

How can GESAMP support the needs of the Sponsoring Organizations going forward?

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The UN system for ocean science knowledge and environmental management

Ocean affairs in the UN system are spread by sectors of activity among several UN entities.

These sectors include fishing, shipping, mining, pollution, science and many others.

UN entities provide different services such as technical assistance and capacity-development, research and data management, support of intergovernmental processes, financial assistance, methodologies and outreach. They share to be based on sound science/expertise.

In addition, agencies within the UN system have authority to negotiate treaties and conventions, which are landmarks of international law.

Table 7.1. Areas of activity declared by the UN-Oceans organizations in 2014 (adapted from Valdés, 2017).

	IOC-UNESCO	WMO	FAO	UNEP-CBD	UNDP	IMO-WMU	IAEA	UNHCR	UNCTAD	DOALOS-ISA	UN DESA
Sustainable development											
Science											
Marine environment											
Marine biodiversity											
Fisheries											
Exploitation non-living resources											
Cables & pipelines											
Marine safety & security											
People at sea and education											
Underwater cultural heritage											

Global Ocean Science Report, 2017

When all UN agencies operate in the reality that the UN is organized in a sector-by-sector approach

-this may inevitably lead to some confusion about which agency should take the lead on a given issue

When UN agencies operate in an increasingly challenging funding environment

-this may inevitably lead to unfruitful competition among agencies that is not in the interest of the UN overall to address a given issue

The complexity of all major marine environmental issues,
their transdisciplinary nature,
the societal expectation today of cross sectorial thinking and solutions

and-

larger strategic frameworks such as the SDG and the UN Decade for
Ocean Science for Sustainable Development



-will more than ever require UN agencies to join forces, work across
sectorial borders and seek alignment in the scientific basis for both their
individual and joint interventions and actions*

** To deliver what Member States expect*



2021 United Nations Decade
2030 of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development

The Decade Science Action Plan will guide actions by which ocean science can more effectively deliver its contribution to achieving the objectives of the Decade by:

- indicating the redirections/ transformations in the various areas of ocean science that are needed;
- setting criteria of the types of programmes and projects that are needed to realize these redirections/transformations;
- identifying existing science plans or those being developed that support the objectives of the Decade or are directly designed to deliver to the Decade.



GESAMP could:

- play a unique synthesis role, at the interface of multiple stakeholders
- review and give advice on specific research priorities within the Decade (as basis for global, regional, national programmes and projects)
- with relevant co-sponsoring agencies also engage in the lead of research/science initiatives



The Decade will more than ever require* UN agencies to join forces, work across sectorial borders and seek alignment in the scientific basis for both their individual and joint interventions and actions

**** To deliver what Member States expect***

50th
Anniversary
(1969-2019)



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



There is and will therefore continue to be a **practical need** for UN Agencies to:

- **Receive independent advice**
- **Foster consistency in received advice**
- **Reduce duplication**
- **Identify areas of common interest and cooperate**
- **Place their specialised activities in a broader perspective**
- **Be cost efficient**

When GESAMP was established:

- The programme and activity portfolios of all UN agencies were slim and problems were most often addressed sectorial
- GESAMP filled a vacuum?



Today and onwards:

- The programme and activity portfolios of all UN agencies are diversified, overlapping and cross sectorial approaches have become part of project culture
- GESAMP is in a busy space and potentially in competition with other mechanisms – the niche is more narrow?



BUT unique strengths of GESAMP to the sponsoring agencies in the present and future context:

- Expected to be impartial independent scientific advice
- Identifies areas of common scientific interest (to reduce duplication)
- Reduces costs by co-sponsoring (never goes out of fashion)
- Receives consistency in the advice provided (crucial to UN as One)
- Provides a cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary approach
- Is based on scientific understanding of marine ecosystems and human activities that affect them

GESAMP is a response to what should be an obligation for each agency (the points above)



Impediments and challenges for **GESAMP** to continue to fill its role:

- Sufficiently deep rooting of GESAMP within the programme and budget of each sponsoring agency
 - *This requires continuous efforts within each agency*
 - *Depends on the Technical Officer*

