



The Marine and Coastal Ecosystems
Management Voluntary Commitments

An Analysis

February 2019



Editor's Note

This document was prepared by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), with input from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), in support of the interim progress report of the Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Management Community of Ocean Action, in the context of the roles of TNC and the CBD Secretariat as the co-focal points for this Community of Ocean Action.

All data for this analysis was sourced from the publicly available Voluntary Commitments data sheet (available at <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/resources>). The data was sourced in July 2018. At that time, 781 Voluntary Commitments had been submitted under the Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Management Community of Ocean Action. Any new Voluntary Commitments, or updates to existing Voluntary Commitments, that were submitted after July 2018 were not included in this analysis. As of December 2018, 831 Voluntary Commitments under the Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Management Community of Ocean Action have been submitted via The Ocean Conference Website.

Readers should note that this analysis is based solely on the information contained in the Voluntary Commitments, and, therefore, does not necessarily reflect the views of The Nature Conservancy or the CBD Secretariat.



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TABLE OF ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

COA	Community of Ocean Action
EAF	Ecosystems Approach to Fisheries
EBM	Ecosystem-based management
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
LDCs	Least Development Countries
LME	Large Marine Ecosystem
MCEM	Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Management
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
VC	Voluntary Commitment



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INTRODUCTION

AN OVERVIEW

The Ocean Conference, held in New York in 2017, resulted in the submission of around 1,400 Voluntary Commitments (VCs) made by governments, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, United Nations entities and more. The more than 1500 VCs have registered aim to help work towards the realization of one, or a number of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 targets. The VCs therefore play a vital role in the journey towards the sustainable management and conservation of our oceans, seas and marine resources.

A report published in 2017, after The Ocean Conference, provided analytical insight into the VCs – providing a thorough assessment of the actors submitting these VCs, which ocean basins they target, and also their contribution to SDG 14 and other SDGs.ⁱ As a result, nine *clusters* of VCs were developed. These focused on different themes, and subsequently lead to the development of nine multi-stakeholder *Communities of Ocean Action* (COAs), all of which are coordinated by designated focal points.

The nine COAs and their associated number of VCsⁱ are:

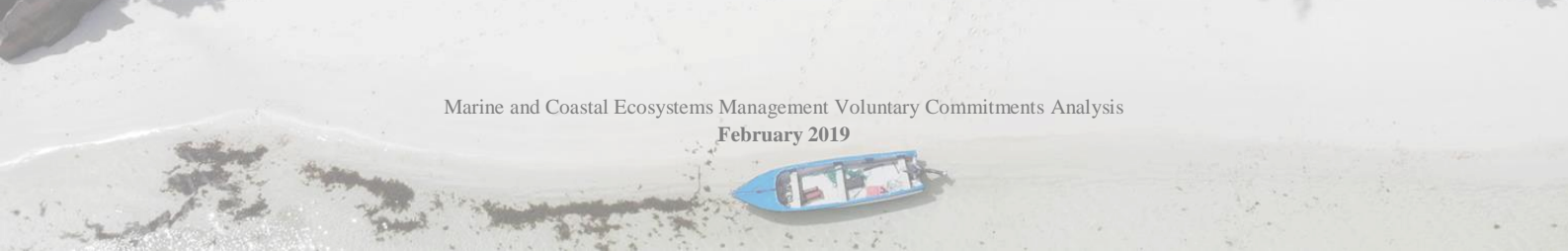
1. *Mangroves* - 83
2. *Coral reefs* - 103
3. *Ocean acidification* - 242
4. ***Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Management – 781ⁱⁱ***
5. *Sustainable fisheries* - 465
6. *Marine pollution* - 564
7. *Sustainable blue economy* - 341
8. *Scientific knowledge, research capacity development and transfer of marine technology* - 551
9. *Implementation of international law as reflected in United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea* - 284

This report aims to provide an analysis of the VCs associated with COA 4 – Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Management (MCEM). This COA focuses on the use of diverse area-based measures and management tools to protect and conserve marine ecosystems. These tools include, for example, marine spatial planning (MSP), integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) and the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs). These tools aim to protect and conserve our oceans whilst also supporting socio-economically valuable activities. Area based-management will play a key role in the realization of not only SDG 14 but sustainable development as a whole.

As of July 2018, 781 VCs have been submitted in relation to MCEM. These commitments focus on a variety of the area-based management issues, many of which include increasing the area of protected or sustainably managed

ⁱ Associated VC's as of July 2018.

ⁱⁱ The data was sourced in July 2018. At that time, 781 Voluntary Commitments had been submitted for the Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Management Community of Ocean Action. 777 of these were used for this analysis (four were not included due to missing data).



ocean space. The MCEM COA currently has the most assigned VCs of all of the COAs and has significant overlap with the majority of COAs, especially mangroves and coral reefs.

Figure 1 shows the relative number of VCs associated with each COA and their overlap with MCEM. The biggest overlap is with mangroves (89%), followed by coral reefs (80%); sustainable blue economy (76%); international law (74%); sustainable fisheries (71%); ocean acidification (67%); science, research, capacity and technology (62%); and marine pollution (51%). The MCEM COA is perhaps unique as it is integral to nearly all of the SDG 14 targets, including 14.1, 14.2, 14.4, 14.5 and 14.7. This explains why the overlap with other COAs is so high.

