



GESAMP

Joint Group of Experts on the
Scientific Aspects of Marine
Environmental Protection

GESAMP 44/3/Add.1
10 August 2017
ENGLISH ONLY

44th session
Agenda item 3

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY OF GESAMP

**Activities and achievements of the Sponsoring Organizations of GESAMP
since the 43rd session**

This document provides a summary of the achievements of UN ENVIRONMENT since GESAMP 43 (14 to 17 November 2016).

* * *

UN ENVIRONMENT (United Nations Environment Programme-UNEP)

Marine and Coastal Strategy¹

1 The work on the marine and coastal ecosystems at UN ENVIRONMENT is conducted based on the marine and coastal strategy. The strategy covers four major areas: the land-ocean connection, ecosystem services, balancing use and conservation, and vulnerable people and places. The outcomes are achieved by scientific assessment, policy, planning and communications, providing objective science-based information and enhancing users' capacities. UN ENVIRONMENT work focuses on using sound science to apply ecosystem management to the factors that cause decline of ecosystem services in marine and coastal areas.

2 UN ENVIRONMENT continues to provide technical support and capacity development for integrated management of marine and coastal ecosystems within the framework of its marine and coastal strategy. In particular, support is given to Member States through the platforms of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) and the Regional Seas programmes and action plans such as the Abidjan Convention, Barcelona Convention, Cartagena Convention, East Asian Seas Action Plan, Nairobi Convention, and Northwest Pacific Action Plan. There is also extensive collaboration with UN Agencies such as United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization-Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO/IOC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Maritime Organization (IMO), United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UN DOALOS), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the World Bank.

3 Through paragraph 17 of the resolution 2/10 Oceans and Seas of the Second Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), Member States requested the Executive Director of UN ENVIRONMENT to assess the effectiveness of the current marine and coastal strategy. Based on the assessment, UN ENVIRONMENT will submit a proposal for its updates, revision or replacement to the Third Session of the Environment Assembly to be held in December 2017.

Regional Seas Programme²

4 UN ENVIRONMENT has been coordinating the UN ENVIRONMENT Regional Seas Programme since 1974. The Regional Seas programmes are among the most important regional mechanisms for the conservation and sustainable use of the marine and coastal environment. There are currently eighteen Regional Seas programmes around the world and more than 143 countries participate in the programmes. UN ENVIRONMENT currently administers seven Regional Seas programmes³.

5 Member States have reiterated the importance of the UN ENVIRONMENT Regional Seas Programme for the sustainable management of the oceans through the resolution 2/10 Oceans and Seas of the Second Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. The contributions of the Regional Seas programmes in assisting Member States with implementing the ocean-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were stressed. The 18 Regional Seas meeting held in October 2017 in Korea emphasized the need for regionally coordinated national actions and reporting for the sustainable development goals, particularly Goal 14.

¹ http://www.unep.org/esm/Portals/50159/docs/em_water/UNEPs_Marine_Coastal_Strategy_Executive_Summary.pdf

² <http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/>

³ Abidjan Convention, Barcelona Convention, Cartagena Convention, East Asian Seas Action, Nairobi Convention, Plan, Northwest Pacific Action Plan, and Tehran Convention

Activities in the regions:***Nairobi Convention⁴***

6 On 25 November 2016 in Seychelles, the Nairobi Convention in partnership with WWF-Madagascar brought together civil society organisations working in the Northern Mozambique Channel to explore the options for partnerships and discussed the role of Northern Mozambique Channel as a good example of integrated ocean management approach for implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 on oceans and seas and the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development. The workshop also focused on the need for integrated management of on-going and arising projects ensuring sustainable development with development approaches for oil and gas in the Northern Mozambique Channel.

7 The third round of negotiations on the Nairobi Convention Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) was held on 21-26 November 2016 in Zanzibar to address outstanding issues of the Protocol and explored possible options for the effective management of marine and coastal environment in the Western Indian Ocean. The negotiations meeting was organised pursuant to Decision CP8/3 of the Eighth Conference of Parties to the Nairobi Convention urging Nairobi Convention to finalize all the key elements of the protocol for presentation to the ninth Conference of Parties.

