership-MED, reflected on the evolution from sectoral silos to more integrated approaches in GEF IW projects, noting that while progress has been made through frameworks such as IWRM, SOPM, nexus approaches,

and S2S, integration often remains confined within disciplinary or institutional boundaries. A key challenge identified is the continued failure to address root causes due to fragmented system boundaries, sectoral donor and government structures, limited capacities, and difficulties in achieving meaningful stakeholder ownership and long-term partnerships. Using the MedProgramme as an example, Mr. Faloutsos highlighted a deliberately integrated design that combines nexus and S2S approaches across regional, national, subnational, and basin levels, engaging multiple organizations and conventions. Practical actions include the development of strategies and management plans in several countries, nexus analyses along the S2S continuum, pioneering S2S modeling in Lebanon, and investment-oriented interventions, such as dam rehabilitation, with the aim of creating scalable blueprints for wider application.

Margarita Victoria Caballa, Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), discussed integration in the East Asian Seas region as a process of strengthening collaboration among the many organizations working on marine conservation in a highly biodiverse but geopolitically complex context. Despite long-standing calls for collaboration, efforts had remained fragmented until recent milestones, including the East Asian Seas Congress in 2023, where multiple regional organizations agreed on six concrete joint action points linked to addressing the triple planetary crisis, including MPA networking to support the 30×30 target. Building on this, a facilitated systems-thinking process held ahead of the Our Ocean Conference brought together nine organizations to identify shared challenges, reduce duplication, and shift from competition for limited funding toward more coordinated and sustainable approaches, including exploring regional conservation financing mechanisms. This process has led to plans to launch a flexible, non-formal regional collaborative MPA network at UNOC3, marking an important first step toward more integrated and cooperative marine governance in the region.

Viktoria Varga Lencses, FAO, highlighted the need for more integrated approaches to ocean governance in ABNJ, linking this discussion to the forthcoming BBNJ Agreement as a major milestone for global ocean management. While governance frameworks already exist, increasing human activities and pressures in ABNJ have led to fragmented and complex governance, underscoring the agreement's emphasis on global collaboration and cooperation with existing instruments, frameworks, and bodies. The Common Oceans Program was presented as a practical example of such integration, having worked for over a decade to foster collaboration among regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) and other actors to align sustainable resource use with biodiversity conservation. Through its fisheries and cross-sectoral projects, including ecosystem-based fisheries management, harvest strategies, country preparedness assessments, and the Sargasso Sea pilot, the program demonstrates how coordinated action can build trust, deliver practical results, and support effective implementation of the BBNJ Agreement.

Session 4B - Supporting LME implementation and integration

	Topic	Facilitator
16.30-17.30	i. MSP in TDA/SAP consultation	Louise Lieberknecht (GRID-A)
	ii. How to Apply the Source-to-Sea Approach in GEF IW projects	Ruth Mathews (Consultant)
	iii. LMEs as users and vehicle to implement SOPM	Fanny Douvere (UNESCO-IOC)
	iv. Citizen science in LME projects	Reynaldo Molina (SCS SAP; UNOPS)
	v. Integrating MED LME policies and action across sectors and spatial segments: Recommendations from the MedProgramme ASM	Christine Haffner-Sifakis & Alessandro Candeloro (MedProgramme)

i. MSP in TDA/SAP consultation

Facilitator: Louise Lieberknecht (GRID-A); **Rapporteur**: Susana Perera Valderrama (with notes from Sevtap Ozdogan)

Question 1: What (if any) transboundary MSP initiatives have you worked on? What challenges have you encountered, and how did you overcome them?

Main outcome

1. Mediterranean Region:
   - No active transboundary MSP due to unresolved maritime boundaries and political tensions (e.g. Algeria–Morocco, Lebanon–Israel).
   - Instead, focus shifted to strengthening national MSPs, which was more politically feasible and actionable.
   - Example: Montenegro's full coastline MSP, and integrated coastal zone planning in Northern Morocco.
2. Arafura and Timor Seas (Australia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste)):
   - In the East Asia countries, the is no term transboundary MSP. MSP is under country authority. In Indonesia, there are several types of MSPs: national MSP, provincial MSP, and cross-region MSP. All are within the country's policy and jurisdiction.
   - Under ATSEA (Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action), they completed MPA Network design to accommodate migratory species protection and improve resilience of climate change. The designing process incorporated biophysical and socio-economic spatial data layers, conservation targets and cost layers. There are several proposals to establish transboundary MPA in the design, not transboundary MSP. Still, the proposal on transboundary MPA has pros and cons. Not all countries agree to establish a transboundary MPA.
   - Furthermore, when ATSEA-2 Project developed the TDA, and updated the 10-year SAP, the existing MSPs in the countries were considered.
   - In addition, Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI - Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Solomon islands, and Timor Leste) apply a seascape approach, not really transboundary MSP. The approach is to support ecosystem-based management across 6 national boundaries.
3. Dogger Bank (North Sea):

- Past EU-supported initiative involving joint marine protected area (MPA) planning among UK, Netherlands, Germany.
- Post-Brexit governance and implementation unclear.

4. Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean:

- Comprehensive TDA and SAP conducted with regional coordination (e.g., under CLME and CLME+).
- Challenges included harmonizing stakeholder interests and ensuring continuity across political transitions.

5. Other Observations:

- Several initiatives relied on informal networks, regional data platforms, and pilot areas free of political conflict.
- Data asymmetry between countries and inconsistent access to regional data platforms remain persistent barriers.

Question 2: Does the format of the draft TDA/SAP enhancement (a new "how to" annex) work for you? Can you suggest a better format?

Main outcome

- General consensus: A new annex is welcome and useful, especially for practitioners new to the process or where prior projects didn't follow the TDA methodology.
- It can clarify key steps, especially on:
  - How to incorporate MSP (data, information, spatial and non-spatial) in the development of TDA and SAP.
  - Guidance on integrating spatial data, national MSP frameworks, and sectoral overlaps.
  - Some participants noted that existing guidance documents are long (40+ pages) and often unclear on how to do cross-sectoral and spatial analyses.
  - Suggested enhancement: Include case-based prompts and mapping exercises to align better with MSP practitioners' expectations.

Question 3: What are the main points of contact between the TDA/SAP and MSP, in your view?

Main outcome

The group discussed this in terms of what additional prompts could be added to the proposed annex.

TDA Phase:

- Identify existing MSPs (national, subnational) and their spatial designations (e.g., conservation, energy, tourism).
- Map out transboundary ecological processes and human activities with spatial implications (e.g., fisheries, shipping routes).
- Include questions like:
  - What marine spatial planning processes already exist in each country or region?
  - What data sources (regional, national) are available and compatible?

SAP Phase:

- Ask: What joint goals or visions can emerge from overlapping national MSPs?
- Incorporate stakeholder prompts such as:
  - Who are the competent authorities for MSP and related sectors?
  - What MSP-related measures (e.g., zoning, PSSAs) can support the agreed strategic actions?
  - Identify mechanisms to translate regional agreements into national MSP updates.

ii. How to Apply the Source-to-Sea Approach in GEF IW projects

Facilitator: Ruth Mathews (Consultant)

Question 1: Have you experienced challenges from lacking policy coherence across the land, freshwater, coastal and marine continuum? If so, did you find effective ways to bring sectors and stakeholders together?

Main outcome

- All participants agreed that S2S approach is missing at the GEF IW project design stage and that better understanding of source-to-sea is needed at all levels.
- All participants agreed that S2S should be applied to every project, as every country is a source of pollution regardless of its marine waters status.
- Regional Seas and regional sectoral organizations are lacking support and coordination with freshwater conventions and vice versa, as well as GWP and other relevant stakeholders.

Question 2: What kinds of methods or tools would you find most helpful and supportive in implementing the source-to-sea approach in each of the project cycle phases?

Main outcome

- best practices and case studies in S2S should be introduced into S2S Guidelines to be prepared within Water Convention
- definitions and other theoretical issues must be further elaborated regarding S2S
- procedures/practicalities of S2S application should be clarified and harmonized
- we should continue feeding the existing S2S partnerships with concrete activities
- small analysis should be introduced to ensure inclusion of gender issues and its implications on S2S
- better coordination between Regional Seas and River Conventions and projects should be established

Question 3: Do you have any examples, lessons learned, or success stories that we can use in the How To Guide?

Main outcome

- trilateral cooperation between secretariats of ICPDR, Black Sea Commission and UNEP/MAP on S2S
- World Bank Project “Blueing the Black Sea” to fight eutrophication
- GWP Projects for three lakes in the Mediterranean area
- GWP Projects for Lebanon
- GWP Projects in South Africa
- bad example of Kakhovka Dam explosion and difficulties in coordination between fresh water and marine experts

iii. LMEs as users and vehicle to implement SOPM

Facilitator: Fanny Douvere (UNESCO-IOC)**; Rapporteur:** Adnan Awad (UNDP)

How can LMEs be a vehicle to connect the dots between different approaches?

Challenges:

- It's about really understanding the process toward integration. Examples such as Australia, which is close to producing their first SOPM plan shortly, will give perspective how it works in practice and where the challenges and opportunities are
- Sustainability of the efforts and the political drive behind integrated management approaches. It's essential to have the pieces connect, it's essential that the stakeholders have continuity in the long term to deliver results
- Climate change: it's just not adequately factored into planning, including in LMEs. Lots of data but that knowledge is not integrated adequately into decision making, including in LME's
- Too much sectoral bias in current planning activities, including MSP. It is not truly integrated today.

Opportunities:

- LME's do show the data and the interdependencies across boundaries. It is a strength to build on
- MSP has already broken the ground toward cross sectoral management, but SOPM and LMEs are an opportunity to connect the missing link
- Target the more mature LMEs to start working toward SOPM that allows a more whole-of-government approach, and move countries to a really integrated approach, that is inclusive of climate change science and data and also look at the poverty reduction and other societal considerations more broadly
- Critical are exit strategies in GEF projects across LMEs: SOPM allows an opportunity to include/look at stronger exit strategies that support sustainability in the long term in LME work in the future.

iv. Citizen science in LME projects

Facilitator: Reynaldo Molina (SCS SAP); **Rapporteur:** Diana Zazueta (Gulf of Mexico LME SAP)

Question 1: Does citizen science need to be integrated into the whole project management cycle or just in a particular cycle (planning, execution, monitoring, evaluation)? Which project management cycle is citizen science most effective in enhancing coastal and marine ecosystem management outcomes?

