



GESAMP

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

GESAMP 49/8

ENGLISH ONLY

Agenda item 8

STRATEGIC REVIEW OF GESAMP

Draft plan for the strategic review of GESAMP

Submitted by the Chair of GESAMP and the IMO Technical Secretary

Introduction

1 At the ExCom intersessional February 2021 the IMO Technical Secretary presented a proposal to conduct a strategic review of GESAMP. It was noted that the last time such a review had been conducted was twenty years ago, and that since then the landscape of ocean related processes had changed drastically. In addition, GESAMP, as well as the Sponsoring Organizations, have changed their ways of working. Therefore, there would be benefits from a review to assist in providing a holistic perspective on how GESAMP can further optimize its work.

2 Following discussion, the ExCom agreed that there could be merit in a review process, but that a more concrete proposal would be necessary, initially focusing on an internal review. At the ExCom intersessional in March 2022, the ExCom considered a revised proposal, and agreed to proceed along the lines of the revised proposal and invited ExCom to submit comments on it within two weeks of the meeting, whereafter the Chair of GESAMP and the GESAMP Office would prepare a full proposal for submission to the annual session of GESAMP in September 2022.

3 The full, draft plan for the strategic review of GESAMP is attached at annex to this document.

Action requested by GESAMP

4 GESAMP is invited to consider the plan for the strategic review, at annex, with the view to its approval, and in particular:

- .1 agree to the work plan and methodology as outlined at annex to this document and its appendix;
- .2 agree to the timeline and responsibilities as indicated in paragraph 11 of the annex; and
- .3 agree to the composition and lead for the Review Task Team.

ANNEX

DRAFT PLAN FOR THE STRATEGIC REVIEW STRATEGIC REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF A LONG-TERM WORKPLAN/ROADMAP FOR GESAMP

Background

1 In March 2000, following the outcomes of the fourth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in 1999, an independent review of GESAMP was proposed. Following agreement by GESAMP Sponsoring Organizations, an evaluation team was established, which submitted a report that was published in July 2001. Subsequently, in 2002 a consultant was contracted to prepare a Strategic Vision for “A New GESAMP”, which was finalized and published in 2005.

2 The 2002 independent evaluation process and the consequent new strategic vision for GESAMP led to an overhaul of GESAMP’s operating procedures, modernizing and updating the way work was done, and it has been the foundation of GESAMP’s work for the past two decades. It also led to extensive financial support from the Swedish Agency for International Development Aid (Sida), including the secondment of several officers to the GESAMP Office at IMO.

The new ocean governance landscape

3 Since then, the world in which GESAMP and its Sponsoring Organizations operate in has changed dramatically. Globally, there has been an increased focus on the marine environment and the ocean, in particular as reflected in the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. Several other processes have also made significant progress in the last decade, such as the UN Regular Process (World Ocean Assessment), and the development of a new international legally binding instrument for marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).

4 Of utmost importance to GESAMP and its relevance is also the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030, for which GESAMP is currently identifying its role and potential contribution.

5 At the United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon, June/July 2022, it was noted that Member States are 'deeply alarmed by the global emergency facing the ocean' and noted the need to 'Strengthen the science-policy interface for implementing Goal 14 and its targets, to ensure that policy is informed by the best-available science' (see <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/ocean2022/political-declaration>)

Draft plan for a strategic review and development of a long-term workplan/roadmap for GESAMP

6 In light of the issues raised in the submission to ExCom in 2021, and as subsequently agreed by ExCom, it would be beneficial to perform a review of GESAMP’s role and support to the United Nations system.

7 The three steps proposed in this review process would aim to deliver a ten-year road map for GESAMP’s future work. The road map provides both the Members and Sponsoring Organizations with a clear long-term work plan and vision for GESAMP within an agreed, balanced and financially sustainable approach.

8 A small Task Team/steering committee will be established to lead the work, but all Members and Technical Secretaries will be continuously involved.

Funding

9 Any costs incurred for the review will be charged to the GESAMP surplus funds held at IMO, as this is a priority for the future and viability of GESAMP. Costs may include an external consultant, meetings for the review team, and publication of the findings, if so decided.