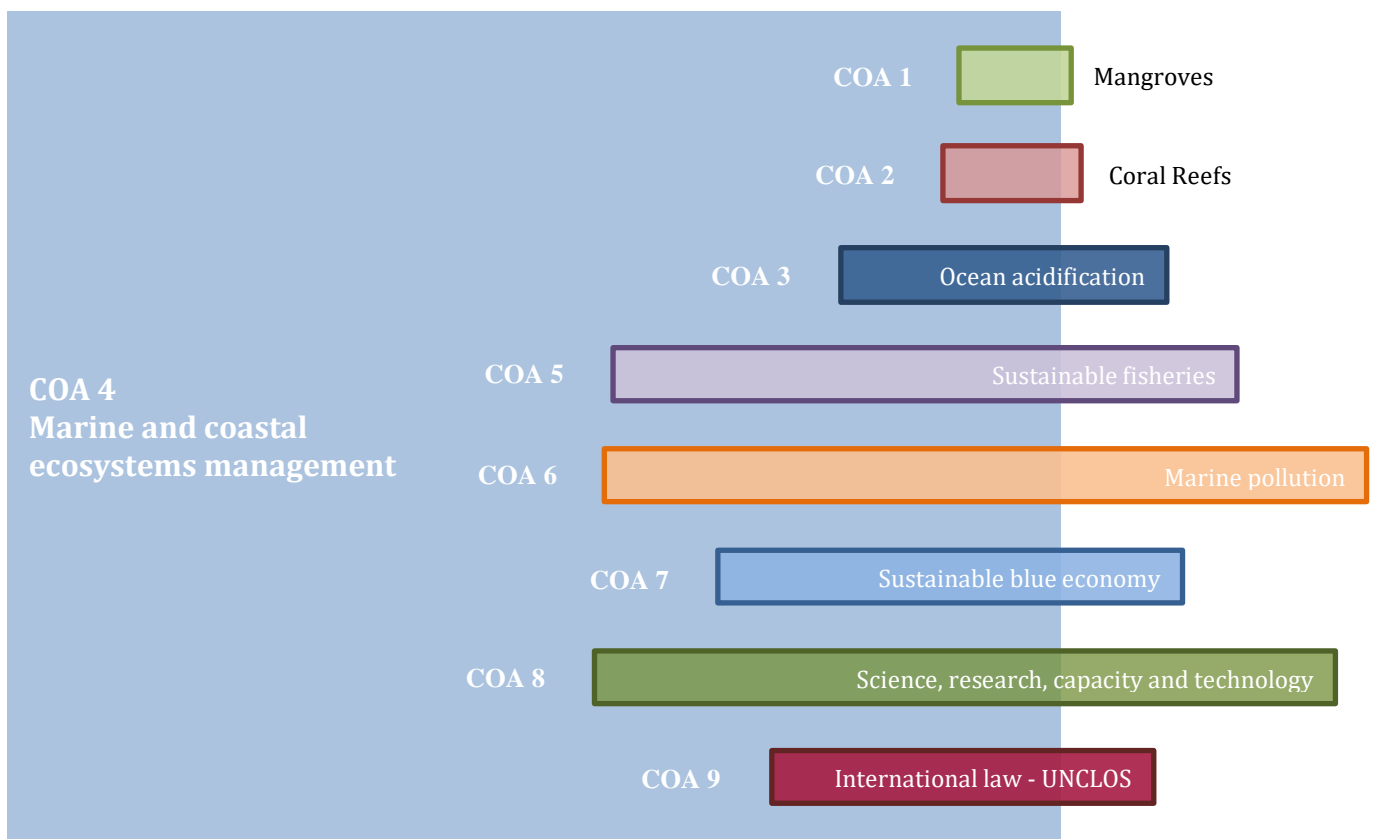


Figure 1 –Voluntary Commitment (VC) overlaps between the Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Management (MCEM) Community of Ocean Action (COA) and the other COAs.



DISTRIBUTION OF VCs BY OCEAN BASIN

The MCEM COA's VCs are distributed across all seven ocean basins – the Arctic Ocean, Southern Ocean, South Pacific, North Pacific, North Atlantic, South Atlantic and Indian Ocean. Most VCs relate to the North Atlantic (20%), which also incorporates the Caribbean and Mediterranean Seas, followed by the South Pacific (17%), Indian Ocean (13%), North Pacific (12%), South Atlantic (9%), Southern Ocean (3%) and Arctic Ocean (2%). **23% of the VCs act globally.** The data for the Ocean Basins focused on by the MCEM VCs is very similar to the data for all 1424 VCs as a whole.

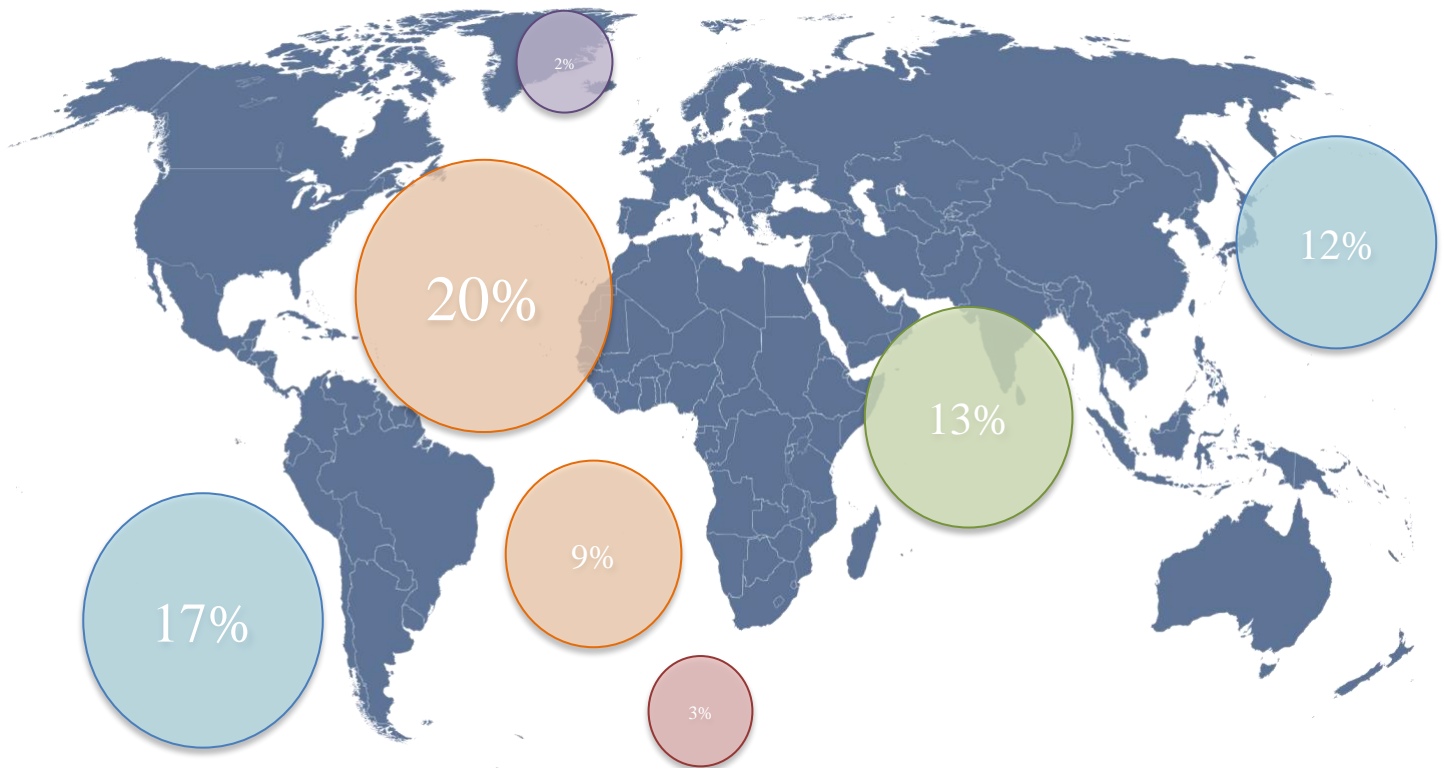


Figure 2 – The relative distribution of VCs for the MCEM COA by ocean basin.