Main outcome

While the roundtable did not include direct experiences of citizen science fully integrated into LME project cycles, participants agreed on its high potential during the whole project management cycle, as it can:

- Inform local priorities and promote early community engagement.
- Generate data for adaptive management and track environmental change.

However, to be impactful, citizen science must face challenges:

- Needs data quality control processes to ensure credibility.
- Implement feedback processes so data informs decisions and communities see tangible outcomes.

Question 2: What citizen science and capacity-building activities have been undertaken at LME project sites to empower citizen scientists in the monitoring and sustainable management of coastal habitats (e.g., mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass, wetlands)? How can LME projects enhance citizen science and capacity-building opportunities for citizen scientists?

Main outcome

Participants shared inspiring national/regional initiatives that could inform future efforts. Examples included:

- Coral bleaching monitoring programs involving divers
- Catch reporting systems linked to quotas in small-scale fisheries (e.g. Belize)
- Community species monitoring, often supported by training and simplified reporting tools.

LME projects can enhance citizen science opportunities with training, technology transfer, and user-friendly reporting.

Question 3: What measures are in place at LME projects or sites to ensure the sustainability and continuity of citizen science activities beyond project lifecycles? Are there specific examples or experiences from LME sites that can guide the sustainability of citizen science initiatives?

Main outcome

Experiences have shown that citizen science can empower communities in a sustainable way, especially when projects manage to:

- Build ownership through community engagement.
- Celebrate contributions and create visibility through communication campaigns: social media and storytelling.
- Promote incentives - avoid dependence on monetary incentives; instead, use long-term motivators like public recognition, skill-building, and local pride.
- Partner with local businesses (e.g. dive shops, tourism operators) who benefit from healthy ecosystems and can help sustain monitoring efforts.
- Ensure data flows back to communities, showing how it leads to action or policy.

v. Integrating LMEs policies and action across sectors and spatial segments. Recommendations from the MedProgramme ASM

Facilitator: MedPCU; **Rapporteur: Alessandro Candeloro**

Question 1: What strategies have proven effective in aligning legal and institutional frameworks to support integrated approaches like the WEFE Nexus, ICZM, and ecosystem-based management, and can you share examples where such alignment led to tangible results?

Main outcome: “the integration work is never over” - long term perspective and continuity

Integration is multidimensional and multilevel. It is to be facilitated by a supporting legal framework at national and regional level. In case of “rigidities” softer “integration arrangements/mechanisms” can be devised to support integration.

Beyond legal instruments, integration requires:

- Clear governance structures that designate leadership at every level.
- Enhanced multilevel coordination mechanisms.
- Capacity building and knowledge exchange platforms.
- Financial tools and incentives, facilitated through partners like EBRD.
- Monitoring and evaluation systems to track integrated policy implementation.

- Proactive “integrative” programme management support

LME, RSC and RFMO frameworks should be also developed towards increased integration based on the outcomes of GEF funded initiatives.

Scaling up and mainstreaming integrated practices is key: Successful pilot initiatives and transboundary cooperation—such as those seen in projects like FishEBM (socioeconomic aspects)—should be upscaled and embedded in national policies, incorporating socio-economic considerations alongside environmental objectives to break silos and support systemic change.

Question 2: What methods or tools would you recommend strengthening the integration of land-based interventions with marine efforts, ensuring effective connections and documented impacts on marine and coastal ecosystems in project planning and implementation?

Main outcome

Strengthening S2S linkages is essential: the MedProgramme must enhance operational connections between land-based and marine interventions to ensure coherent management of ecosystems and more impactful outcomes across the freshwater–marine continuum.

Soft launch of the GEF-8 Clean and Healthy Ocean Integrated Program (CHO IP)

This session marked the soft launch of the Clean and Healthy Ocean Integrated Programme (CHO IP), one of the 11 IPs under the GEF-8 cycle, designed to strengthen integration across focal areas and address global drivers of marine ecosystem degradation. The discussion underscored that hypoxia remains a critical and persistent threat to marine ecosystems worldwide, despite decades of effort, and that its primary drivers - excessive nutrient inputs, particularly nitrogen and phosphorus from land-based sources - require coordinated action beyond national and regional boundaries. The programme is therefore grounded in a global S2S approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of freshwater, coastal, and marine systems.

The session outlined the overall objective of the CHO IP, which is to significantly reduce nutrient pollution entering the ocean by curbing land-based sources of pollution through improved policies and regulations, targeted infrastructure investments, and the large-scale adoption of nature-based solutions. The programme is structured around a global coordination project and 14 child projects implemented across nine LMEs, enabling action at national, regional, and global scales while ensuring coherence and knowledge exchange across sites.

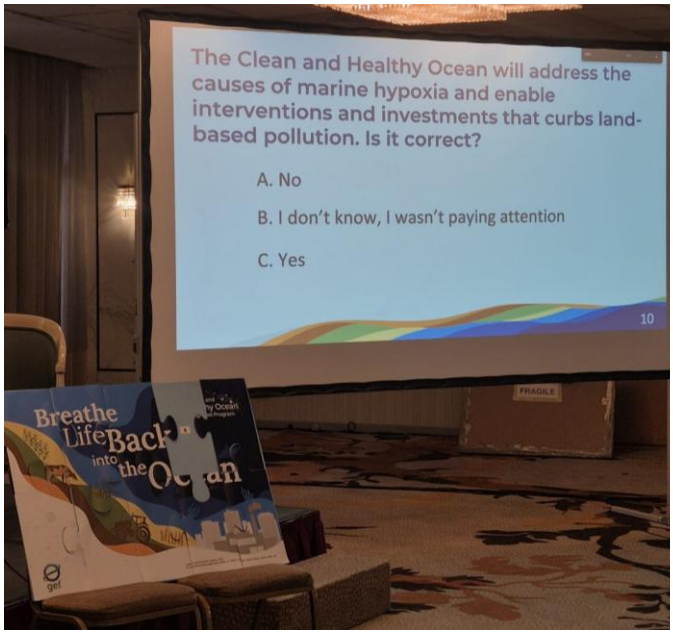
Participants were re-introduced to the three main technical components of the CHO IP. The first focuses on building awareness, data, and knowledge to stimulate action and inform evidence-based decision-making, recognizing that gaps in data availability, accessibility, and understanding continue to hinder effective responses to hypoxia. The second component aims to enhance policy frameworks, regulatory instruments, and investment planning to incentivize reductions in nutrient pollution, including improvements in wastewater treatment, agricultural practices, and industrial controls. The third component emphasizes scaling up best practices and promoting NbS, such as wetlands restoration and sustainable land management, as cost-effective and resilient complements to traditional infrastructure.

A key outcome of the session was the strong emphasis on integration and partnership. The CHO IP will be implemented by a wide range of GEF agencies, including FAO, UNDP, UNEP, the World Bank, regional development banks, and others, reflecting the multi-sectoral nature of nutrient pollution. Strategic partnerships with organizations, such as UNESCO-IOC, GWP, UNIDO, and leading scientific institutions will ensure engagement across freshwater, coastal, marine, industrial, and agricultural sectors. The programme also places high priority on private sector engagement, including collaboration with the fertilizer industry, and on establishing communities of practice to promote shared learning and replication of successful approaches.

The session further highlighted the importance of a strong monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework. The CHO IP will consolidate and analyse the large volume of data generated by the Child Projects to strengthen global knowledge on nutrient pollution and hypoxia, support adaptive management, and inform future policy and investment

decisions. This programmatic approach is expected to enhance coherence across projects, avoid duplication, and amplify impacts beyond individual sites.

In conclusion, the soft launch session reaffirmed the CHO IP as a flagship example of the GEF-8 commitment to more integrated, systemic, and scalable solutions. The session concluded with an invitation for participants to remain engaged in the programme's development and to attend the formal kick-off event, where further details on implementation and collaboration opportunities would be presented.



DAY 2: THURSDAY 15 MAY 2025

Session 5A - Data, Information and Knowledge Management Strategies

Session Chair: Lorenzo Galbiati (FAO)		
Objectives: To share experiences and challenges on DIM at different levels		
Time	**Description**	**Name**
09.30-10.30	Approaches and challenges **From Global**	
	Blue and Green Islands IP	Adnan Awad (UNDP)
	Plastic Reboot IP	Isabelle Vanderbeck (UNEP)
	Common Oceans Programme	Viktoria Varga Lencses (FAO)
	Integrating coral reef indicators, monitoring data, and the subsequent global and regional assessments	Tom Dallison (ICRI)
	Ocean Intelligence	Jason Meads (SubSee AI)
	To Regional	
	Black Sea - Blueing the Black Sea (BBSEA)	Venera Domi (BSEC)

Lorenzo Galbiati, FAO, introduced the session dedicated to data, information, and knowledge management strategies. He highlighted the challenge that despite 25 years of investments in IW and climate projects, the generated knowledge remains underutilized.

Adnan Awan, UNDP, talked about the Blue and Green Islands Integrated Program (BGI IP), a flagship GEF-8 initiative led by UNDP that unites 15 SIDS across the Pacific, Caribbean, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans. BGI IP acts as a transformative platform that integrates NbS across food systems, sustainable tourism, and urban development. Central to the program is a knowledge management and learning (KML) cluster, which facilitates collaboration among country teams, regional nodes, and global platforms, ensuring evidence generation for policy, investment, and replication. The BGI digital collaborative space, to be launched in the following month, will provide online toolkits, case study libraries, technical forums, and secure country-level interfaces, supported by regional nodes and thematic working groups addressing areas such as gender inclusion, ecosystem services, and finance mechanisms. Overall, the program aims to build a knowledge-driven, people-centered community of practice that integrates global and local systems while amplifying island voices in decision-making.

Isabelle Vanderbeck, UNEP, introduce the Plastic Reboot IP, led by UNEP and WWF with support from UNDP and UNIDO. The IP focuses on circular solutions to single-use plastic packaging in the food and beverage sector, encompassing 15 national Child Projects and a global platform acting as a unifying knowledge management hub. As the program is newly approved, initial efforts are concentrated on designing a common framework of indicators to ensure coherence across Child Projects and the global initiative, align core indicators with global environmental benefits, and leverage transformative levers such as policy coherence, finance, innovation, learning, and partnerships. The global platform will also facilitate collaboration among partners, technical working groups, and private sector stakeholders to support the program's goal of delivering transformative change.