8 The November 2016 Zanzibar meeting of experts in environmental management of the emerging oil and gas industry in the Western Indian Ocean region developed a regional oil and gas capacity building programme. The programme aims to establish and strengthen capacity in oil and gas regulatory frameworks and support the Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention and manage oil and gas development in accordance with the universal standards and best practices. As a follow-up, the Nairobi Convention in collaboration with the Government of Norway will hold a regional workshop on managing environmental emergencies in the oil and gas industry in the Western Indian Ocean in October 2017. The workshop will lay the groundwork on environmental management for oil and gas development necessary to generate policy, business and civil society actions towards the sustainable management of the oil and gas resources in the region.

9 As a follow up to Nairobi Convention Contracting Parties Decision CP8/10 on Blue/Ocean economy in which Contracting Parties were urged to apply blue or ocean economy approaches as pathways for sustained economic growth, food security, poverty eradication, job creation and environmental sustainability, WWF-Madagascar in January 2017 launched a report on 'Reviving the Western Indian Ocean Economy: Actions for a Sustainable Future'. The report offers estimates of the economic value generated from the sea to motivate governments and economic sectors in the Western Indian Ocean to embark on a development pathway based on protecting the assets that deliver this economic value. The report aims to help Western Indian Ocean countries to achieve the SDG plan of action for 2016-2030 in the ocean sector and thus to realize the vision expressed under the regional strategic action programme, of "people prospering from a healthy Western Indian Ocean".
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/13692WWF2.pdf>

10 In April 2017 the Nairobi Convention in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society reviewed the Regional Status Report on Sharks and Rays in the Western Indian Ocean for submission to the ninth Conference of Parties to the Convention in March 2018. The report aims to present major issues and gaps in knowledge, governance, capacities; and actions of priority for closing these gaps in the form of a regional roadmap for shark and ray conservation and management.

11 The Nairobi Convention participated in the second international conference on Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of the United

⁴ <http://www.unep.org/nairobiconvention/>

Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in March 2017 in Paris, France. Among others, the conference identified the MSP priorities over the next decade (2017-2027), including applying MSP in Areas beyond National Jurisdiction. Nairobi Convention attended the Conference pursuant to the Eight Conference of Parties Decision CP8/13 requesting the Secretariat to collaborate with partners on capacity building, implementation, and sharing of experiences on integrated marine spatial planning in support of blue economy. As a follow up the Nairobi Convention Secretariat in collaboration with WIOMSA and Blue Climate Solutions and IOC-UNESCO will be organizing a regional training on Marine Spatial Planning in Western Indian Ocean region in November 2017 to build the capacity of the Contracting Parties to Nairobi Convention in marine spatial planning, methods and practices for an integrated and holistic approach to the management of coastal and marine resources in the region.

12 In April 2017 an outlook on 'Marine Spatial Planning of the Western Indian Ocean Blue Economy' was prepared by the Nairobi Convention to demonstrate ecosystem-based marine spatial planning as an effective tool for the implementation of the Western Indian Ocean Blue Economy by the Contracting Parties to the Convention. The report elaborates on the strong relationship between the Blue Economy and marine spatial planning (MSP), as well as proposing its place amongst other policy tools such as integrated coastal management (ICM), and presents regional progress on the uptake and use of MSP including in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

13 Countries of the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region jointly developed a set of regional Voluntary Commitments, supported by a joint statement, which were presented at the UN Ocean Conference on SDG14 (New York, June 2017). These joint commitments were submitted within the framework of the Nairobi Convention, and consolidated during a Regional SDG14 Conference hosted by the Government of Seychelles in May 2017. Among the key commitments agreed upon by countries as part of this process are to strengthen ocean governance in the region, and to ensure the sustainable management of shared fish resources and collaborative management of marine and coastal resources in the Northern Mozambique Channel. Others included implementation of the strategic action programme to reduce impacts from land-based sources and activities and sustainably manage critical coastal and marine ecosystems through implementation of the agreed priorities and implementation of the Western Indian Ocean strategic action programme on policy harmonization and institutional reforms towards improved ocean governance and transition to a low carbon pathway. A follow-up action in October 2017 will bring together countries from the WIO region, in particular those with a specific interest in the Northern Mozambique Channel (NMC) area where WWF-Madagascar is active. The workshop will provide a forum to take stock of the outcomes of the UN Ocean Conference, and to expand the dialogue between countries and key stakeholder groups around their plans and commitments towards delivering on these commitments, as well as the SDG14 targets.