DISTRIBUTION OF VCs BY LEAD ENTITY

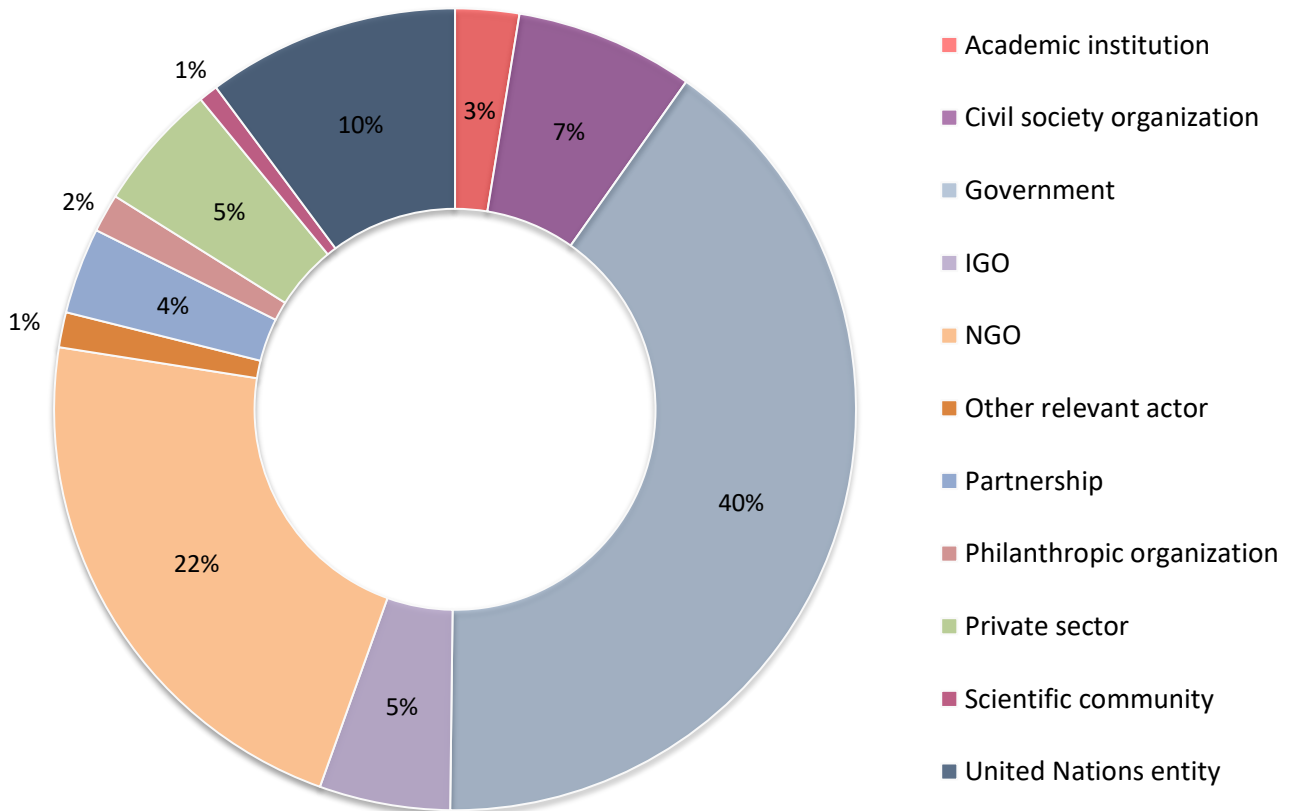
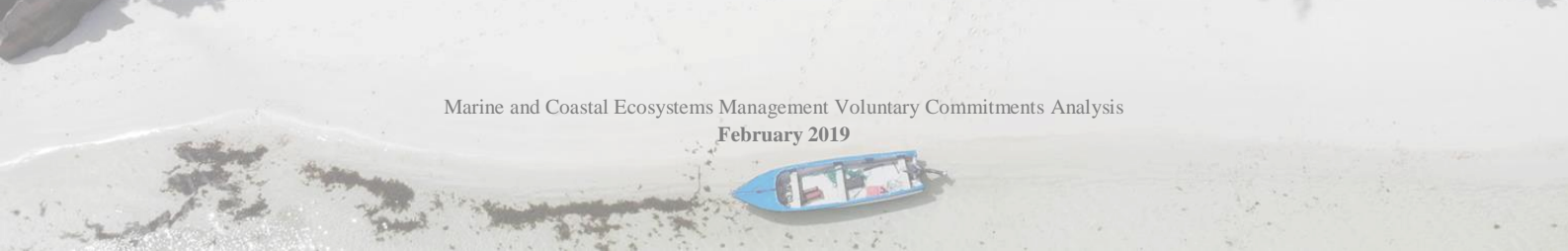


Figure 3 –Distribution of Voluntary Commitments (VCs) by lead entity for the MCEM COA

The VCs were submitted by a number of different groups including academic institutions, civil society organizations, governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations entities. Governments submitted the highest number of VCs by some margin (40%), followed by NGOs (22%). United Nations entities submitted 10% of VCs. Figure 3 represents the percentage of VCs for SDG 14 submitted by each entity.

However, it may also be important to look into differences between lead entity distribution across different regions and countries. For example, Least Developed Countries often lack resources for science and research compared to most developed countries. Further analysis should model how lead entity varies spatially for deeper insights.



DISTRIBUTION OF VCs BY CONTINENT

Further analysis looked at VC distribution by continent for all VCs submitted by governments. Figure 4 represents this distribution. Figure 4 shows strong contributions from governments in Europe (25%), North American (23%) and Australia (22%). Asia (16%), Africa (8%) and South America (7%) governments were less well represented. When broken down further, the majority of VCs from North America came from Caribbean countries (49%). Special mention should be given to the Dominican Republic who submitted over a quarter of VCs for North America. Eight VCs were not included due to lack of information.