Viktoria Varga Lencses, FAO, talked about the dedicated knowledge management and communication approach of the Common Oceans Program to support its technical projects, including fisheries, cross-sectoral cooperation, and governance of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ). Encompassing 67 partners and 115 organizations, the Common Oceans Program uses a knowledge management approach that is closely linked with communication, targeting primarily technical audiences through experience notes, publications, e-learning courses, and specialized platforms, which facilitate community-based knowledge sharing. The program emphasizes transformation accelerators, such as governance improvement, innovation, and data use, while focal points in each project ensure consistent experience capitalization and dissemination of lessons learned across the global partnership.

Tom Dallison, Blue Pangolin Consulting, provided an overview of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN), highlighting their role in collecting and analysing coral reef data from over 30,000 sites across 120 countries. With more than 19 million observations contributed under strict data-sharing agreements, the GCRMN uses machine learning to model trends from 1980 to 2024, informing global and regional assessments, including the upcoming 2025 global report. The data support countries in implementing international targets, such as the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and SDG 14, while identifying areas of resilience and guiding resource allocation for coral reef conservation amidst ongoing global bleaching events.

Jason Mead, SubSee AI, highlighted the transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) for ocean protection. SubSee's approach leverages AI agents to manage and protect marine areas, providing data management, insights, and knowledge services while working alongside human teams to maximize effectiveness. AI is positioned as a force multiplier for NGOs and multilateral bodies, accelerating the creation and management of MPAs, supporting the 30x30 global conservation target, and more efficient decision-making through continuous monitoring, planning, and analysis. His presentation emphasized the exponential growth of AI capabilities and the urgent need to harness these technologies for global ocean conservation.

Venera Domi, Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC), presented its ongoing initiatives to address environmental challenges in the Black Sea region. The GEF-funded “Blueing the Black Sea” project, implemented in partnership with UNOPS, focuses on reducing nitrogen pollution through improved national and regional policy frameworks and innovative public-private financing mechanisms, including an innovation challenge targeting eutrophication. Additionally, BSEC has developed the Black Sea Virtual Knowledge Center to facilitate regional data and information sharing, and is establishing a regional climate data and information hub to support adaptation efforts and enhance environmental management. These initiatives leverage digital tools and AI to strengthen regional cooperation and provide actionable insights for Member States.

Session 5B - Data, Information and Knowledge Management Strategies

11.00-12.00	i. DIM: Regional data infrastructure, standards, accessibility, availability etc.	Isabelle Vanderbeck (UNEP)
	ii. DIM: Common indicators	Vladimir Mamaev (UNDP)
	iii. Integrating DIM from source-to-sea	Iryna Makarenko (BSC)
	iv. Collect, Curate, Share: The Knowledge Management Challenge	Konstantina Toli (UNESCO-IOC, IW:LEARN)
	v. Use of AI in Ecosystem Based Management	Richard Saville (SubSee AI)

i. DIM: Regional data infrastructure, standards, accessibility, availability etc.

ii. DIM: Common indicators

Facilitator: Isabelle Vanderbeck (UNEP) & Vladimir Mamaev (UNDP); **Rapporteur:** Handoko Adi Susanto (ATSEA) & Adipati Rahmat (CFI)

Question 1: How to connect the DIM to the regional data for decision making?

Main outcome:

- Several challenges were identified: the existing/available data and information cannot be accessed, there is no national-scale database, and the data is collected using different methods, terminology, and standards.
- It's very important to have a national data center, using a common and agreed-upon format and, if possible, the same methods, and trying to balance the issues.
- Data validation and ownership, clarity before sharing. We are not collecting the raw data, but we need to process and analyse it. The objective of information management is to assess the progress of data. A data sharing agreement (policy and protocol) is needed.
- A lesson from Indonesia: Indonesia's marine waters are divided into 11 Fisheries Management Areas, each with its own leaders who collect and analyse marine and fishery data. Indonesia also has a National Commission on Fisheries Study, which consists of experts from universities who validate the data before sharing it. Quality control and quality assurance are important.

Question 2: How are you creating and validating the data?

Main outcome:

- Combining primary and secondary data. GEF uses and optimises the existing/ published data/info. We make the data/thematic maps based on satellite/remote sensing/GIS and other sources, analyze data, and also do ground-truthing and data validation.
- The project was assisted by the regional/international experts and engaged national and local universities, in-country experts.
- Data validation is conducted through Technical Working Group meetings, which include representatives from each member country, regular meetings, and email consultations.
- Data quality control and assurance. The standard and meta data are necessary, but we need an understanding of the human network and experts. There's knowledge sharing, so that the data is always shared with all.

Question 3: What can IW:LEARN help with and provide in supporting data sustainability?

Main outcome:

- We agreed that capacity building is very important at various levels, engaging the university and research centers.
- IW:LEARN has a working group/task force to discuss what kind of data, what protocol, minimum or standard, how it will be used, and how you could possibly exchange the data. This working group will help share the effort.
- Let's start by intercalibrating with the institution. What we do with DIM is just a small part. IW:LEARN supports the process of data management.
- Stakeholder ownership of the data is very important. Different protocols and reporting, minimum requirements for DIM. Connect with the existing data network, share, and also access the data shared.
- Project data and documents are linked with existing platforms. ATSEA Atlas, data, and information link to and incorporate CTI CFF Atlas and PEMSEA South East Asia Knowledge Bank (SEAKB).

iii. Integrating DIM from source-to-sea

Facilitator: Iryna Makarenko (BSC); **Rapporteur:** Venera Domi (BSEC)

Question 1: What are the challenges that your region is facing in terms of introduction of S2S management?

Main outcome

With the Black Sea and South African riverine projects as examples, some of the challenges are:

- different political decision making,
- different political priorities,
- Different national methodologies or protocols to collect the same data,
- Data gaps and data sharing lack with the marine counterparts in the case of riverine projects, at least those in South Africa,
- Lack of cooperation among different facets of the same issue. Basically, a S2S not being considered holistically, as part of the same issue and deeply interconnected,
- Proliferation of reporting on different levels: national, regional and international that are also oftentimes disconnected.

Recommendations:

+ Maybe a call to LME to elaborate protocols on how to harmonise and share data among the different actors from S2S,
+ Create a project/platform on a global level on how this harmonisation and cooperation can occur,
+ S2S and LME can become a comprehensive umbrella to bring riverine and seas experts together.

Question 2: How can harmonization of data and coordination with Regional Seas and other sectoral organizations improve the S2S management?

Main outcome

In the Black Sea region, we have an example of this harmonization in the cooperation between the Black Sea Commission (BSC) and International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) that have a reporting cooperation on a number of data and cooperate in common projects.

From the same region, the example of the destruction of the Kakhovka Damn in 2023 caused extensive flooding and ecological issues in the Black Sea. The riverine and sea scientific communities were not prepared to cooperate, and it took time to find solutions. This is another proof of the necessity of cooperation among these two scientific communities.

From the perspective of the river basin management based on GWP's implementation of transboundary projects in Southern Africa, the S2S approach – while fully accepted as a concept – does not necessarily materialize in the context of practical project design and implementation in transboundary river basin management projects. As such there is significant scope to increase this element building on good examples from, e.g. the ICPDR and BSC collaboration.

Question 3: Can you share your best practices in applying S2S in your region?

Main outcome

The cooperation between BSC and ICPDR in data sharing and reporting, although not yet perfect, is a good example to be replicated whenever possible. It is a considerable effort to make the S2S approach a reality among communities that do not often coordinate.

iv. Collect, Curate, Share: The Knowledge Management Challenge

Facilitator: Konstantina Toli (UNESCO-IOC, IW:LEARN); **Rapporteur:** Alejandro Arrivillaga (WWF)

Question 1: What are the most effective and sustainable ways of capturing knowledge from projects and the broader LME community?

Main outcome

- Capture knowledge onsite, during field missions - testimonials (written or footage)
- Distinguish the functions between Knowledge Management & Communications and have a dedicated KM officer and function
- Employ various methods: interviews, focus groups, reflection circles, case studies, mediated documents, compendiums of best practices
- Employ citizen science and System's thinking
- Facilitate knowledge and experience exchanges

Question 2: b. How can captured knowledge be effectively curated and transformed into usable, accessible outputs?

Main outcome

- Develop a comprehensive knowledge repository, easily accessible, searchable and user friendly
- Develop toolkits
- Disseminate knowledge via newsletters
- Employ AI to extract lessons and learnings
- Long, comprehensive studies and reports to have a short summary

Question 3: What knowledge formats and platforms work best today to reach practitioners, policymakers, and communities?

Main outcome

- KM Products tailored to the audience
- Short videos (e.g. TikTok, WEF videos)

- Audible content/podcasts (short duration) to complement publications/reports
- Infographics and visuals
- Human stories
- Knowledge modules
- Series of thematic posts on Social Media (especially LinkedIn)

FURTHER Recommendations

- Knowledge products should response to needs as a priority - identify needs via surveys
- Keep it simple: Knowledge documentation should be an easy-to-do task for project managers and knowledge holders
- Keep it short and sharp: super concise content, no acronyms
- Make it attractive: attractive visuals and screen responsiveness

v. Use of AI in Ecosystem Based Management

Facilitator: Richard Saville (Subsee AI); **Rapporteur:** Anoud Allouzi (EBRD)

Question 1: How can AI help with problems related to ecosystem management?

Main outcome

(a) Shared repository to across projects to solve struggle with data management

- provide automated DIM/KM

(b) Provide common indicators - align and consolidate separate indicator sets

(c) Place to consolidate all data – provide specific data models (natural language models - NLMs) – and domain language

(d) Scan existing projects and offer insights and best practices

- 300+ projects containing un-tapped treasure

(e) Generate a toolkit adapted to the need of the target audience

- prepare technical material for (or explain to) a less technical person

(f) Appropriate reporting tweaked to target audience

- provide automated reporting and communication, incl. creating web sites

(g) AI should NOT take decisions on behalf of humans

- human control and trust required

(h) Provide analysis and policy solutions to support decision-making

(i) Create monetizing scenarios to bring in private sector investments

- with a lens on value add to private sector

(j) Scenario planning and modelling of different scenarios

- what-if processing, course-of-action (COA) analysis

Question 2: How can AI help you?

Main outcome

(a) Feature to give feedback - interactive interface to projects

(b) Communicating results via infographics - other auto-generated reporting

(c) Help make the financial case and show financial impact of project activity

(d) Modelling scenarios with latest data – always updating data

(e) Science-policy interface

- Effective and impactful activities – with evaluation of legal frameworks
- Translate across the boundary - use the language of each community

(f) Spatial mapping - create and manage spatial database repositories

(g) Specific example: deep seas

- make the case to private sector to not disrupt the environment with sea mining
- addressing impact on environment and economy

(h) Offer country-based plans

- regulating compliance
- suggest suitable compensation from the private sector for their activities

(i) Make a master Marine Spatial Plan (MSP)

- that balances the needs of all the stakeholders
- region, country, government department, community, commercial, etc.