14 To enhance cooperation, collaboration and support with partners, Nairobi Convention participated in the International Maritime Organisation sub-regional workshop on Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas in April 2017. The workshop introduced the International Maritime Organization's Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas concept and the associated guidelines for identifying and designating a Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA). The workshop provided participants with an overview of the mechanics of preparing a proposal for particularly sensitive sea areas and navigating the proposal through the International Maritime Organisation, and implementation and compliance of a regional and national particularly sensitive sea area. The workshop flagged the need to raise awareness on PSSA and their vulnerability to damage from international shipping, and the type of associated protective measures for PSSAs.

15 The Nairobi Convention is providing support for development of the oceans governance strategy taking into account AIMS 2050 strategy, African Union Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030. The gap analysis also takes into account the Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and other existing frameworks and initiatives for discussion in a regional conference with options to develop an Africa ocean governance strategy. As a follow up to this

process, the Nairobi Convention participated in the Sixteenth Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) on 15-18 June 2017 in Libreville, Gabon.

16 The Nairobi Convention Secretariat attended the Africa Marine Waste conference in July 2017 in South Africa. The conference provided a platform for delegates from the public and private sector in Africa and experts from Africa and other countries to discuss issues of marine waste, including data and research, capacity building, prosperity through the development of economic enterprises centred on waste management, education and awareness and the role of the consumer, government, industry and municipalities. Participants discussed innovative solutions to waste that are applicable to Africa and explored opportunities to shape a brighter future for the human health, economies and environments of Africa.

17 As part of the 'Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the protection of the Western Indian Ocean from land-based sources and activities (WIOSAP) the Nairobi Convention in collaboration with WIOMSA organized a scoping workshop in June 2017 to review the status and outlooks of marine protected areas and critical habitats in the Western Indian Ocean region in line with Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goal 14 targets 14.2 and 14.5. The review process aims at assisting Contracting Parties achieve their obligations under SDG14 on oceans and the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) Aichi Strategic Goal C, Target 11, to increase MPA coverage for coastal and marine protection in the region to 10% by 2020. To contribute to this Agenda and pursuant to Decision CP8/13 on enhancing cooperation, collaboration and support with partners, the Nairobi Convention had earlier participated in the workshop on Marine Genetic Resources Area based Management Tools in Marine Protected Areas in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction on May, 2017 in Switzerland, and the Second Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies on Accelerating Progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets held in Seoul, Korea, in June 2017.

18 The Nairobi Convention in collaboration with Kenya's National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) organized a three-day leadership training on the management of the coastal and marine environment in July 2017 in Mombasa to equip senior policy makers with skills for better advocacy on the use of integrated approaches to the management of the coastal and marine ecosystems within government, and in partnerships with regional and global stakeholders. The training also equipped the policy makers with skills necessary for the development of informed policies and decision making for ocean management. The training was organized pursuant to Decision CP8/6c of the Eighth Conference of Parties to the Nairobi Convention on support and partnership for implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the protection of the Western Indian Ocean from land based sources and activities. The governance training was part of the process of strengthening governance and awareness in the Western Indian Ocean, which is a key component of the strategic action programme.

19 The Nairobi Convention participated in the EAF-Nansen Programme Science Plan 2018-2021 meeting organized by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation in August 2017 in Mauritius necessary to strengthen the knowledge base for the sustainable management of fisheries in the face of increasing fishing pressure, climate variability and change, pollution and other anthropogenic stressors in the South West Indian Ocean region. The four-year science plan will identify priority areas for collaborative work between the Western Indian Ocean countries and the EAF-Nansen Programme in marine fishery and environmental research, fisheries management and capacity development.

Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP)⁵

20 NOWPAP activities are structured around six major thematic areas: regular assessments, integrated coastal and river basin management, pollution prevention and reduction, biodiversity conservation, climate change impacts, and information management. NOWPAP Regional Coordinating Unit and four Regional Activity Centres (RAC) continued to address marine and

⁵ <http://www.nowpap.org/>

coastal environmental issues such the development of Ecological Quality Objectives (EQOs), prevention and reduction of pollution from harmful substances and marine litter, and strengthening regional cooperation to prepare and respond to oil and NHS spills among key priorities. NOWPAP experts are also implementing projects focusing on major threats to marine and coastal biodiversity: eutrophication, destruction of coastal habitats and introduction of alien invasive species. Other projects are related to sea grass and seaweed habitat mapping and assessment of the status of threatened and endangered marine and coastal species in the region. The Pilot assessment of the impacts of major threats to marine biodiversity in selected areas of the NOWPAP region will be published in August 2017. Case studies of seagrass and seaweed mapping in selected sea areas in the NOWPAP region using remote sensing will be published by the end of 2017.

21 In May 2016, NOWPAP focal points agreed on the list of EQOs common to the four NOWPAP countries, including: (1) Biological and habitat diversity have not changed significantly due to anthropogenic pressure; (2) Alien species are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystem; (3) Eutrophication adverse effects are absent; (4) Contaminants cause no significant impact on coastal and marine ecosystems and human health; and (5) Marine litter does not adversely affect coastal and marine environments. NOWPAP has prepared for the draft Regional overview of possible Ecological Quality Objective indicators for the NOWPAP region in July 2017. The indicators and targets for each EQO will become a basis for the next NOWPAP Medium Term Strategy 2018-2023.

22 The NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter is also being implemented in cooperation with central and local governments in the NOWPAP member states as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) including the organization of highly successful International Coastal Clean-up campaigns in all participating countries. The review and analysis of existing prediction models for floating marine litter has been prepared in 2017. NOWPAP is a member of the Global Partnership on Waste Management (GPWM) and has been hosting the NW Pacific regional node of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) since 2014.

23 NOWPAP continues developing and strengthening partnerships with the relevant organizations and programmes in the region, including North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Corporation (NEASPEC), North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), and UNESCO/IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC), Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (YSLME) Phase II Project to name a few. NOWPAP contributes to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia and provides technical expertise to the Convention on Biological Diversity on relevant issues such as description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) in the region.

24 NOWPAP member states are currently developing a new Medium-term Strategy (MTS) for the period 2018-2023 and the implementation plan to tackle multiple regional challenges and ways to revitalize and expand the NOWPAP partnership. The draft Strategy intends to align future NOWPAP activities with the delivery of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The proposed focus areas of the MTS include: supporting integrated coastal and river basin planning and management, assessing status of the marine and coastal environment, preventing and reducing land- and sea-based pollution and conserving marine and coastal biodiversity. The Strategy is expected to be adopted at the 22nd Intergovernmental Meeting in December 2017.

The Regular Process for reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment including socioeconomic aspects.

25 World Oceans Assessment (WOA), with its secretariat (UN DOALOS) and member states completed the implementation of first phase of assessment cycle 2010-2015 at the end of 2015. On 23 December 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 70/235 on

“Oceans and the law of the sea,” in which it welcomed with appreciation the first global integrated marine assessment⁶ and approved its summary.

26 The second phase of the WOA was launched in January 2016. UN Environment and other relevant United Nations system organizations, bodies, funds and programmes have been invited to assist in the implementation of the second cycle of the Regular Process with regard to the following activities: awareness-raising, identification of experts for the Pool of Experts, technical and scientific support to the Bureau and the Group of Experts, hosting workshops and meetings of the writing teams, capacity-building and the scoping process for the assessment(s) of the second cycle. While the first cycle of the Regular Process focused on establishing a baseline, it has been decided that the scope of the second cycle would extend to evaluating trends and identifying gaps. The second cycle will cover a period of five-years and two principal outputs have been proposed in the work plan. UN Environment is expected to provide scientific and technical support to the Group of Experts, the bureau and the secretariat.

