

Ocean Action Panel 8:

Promoting and supporting all forms of cooperation, especially at the regional and subregional level

*An extract of the Global Online Stakeholder Consultation:
Inputs to Ocean Action Panels Concept Papers*

About this Paper

This paper is an extract from the report of the Global Online Stakeholder Consultation: Inputs to Ocean Action Panels Concept Papers, which summarizes inputs received from stakeholders to a global online stakeholder consultation organized by UN DESA in connection with the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference which will be held from 9 June to 13 June in Nice, France.

The main Report can be found [here](#), including links to all responses and all inputs to the ten Ocean Action Panels, as well as detailed background information and a summary.

This paper presents summaries of key messages for Ocean Action Panel 8: Promoting and supporting all forms of cooperation, especially at the regional and subregional level.



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Under this topic, 193 contributions were received, and more detailed inputs are available [here](#).

Main Challenges

One of the most pressing challenges identified by stakeholders is the lack of comprehensive cooperation at the regional and subregional levels. Despite the shared environmental and marine issues, many countries struggle to align their policies and collaborate effectively across borders. The **absence of harmonized policies and robust data-sharing platforms** impedes progress, limiting the ability to address critical environmental challenges holistically. This fragmentation weakens conservation efforts, resulting in unsustainable resource use and delayed responses to emerging threats.

Another challenge is the **limited adoption of sustainable practices in marine and fishery management**. Toxic chemicals in fishing and unsustainable fishing practices continue to harm biodiversity and degrade marine ecosystems. While some stakeholders are promoting sustainable aquaculture and methods to reduce the environmental footprint of fishing activities, the lack of widespread adoption of these practices threatens the long-term health of marine environments. **Economic pressures and the absence of adequate support for local communities** further compound the issue, making it difficult for coastal populations to transition to sustainable livelihoods.

Lastly, stakeholders expressed concern that many regions face significant **technological gaps in ocean governance and conservation**. The failure to fully leverage modern technologies and innovative data solutions constrains conservation efforts, limiting decision makers' capacity to make informed decisions. Without adequate access to advanced tools and technologies, local communities and policymakers struggle to engage effectively in marine conservation efforts. This technological divide also inhibits the ability to monitor environmental changes, leading to slower responses to critical issues such as marine resource depletion and habitat degradation .

Transformative Actions

Multiple stakeholders highlighted the importance of policy and decision making related to enhancing cooperation at the regional and subregional level. They emphasized the importance of supporting decision-making through **policy evaluations and evidence-based approaches**. Furthermore, stakeholders stressed the significance of **collaborative governance**, particularly in managing marine and fishery resources. They advocated for **co-management frameworks** that foster cooperation between fishers, community stakeholders, and managers to ensure more sustainable and equitable resource management.

"Program and policy evaluations and supply of quality data are essential for informed decision-making and fostering cooperation at regional and subregional levels." (Sama Consulting Services Corp.)

Various respondents emphasized the urgency of adopting sustainable practices, such as **eliminating the use of toxic chemicals in fishing activities**. These measures are crucial to preserving biodiversity and protecting marine ecosystems from harmful environmental impacts. Many stakeholders highlighted the promotion of **sustainable aquaculture and fishing methods**. These methods aim to reduce the environmental footprint of fishing practices, improve food security, and enhance the economic resilience of coastal communities.

"Achieving sustainable fisheries is a complex endeavor, and it is evident that a single actor, such as a government, is unlikely to achieve this objective alone. What is needed instead is a collective effort by all those with a stake in achieving the objective of sustainable fisheries. Having the support of a broad range of actors and reconciling their often-diverging perspectives through deliberation increases the legitimacy of the outputs." (Fisheries Transparency Initiative)

Several stakeholders underscored the need for a **proactive approach to ocean governance**. This involves early interventions and forward-thinking strategies to address emerging challenges in marine conservation and sustainable resource use.

Numerous respondents emphasized the importance of **empowering local communities** by granting them **access to modern technologies and supporting sustainable livelihoods**. This empowerment is essential for enabling communities to engage in environmental conservation and benefit from sustainable economic opportunities.

"A potential transformative action is the creation of local networks of communities who know their lands and waters best and are positioned at the center of solutions. These local networks should be bottom-up and island led, where we really must listen to those who have been left out of decision making while their lands, waters, and resources have slipped away through no fault of their own." (Environmental Systems Research Institute)

A strong theme of fostering regional and subregional cooperation emerged, with organizations advocating for **multinational frameworks, harmonized policies, joint data sharing, and collaborative approaches** to tackling shared environmental and marine issues across borders.

"One transformative action is the creation of a Regional Ocean Governance Framework by regional bodies such as the Regional Seas Programmes under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). This framework should facilitate cooperation among neighboring countries, harmonize policies for sustainable ocean use, and establish joint initiatives for marine conservation." (Babatunde Development and Empowerment Initiative)

Partnership Spotlight

The International Association of Universities (IAU) plays a key role in fostering partnerships for ocean conservation through educational and research initiatives. The IAU promotes collaboration among universities and research institutions worldwide to enhance knowledge sharing and capacity building for sustainable ocean management. By supporting interdisciplinary research, policy dialogues, and academic exchanges, the IAU encourages regional and subregional cooperation to address global marine challenges, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and sustainable resource use. (Submitted by International Association of Universities)

A key priority for several stakeholders was **improving data sharing and leveraging cutting-edge technologies** to address environmental challenges. Enhanced access to data and technology can drive innovation in conservation efforts and lead to more informed decision-making processes.

“Establishing common protocols for data collection and sharing ensures consistency and comparability across regions. This standardization helps in creating comprehensive databases that support large-scale analyses and more informed decision-making.” (Objectif Sciences International)



Figure 14: Keywords associated with Ocean Action Panel 8: “Promoting and supporting all forms of cooperation, especially at the regional and subregional level” according to stakeholders.
Source: UN DESA



Partnership Spotlight

The Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security (CTI-CFF) is a regional cooperation initiative among six Southeast Asian and Pacific countries aimed at sustainably managing marine and coastal resources in the Coral Triangle, a biodiversity hotspot. The initiative has strengthened regional cooperation, leading to the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), improved fisheries management, and significant enhancements in coral reef health and marine biodiversity. It engages local communities in conservation efforts, promoting sustainable practices and improving livelihoods. It is led by the six Coral Triangle countries, supported by international donors and NGOs, and fosters collaboration through regional partnerships, community involvement, and capacity-building efforts. (Submitted by the Millenium Child Support Group)