Methodology

10 The methodology and work plan for the review and road-map development is attached at appendix 1 to this submission.

Timeline

11 The review will be carried out in accordance with the following timeline/deadlines:

Action	Timeline/deadline	Responsible
Approval of review work plan and establishment of the Review Task Team	September 2022 (GESAMP 49)	GESAMP
Review step 1: Initial internal evaluation	October 2022-February 2023	Review Task Team
Presentation of initial findings to GESAMP and ExCom	March 2023	Review Task Team
Review step 2: External review/evaluation	Presented to GESAMP 50 in September 2023	Review Task Team
Review step 3: Drafting of the ten-year road map	October to December 2023	Review Task Team
Approval and launch of the ten-year road map	Late 2023/first half of 2024	GESAMP/ExCom

12 Following approval of the road map, the GESAMP Office will be requested to prepare communications materials (leaflet, digital cards, etc.) for circulation and communication through the website and the Sponsoring Organizations.

APPENDIX

WORK PLAN FOR A GESAMP REVIEW AND 10-YEAR ROAD-MAP

Step 1: Analysis of threats to the global ocean, impacts and GESAMP ability to respond

The following sequential activities that will take place as part of Step 1 of the review process:

- .1 **A causal chain analysis:** A Task Team to identify the most pressing issues and concerns within a Causal Chain Analysis Matrix under the headings of:
 - a. Actual/Potential threats;
 - b. Environmental impacts;
 - c. Socio-economic impacts;
 - d. Root causes; and
 - e. Barriers to removal/mitigation.
- .2 **GESAMP abilities and Sponsoring Organization priorities:** A list comparing main threats/impacts from the Causal Chain Analysis against:
 - a. Sponsoring Organization (SO) priorities/needs; and
 - b. GESAMP Membership skills and expertise.
- .3 **Assessment of GESAMP's work:** This will focus on how well the work and expertise of GESAMP supports the SOs and how effectively the SOs use GESAMP and its skillsets.
- .4 **A review of the current operational and administrative practices:** This will particularly aim to identify opportunities for improvement and streamlining, with consideration given to the amount of time invested by the Members and the various Working Groups.

Step 2: Stakeholder and SO review and evaluation of the findings of the analysis

Step 2 of the review process will entail the following steps:

- .1. **Feedback from the Sponsoring Organizations:** Circulation of the Analysis and Evaluation Document to the SOs and, through them to their relevant internal stakeholders for comment and input.
- .2 **Feedback from selected stakeholders:** Stakeholders will be asked (by way of interviews/questionnaires, as appropriate) to assess GESAMP's impact on marine environmental protection and other ocean-related processes. This will include specific feedback on impacts related to the SDGs, the Decade of Ocean Science, the UN Regular Process and its World Ocean Assessment, as well as the evolving BBNJ legally binding instrument and the newly announced global treaty on plastic pollution, to name a few. The Review Task Team will identify relevant stakeholders and prepare a questionnaire, to be agreed in dialogue with the ExCom and GESAMP Members. Likely entities to interview are e.g.

other UN entities (non-sponsors), NGOs, academia, Regional Seas Programmes, governments agencies, etc.

- .3 **A review of GESAMP's impact:** This step will complement the previous step (stakeholder impacts) by focusing on GESAMP's impact on academic, popular and 'grey' literature and within the media.

Step 3: Development of a ten-year strategic road map for GESAMP

Step 3 will consist of the following activities:

- .1 Definition and preparation of a 10-year road map for GESAMP **in collaboration and consultation with the Membership and** based on the findings for the analysis and the review and evaluation in steps 1 and 2 above. It is proposed that this will be carried out by a consultant, unless otherwise agreed.

The road map will be forward-looking and will complement the Decade of Ocean Science as well as other UN visions and targets (e.g. SDGs) but will also be flexible to respond to emerging issues. It will better define GESAMP's role moving forward and how that role can be better broadcasted and communicated, both within and beyond the UN agencies.
- .2 The draft road map to be circulated within the Membership first for their agreement and then sent to ExCom for discussion and approval.
- .3 The ten-year road map will subsequently be launched at the appropriate annual session of GESAMP.

Following approval of the road map, the GESAMP Office will be requested to prepare communications materials (leaflet, digital cards, etc.) for circulation and communication through the website and the Sponsoring Organizations.