The GEF Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme (TWAP)

27 The TWAP Full Size Project which commenced in April 2013 and envisioned to fill two major objectives: (1) to undertake the first global assessment of transboundary water systems that will assist GEF and other international organizations improve the setting of priorities for funding; and (2) to formalise the partnership with key institutions so that transboundary considerations are incorporated in regular assessment programmes has been completed. It is currently undergoing a terminal evaluation.

28 The assessment results are organized into five technical reports and a sixth volume that provides a cross-category analysis of status and trends:

- Volume 1 – Transboundary Aquifers and Groundwater Systems of Small Island Developing States: Status and Trends
- Volume 2 – Transboundary Lakes and Reservoirs: Status and Trends
- Volume 3 – Transboundary River Basins: Status and Trends
- Volume 4 – Large Marine Ecosystems: Status and Trends
- Volume 5 – The Open Ocean: Status and Trends
- Volume 6 – Transboundary Water Systems: Crosscutting Status and Trends

29 A Summary for Policy Makers accompanies the first five volumes and A Global Compendium of Water System Information Sheets is an online accompaniment of the Crosscutting Analysis discussed in Volume 6. It has 12 annexes and organized into 14 TWAP regions, it compiles information sheets on 765 international water systems including the baseline values of quantitative indicators that were used to establish contemporary and relative risk levels at system and regional scales. All TWAP publications are available at www.geftwap.org. Other products include a TWAP Comparative Analysis of Governance Report and the Transboundary Water Profile-Global Baseline Folio. To provide access to the quantitative data that underpin the assessments, a central data portal can be explored at <http://www.geftwap.org/data-portal>. For water category-specific data and water-system factsheets, links to partner websites are also provided from the central data portal webpage.

30 The execution of the TWAP has been coordinated by UN ENVIRONMENT (Science Division as executing unit and the Ecosystem Division as implementing unit, project-wide) and involves many partners already engaged in assessment efforts. Lead organizations at the project component scale are: Transboundary aquifers and SIDS groundwater systems: UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP); Transboundary lake/reservoirs basins: International Lake Environment Committee (ILEC); Transboundary river basins: UN ENVIRONMENT-DHI Centre for Water and Environment (lead); Large marine ecosystems: Intergovernmental

⁶ http://www.un.org/Depts/los/global_reporting/WOA_RegProcess.htm

Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC of UNESCO); Open ocean: IOC of UNESCO; Crosscutting Analysis: UN ENVIRONMENT-Science Division; and Data and information management: UN ENVIRONMENT/Science Division/Global Resources Information Database (GRID-Geneva).

Global Resources and Information Data Centre (GRID-Arendal)

31 GRID-Arendal, a centre collaborating with the UN ENVIRONMENT, supports informed decision making and awareness-raising through: a) Environmental information management and assessment; b) Capacity building services; and c) Outreach and communication tools, methodologies and products.

32 GRID-Arendal has been actively involved in building capacity in ecosystem-based marine management and enabling of sustainable blue economies in developing countries. Marine spatial planning, state of the environment reporting, sound management of the deep seabed, the ocean and climate change (e.g. blue carbon) and promoting and replicated demonstrated 'blue solutions' are some of the other areas of focus of marine and coastal activities for GRID-Arendal.

33 GRID-Arendal helped UN ENVIRONMENT draw up a global support programme for monitoring the state of the marine environment in the Regional Seas; this is now being tested in West Africa. Additionally a presentation of the method was recently given to the Caribbean countries in Kingston, Jamaica in a workshop organized by the UN ENVIRONMENT Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit and Secretariat.

34 Having worked with UN ENVIRONMENT and key partners to produce a Vital Graphics on Marine Litter, work is now progressing to develop target awareness raising and capacity building efforts to mitigate and reverse the impacts of marine litter, plastics and microplastics on the ocean. Initial discussions with potential partners in Africa, with support from the Government of Norway and UN ENVIRONMENT, aims to produce a concrete action plan during 2017.