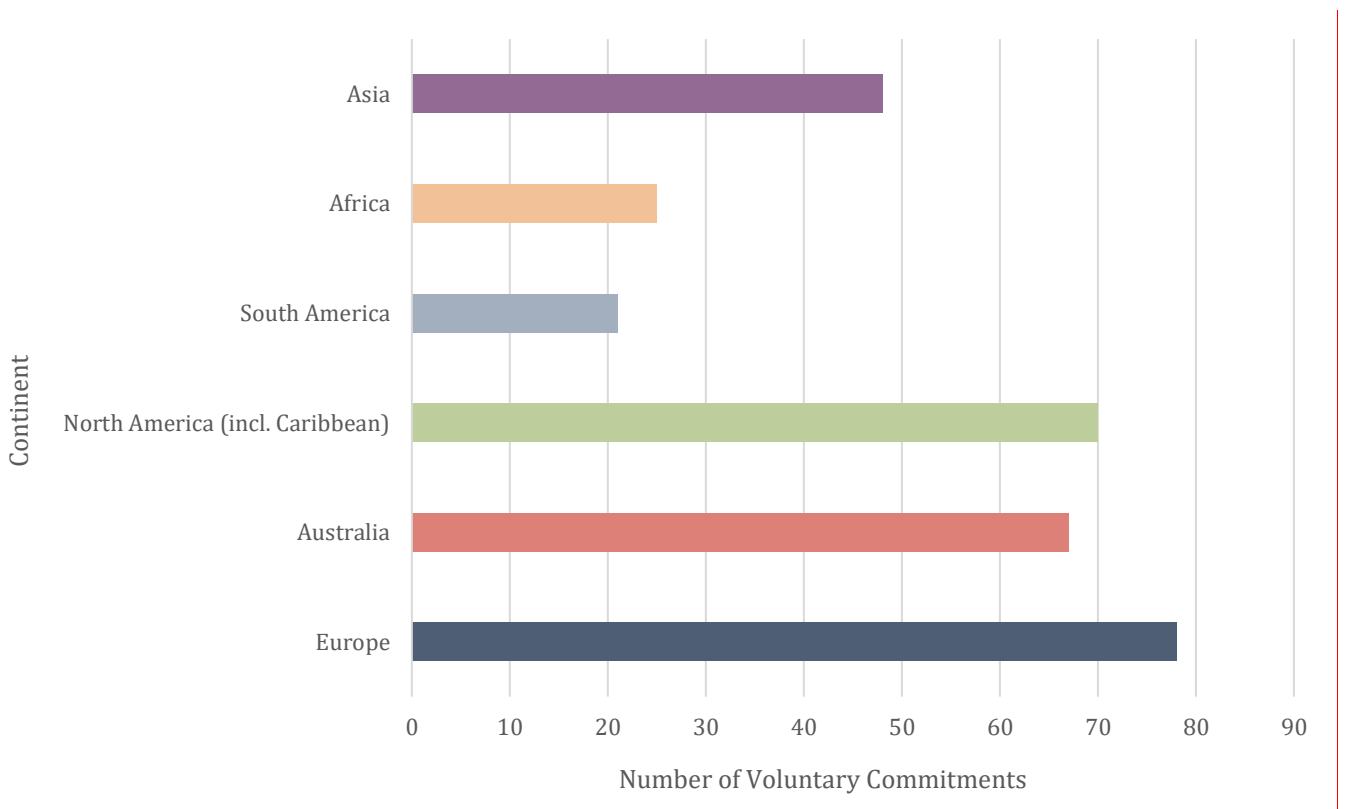


Figure 4 – Distribution of VCs for the MCEM COA by continent, for government submitted VCs only.



DISTRIBUTION OF VCs BY OCEAN BASIN AND LEAD ENTITY

It is also important to understand the relationships between ocean basins targeted and the lead entities submitting the voluntary commitments. Table 1 highlights the distribution of VCs by ocean basin and lead entity combined.

	OCEAN BASIN							
	Global	Arctic Ocean	Southern Ocean	South Pacific	North Pacific	North Atlantic	South Atlantic	Indian Ocean
LEAD ENTITY								
Government	66	10	16	89	69	102	37	69
United Nations entity	31	3	4	16	16	17	9	17
Intergovernmental organization	19	1	1	9	8	12	5	10
Non-governmental organization	86	8	7	29	22	50	24	38
Civil society organization	14	1	0	18	11	15	10	8
Academic institution	8	0	1	3	2	3	6	5
Scientific community	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	2
Private sector	24	1	0	15	7	10	4	6
Philanthropic organization	7	2	2	4	4	4	2	4
Other relevant actor	24	0	0	3	1	4	1	3
Partnership	55	2	2	5	5	17	13	2

Table 1 – The number of VCs for each ocean basin and lead entity is graded from RED (few VCs) to GREEN (many VCs). Includes data from full set of 831 VCs (December 2018).

It is important to note that the colour grading in Table 1 assumes the optimal distribution of VCs is equal between different ocean basins and lead entities. On the basis that equal distribution is almost certainly not optimal or achievable, the colour grading should be seen as a potential indicator of gaps, but not viewed in isolation. Further analysis can possibly look into the relative distribution of VCs for each ocean basin and lead entity pair combined.



SDG 14 AND THE TARGETS

The VCs in The Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Management (MCEM) Community aim to work towards one or a number of the ten SDG 14 targets, which focus on conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

