

Commissioned by



HIGH LEVEL PANEL for
**A SUSTAINABLE
OCEAN ECONOMY**

BLUE PAPER

Summary for Decision-Makers

Integrated Ocean Management

Balancing a healthy ocean with a wealthy one requires taking a holistic approach to ocean uses and management, as well as effectively implementing relevant national and international measures. It is critical that short-term, profitable solutions—which are often accompanied by negative environmental impacts—are replaced with long-term, sustainable solutions that strike a better balance between protection and production.

New analysis¹ commissioned by the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy identifies the challenges in implementing integrated ocean management (IOM) through five case studies from around the world, analyses the components of IOM and identifies success factors that enable a more balanced approach to the uses and conservation of ocean resources.

What is IOM?

IOM provides an understanding of the totality of ocean uses and pressures and prioritises among these various uses.

- The goal of IOM is to support the long-term, sustainable use of ocean resources in ways that preserve the health and resilience of marine ecosystems and improve livelihoods and jobs, balancing protection and prosperity.
- The functions of IOM include promoting environmentally sound economic development, protecting coastal and marine habitats and biodiversity and balancing competing interests through spatial planning.
- IOM brings together relevant actors from government, business and civil society, from the entire spectrum of human activities, to collaborate toward a sustainable future for our ocean environment.

As such, government solutions need to be tailored for the different marine regions. Regional cooperation on issues such as fisheries management and marine pollution is necessary to address the problems at an appropriate geographical scale. At the local level, connectivity among people and institutions plays a vital role in ensuring sustainable ocean governance.

Despite representing vastly different situations (with respect to climatic conditions, geographical scales, the nature of economic activities and regulatory environments), the IOM case studies reviewed by this paper reveal significant commonalities that can be useful in other contexts:

- **IOM is the tool** that best addresses multiple ocean uses—building on an ecosystem-based and knowledge-based approach—while accounting for changing factors such as the impacts of climate change.
- **Local context is key** to tailoring IOM to the characteristics and needs of the region in question. The concrete economic activities and environmental pressures should be the point of departure for the development of IOM.
- **Information is critical** to establishing robust data series on the evolution of essential environmental variables as well as on economic activities. Information should be transparent, easy to find and subject to quality checks and updates.
- **Implementation is essential** as several case studies demonstrate that IOM can be done effectively without a separate legal basis for it.
- **Stakeholder involvement is necessary** to ensure that the practical information needed to develop IOM measures is available, and to build the understanding and legitimacy required for effective implementation. Political will is also essential.
- **Institutional mechanisms for IOM are required** to consider the various pressures and uses of ocean space in a comprehensive manner and make decisions on that basis.



Opportunities for Action

This paper advances six opportunities for action to enhance global ocean governance through improved IOM.



Harness Science and Knowledge: The global ocean science enterprise should be strengthened, building on the work of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and further developing international cooperation in marine science during the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.



Establish Partnerships between Public and Private Sectors: Strengthening the commitments of businesses is critical to further developing technological solutions and thus empowering consumers to change the markets.



Strengthen Stakeholder Engagement: Governments should support the active involvement of local communities in all stages of planning and development of IOM.



Improve Capacity Building: The use of best practice principles and relevant procedures from regional efforts at IOM should be the starting point for developing integrated management in other regions.



Implement Regulatory Frameworks: Regulatory frameworks for areas beyond national jurisdiction as well as those in areas under national jurisdiction need to be effectively implemented, building on the best available science. Rules for managing human activities in the high seas should be compatible with and at least as strict as those that apply in areas under national jurisdiction.



Develop Adaptive Solutions: IOM should capture the connectivity and differences between land and ocean in an integrated and adaptive manner. Further, ocean governance should consider the expected changes in the ocean environment by using the best available knowledge on climate change.

This paper demonstrates that addressing increasing uses and pressures on individual marine ecosystems requires taking a holistic view of pressures on the entire ocean space. Even if the success of governance solutions varies geographically, past experiences can serve as inspiration and guidance going forward. Countries with such governance solutions already in place should make continued improvements while countries without them have an opportunity to start from scratch. **This paper may be an advantageous starting point for building the capacity needed to establish successful IOM.**

The High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (Ocean Panel) is a unique initiative by 14 world leaders who are building momentum for a sustainable ocean economy in which effective protection, sustainable production and equitable prosperity go hand in hand.

Co-chaired by Norway and Palau, the Ocean Panel comprises members from Australia, Canada, Chile, Fiji, Ghana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Namibia, Norway, Palau and Portugal and is supported by the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean.

The Ocean Panel gathers input from a wide array of stakeholders, including an Expert Group and an Advisory Network. The Secretariat, based at World Resources Institute, assists with analytical work, communications and stakeholder engagement.

The Blue Paper that this brief summarises is an independent input to the Ocean Panel process and does not necessarily represent the thinking of the Ocean Panel, Sherpas or Secretariat.

For more information, including the full report, visit www.oceanpanel.org

Endnote

- 1 Winther, J-G., M. Dai, et al. 2020. *Integrated Ocean Management*. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute. Available online at www.oceanpanel.org/blue-papers/integrated-ocean-management