



REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF GESAMP

Submitted by the Chair of GESAMP

Introduction

1 Since the 2024 annual session, there have been two intersessional meetings of the GESAMP Members and one intersessional Executive Committee meeting. Additionally, Members participated in various external meetings and workshops, as detailed in subsequent sections of this report.

Summary of Member's intersessional meeting: December 2024

2 Follow-up actions from GESAMP 51 were discussed during the intersessional meeting, Mr C. Vivian was tasked with leading the evaluation of potential candidates to replace outgoing Members (R. Rayfuse and A. Girvan), with particular attention given to enhancing representation from Eastern Europe, Asia and the Arab States. During the meeting, the need to develop alternative approaches to engage early-career scientists was also noted, following unsuccessful initiatives with the World Maritime University (WMU).

3 Working Groups Chairs presented comprehensive updates on the activities of their respective Working Groups since the last intersessional meeting, highlighting both progress and any ongoing or emerging concerns.

4 Discussions covered several other agenda items including the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement, the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, the 80:20 conundrum article, scoping papers addressing Ocean and Human/Animal Health, Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) as well as proposed revisions to the Rules of Procedure.

5 A procedural arrangement was agreed that would require Members to provide emergency contact information prior to each annual session, as recommended by the Chair.

6 The Group also discussed C. Vivan's the Artificial Light at Night (ALAN) paper as well as the development of a second GESAMP contributions paper, this time science-focused.

7 Building on discussions from GESAMP 50, Members agreed to prepare a formal proposal for the February 2025 ExCom intersessional meeting seeking to establish a standardized travel funding mechanism, through annual Sponsoring Organizations' contributions to the IMO. These would be held within the GESAMP Trust Fund, enabling the GESAMP Office to coordinate equitable travel and DSA arrangements for all Members.

Summary of Members' intersessional meeting: July 2025

8 The selection process for new experts in international law and environmental economy was discussed, resulting in the agreement to forward four and five candidates respectively (listed in alphabetical order) to the ExCom for decision and final approval. The discussion noted potential travel challenges for candidates, depending on their location, that may need to be considered.

9 Mr. D. Vousden provided an update on the Strategic Review highlighting progress on the causal chain analysis, member skills assessment and alignment with UN agency priorities. Key points included:

- .1 expanding the Climate Change Task Team's scope to include ocean acidification;
- .2 directing the GESAMP Office to draft a plan for annual contributions from Sponsoring Organizations to centralize travel funding; and
- .3 determining that a ten-year Roadmap was unnecessary, given GESAMP's reactive nature.

10 It was agreed that an updated draft would be circulated to Members for feedback and that D. Vousden would follow up with SOs for specific input. In addition, the GESAMP Office (as well as the Members) agreed to locate the questionnaires prepared by A. Girven on valuing members' time contributions on GESAMP issues, and requested Mr. Girvan's related presentation from GESAMP 51.

11 Preparations for GESAMP 52 included decisions to invite observers from OECD, CBD, the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) and WHO, while noting the Basel/Rotterdam/Stockholm Conventions Secretariat's decision not to become a Sponsoring Organization at this point in time. Discussions included proposals for new Working Groups, with Working Group chairs instructed to submit their progress reports by the end of July 2025, for discussion at the annual session in September. The Climate Change Task Team Chair, E. Holland, agreed to deliver the team's scoping paper report ahead of this deadline.

12 Regarding updates and publications, it was noted that the Correspondence Group on GESAMP's scientific impact paper had begun its work, with Members reminded to provide the requested input. Furthermore, it was noted that the 80:20 paper had been published. A potential GESAMP social media strategy and a Trust Fund for publications would be discussed at GESAMP 52. Members were also informed that IMO had requested the re-establishment of the Exhaust Gas Cleaning Systems (EGCS) Task Team, with a report deadline of December 2025.

13 Members identified the centralised travel arrangement proposal as the most pressing issue, emphasizing the need for equitable participation opportunities at annual meetings through standardised funding mechanisms.

Chair, Vice Chairs and Secretariat (CVCS) Meetings

14 The Chair, Vice-Chair(s) and the GESAMP Office convened multiple intersessional meetings to address pending actions, emerging matters and preparations for upcoming Members' and ExCom intersessional meetings.

Other activities in the intersessional period

15 GESAMP, through Chris Vivian as one of the Vice-Chairs, submitted formal comments to the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights regarding inaccuracies about marine geoengineering in her report '*Human Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment*', (A/HRC/58/59) prior to its consideration by the Human Rights Council.

16 The Chair participated as an invited speaker at a virtual Expert Group Meeting on SDG 14 in preparation for the 2025 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). This event, organized by IMO, UNEP and IAEA, focussed on the topic of Marine Pollution.

17 During the third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC 3) in Nice, France, the Chair spoke at three events, as follows:

- .1 Ocean Action Panel 4 on Marine Pollution;
- .2 an IMO-sponsored SDG media event; and
- .3 a Nippon Foundation-sponsored IOC/UNEP side-event entitled 'A Global Ocean Free from the Harmful Impacts of Pollution by 2050'.

18 Former GESAMP chair Peter Wells presented the article entitled 'The United Nations Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) – an Ocean and Coastal Science-Policy Interface Standing the Test of Time', co-authored with the current Chair and other GESAMP Members, at the Coastal Zone Canada 2025 conference, held from 9 to 11 June 2025.

Action requested of GESAMP

- 19 GESAMP is invited to note the information provided and take action as appropriate.
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