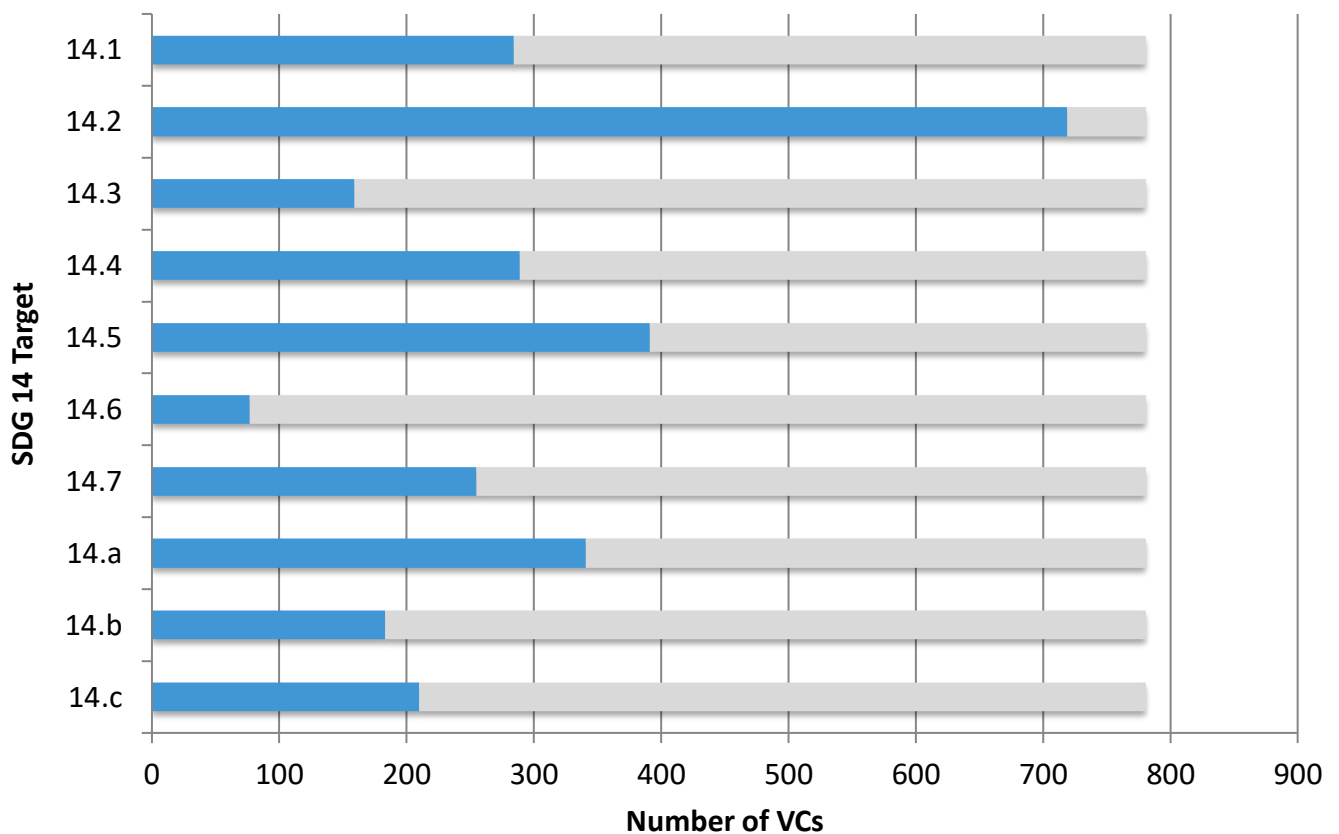


Figure 5 –Number of VCs for MCEM COA that contribute to each of the 10 SDG 14 targets.

The rest of this section outlines all 10 SDG 14 targets and the contribution of the MCEM VCs to each, including sub-targets as well as by ocean basin and lead entity distribution.

Note: The total number of VCs in each table adds up to more than the total number of VCs for each target due to overlap; a number of VCs tackle more than one sub-target. In addition, lead entities indicated as ‘other relevant actor’ are not included in the percentage breakdown.



14.1 “By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.”

284 (37%) of the MCEM VCs address SDG target 14.1.

14.1 SUB-TARGET	NUMBER OF VCs
Nutrients	
Fertilizer use efficiency	36
Nutrient sinks (e.g. constructed wetlands)	29
Manure management	29
Wastewater treatment	63
Plastics	
Plastics recovery/recycling/reuse	98
Plastics product bans or restrictions	68
Coastal clean-ups	119
Shipping	
Management of ship-based pollution and/or port waste management	62
Reduce invasive aquatic species introduction	42
Other Pollutants	
Integrated pest management	17
Industrial effluent pre-treatment	14
Cleaner production	22

Of the 284 VCs that relate to SDG 14.1, the ocean basin targeted most is the North Atlantic (16%), followed by the South Pacific (15%), Indian Ocean (14%), North Pacific (13%), South Atlantic (10%), Southern Ocean (3%) and Arctic Ocean (3%). 26% of the VCs have a global focus.

When analysed by lead entity, the most VCs were submitted by governments (29%), followed by non-governmental organizations (27%), United Nations entities (12%), the private sector (8%), intergovernmental organizations (7%), civil society organizations (6%), partnerships (4%), philanthropic organizations (2%), academic institutions (2%), the scientific community (1%), and other relevant actors (2%).



14.2 *“By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans.”*

719 (93%) of the MCEM VCs address SDG target 14.2.

14.2 SUB-TARGET	NUMBER OF VCs
Community or Locally Managed Marine Areas	302
Integrated Coastal Management	310
Marine Spatial Planning	208
Large Marine Ecosystem approach	167
Ecosystem-based Adaptation	236

Of the 719 VCs that relate to SDG 14.2, the ocean basin targeted most is the North Atlantic (20%), followed by the South Pacific (17%), Indian Ocean (13%), North Pacific (12%), South Atlantic (9%), Southern Ocean (3%) and Arctic Ocean (2%). 24% of the VCs have a global focus.

When analysed by lead entity, the most VCs were submitted by governments (40%), followed by non-governmental organizations (22%), United Nations entities (11%), civil society organizations (7%), intergovernmental organizations (5%), the private sector (5%), partnerships (4%), academic institutions (3%), philanthropic organizations (2%) and the scientific community (1%).

14.3 *“Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels.”*

159 (20%) of the MCEM VCs address SDG target 14.3.

14.3 SUB-TARGET	NUMBER OF VCs
Coastal carbon sinks/blue carbon	44
Terrestrial carbon sinks	12
Carbon capture and sequestration	24
CO ₂ emission reductions (energy efficiency, renewable energy, etc.)	44
Adaptation to more acidic ocean conditions	24
Scientific research and cooperation to address ocean acidification knowledge gaps	72



Of the 159 VCs that relate to SDG 14.3, the ocean basin targeted most is the North Atlantic (15%), followed by the South Pacific (14%), Indian Ocean (14%), North Pacific (14%), South Atlantic (8%), Southern Ocean (3%) and Arctic Ocean (3%). 29% of the VCs have a global focus.

When analysed by lead entity, the most VCs were submitted by governments (33%), followed by non-governmental organizations (23%), United Nations entities (11%), civil society organizations (8%), intergovernmental organizations (6%), the private sector (4%), partnerships (4%), academic institutions (4%), philanthropic organizations (3%). The scientific community were the lead entity on only 4 VCs (2%), and the remaining VCs were submitted by other relevant actors (2%).

14.4 *“By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics.”*

289 (37%) of the MCEM VCs address SDG target 14.4.

14.4 SUB-TARGET	NUMBER OF VCs
Compliance, monitoring and enforcement	134
Reduction and elimination fishing practices and gear that destroy/degrade marine habitat	113
Science-based fisheries management plans	126
Ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF)	142
Reduction of fisheries by-catch and product waste/losses	84
Eco-labelling, traceability, certification programmes	55
Market-based instruments (Individually Traded Quotas, Vessel Day Schemes, etc.)	36

Of the 289 VCs that relate to SDG 14.4, the ocean basin targeted most is the North Atlantic (17%), followed by the South Pacific (16%), Indian Ocean (15%), North Pacific (14%), South Atlantic (9%), Southern Ocean (3%) and Arctic Ocean (2%). 24% of the VCs have a global focus.

When analysed by lead entity, the most VCs were submitted by governments (34%), followed by non-governmental organizations (25%), United Nations entities (11%), civil society organizations (7%), the private sector (6%), intergovernmental organization (5%) partnerships (4%), academic institutions (3%), philanthropic organizations (3%), the scientific community (1%), and other relevant actors (1%).



