



2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event

Evaluating Science, Valuing the Ocean: Exploring the role of science evaluation in getting the science we need for the ocean we want

30 June 2022, online

Panel discussion organized by *the European Marine Board and the FluidKnowledge project team at the Centre for Science and Technology Studies, Leiden University, The Netherlands.*

Background on the event

The UN Ocean Conference 2022 sought to ‘propel much needed science-based innovative solutions aimed at starting a new chapter of global ocean action’. The call to contribute solutions to societal challenges is not unique to ocean science: research and innovation have become the central locus of hope internationally, and many scientific disciplines are currently being structured to simultaneously encourage competitiveness and responsiveness to societal needs. Recent shifts in the governance of science include significant changes in the funding structures, a move to open science and responsible research assessment, and the incentivization of more inter- and transdisciplinary engagement. Do these concrete science policy steering efforts help or hinder ocean science to tackle sustainable development goal 14?

Panelists:

- Sheila Heymans - Executive Director, European Marine Board (EMB); Professor of Ecosystem Modelling at the University of Highlands & Islands and the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS), Scotland
- Sophie Seeyave - CEO, Partnership for Observation of the Global Oceans (POGO)
- Niall McDonough - Chair of the Management Board, Joint Programming Initiative Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans (JPI Oceans); Director of Policy, Innovation and Research Support Services, Marine Institute, Ireland

- Rebecca Zitoun - Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOP) Network, Ocean Literacy Task Team (OLTT); European Marine Board Young Ambassador; Postdoctoral Researcher at GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research, Kiel, Germany
- Sarah de Rijcke, Professor of Science and Evaluation Studies, CWTS, Leiden University, PI of the ERC-funded project *FluidKnowledge*, moderator.

Key Issues discussed

- The relationship between globally coordinated research - essential to achieve an ocean science capable of tackling societal and ecological challenges at a planetary scale – and national and local strategies and priorities of Member States;
- The most promising approaches for making global ocean science more inclusive, for instance in considering emerging countries and regions;
- Open science: who is being included and excluded in the process of ocean scientific knowledge creation;
- Opportunities and constraints of cross-sectoral collaboration, including with industry partners;
- How to involve more early career researchers in science policy;
- The role of research evaluation and pressures to be simultaneously scientifically excellent, relevant to industry, and relevant to the future of the planet

Key recommendations for action

- Help foster exchange between existing partnership networks (e.g. POGO, EMB, JPI Oceans) and capitalize on their longstanding experience in making ocean science amenable to science policy;
- Develop clear pathways for opening up the access and availability of knowledge and information to all stakeholders and broader society;
- Improve science advisory mechanisms to leverage existing knowledge at the national and international level;
- Train scientists early on in communicating with stakeholders and broader society, e.g. by introducing science communication in their curricula;
- Develop a sustained open forum for dialogue between early career researchers and policymakers;
- Start evaluating and rewarding how researchers pass on their knowledge and not just their number of publications and citations, with particular attention to mitigating effects on early career researchers and the global South.

Voluntary Commitments

N/A

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