Question 3: Other Key Issues/Observations?

Main outcome

(1) Environmental implications of using AI (practice what we preach)

- Intensity of the models for inferencing - may reduce, but Jevons paradox
- Moving out of the cloud to reduce that intensity - and talked about SLMs

(2) Cost of inaction with all the data produced

- Need to understand & exploit AI to analyse and mine the output data from projects
- Need to provide common AI services across projects for use by non-technical teams

(3) Future has many specialised models, in addition to the large models

- creating NLMs for vertical domains
- resource and skill cost for NLMs is falling rapidly

Session 6 - Launch of twinning programmes

12.00-12.30	i. Sustainable Pacific (10076) & Humboldt II (9592)	Alejandro Arrivillaga (WWF)
	ii. African SIDS (10865) & PROCARIBE+ (10800)	Ralph Philip (GWPSA)
	iii. BE-CLME+ (10211) & Micronesia Challenge 2030 (10740)	Dayne Buddo (CRFM)
	iv. CAR BluEFin (10782) & Amazon River Basin (9770)	Claudette Spiteri (UNESCO-IOC, IW:LEARN)

During this session, four new twinning programs under IW:LEARN were officially launched to foster cross-project knowledge exchange and collaboration across LMEs, projects and regions.

1. **Sustainable Pacific (10076) & Humboldt II (9592)** – This twinning initiative pairs the first-phase Sustainable Pacific project with the more advanced Humboldt II project. Humboldt II, in its second phase, focuses on ecosystem-based management, fisheries, habitat restoration, and governance strategies. The collaboration aims to capture and disseminate good practices, strengthen knowledge exchange among specialists, and identify lines of cooperation. Key themes include biodiversity and marine resource management, MSP, sustainability post-GEF funding, gender equality, and knowledge management. Expected outputs include shared experiences, joint publications, and an action plan for follow-up activities.
2. **African SIDS (10865) & PROCARIBE+ (10800)** – This program facilitates knowledge sharing on blue economy development between stakeholders in African SIDS and the Caribbean, addressing common challenges in marine ecosystem conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and community resilience. African SIDS covers six island nations, aiming to enhance integrated blue governance and ecosystem management. PROCARIBE+, a continuation of CLME+ initiatives, focuses on regional strategic action for sustainable marine development. Learning objectives include exchanging governance models, improving MPA management, and sharing stakeholder engagement strategies. Activities will include participation in regional meetings, fostering collaboration and cross-project synergies.
3. **BE-CLME+ (10211) & Micronesia Challenge 2030 (10740)** – This twinning initiative enables comparative learning on MSP, MPAs, and coastal and pelagic fisheries between the Caribbean and Micronesia regions. The program features immersive field visits to sites in Palau and Jamaica, hands-on learning, and engagement with local communities and authorities. Early-career ocean professionals (ECOPs) will be actively involved to build capacity and contribute to the projects. Outputs include mini-projects, field-based lessons, videos documenting the exchanges, and post-trip reports to ensure tangible benefits for both regions.

4. **CAR BluEFin (10782) & Amazon River Basin (9770)** – Focused on innovative conservation financing and policy integration, this program will explore mechanisms such as blue bonds, payments for ecosystem services, and trust funds. The initiative aims to strengthen institutional capacity, promote community participation, and produce joint policy briefs, case studies, and knowledge products to support sustainable marine management in the Caribbean and Amazon regions.

All four twinning programs are designed to capture, systematize, and disseminate lessons learned, strengthen regional cooperation, and enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of governance efforts. Results will be shared in future LME meetings to inform broader IW:LEARN initiatives.

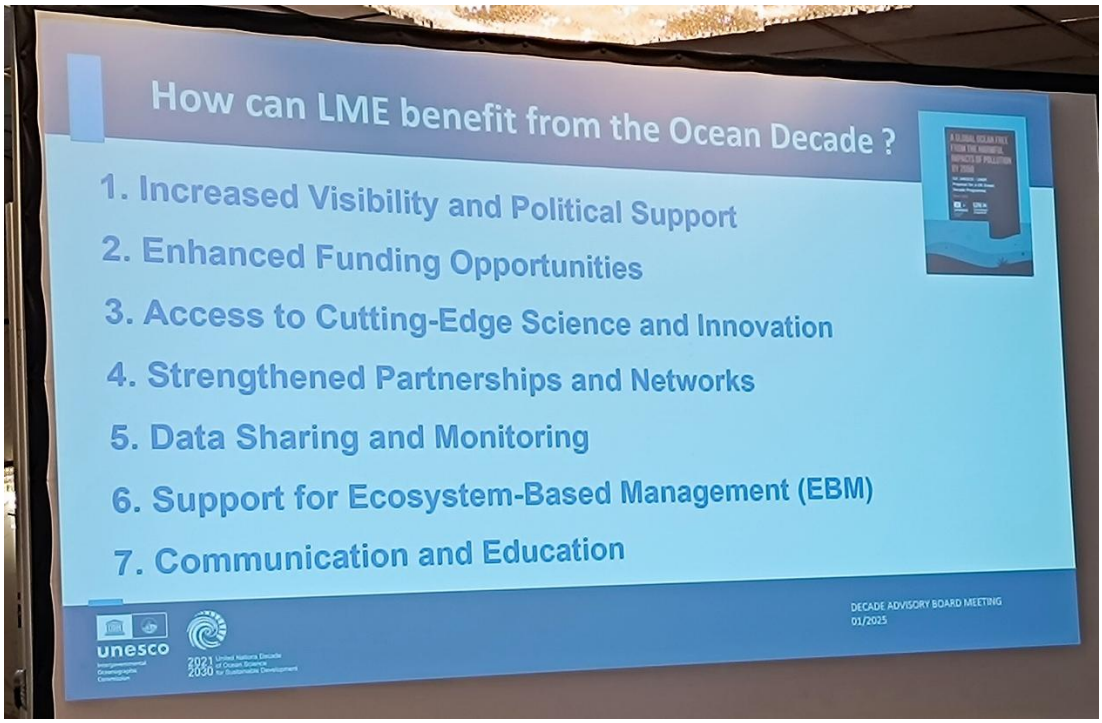
Session 7A - Science generation, uptake and communication

Session Chair: Julian Barbière (UNESCO-IOC)		
Objectives: To discuss how to enhance uptake and communication of science generated by LMEs		
Time	**Description**	**Name**
14.00-15.00	Ocean Decade update	Julian Barbière (UNESCO-IOC)
	INMS tools - the global scientific support process for international nitrogen policy development	Mark Sutton (CEH) (online)
	GEF TDA/SAP methodology to an ABNJ marine ecosystem – A case study of the Sargasso Sea	Andrew Hudson (consultant) (online)
	GloNoise's contribution to scientific data generation and its integration into policy frameworks	Sevtap Ozdogan (IMO)
	Assessing biodiversity status using plankton assemblages	Kalliopi Pagkou (HCMR)
	Ocean science and governance: looking into the future	Cyrille Barnerias (OFB)

Julian Barbière, UNESCO-IOC, welcomed back the participants. He introduced the session focusing on science generation, uptake, and communication, with the aim to examine how robust scientific processes can be designed and embedded within LME interventions to better inform policy and societal action. He explained that the discussion also aimed to highlight the long-standing role of the LME approach in evidence building, rooted in the TDA/SAP framework and supported by decades of scientific outputs, including symposia, monographs, and assessments. Mr. Barbière placed an emphasis on LMEs both as generators and users of scientific knowledge, the co-design of research questions with scientists and stakeholders, the importance of effective data collection and indicator development, and the need for strong science–policy–society interfaces to ensure that knowledge is translated into decision-making.

Mr. Barbière also talked about the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development as a key global framework aligned with LME objectives, aimed at filling critical knowledge gaps, promoting transformative and solution-oriented ocean science, and strengthening scientific infrastructure, particularly in developing countries. Participants were briefed on the Decade's action framework, endorsed programs, collaborative centers, national committees, and regional task forces, as well as priority themes such as marine pollution, ecosystem-based management, fisheries, climate resilience, data sharing, gender and youth inclusion, indigenous and local knowledge, and sustainable financing for ocean science. The discussion highlighted how LME

projects can benefit from the Ocean Decade through increased visibility, enhanced partnerships, access to cutting-edge science and innovation, improved data sharing and monitoring, and stronger communication and education efforts. Mr. Barbière concluded by introducing a diverse panel of experts from research institutions, international organizations, and policy practice to further explore innovative approaches to science generation and uptake within LMEs.



Mark Sutton, UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology**,** presented insights from the International Nitrogen Management System (INMS) on how scientific processes can be effectively designed and translated into policy action. He emphasized the fundamental differences between scientists and policy-makers in terms of priorities, timelines, and ways of working, noting that successful uptake of science requires sustained engagement, mutual understanding, and early dialogue with decision-makers. Drawing parallels with the TDA/SAP approach in LMEs, he highlighted the importance of combining robust evidence generation with structured policy processes. Within INMS, this has involved not only compiling data and analytical tools on nitrogen management across land, air, and ocean systems, but also actively supporting the creation of a global policy framework, including the adoption of UN Environment Assembly resolutions in 2019 and 2022. Mr. Sutton stressed the need for science to be practical, solution-oriented, and appealing to policy-makers, demonstrating clear societal and economic benefits. He also underscored opportunities linked to nutrient circularity and nitrogen finance, framing pollution reduction as both an environmental necessity and an economic opportunity, and called for accelerated action to meet global targets under the SDGs, the Ocean Decade, and the Global Biodiversity Framework.

In response to a question on whether scientists are best equipped to translate environmental challenges into economic narratives, Mr. Sutton emphasized that while science provides the essential evidence base, translating environmental challenges into effective economic messaging requires collaboration with economists and professional communicators. Using examples from INMS, he highlighted that wasted nitrogen represents hundreds of billions of dollars in lost resources annually, with even greater costs from environmental and health impacts. Framing pollution as an economic loss and an opportunity for resource recovery can help mobilize policy action and investment, supporting more sustainable and economically viable solutions.