14.5 *“By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information.”*

391 (50%) of the MCEM VCs address SDG target 14.5.

14.5 SUB-TARGET	NUMBER OF VCS
No take marine protected area	109
Marine protected area with partial protection	115
Multiple use marine protected area	159
Locally or community managed marine areas	180
MPA management and/or enforcement	172

Of the 391 VCs that relate to SDG 14.5, the ocean basin targeted most is the South Pacific (19%), followed by the North Atlantic (18%), North Pacific (13%), Indian Ocean (12%), South Atlantic (11%), Southern Ocean (3%) and Arctic Ocean (2%). 22% of the VCs have a global focus.

When analysed by lead entity, the most VCs were submitted by governments (44%), followed by non-governmental organizations (23%), United Nations entities (9%), civil society organizations (9%), intergovernmental organizations (3%), partnerships (3%), the private sector (3%), philanthropic organizations (2%) and academic institutions (2%). The scientific community were the lead entity on just 6 VCs (2%).

14.6 *“By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and Least Developed Countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation.”*

77 (10%) of the MCEM VCs address SDG target 14.6.

14.6 SUB-TARGET	NUMBER OF VCS
Removal or reduction of harmful fisheries subsidies	31
Information relating to harmful subsidies	29

Of the 77 VCs that relate to SDG 14.6, the ocean basin targeted most is the North Atlantic (15%), followed by the South Pacific (14%), Indian Ocean (13%), South Atlantic (13%), North Pacific (9%), Southern Ocean (3%) and Arctic Ocean (2%). 31% of the VCs have a global focus.



When analysed by lead entity, the most VCs were submitted by governments (32%), followed by non-governmental organizations (27%), United Nations entities (8%), civil society organizations (6%), partnerships (6%), academic institutions (4%), intergovernmental organizations (4%), the scientific community (4%), the private sector (3%), philanthropic organizations (3%), and other relevant actors (3%).

14.7 *“By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.”*

255 (33%) of the MCEM VCs address SDG target 14.7.

14.7 SUB-TARGET	NUMBER OF VCs
Economic benefits from sustainable fisheries	127
Economic benefits from sustainable tourism	140
Economic benefits from sustainable aquaculture/mariculture	78
Economic benefits from marine renewable energy	39
Economic benefits from marine biotechnology	32
Economic benefits from sustainable transport	32

Of the 255 VCs that relate to SDG 14.7, the ocean basin targeted most is the South Pacific (22%), followed by the Indian Ocean (17%), North Pacific (12%), North Atlantic (11%), South Atlantic (9%), Southern Ocean (4%) and Arctic Ocean (2%). 23% of the VCs have a global focus.

When analysed by lead entity, the most VCs were submitted by governments (35%), followed by non-governmental organizations (22%), United Nations entities (10%), civil society organizations (8%), intergovernmental organizations (7%), the private sector (6%), academic institutions (4%), partnerships (3%), philanthropic organizations (2%), the scientific community (1%), and other relevant actors (2%).



14.A *“Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries.”*

341 (44%) of the MCEM VCs address SDG target 14.A.

14.A SUB-TARGET	NUMBER OF VCs
Scientific, socioeconomic and interdisciplinary research	185
Research capacity development	176
Data access and sharing	186
Training and professional development	195
Scientific cooperation	176
Transfer marine technology	102
Actions that support SIDS and LDCs	92

Of the 341 VCs that relate to SDG 14.A, the ocean basin targeted most is the South Pacific (16%), followed by the North Atlantic (15%), North Pacific (14%), Indian Ocean (13%), South Atlantic (11%), Southern Ocean (4%) and Arctic Ocean (2%). 25% of the VCs have a global focus.

When analysed by lead entity, the most VCs were submitted by governments (32%), followed by non-governmental organizations (24%), United Nations entities (13%), intergovernmental organizations (7%), the private sector (5%), academic institutions (5%), civil society organizations (5%) and partnerships (4%). The scientific community and philanthropic organizations were the lead entity on only 5 VCs (1%) each, with the remaining VCs submitted by other relevant actors (4%).

14.B *“Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets.”*

183 (24%) of the MCEM VCs address SDG target 14.B.

14.B SUB-TARGET	NUMBER OF VCs
Legal/policy/institutional measures	82
Access to market-based instruments	49
Transfer of fishing technology	0
Access to coastal fishing grounds	61
Access and capacity building for eco-labelling and traceability systems	42
Community empowerment for fisheries management	102



Of the 719 VCs that relate to SDG 14.B, the ocean basin targeted most is the Indian Ocean (17%), followed by the South Pacific (16%), North Atlantic (16%), South Atlantic (13%), North Pacific (12%), Southern Ocean (3%) and Arctic Ocean (2%). 21% of the VCs have a global focus.

When analysed by lead entity, the most VCs were submitted by governments (37%), followed by non-governmental organizations (21%), civil society organizations (11%), United Nations entities (8%) intergovernmental organizations (5%), partnerships (4%), academic institutions (4%), the private sector (4%), philanthropic organizations (3%). The scientific community were the lead entity on only 4 VCs (2%), with the remaining 1% being submitted by other relevant actors.

14.C *“Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of The Future We Want.”*

210 (27%) of the MCEM VCs address SDG target 14.C.

14.C SUB-TARGET	NUMBER OF VCs
Activities to raise awareness of the comprehensive legal and policy framework for the sustainable development of oceans and seas, in particular UNCLOS, its Implementing Agreements and other relevant ocean-related instruments	110
Ratification, accession and acceptance of UNCLOS, its Implementing Agreements and other relevant ocean-related instruments	34
Activities to develop the capacity of States towards broader participation in and effective implementation of UNCLOS and its implementing Agreements	64
Strengthening ocean governance, for example through the development of a national ocean policy or regional ocean policy	118
Development of necessary infrastructure and/or enforcement capabilities to comply with international law, as reflected in UNCLOS and as complemented by other ocean-related instruments	59