- Adequate awareness and knowledge about what the GESAMP mechanism can deliver

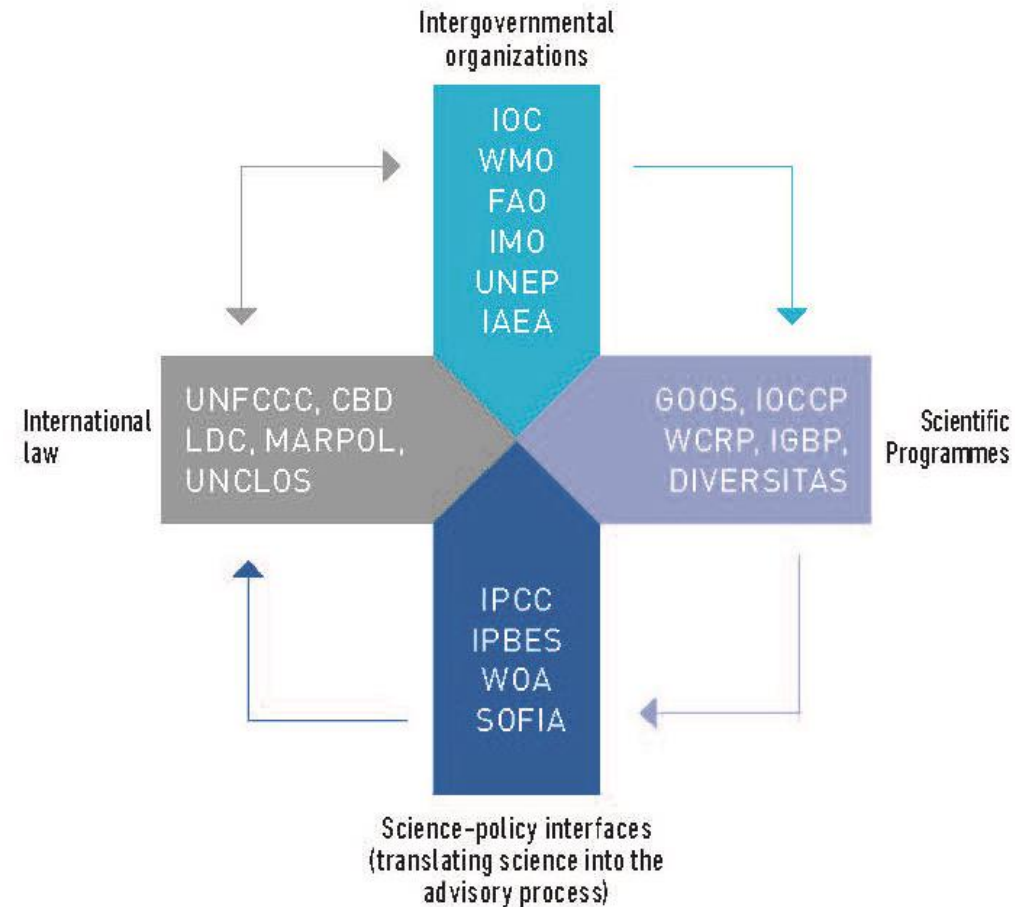
- A well balanced GESAMP in terms of expertise and representation (sectors, geography)
 - *ocean science is multi-faceted hard to cover all*
 - *Harder and harder to find altruistic experts who can spend time*
 - *A systematic approach to identifying candidates will help ensure balance*

GESAMP in the UN architecture :

Through the circulation of knowledge, new findings in science, know-how or decisions made in one 'arm' become knowledge input to a different 'arm'.

GESAMP can - through its joint ownership by the sponsoring agencies and through its links with Scientific Programmes - support the needs of its sponsoring agencies through the generation and synthesis of knowledge that needs to be circulated and transferred in the UN system – and eventually through the Agencies to their Member States

This gives the GESAMP 'mechanism' a potential to be further explored and developed



Model showing the UN architecture for ocean science knowledge and environmental governance (the list of organizations and entities shown here is not exhaustive). Source: redrawn from Valdes (2017) in Global Ocean Science Report, 2017