Andrew Hudson, consultant, described the application of the well-established GEF TDA/SAP approach to the Sargasso Sea, adapting it to an ABNJ context through a Socio-Ecosystem Diagnostic Analysis (SEDA) and SAP. The SEDA follows a methodology similar to traditional TDAs, combining best available environmental and socioeconomic science with issue prioritization, ecosystem valuation, cost-benefit analysis, and a dedicated governance assessment to inform policy and investment decisions. Strong stakeholder engagement, robust knowledge management, and collaboration with leading scientific institutions underpin the process. The approach aligns closely with the BBNJ Agreement, particularly Article 19 on area-based management, and is expected to deliver a scientifically robust SAP by 2025–2026 to guide long-term, cooperative management and investment for the Sargasso Sea ecosystem.

Sevtap Ozdogan, IMO, highlighted the growing importance of addressing underwater radiated noise (URN) from shipping as an often overlooked but significant form of marine pollution with impacts on marine mammals, fisheries, coral reefs, and coastal livelihoods. Through the GEF–UNDP–IMO GloNoise Partnership, IMO is strengthening the scientific basis for understanding URN while ensuring that this knowledge directly informs policy and regulatory processes. The project addresses key data gaps and methodological inconsistencies by consolidating existing science, generating new baseline assessments, and developing an online URN assessment toolkit that enables countries to produce standardized, nationally owned data. These scientific outputs are fed into IMO's experience-building phase and regulatory review processes, supporting evidence-based decision-making at national, regional, and global levels. By linking scientific assessments with policy guidance, capacity development, and stakeholder engagement, GloNoise helps translate emerging science on URN into practical measures and future regulatory action.

In reaction to the presentation, Mr. Barbière noted the relevance of existing Ocean Decade programmes on ocean noise and the potential for collaboration to strengthen this area of work.

Kalliopi Pagkou, Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HMCR), presented key findings from recent EU-funded projects in the Mediterranean and Black Sea that focused on marine strategy implementation and the ecosystem approach, with a particular emphasis on plankton biodiversity. Working closely with RSCs, national authorities, NGOs, and experts, the projects identified significant research and monitoring gaps in plankton ecology, including limited understanding of plankton dynamics, insufficient taxonomic

expertise, inconsistent methodologies, and challenges in defining reference conditions due to the highly dynamic nature of plankton communities. Ms. Pagkou stressed the critical importance of long-term, harmonized monitoring programmes, standardized and intercalibrated methods, open and FAIR data repositories, and improved data accessibility to support robust assessments and policy reporting. The need to integrate climate change considerations, adopt innovative tools, such as remote sensing, DNA meta-barcoding, and real-time monitoring technologies, and translate complex scientific information into clear indicators usable by policymakers was highlighted as essential for improving marine ecosystem assessments and management.

Cyrille Barnerias, French Office for Biodiversity (OFB) emphasized the importance of integrating a robust scientific component into LME projects, emphasizing the need to define clear research questions, collaborate with knowledge institutions, and utilize standardized data collection and analysis methods, such as eDNA and acoustic sampling. He stressed the role of trained scientists, adaptive management, and effective communication, including awareness-raising through exhibitions and documentaries. Looking ahead, Mr. Barnerias noted emerging technological opportunities, including advanced drones, AI-driven real-time data analysis, improved underwater sensors, and higher-precision remote sensing, which can enhance monitoring and ecosystem assessment. He also emphasized the continued relevance of human knowledge, including citizen science and indigenous expertise, alongside strong links between scientific outputs and policymakers. On governance, Mr. Barnerias highlighted the potential impact of developments in ABNJ on LME planning, coordination with regional fisheries management organizations, and the achievement of ocean protection targets, including the 30% protection goal by 2030, reinforcing the strategic role of LMEs in broader ocean governance.

Mr. Barbière concluded the session by emphasizing the need to strengthen the scientific foundation within the LME framework. He highlighted innovative approaches discussed during the session, including area-based management in ABNJ, regulatory responses to ocean noise, and strategies for addressing knowledge gaps in plankton ecology. He underscored the importance of linking science to societal and economic challenges, encouraging participants to continue engaging with ongoing research and collaborative processes to keep science central to LME planning and management.

Session 7B - How to communicate science better

15.00-16.00	Communicating science – the role of green/blue journalism	Climate Explorers 2024/ Constructive Institute

Nina Baijens, UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) and **Maria Dalby**, GRID-Arendal, led an interactive workshop on Communicating Science, structured around the following prompting questions:

1) *Can we address the current geopolitical context and how to navigate science communications and our wording in science communications? How can we make people care with all that's going on?*
2) *The cultural context and language, how do we manage that when talking about science?*
3) *Related to the psychological part and predisposition of people, how can we speak to all kinds of persons, with more and less knowledge?*

The workshop focused on effective science communication and strategies to engage the public, policymakers, and media. The importance of making complex scientific data relatable, solution-oriented, and emotionally engaging was highlighted. Practical examples included using visual storytelling, characters, infographics, interactive maps, and AI-assisted tools to translate long-term research into accessible formats. Emphasis was placed on building relationships with journalists, understanding target audiences, and presenting clear, concise messages that connect science to societal and economic relevance. The role of AI as a supportive tool in structuring content, generating summaries, and enhancing social media presence was also demonstrated. Participants engaged in brainstorming exercises to simplify scientific messages and explore creative ways to communicate coastal monitoring and land cover change indicators. The workshop concluded with actionable guidance: *tell authentic, relatable stories, focus on solutions, and leverage technology and collaboration to amplify scientific impact*.

Session 8 - Engagement of the LME community in global dialogues

Session Chair: Claudette Spiteri (UNESCO-IOC, IW:LEARN)		
Objectives: To identify synergies and opportunities for the engagement of the LME community in global dialogues		
Time	**Description**	**Name**
17.00-17.30	UNOC3 & One Ocean Science congress	Julian Barbiere (UNESCO-IOC)
	Ocean and Climate Dialogue & COP30	Jasdeep Randhawa (UNFCCC -online)
	IMPAC6	Gonzalo Cid (NOAA -online)
	GEF-9 strategic directions	Ines Benabdallah (GEFSec)

Claudette Spiteri, UNESCO-IOC; IW:LEARN. Introduced this short session highlighting opportunities for the LME community for engagement in global dialogues and initiatives.

Julian Barbière, UNESCO-IOC informed the participants on the upcoming United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3), scheduled on June 9-13 in Nice, and its aims to advance SDG 14 and promote ocean sustainability. Held every two to three years, the conference includes a political declaration highlighting Member States' commitments, urgent ocean threats, conservation efforts, integrated management, NbS, sea-level rise, deep-sea governance, sustainable ocean economies, ocean literacy, data collection, and regional cooperation. While the LME concept is not explicitly mentioned, transboundary cooperation and EBM are emphasized. The conference will feature plenaries, ocean action panels aligned with SDG 14 targets, and formal and informal events across three zones: Blue (formal sessions), Red (research vessels), and Green (public and NGO engagement). Special events include the first UN Ocean Science Congress, the Blue Economy and Finance Forum in Monaco, and the Coastal Resilience Summit, each with distinct accreditation processes. IOC will host several events, including an Ocean Decade Forum and an LME-focused off-site meeting on June 10, marking the 30th anniversary of the LME process, engaging stakeholders to discuss private-sector partnerships, contributions to SDG targets, and future priorities, followed by a social reception.

Participants asked about the formal endorsement of the political declaration, which was explained as a three-month negotiation through UN missions in New York, with formal adoption on the conference's last day. Questions arose about major countries not endorsing it, and the availability of the draft online. It was also highlighted that two remaining Green Zone event slots on Africa-focused projects and ocean innovation were still available, while noting that most Blue Zone events are already finalized.

Jasdeep Randhawa, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), started by thanking IW:LEARN and highlighted opportunities for the LME

community to engage in ocean-related climate action under the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement. She emphasized the ocean's critical role in climate regulation and vulnerability to warming, acidification, and sea level rise, while noting opportunities for resilience through governance, technology, and finance. Key milestones under COP25–27 were outlined, including the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue (17-18 June 2025, hybrid), which facilitates knowledge exchange, partnerships, and reporting on ocean-based mitigation and adaptation through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Action Plans (NAPs), and the global stocktake. The 2024 NDC synthesis shows growing inclusion of ocean measures, though financing and implementation remain challenges. Opportunities for LME involvement include contributing to the Ocean Dialogue, sharing project experiences, supporting ecosystem and biodiversity indicators under the climate resilience framework, and advancing implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), Kunming-Montreal GBF targets and the BBNJ Agreement.

Gonzalo Cid, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), provided an overview of the International Marine Protected Area Congress (IMPAC) series, noting its role as a practitioner-focused platform for sharing best practices, strengthening governance, and integrating MPAs into larger conservation frameworks. Senegal was introduced as the host for IMPAC6, with a focus on community engagement, regional MPA networks, and integration with the Blue Economy. Mr. Cid encouraged the LME community to participate, contribute to partnerships, and support Senegal's leadership in advancing marine conservation in Africa, highlighting this event as a key opportunity for collaboration and capacity-building over the next two years.

Ines Benabdallah, GEF Secretariat, highlighted the role of GEF as a financial mechanism supporting developing countries to meet environmental commitments under six MEAs, including the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the BBNJ Agreement. She outlined GEF's 30-year track record, with over $26 billion in direct funding leveraged with $150 billion in co-financing across 6,000 projects, including the creation and management of protected areas. Ms. Benabdallah informed about the GEF replenishment cycle, with GEF-9 negotiations underway to shape programming directions for 2026–2030. The draft strategy for IW emphasizes three objectives: 1. sustainable management of shared coastal and marine ecosystems including LMEs, 2. support for the BBNJ Agreement, and 3. transboundary freshwater management. Key themes include the S2S approach, sustainable financing, blended finance, whole-of-society engagement, knowledge management, and private sector involvement. Ms. Benabdallah made reference to the recent independent evaluation of the IW Focal Area, which stressed the importance of mandate fulfilment, long-term financial sustainability, and improved monitoring and results indicators to measure the impact of transboundary cooperation.