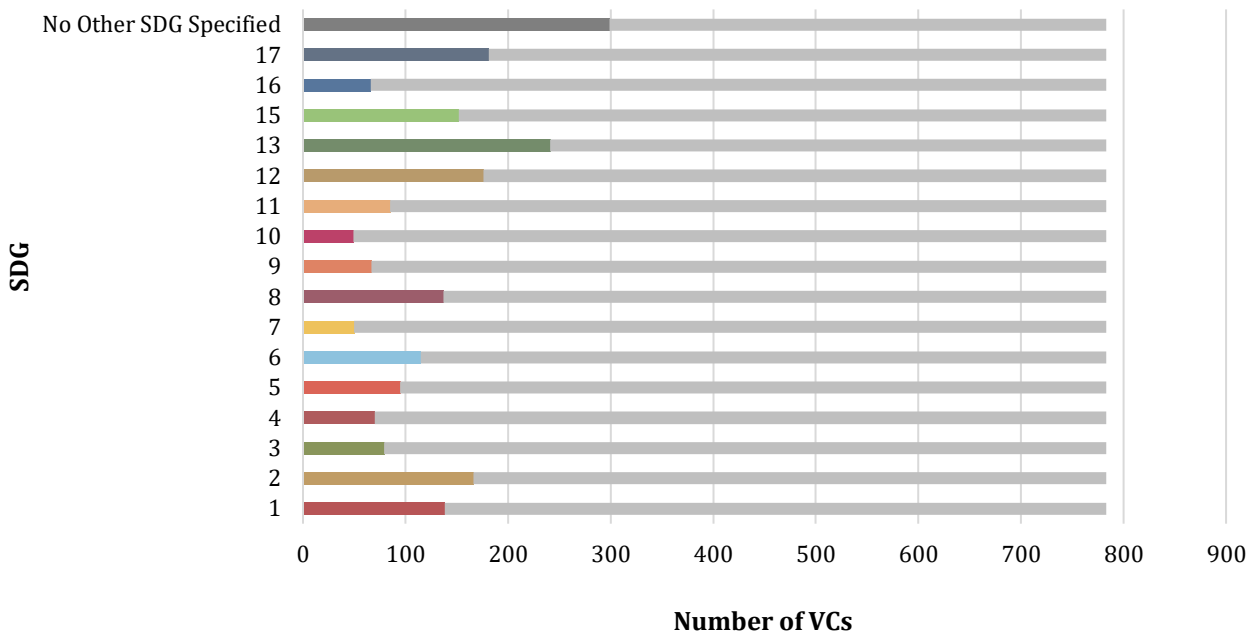
Of the 210 VCs that relate to SDG 14.C, the ocean basin targeted most is the South Pacific (17%), followed by the North Pacific (13%), Indian Ocean (13%), North Atlantic (13%), South Atlantic (13%), Southern Ocean (6%) and Arctic Ocean (3%). 22% of the VCs have a global focus.

When analysed by lead entity, the most VCs were submitted by governments (37%), followed by non-governmental organizations (19%), United Nations entities (14%), civil society organizations (9%), intergovernmental organizations (7%), partnerships (4%), the private sector (3%), the scientific community (3%), academic institutions (2%), philanthropic organizations (1%), and other relevant actors (1%).



LINKS TO OTHER SDGs AND TARGETS

In total, 1867 links to other SDGs were made from the marine and coastal ecosystems management (MCEM) VCs. The most links were made to SDG 13 – climate action. The fewest links were made with SDG 10 – reduced inequalities. However, of the 781 VCs, 299 did not indicate links with other SDGs.



(KEY: **SDG 1**- No Poverty, **SDG 2** – Zero Hunger, **SDG 3** – Good Health and Well-being, **SDG 4** – Quality Education, **SDG 5** – Gender Equality, **SDG 6** – Clean Water and Sanitation, **SDG 7** – Affordable and Clean Energy, **SDG 8** – Decent Work and Economic Growth, **SDG 9** - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, **SDG 10** – Reduced Inequalities, **SDG 11** – Sustainable Cities and Communities, **SDG 12** – Responsible Consumption, **SDG 13** – Climate Action, **SDG 15** – Life on

Figure 6 – The number of MCEM COA VCs contributing to otherSDGs.

Land, **SDG 16** – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, **SDG 17** – Partnerships for the Goals)

In addition, submitters of VCs are also asked to state which SDG targets their VC covers. In total, 1436 linkages were made between the MCEM VCs and the SDG targets. The most links were made with target 17.1. All targets under SDG 17 had a significant number of links (55% of total links) to MCEM. There were no links indicated to any of the SDG 3, 7 and 10 targets.

The differences between the number of links to the SDGs and the individual targets shows that submitters may not be fully stating how their VC contributes to other targets outside of SDG 14. Many responses stated links to multiple SDGs but did not include supporting information relating to the targets. It is for this reason that SDG 17 targets were stated as having the majority of links to the VCs, despite the fact that only 181 of the VCs make links to SDG 17. This is compounded by the fact that many of the VCs with links to SDG 17 have links with the majority of its targets, unlike other goals.



DELIVERABLES AND RESOURCES

DELIVERABLES

Many of the targets associated with each SDG make reference to when they must be achieved. Targets must be delivered by 2020, 2025 or 2030. When submitting VCs, submitters specify up to a total of four deliverables associated with their VC and include date of expected completion. In total, 258 VCs contain 4 deliverables, 156 contain 3 deliverables, 135 contain 2 deliverables and 193 contain 1 deliverable. 35 VCs did not indicate deliverables. In line with the 2020, 2025 and 2030 targets, figure 8 shows the number of deliverables that should have reached completion by each of the three years. Please note, deliverable dates before The Ocean Conference (2017) are not included. If dates were given as a range, the latest date of the range was used for this analysis.

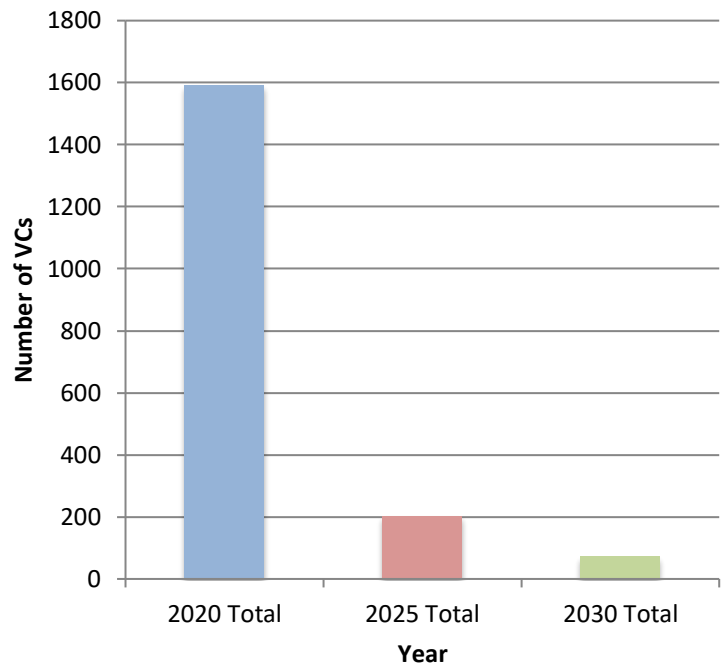


Figure 7 – The number of VC deliverables for the MCEM COA with completion dates before 2020, 2025 and 2030.