35 In partnership with UN ENVIRONMENT, GIZ and IUCN, GRID-Arendal has developed and implemented the Blue Solutions Initiative which provides a global platform to collate, share and generate knowledge and capacity for sustainable management and equitable governance of our ocean. Through different formats and cooperation with various Partner institutions Blue Solutions seeks to enhance capacities for scaling up success, provide learning opportunities and support policy processes to facilitate the putting into practice of viable and valuable solutions.

36 GRID-Arendal continued to support the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans and their member states on a number of fronts. The Interim Secretariat of the Tehran Convention continues to be supported in its work to establish a fully functioning Secretariat. The first national State of the Marine Environment (SoME) report for Sierra Leone was completed using an Expert Elicitation participatory approach to properly integrate the observations of experts with concrete (although limited) data. The final report was endorsed by the President of Sierra Leone. A synthesis report on "The Socioeconomics of the West, Central and Southern African Coastal Communities" will soon be published for the Abidjan Convention. Additionally, a "Blue Carbon Financing of Mangrove Conservation in the Abidjan Convention Region: A Feasibility Study" will help set the stage for more active work on enabling blue carbon approaches in the Abidjan Convention region.

37 As part of an ongoing formal partnership with the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention, GRID-Arendal is the executing agent for a multi-year capacity enhancing ecosystem-based management programme for Abidjan Convention region. The Mami Wata project will be applied in the countries of the Abidjan Convention region, which covers 22 countries and a combined EEZ of approximately 4.8 million km² in size. It is funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (International Climate Initiative), and implemented by GRID-Arendal, the Abidjan Convention Secretariat and UN ENVIRONMENT.

38 Following the joint submission by 7 coastal countries in West African (Mauritania, Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Cabo Verde and Sierra Leone) to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) in August 2015, GRID-Arendal, with support from the Government of Norway has committed to design and implement a process to maintain national expert capacity on continental shelf delineation while countries await their turn to present and discuss the joint submission with the CLCS. The first 'capacity maintenance' workshop took place in early 2017 in Cabo Verde.

39 Blue carbon initiative: The international GEF/UN ENVIRONMENT Blue Forests Project, executed by GRID-Arendal for UN ENVIRONMENT, is now in its second year of implementation. The effort is anchored by interventions and project work in five countries spanning five continents. The effort continues to detail and demonstrate the methodologies required for carbon sequestered by key ocean habitats to be recognized under the UNFCCC and REDD+ protocols.

40 GRID-Arendal is executing the international IW/Learn GEF Project in partnership with UN Environment, UNESCO-IOC, Conservation International, The Global Water Partnership, The International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, The International Union for the Conservation of Nature, The Nature Conservancy, The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, The International Hydrological Programme of UNESCO, The United Nations Industrial Development Organization and The World Wildlife Fund.

41 GRID-Arendal is a partner in the international Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) GEF Project, executed by the World Conservation Monitoring Commission (UN ENVIRONMENT/WCMC). This project aims to deliver improved capacity in the Nairobi Convention and CPPS Regional Seas to undertake area based planning in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

UN ENVIRONMENT-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC)

42 UNEP-WCMC is the specialist biodiversity assessment arm of UN ENVIRONMENT based in Cambridge, UK. The focus of Marine Programme of the UNEP-WCMC is to develop and share data, tools, and analyses to inform decisions regarding the conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity. During the period under review, the Programme focused on four main areas: Improving and enhancing data, the effective use of data through analysis and interpretation, supporting marine spatial planning for improved conservation and resource use, and the application of area-based planning techniques in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

43 UNEP-WCMC has continued to enhance the Ocean Data Viewer (<http://wcmc.io/ODV>), which is an online portal that provides easy and free access to a range of marine biodiversity-related datasets drawn from internationally-respected scientific institutions and organizations. The quality of datasets has been improved with detailed metadata and background information that accompany them. UNEP-WCMC's 'Manual on marine and coastal datasets of biodiversity importance' (<http://wcmc.io/MarineDataManual>), which is an inventory of 128 online marine and coastal data resources, was updated.