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY 5 JUNE 2025

Session 9 - Mainstreaming the LME approach into global environmental and policy processes and initiatives

Session Chair: Ines Benabdallah (GEFSec)		
Objectives: To identify opportunities for synergies with other global processes		
Time	**Description**	**Name**
09.00-10.00	Contribution by the MedProgramme & Fish EBM (10560) to other ocean related frameworks: CBD-KMBDF, BBNJ, UNFCCC (Paris Agreement)	Tatjana Hema (Barcelona Convention Secretariat)
		Anna Carlson (GFCM) Emna Derouiche (SPA/RAC)
	Contribution of national activities, supported by LME projects, towards global processes	Sabria Bnouni (Ministry of Environment, Tunisia)
		Djurdjina Bulatovic (Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development)

Ines Benabdallah, GEF Secretariat, introduced the session focusing on the links between the LME approach, LME projects, and global environmental agreements and processes. The aim of the session was to discuss how their respective projects have contributed to helping regions and countries meet targets established under MEAs at global, regional, and national levels, highlighting the role of the LME framework in translating global commitments into on-the-ground action

Tatjana Hema, Barcelona Convention Secretariat, discussed how the Mediterranean LME (MedProgramme), implemented in close alignment with the Barcelona Convention and supported by the GEF, contributes directly to the global environmental agenda. She outlined the programme's role in advancing the GBF, particularly through strengthening national capacities for effective MPA management and supporting progress toward the 30×30 target, as well as ICZM, water security, and NbS. The MedProgramme was also noted for its strong contributions to the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions through the disposal of obsolete Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and capacity building, and for its leadership on climate change adaptation in a region identified as a climate hotspot. Overall, the MedProgramme was presented as a pioneering, cross-cutting LME initiative that strengthens governance, knowledge management, and regional cooperation while supporting multiple MEAs and SDGs.

Anna Carlson, General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), highlighted how the FishEBM Med and Black Sea projects contribute to global environmental goals by promoting an ecosystem-based fisheries management approach in close synergy with the MedProgramme. Working through the GFCM, the projects strengthen transboundary fisheries governance by filling data, capacity, and

methodological gaps across the full management cycle, from data collection and analysis to stakeholder engagement, compliance, and adoption of binding regional measures. Concrete contributions to the GBF include support to sustainable fisheries management, combating Illegal, IUU fishing, reducing bycatch, addressing invasive alien species, and advancing the 30×30 target through the establishment of fisheries restricted areas and protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems. The projects also support implementation readiness for the BBNJ Agreement, integrate climate change considerations into fisheries management, and contribute to emerging efforts on plastics pollution, demonstrating how fisheries-focused LME initiatives can effectively advance multiple MEAs.

Emna Derouiche, Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC), talked about how the MedProgramme's Child Project 3.1 in Libya (GEF ID 10158) and the FishEBM project contribute to key global and regional ocean frameworks, including the GBF, the SDGs, and the Paris Agreement. Child Project 3.1 focuses on strengthening MPAs in Libya through improved national governance, site-level management, stakeholder engagement, and awareness raising, with management plans developed for pilot sites and a national network of sites of conservation interest contributing to the 30×30 target. At the regional level, FishEBM supports ecosystem-based fisheries management by addressing non-indigenous species, marine litter, climate change adaptation, and sustainable fisheries. Both projects also advance blue economy approaches, participatory governance, gender equality, and multi-stakeholder engagement, demonstrating an integrated, science-based, and inclusive approach to strengthening ocean governance at national and regional scales.

Sabria Bnouni, Ministry of Environment, Tunisia, highlighted that the MedProgramme's most significant support to Tunisia focuses on implementing the Land-Based Sources (LBS) Protocol, aligned with the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, particularly through mercury impact assessments, support to Minamata Convention ratification, the finalization of regulatory frameworks for mercury and PCBs, and the planned removal of substantial quantities of hazardous substances. In parallel, the programme supports the ICZM Protocol, building on Tunisia's 2020 national ICZM strategy, which promotes sustainable coastal development and climate resilience through a participatory approach; current Med Programme support focuses on operationalizing this strategy via action plans, strengthened institutional coordination and capacity-building for effective coastal management.

Djurdjina Bulatovic, Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development, Montenegro, explained that in Montenegro the MedProgramme and the FishEBM project are strengthening national capacity and supporting alignment with the Barcelona Convention and its protocols. Key actions include reducing chemical and waste pollution in the Bay of Kotor through contaminated sediment management and PCB removal, advancing biodiversity protection through improved data collection, invasive species management and ecosystem-based fisheries approaches, and addressing climate change via the country's first ICZM plan. Overall, the programme has helped Montenegro better meet its international environmental obligations by embedding an ecosystem-based approach into national marine policies.

Session 10 - Extending cooperation with the private sector

Session Chair: Konstantina Toli (UNESCO-IOC, IW:LEARN)		
Objectives: To explore how LMEs can enhance cooperation with the private sector		
Time	**Description**	**Name**
10.00-11.00	Showcasing diverse examples of private sector engagement, focusing on contributions to marine sustainability through data services, green technologies, partnerships, and voluntary action.	Lilia Khodjet El Khil (IMO)
		Alpa Bhattacharjee (Fugro)
		Alkistis Kyriakopoulou (Deepsea Technologies)
		George Sarigiannis (Vasileiadis Group of Companies - V Group)

Konstantina Toli, UNESCO-IOC; IW:LEARN, introduced the last session on extending cooperation with the private sector, emphasizing that LMEs require integrated solutions that bring together policy, science, finance, innovation and governance. She underlined the growing role of the private sector as a critical partner in ocean and coastal protection, through technological innovation, sustainable business practices and new financing mechanisms, while noting that effective engagement depends on enabling policy, regulatory frameworks and incentives.

Lilia Khodjet El Khil, IMO, highlighted the GloFouling Partnerships project's distinct model of engaging the private sector as a key partner in advancing ocean sustainability objectives. She explained that the project established a GIA composed entirely of private companies to support the uptake of best management practices for biofouling management across seven LMEs. The alliance provides developing countries with technical expertise, knowledge products, and access to innovative technologies, addressing practical solutions that governments alone cannot provide. The process of engaging companies involved reactivating contacts from the project's preparatory phase, reaching out to potential new members, and demonstrating clear mutual benefits to ensure a win-win partnership. Communication and networking, including webinars and side events, were critical to maintaining active participation and expanding the alliance, reinforcing the project's integrated approach to public-private collaboration. The discussion addressed the challenge of demonstrating the benefits of biofouling management to the private sector. Ms. Khodjet El Khil noted that providing clear value is essential to engage companies, as industry often asks "What's in it for me?". Regarding compliance, she explained that there are currently no mandatory requirements for biofouling management, only voluntary guidelines, creating a barrier for both environmental protection and industry innovation. Without enforceable standards, technology developers lack incentives to invest in or improve solutions. The GIA has played a critical role in highlighting the need for regulation and mandatory requirements, a notable achievement given that private sector actors typically resist new regulatory obligations.

Alpa Bhattacharjee, Fugro, presented on leveraging geospatial data to unlock finance for marine and coastal ecosystem restoration. Fugro uses earth observation, seabed mapping, and other geodata technologies to assess ecosystem states, model future changes, and quantify their value across biodiversity, fisheries, climate mitigation, and adaptation. This “net ecosystem value” approach positions ecosystems as critical infrastructure, supporting investment decisions and cost-benefit analyses for restoration. Successful scaling requires whole-ecosystem approaches, strong partnerships with local communities and organizations, and integration of cultural and socioeconomic values. Current collaborations include developing coastal resilience indices with the Commonwealth Blue Charter and the Stimson Center, ensuring iterative, data-driven, and locally informed solutions for long-term ecosystem and community benefits.

Alkistis Kyriakopoulou, Deepsea Technologies, presented on the application of AI to support decarbonization and operational efficiency in the shipping industry. She highlighted that shipping contributes approximately 3% of global CO_2 emissions, with around 900 million tonnes emitted annually, and emphasized the urgency of optimizing existing fleets, which will remain operational for the next 20–30 years, alongside the transition to alternative fuels and energy-efficient technologies. Deep Sea Technologies collects vessel and environmental data, including weather, wave, and current conditions, and uses AI to clean, process, and analyse the information, creating digital twins of vessels onshore. These digital models enable operators to simulate performance, optimize routes, speeds, and maintenance schedules, and eventually automate vessel operations. This approach allows for immediate fuel savings and CO_2 reduction of roughly 10% without altering operational practices. The company’s solutions demonstrate how AI and digitalization can provide cost-effective, scalable, and practical strategies for reducing emissions in existing fleets, supporting the broader goal of a sustainable and low-carbon maritime sector while bridging the gap until longer-term technological transformations, such as alternative fuels and new vessel designs, are fully implemented.

On the questions related to the barriers and the opportunities for scaling up AI solutions in the maritime business, Ms. Kyriakopoulos explained that the company was founded in 2017 and recently acquired by Japan’s Tesco Corporation. Key challenges include the traditionally slow adoption culture in shipping, limited availability of high-quality, diverse data, and the organizational changes required to implement AI systems effectively. Despite these hurdles, opportunities arise from increasing regulatory pressures, growing awareness of environmental impacts, and the expanding availability of digital and sensor data.

George Sarigiannis, Vasileiadis Group of Companies - V Group, highlighted the company’s holistic approach to circular economy solutions, integrating onshore and offshore environmental services with a focus on maritime operations. Key initiatives include port reception facilities, hazardous waste management, environmental restoration, eco-vessels for waste collection, and over 30 annual marine cleanup activities. A flagship project is the establishment of Anti-Pollution Egypt in partnership with the Suez Canal Authority to support the Green Canal 2030 vision. This initiative involves a mandatory environmental fee for vessels, waste collection, online tracking, and plans

for waste-to-hydrogen production, with €150 million projected investment. Mr. Sarigiannis emphasized the importance of data-driven prevention, risk mapping, cross-border cooperation, and scientific integration between public and private sectors to improve emergency response and marine pollution management.

Panelists also discussed the need for regulatory frameworks to encourage industry compliance, with Ms. Khodjet El Khil and Ms. Bhattacharjee highlighting that high-quality data and collaboration between stakeholders, including AI and geospatial data companies, are crucial for informed decision-making, effective policy, and financing of sustainable marine operations. This session underscored the critical role of private sector engagement, technology, and regulatory incentives in advancing marine ecosystem protection and sustainable maritime practices.