RESOURCES COMMITTED

During submission, submitters were also required to state the types of resources being committed to the achievement of their VC. They were able to choose from four categories – financing, in-kind contributions, staff / technical expertise and other. 2 VCs did not indicate resources committed.

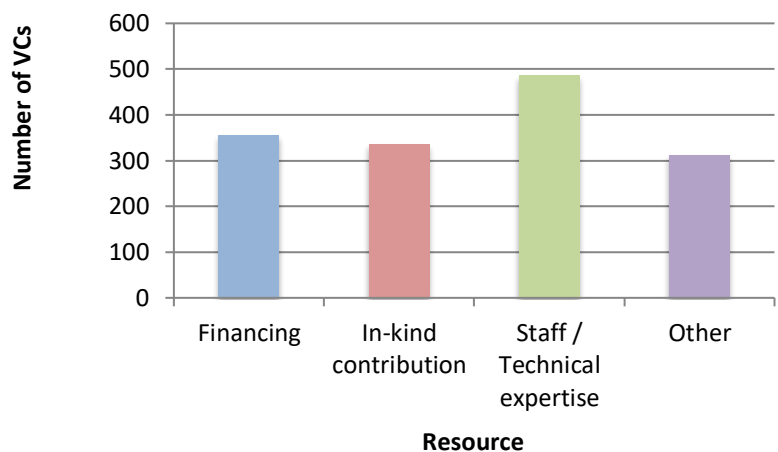


Figure 8 – The number of each resource committed for the MCEM COA Voluntary Commitments.



SUMMARY OF GAPS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

DISTRIBUTION BY OCEAN BASIN

The VCs under the Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Management (MCEM) Community of Ocean Action (COA) follow a similar pattern to that of all the VCs for all COAs. The North Atlantic and South Pacific regions have the highest number of VCs, with the Arctic and Southern Oceans having considerably fewer VCs. More investment is needed for to ensure developing countries have the resources needed. Distribution by ocean basin does not give a full indication of the geographical distribution, however. Further research can look deeper into distribution by region or country in order to highlight any gaps.

DISTRIBUTION BY LEAD ENTITY

Similarly to the VCs as a whole, the scientific community and academic institutions have contributed few VCs for the MCEM COA. A stronger focus on science and research is particularly needed in Least Developed Countries and SIDS, a significant number of which are on the frontline of climate change, as well as biodiversity and habitat loss. It is therefore important to analyze this information further by considering how lead entity varies spatially by region. Analyzing on the basis of the ocean basin alone does not accurately reflect the relative contributions of individual countries.

As discussed in previous reports on the VCs, many VCs do not materialize due to lack of funding. A stronger contribution by the private sector might therefore be necessary. VCs submitted by the private sector currently account for just 5% of the total VCs.

DISTRIBUTION BY CONTINENT

When analysing VC contributions by governments, European, Australian and North American governments submitted considerably more VCs than governments in Africa, Asia and South America.

SDG 14 TARGETS COVERED

SDG 14 targets 14.3 (minimizing and addressing the impacts of ocean acidification) and 14.6 (prohibiting certain forms of fisheries subsidies) had the fewest VCs. This is the same for all VCs for all the COAs. It is important to understand that the ratio of targets to VC's may differ among targets due to the difference in spatial and temporal scope. Target 14.6, despite having the fewest associated VCs, is linked to 77 of the MCEM VCs and 14.2 (sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems), is linked to 719 VCs. 14.2 has strong links with the MCEM COA, which focus on the protection of coastal ecosystems and aims to increase the quantity and size of protected areas, as well as introduce tools such as MSP and ecosystem-based management (EBM) to successfully conserve and protect the oceans while also promoting sustainable socio-economic development. Target 14.2 and the MCEM COA also have strong links to target 14.5 (conserve at least 10% of coastal and marine areas by 2020). Target 14.5 currently has the second highest number of associated VCs at 391. This is an encouraging result – a large proportion of VCs are focused on working towards the core aims of the MCEM COA.



Common themes of the VCs include pollution, including plastic pollution, nutrient pollution, ocean noise and invasive species. This is of particular importance to the MCEM COA as a significant proportion of ocean pollution takes place at the land-sea interface. Other key themes relevant to MCEM COA included mention of EBM, ICZM LMEs, MSP and significant mention of MPAs. Fisheries, including aquaculture and mariculture were also referred to multiple times, as well as terms associated with blue economy and natural resource management. Many VCs made reference to extractive processes, which again, is of particular importance to the aims of the MCEM COA. There was also strong mention of international law and issues associated with its implementation, governance, enforcement and monitoring. However, technology was not referred to many times. This observation is backed up by the significant lack of VCs submitted by the scientific community and academic institutions, as previously discussed.

In conclusion, there are no obvious gaps when considering the contribution of the VCs to the SDG 14 targets, other than perhaps a lack of VCs integrating science and technology. However, further analysis is needed to understand the exact number of VCs contributing to more specific themes within the MCEM COA, perhaps through further dissection of the descriptions of each VC.

LINKS TO OTHER SDGs

All of the other SDGs are well represented by the VCs associated with the MCEM COA. However, one potentially concerning observation is that 299 of the VCs were submitted with no information on how they will work towards other SDGs. A fundamental component of the 2030 Agenda is that the goals must be viewed as one entity and worked towards holistically. It is imperative that the targets associated with SDG 14 are not viewed in isolation and that they consider their impacts on targets associated with other goals. This may prove essential for maximizing benefit to all stakeholders involved in ocean management and reducing the quantity and magnitude of potential trade-offs.

As previously discussed, submission of VCs must also more accurately describe which goals and targets are being achieved. There was considerable discrepancy between analysis of the contribution of the VCs to the goals as a whole and to the individual targets.

DELIVERABLES AND RESOURCES

All but 35 of the MCEM COAs made reference to deliverables. Information relating to the number of deliverables may not prove to be useful as the quantity of deliverables is only important if they are, of course, achieved. Further analysis will be needed over the coming years to determine how many of the deliverables are achieved before the specified dates. It is promising that the significant majority of deliverables should be met before 2020. However, care must be taken to ensure that the deliverables are achievable over that time-scale. It may be slightly concerning that so few targets are set for completion between 2020 and 2030, especially when a considerable number of ocean issues, such as ocean acidification, cannot be solved over such short temporal scales. This might be reflective of the ambitious nature of the SDG 14 targets timeline. In terms of resources committed, there are no obvious gaps. However, as previously discussed, many deliverables seem to lack funding.