44 UNEP-WCMC is the executing agency for Component 4 of the FAO/UNEP GEF Project entitled 'Sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation of deep-sea living resources and ecosystems in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction' (known as the ABNJ Deep Seas Project). In this project and in collaboration with the Regional Seas Convention secretariats, management authorities and technical partners (including Seascope Consultants, Duke University, GRID Arendal, and NCEAS), UNEP-WCMC is developing and testing a methodology for area-based planning in the Western Indian Ocean and the South East Pacific. Contributing to this objective, UNEP-WCMC has published a report entitled 'Governance of areas beyond national jurisdiction for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use' which is focused on the Western Indian Ocean and South-East Pacific. The report identifies opportunities for enhanced

collaboration between bodies with a governance role in ABNJ. As part of the same project, inventories of global data of biodiversity importance in ABNJ have been produced, and two regional workshops were held to explore area-based planning concepts and assess regional capacity.

45 UNEP-WCMC built upon the pre-existing UN ENVIRONMENT 'marine spatial planning in practice database' to develop an inventory of marine spatial examples from which cross-border marine spatial practices could be evaluated. This was supplemented by a detailed review of marine spatial planning in the Southern Ocean and Coral Triangle. The resultant report was presented at the EC/UNESCO-IOC 2nd International Conference on Marine Spatial Planning and made available online via EC and UNEP-WCMC websites.

46 As part of a project to explore legal options for the conservation of biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) UNEP-WCMC, in partnership with Cambridge Conservation Initiative, University of Cambridge, Birdlife International and IUCN, published a report entitled '[Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction: Legal options for a new international agreement](#)'. This report explores a range of options through which the proposed BBNJ implementing agreement can accommodate changing uses and pressures. The results of the study were presented at the 3rd meeting of the Preparatory Committee established by General Assembly resolution 69/292: Development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

47 UNEP-WCMC contributed to discussions of the UN Ocean Conference in June 2017 in New York. This included co-organising with UN ENVIRONMENT a side event focused on 'Sharing effective area-based planning practices for sustainable oceans' at which UNEP-WCMC, Italian Government and OECD provided expert contributions. UNEP-WCMC also submitted three voluntary commitments: Catalysing ocean literacy (#OceanAction21016); Supporting effective ocean governance (#OceanAction21004); and Promoting enhanced access and use of global marine biodiversity information (#OceanAction20776).

48 UNEP-WCMC is contributing to a H2020 project entitled 'Operating a Network of Integrated Observatory Systems in the Mediterranean Sea' (ODYSSEA). ODYSSEA aims to develop, operate and demonstrate an interoperable and cost-effective platform that fully integrates networks of observing and forecasting systems across the Mediterranean basin.

UN ENVIRONMENT's Mercury Programme

49 UNEA has charged UN ENVIRONMENT with updating its 2013 Global Mercury Assessment (GMA) within a period of 6 years, (i.e. for delivery no later than 2019). Work has been initiated to develop an updated GMA for 2018.

50 The Main focus of the assessment is to update the global emissions and releases inventory components (for the target year of 2015), especially for sectors of relevance for the Minamata Convention. The assessment will also be expanded with respect to quantification of releases and discharges of mercury to the aquatic environment, and include an overview of mercury levels in humans and biota. Developed inventory estimates will be compared with nationally reported emissions and releases estimates, including those being developed through ongoing Minamata Initial Assessments (MIAs), and information from the planned update of the "Summary of Supply, Trade and Demand, 2006".

51 This work will facilitate a dialogue regarding future improvement of emission and release estimates. Additional sections of the GMA 2018 will address mercury environmental fate and transport. Planned products will include the GMA 2018 policy-makers summary report which will be about 50 pages and include a 2-page executive summary. This report will reflect the content of a comprehensive technical background document to be prepared through collaboration

between UN ENVIRONMENT and the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP). A draft of the technical background report for the GMA 2018 will be available for comments in summer/autumn 2017. The report will be revised considering the comments received, and the GMA 2018 summary report will be prepared for delivery to UNEA in 2019.