Closing Session

Session Chair: Vladimir Mamaev (UNDP)		
11.30-12.00	**Closing**	Tatjana Hema (Barcelona Convention Secretariat) Julian Barbière (UNESCO-IOC)

Julian Barbière, UNESCO-IOC, invited **Tatjana Hema**, Barcelona Convention Secretariat, and **Vladimir Mamaev**, UNDP, on stage to close the meeting. This session highlighted the enduring value of collaboration, partnership, and knowledge sharing across LME projects, emphasizing the importance of data management, integrated programmatic approaches, and innovative practices. The long-term contributions of Mediterranean LME initiatives were noted and the need to evolve frameworks in line with changing ocean governance, while stressing private sector engagement and cross-sectoral collaboration. Special tribute was paid to Dr. Mamaev for his decades of outstanding leadership and dedication to the LME process, from pioneering the first projects in the early 1990s to fostering strong partnerships globally, as he retires from his current role. Dr. Mamaev also recognized the dedication of the IW:LEARN team and encouraged continued innovation and participation in future events, including LME25 meeting in Paris and the 50th anniversary of the Mediterranean Action Plan. The session reaffirmed the strength and cohesion of the LME community, the centrality of science-based management, and the commitment to collective action for ocean health and resilience.

The Chair closed the meeting at 12.00.

List of Annexes

i. Detailed Agenda
ii. List of participants

Annex i: Detailed Agenda

DAY 1: Wednesday 14 May 2025			
Session 1 - Opening			
Session Chair: Julian Barbière (UNESCO-IOC)			
Objectives: To open the meeting, welcome the participants and set the scene for the subsequent sessions and discussions.			
Time	**Description**	**Name**	**Format**
09.00-09.25	Welcome	Tatjana Hema (UNEP/MAP, Barcelona Convention Secretariat) Muhammad Abdi Suhufan (Special Envoy of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia) Ines Benabdallah (GEF Sec) Adnan Awan (UNDP) Hartwig Kremer (UNEP) Konstantina Toli (UNESCO-IOC, IW:LEARN)	Plenary; individual addresses
09.25-09.30	Structure and objectives of LME24 meeting	Claudette Spiteri (UNESCO-IOC; IW:LEARN)	Plenary, presentation
Session 2A - Progress in LME Implementation			
Session Chair: Vladimir Mamaev (UNDP)			
Objectives: To present latest key highlights from the GEF projects			
Time	**Description**	**Name**	**Format**
09.30-11.00	Build back a blue and stronger Med (10685)	Romain Renoux (MedFund)	Panel

	Blue Nature Alliance (10375)	Madeline Beattie (Conservation International)	7-8 mins each Topics: - MPAs; 30 X 30 - Fisheries - SIDS - Sustainable Blue Economy - SAP implementation - Coastal Zone Management - Marine Spatial planning 2 slides : 1. Brief overview of project, location, objectives, timeline etc. 2. Describe the latest key achievement on one of the topics above with respect to one of the following: • scientific results & tools • partnerships • governance • innovation • sustainability
	Common Fisheries Initiative Indonesia (9129)	Syahril Abd Rauf (CFI Indonesia; Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Indonesia)	
	Sustainable management of the living marine resources of the WCPFC (10394)	Lisa Buchanan (OFMP; FFA)	
	REBYC-III CLME+ (10857)	Nerissa Lucky (University of the West Indies)	
	ICZM, governance & climate change 9687 & SSCF -9670	Djurdjina Bulatovic (Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development)	
	Gulf of Mexico SAP LME (6952)	Margarita Garcia; Sergio Bernabe Garzon (GoM SAP; UNOPS)	
	Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action (6920)	Handoko Adi Susanto (PEMSEA)	
11.00-11.30	**COFFEE BREAK**		
Session 2B - How to advance the existing LME partnerships and overcome challenges they face			
11.30-12.30	i. Governance issues	Isabelle Vanderbeck (UNEP)	Round-table discussions
	ii. Project management issues	Vladimir Mamaev (UNDP)	
	iii. Inclusion (youth, gender, Indigenous People)	Marialena Vyzaki (FAO) Senem Berber (MedProgramme)	
	iv. Stakeholder Engagement	Dimitris Faloutsos (GWP)	

	v. Partnerships	Michail Marios Scoullos (MIO-ECSDE; GWP-Med; WES-BCA)	
12.30-14.00	**LUNCH**		
Session 3 - Supporting LME implementation			
Session Chair: Ines Benabdallah (GEFSec)			
Objectives: To inform on the latest processes and activities in support of the LME implementation			
Time	**Description**	**Name**	**Format**
14.00-15.00	Update on GESAMP Scoping Paper on Scientific Support to LMEs	Andrew Hudson (GESAMP) (online)	Presentation (10-15 mins each)
	TDA/SAP enhancements (S2S & MSP/SBE)	Ruth Mathews (Currents Converge) Louise Lieberknecht (GRID-A)	
	Leverging expertise and contribution from the industry/private sector expertise in support of LMEs	Lilia Khodjet El Khil (IMO)	
	IW:LEARN activities	Claudette Spiteri (UNESCO-IOC; IW:LEARN)	
Session 4A - Towards more integrated approaches			
Session Chair: Isabelle Vanderbeck & Hartwig Kremer (UNEP)			
Objectives: To highlight progress and challenges in the application of more integrated approaches			
Time	**Description**	**Name**	**Format**
15.00-16.00	S2S guidance (UNECE; IW:LEARN)	Ruth Mathews (Currents Converge)	Presentation (7-8 mins each)
	Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (SOPM)	Fanny Douvere (UNESCO-IOC)	
	Clean and Healthy Oceans IP	Lorenzo Galbiati (FAO)	Panel (40 mins + Q&A) Questions – no slides

	Integrated management approaches from source to sea	Dimitris Faloutsos (GWP)	
	South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand SAP (5538)	Margarita Victoria Caballa (COBSEA)	
	From Common Oceans to ABNJ/BBNJ	Viktoria Varga Lencses (FAO)	
16.00-16.30	**COFFEE BREAK**		
Session 4B - Supporting LME implementation and integration			
16.30-17.30	i. MSP in TDA/SAP consultation	Louise Lieberknecht (GRID-A)	Round-table discussions
	ii. How to Apply the Source-to-Sea Approach in GEF IW projects	Ruth Mathews (Consultant)	
	iii. LMEs as users and vehicle to implement SOPM	Fanny Douvere (UNESCO-IOC)	
	iv. Citizen science in LME projects	Reynaldo Molina (SCS SAP; UNOPS)	
	v. Integrating MED LME policies and action across sectors and spatial segments: Recommendations from the MedProgramme ASM	Christine Haffner-Sifakis & Alessandro Candeloro (MedProgramme)	
17.30-18.15	Curbing land-based pollution to address marine hypoxia: soft launch of the GEF-8 Clean and Healthy Ocean Integrated Program (CHO IP)	FAO	
18.15-19.15	**Welcome Cocktail**		

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">DAY 2: Thursday 15 May 2025</td></tr>
<tr><td>Time</td><td>Description</td><td>Name</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>09.00-09.30</td><td>Reporting Day 1 (Sessions 2B & 4B)</td><td>Group Rapporteurs</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Session 5A- Data, Information and Knowledge Management Strategies</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Session Chair: Lorenzo Galbiati (FAO)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Objectives: To share experiences and challenges on DIM at different levels</td></tr>
<tr><td>Time</td><td>Description</td><td>Name</td><td>Format</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="9">09.30-10.30</td><td colspan="2">Approaches and challenges
From Global</td><td rowspan="9">5 mins & 1 question each.
Slides optional – 3 max.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Blue and Green Islands IP</td><td>Adnan Awad (UNDP)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Plastic Reboot IP</td><td>Isabelle Vanderbeck (UNEP)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Common Oceans Programme</td><td>Viktoria Varga Lencses (FAO)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Integrating coral reef indicators, monitoring data, and the subsequent global and regional assessments</td><td>Tom Dallison (ICRI)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ocean Intelligence</td><td>Jason Meads (SubSee AI)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">To Regional</td></tr>
<tr><td>Black Sea - Blueing the Black Sea (BBSEA)</td><td>Venera Domi (BSEC)</td></tr>
<tr><td>10.30-11.00</td><td colspan="3">COFFEE BREAK</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Session 5B - Data, Information and Knowledge Management Strategies</td></tr>
<tr><td>11.00-12.00</td><td>i. DIM: Regional data infrastructure, standards, accessibility, availability etc.</td><td>Isabelle Vanderbeck (UNEP)</td><td>Round-table discussions</td></tr>
</table>

	ii. DIM: Common indicators	Vladimir Mamaev (UNDP)	
	iii. Integrating DIM from source-to-sea	Iryna Makarenko (BSC)	
	iv. Collect, Curate, Share: The Knowledge Management Challenge	Konstantina Toli (UNESCO-IOC, IW:LEARN)	
	v. Use of AI in Ecosystem Based Management	Richard Saville (SubSee AI)	
Session 6 - Launch of twinning programmes			
12.00-12.30	i. Sustainable Pacific (10076) & Humboldt II (9592)	Alejandro Arrivillaga (WWF)	Pitches x4 (5 mins each)
	ii. African SIDS (10865) & PROCARIBE+ (10800)	Ralph Philip (GWPSA)	
	iii. BE-CLME+ (10211) & Micronesia Challenge 2030 (10740)	Dayne Buddo (CRFM)	
	iv. CAR BlueFin (10782) & OCTA Amazon (9970)	Claudette Spiteri (UNESCO-IOC; IW:LEARN)	
12.30-14.00	**LUNCH**		
Session 7A - Science generation, uptake and communication			
Session Chair: Julian Barbière (UNESCO-IOC)			
Objectives: To discuss how to enhance uptake and communication of science generated by LMEs			
Time	**Description**	**Name**	**Format**
14.00-15.00	Ocean Decade update	Julian Barbière (UNESCO-IOC)	Panel 3 slides

	INMS tools - the global scientific support process for international nitrogen policy development	Mark Sutton (CEH) (online)	2 questions *How can projects be designed to include a robust scientific component?* *How can we ensure that the science generated is effectively taken up, particularly in policy and societal processes?*
	GloNoise's contribution to scientific data generation and its integration into policy frameworks	Sevtap Ozdogan (IMO)	
	GEF TDA/SAP methodology to an ABNJ marine ecosystem – A case study of the Sargasso Sea	Andrew Hudson (consultant) (online)	
	Assessing biodiversity status using plankton assemblages	Kalliopi Pagkou (HCMR)	
	Ocean science and governance: looking into the future	Cyrille Barnerias (OfB)	
Session 7B - How to communicate science better			
15.00-16.00	Communicating science – the role of green/blue journalism 1) Can we address the current geopolitical context and how to navigate science communications and our wording in science communications? How can we make people care with all that's going on? 2) The cultural context and language, how do we manage that when talking about science? 3) Related to the psychological part and predisposition of people, how can we	Climate Explorers 2024/ Constructive Institute	Workshop

	speak to all kinds of persons, with more and less knowledge?		
16.00-16.30	**COFFEE BREAK**		
16.30-17.00	**Session 7B - How to communicate science better (cont.)**		
Session 8 - Engagement of the LME community in global dialogues			
Session Chair: Claudette Spiteri (UNESCO-IOC, IW:LEARN)			
Objectives: To identify synergies and opportunities for the engagement of the LME community in global dialogues			
Time	**Description**	**Name**	**Format**
17.00-17.30	UNOC3 & One Ocean Science congress	Julian Barbiere (UNESCO-IOC)	Presentations (10 mins)
	Ocean and Climate Dialogue & COP30	Jasdeep Randhawa (UNFCCC -online)	
	IMPAC6	Gonzalo Cid (NOAA - online)	
	GEF-9 strategic directions	Ines Benabdallah (GEFSec)	
Time	**Description**		
17.30-18.00	Reporting (5B & 7B) & wrap up	Group Rapporteurs	

