

MARE – Marine and Environmental Sciences Centre (Portugal)

During the 2022 UN Ocean Conference, renewed commitments were made in relation to several important targets of SDG 14 – Life below water, redefining and strengthening our ambition for where we want to be by 2030.

To achieve our collective ambition until the end of the decade, the following Plans and corresponding Roadmaps need to be urgently developed and implemented in every country through participatory processes, involving relevant stakeholders:

- a Comprehensive Action Plan and Roadmap, to detail and operationalize how the SDG 14 targets can and will be achieved, including measures for adaptive management, namely regular assessments of progress towards each target. Specifically in the context of marine protection, due consideration must be given to adaptive (dynamic/mobile) marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures that can cope with the instability resulting from climate change, particularly in transition zones between biogeographical regions and that ensure connectivity between areas where different ecosystem key functions take place (e.g., feeding, reproduction, nursery);
- a Strategic Ocean Science Plan and Roadmap, to promote the ocean science and corresponding scientific knowledge necessary to inform policies and for the successful achievement of SDG 14 including monitoring and evaluation of progress. Such a plan must include measures to ensure sustained funding throughout its implementation. Due consideration must be given to the fact that only 5% of the ocean has been explored to date and that it is critical to increase knowledge on ocean ecosystem structure and processes, including in the deep sea, namely to ensure that the most important areas (including key biodiversity areas) are indeed protected;
- a Comprehensive Ocean Literacy Plan and Roadmap, for all stakeholders, including children, one that makes Ocean Literacy an integral component of all levels of formal education, from the earliest ages into adulthood, and including dedicated training for politicians, decision makers, administration, private sector, fishermen, and media. This plan strongly aligns with SDG 4 – Quality education, promoting public awareness on the need for immediate actions towards ocean conservation and capacity building to foster the next generation of marine scientists.

As a Portuguese multipolar RD&I centre, made up of seven academic and research partners with nationwide territorial coverage, MARE (<https://www.mare-centre.pt/en>) is committed to championing the successful implementation of SDG 14 in Portugal, by proactively approaching and supporting Portuguese national authorities in the development and implementation of the aforementioned Plans and Roadmaps.