DAY 3: Friday 16 May 2025 (morning only)			
Session 9 – Mainstreaming the LME approach into global environmental and policy processes and initiatives			
Session Chair: Ines Benabdallah (GEFSec)			
Objectives: To identify opportunities for synergies with other global processes			
Time	**Description**	**Name**	**Format**
09.00-10.00	Contribution by the MedProgramme & Fish EBM (10560) to other ocean related frameworks: CBD-KMBDF, BBNJ, UNFCCC (Paris Agreement)	Tatjana Hema (Barcelona Convention Secretariat)	Presentation (10 mins each)
		Anna Carlson (GFCM) Emna Derouiche (SPA/RAC)	
	Contribution of national activities, supported by LME projects, towards global processes	Sabria Bnouni (Ministry of Environment, Tunisia)	Panel discussion
		Omar Sharif (Ministry of Environment, Libya) - tbc	
		Djurdjina Bulatovic (Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development)	
Session 10 – Extending cooperation with the private sector			
Session Chair: Konstantina Toli (UNESCO-IOC, IW:LEARN)			
Objectives: To explore how LMEs can enhance cooperation with the private sector			
Time	**Description**	**Name**	**Format**
10.00-11.00	Showcasing diverse examples of private sector engagement, focusing on contributions to marine sustainability through data services, green technologies, partnerships, and voluntary action.	Lilia Khodjet El Khil (IMO)	Panel
		Alpa Bhattacharjee (Fugro)	
		Alkistis Kyriakopoulou (Deepsea Technologies)	
		George Sarigiannis (Vasileiadis Group of Companies - V Group)	

11.00-11.30	**COFFEE BREAK**	
Time	**Description**	**Name**
Session Chair: Vladimir Mamaev (UNDP)		
11.30-12.00	**Closing**	Tatjana Hema (Barcelona Convention Secretariat) Julian Barbière (UNESCO-IOC)

Annex ii: List of Participants

	First Name	Family Name	Organization	GEF project name	GEF project ID
1	Mr. Adipati	Rahmat	Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF)	Eco-system Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) in Eastern Indonesia	9129
2	Mr. Adnan	Awad	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)		
3	Mr. Alejandro	Arrivillaga	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)	Towards Joint Integrated, Ecosystem-based Management of the Pacific Central American Coastal Large Marine Ecosystem (PACA)	10076
4	Mr. Alessandro	Candeloro	UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)	Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme): Enhancing Environmental Security	9607
5	Ms. Alice	Meads	Subsee AI		
6	Ms. Alkistis	Kymanopoulou	Deep sea Technologies		
7	Ms. Alpa	Bhattacharjee	Fugro Climate & Nature - Blue Finance		
8	Ms. Anna	Carlson	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (FAO/GFCM)	Fisheries and Ecosystem Based Management for the Blue Economy of the Mediterranean - (FishEBM MED) / Fisheries and Ecosystem Based Management for the Black Sea - (FishEBM BS)	10560 / 10558

9	Mr. Anoud	Allouzi	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)		
10	Mr. Ante	Ivcevic	Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC)	Mediterranean Coastal Zones Climate Resilience Water Security and Habitat Protection	9687
11	Ms. Carole	Martinez	MedPan	Build back a blue and stronger Mediterranean	10685
12	Ms. Christine	Haffner-Sifakis	UNEP/Mediterrane an Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)		
13	Ms. Claudette	Spiteri	UNESCO-IOC, IW:LEARN		
14	Mr. Cyrille	Barnérias	French biodiversity agency (OFB)		
15	Mr. David	Vousden	UNDP/GESAMP		
16	Mr. Dayne	Buddo	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM)	BE-CLME+": Promoting National Blue Economy Priorities Through Marine Spatial Planning in the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Plus	10211
17	Ms. Diana Gabriela	Zazueta Pozos	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	Implementation of the Strategic Action Program of the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem	6952
18	Mr. Dimitris	Faloutsos	Global Water Partnership - Med (GWP-MED)	MedProgramme	9687 and 9685
19	Ms. Djurdjina	Bulatovic	Montenegro-Directorate for Nature Protection Ministry of Tourism, Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development	Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramm e): Enhancing Environmental Security	9607
20	Mr. Dodiet Rachmadi	Slamet	Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs	Eco-system Approach to	9129

			and Fisheries (MMAF)	Fisheries Management (EAFM) in Eastern Indonesia	
21	Mr. Eduard	Interwies	InterSus - Sustainability Services	Strengthening the Stewardship of an Economically and Biological Significant Area - The Sargasso Sea	10620
22	Ms. Emna	Derouich	Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC)		
23	Ms. Fanny	Douvere	IOC-UNESCO		
24	Mr. Fisseha	Abissa	World Bank		
25	Mr. Free	De Koning	Conservation International (CI)		
26	Mr. George	Sarigiannis	Vasileiadis Group of Companies - V Group		
27	Mr. Gerardo	Gold Bouchot	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	Implementation of the Strategic Action Program of the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem	6952
28	Mr. Gonzalo	Cid	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)		
29	Mr. Handoko Adi	Susanto	Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA)		
30	Mr. Hartwig	Kremers	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)		
31	Mr. Hasan	El Fakri	Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF)	Eco-system Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) in Eastern Indonesia	9129
32	Ms. Ines	Benabdallah	Global Environment Facility (GEF)		

33	Ms. Iryna	Makarenko	Black Sea Commission (BSC)		
34	Ms. Isabelle	Vanderbeck	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)		
35	Ms. Jasdeep	Randhawa	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)		
36	Mr. Jason	Meads	Subsee AI		
37	Mr. Julian	Barbière	IOC-UNESCO		
38	Ms. Kalliopi	Pagkou	Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR)		
39	Ms. Khristine	Gudczinski	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	Implementing the Strategic Action Programme of the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand	5538
40	Ms. Konstantina	Toli	UNESCO-IOC	IW:LEARN	10374
41	Ms. Lilia	Khodjet El Khil	International Maritime Organization (IMO)	Building Partnerships to Assist Developing Countries Minimize the Impacts from Aquatic Biofouling (GloFouling Partnerships)	9605
42	Ms. Lisa	Buchanan	Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)	Mainstreaming climate change and ecosystem-based approaches into the sustainable management of the living marine resources of the WCPFC	10394
43	Mr. Lorenzo Paolo	Galbiati	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)		
44	Ms. Louise	Lieberknecht	GRID-Arendal		
45	Ms. Lucilla	Minelli	Food and Agriculture		

			Organization of the United Nations (FAO)		
46	Ms. Madeline	Beattie	Conservation International (CI)	Blue Nature Alliance to expand and improve conservation of 1.25 billion hectares of ocean ecosystems	10375
47	Ms. Malek	Ameri	IW:LEARN	IW:LEARN	10374
48	Ms. Margarita	Garcia	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	Implementation of the Strategic Action Program of the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem	6952
49	Ms. Margarita Victoria	Caballa	Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)	Seeding a Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy for the coastal waters of Thailand	11359
50	Ms. Maria	Dalby	GRID-Arendal		
51	Ms. Marialena	Vyzaki	UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)	Global Coordination Project-Clean and Healthy Ocean Integrated Program	11353
52	Mr. Michael	Scoullos	MIO-ECSDE		
53	Mr. Mohamed	Elbouch	DDD Morroco		
54	Mr. Mohammad Abdi	Suhufan	Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF)	Eco-system Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) in Eastern Indonesia	9129
55	Ms. Natalie	Degger	United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)		
56	Ms. Nerissa	Lucky	University of the West Indies		

57	Ms. Nina	Baijens	UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)	Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme): Enhancing Environmental Security	9607
58	Ms. Putranta Duta	Hurip	Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF)	Eco-system Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) in Eastern Indonesia	9129
59	Mr. Ralph	Philip	Global Water Partnership Southern Africa (GWPSA)	Blue Economy Transformation in African SIDS	10865
60	Mr. Reynaldo	Molina	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	Implementing the Strategic Action Programme of the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand	5538
61	Mr. Richard	Saville	Subsee AI		
62	Mr. Romain	Renoux	MedFund	Build back a blue and stronger Mediterranean	10685
63	Ms. Ruth	Mathews	Independant consultant		
64	Ms. Sabria	Bnouni	Tunisian Ministry of Environment - Director General for International cooperation		
65	Mr. Sergio Bernabe	Garzon	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	Implementation of the Strategic Action Program of the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem	6952
66	Ms. Sevtap	Ozdogan	International Maritime Organization (IMO)	Global Partnership for Mitigation of Underwater Noise from Shipping (GloNoise Partnership)	10890
67	Ms. Susana	Perera Valderrama	UNEP/Cartagena Convention Secretariat	Implementation of the Strategic Action Program	6952

				of the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem	
68	Mr. Syahril Abd	Rauf	Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF)	Eco-system Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) in Eastern Indonesia	9129
69	Ms. Tatjana	Hema	UNEP/Mediterrane an Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)		
70	Ms. Tea	Marasovic	Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC)	Mediterranean Coastal Zones Climate Resilience Water Security and Habitat Protection	9687
71	Mr. Tom	Dallison	International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)		
72	Mr. Vangelis	Constantianos	Global Water Partnership - Med (GWP-MED)		
73	Ms. Venera	Domi	Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) organization	Blueing the Black Sea	10563
74	Ms. Viktoria	Varga	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	Global Coordination Project for the Common Oceans ABNJ Program	10626
75	Ms. Virginie	Hart	UNEP Greece		
76	Mr. Vladimir	Mamaev	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)		
77	Mr. Yoppy	Endano	Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF)	Eco-system Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) in Eastern Indonesia	9129