UNITED NATIONS

EP

UNEP/RSP24/2

Distr.: General
11 June 2025

Original: English

United Nations Environment Programme

Twenty-Fourth Global Meeting of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs)
France, Nice, 11 June 2025

Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2026-2029



Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2026-2029

June 2025

UN environment programme | Regional Seas

Regional Seas Strategeic Directions 2026-2029

June 2025

Acknowledgements

Regional Seas Strategic Directions (RSSD) 2026-2029

Published by United Nations Environment Programme

United Nations Avenue, Gigiri
PO Box 30552, 00100 Nairobi, Kenya
T: +254 20 7621234
E: unep-publications@un.org
www.unep.org

© UNEP 2025

No use of this publication may be made for resale or any other commercial purpose whatsoever without prior permission in writing from the Publisher.

Contributors/Authors

Dr. Karen Raubenheimer (University of Wollongong, Australia)
Niko Urho (Independent consultant)
Margot Dons (Independent consultant)

Recommended Citation

United Nations Environment Programme, (2025)
Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2026-2029.

Disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Moreover, the views expressed do not necessarily represent the decision or the stated policy of the United Nations Environment Programme, nor does citing of trade names or commercial processes constitute endorsement.

Cover Image: Xavier Coiffic, *Le Morne, Mauritius*



Image: Tyler Casey, *Big Sur, Carmel*

Table of Contents

Forword 8

I. Background 10

II. Objective and strategic goals for 2026-2029 17

- RSSD 2026-2029 Vision 17
- Medium-term outcomes (to 2029) 17
- Long-term outcomes (beyond 2029) 18
- Objective 18
- Strategic goals 18
- Principles and approaches to guide activities 19

III. Strategic actions to deliver the goals 21

GOAL I: Secure biologically diverse, pollution free, productive and climate resilient marine and coastal ecosystems 22

Sub-Goal I a): Protect biodiversity to maintain ocean and coastal ecosystem functions 22
Actions to deliver Sub-Goal I a) on protecting biodiversity 24
Sub-Goal I b): Reduce ocean and coastal pollution 26
Actions to achieve Goal I b) on reducing ocean and coastal pollution 28
Sub-Goal I c): Secure ocean and coastal climate resilience to reduce climate change impacts and disaster risk 31
Actions to achieve Goal I c) on securing ocean and coastal resilience 33
UNEP supporting activities for achieving Goal I 34

GOAL II: Support knowledge management and science-policy dialogue on marine and coastal issues 35

Actions to achieve Goal II on supporting knowledge management and science-policy dialogue 36
UNEP supporting activities for achieving Goal II 38

GOAL III: Elevate the global profile of the RSP through outreach, advocacy and partnerships 39

Actions to achieve Goal III on outreach, advocacy and partnerships 40
UNEP supporting activities for achieving Goal III 42

IV. Reporting on Progress of the RSSD 43

Modes of reporting 43
A phased approach to developing RSP targets and indicators 44

Appendix I: Full text of global targets referenced 46

References for emerging issues included in the RSSD 2026-2029 56

Abbreviations

ABAS	The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS
BAT	Best available technique
BBNJ	Biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction
BEP	Best environmental practice
BWM	International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives (to UNEP)
DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFC	Global Framework on Chemicals
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GOOS	Global Ocean Observing System
GPA	Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities
HELCOM	Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission)
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IGO	Inter-governmental Organisation
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO
ISA	International Seabed Authority
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KM	Knowledge Management (used in KM-GBF indicators)
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MPA	Marine protected area
MSP	Marine spatial planning
MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield

MTS	Medium Term Strategy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECM	Other effective area-based conservation measures
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OHHLEP	One Health High-Level Expert Panel
OSPAR	Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
POPs	Persistent Organic Pollutants
POW	Programme of Work
QSR	Quality Status Report
RAC	Regional Activity Centres
RACER	Relevant, Acceptable, Credible, Easy, Robust
RCU	Regional Coordination Centres
RFMO	Regional fisheries management organization
RS	Regional Seas (used in indicator references like RS 1, RS 2...)
RSCAP	Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans
RSP	Regional Seas Programme
RSSD	Regional Seas Strategic Directions
SAMOA	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
WHO	World Health Organization
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-WCMC	UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization



Image: Andrea Pivari, *Dophins*

Forword

The ocean faces multiple anthropogenic driving forces that are relentlessly depleting the vital goods and services our marine and coastal environments provide. Despite our efforts, these forces are leading to continuing biodiversity loss in our ocean, increasing pollution and decreased resilience to climate-induced changes, referred to as the triple planetary crisis - a core focus of the UN Environment Programme. These three crises are now showing signs of synchronizing and thereby amplifying each other, particularly in our ocean. Their interconnectedness is undeniable, and one crisis cannot be addressed without a strong and interconnected response to the others.

The Regional Seas Strategic Directions (RSSD) for 2026-2029 reflects the ever-increasing urgency of preserving and restoring the marine and coastal environments for the three billion people whose livelihoods depend on them. The updated Strategic Directions place stronger emphasis on the triple planetary crisis, aligning with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (2026-2029). The MTS underscores the importance of integrated, cross-sectoral responses to climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, and the RSSD helps operationalize this vision at the regional level by aligning efforts across all relevant agencies and enhancing cooperation with key partners.

This strategic shift is supported by an increased number of multilateral frameworks addressing ocean health identified in the Strategic Directions for collaboration on targeted issues. Notably, the RSSD reflects recent progress in multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other relevant multilateral instruments, such as the Global Biodiversity Framework, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) and the Global Framework on Chemicals.

Such comprehensive collaboration was called for in UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) Resolution 6/15 on "Strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution" in recognition of the key role the Regional Seas Programme (RSP) and the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs) play in protecting and conserving the marine and coastal environments. The inclusion of emerging issues across the three core goals, such as the release of pharmaceuticals into our oceans and light pollution, helps maintain the currency of the RSCAPs in delivering on multiple UNEA Resolutions of relevance to the marine and coastal environment.

Overall, the RSSD (2026-2029) provides a solid basis for measurable action towards achieving its vision of "prosperous and climate resilient seas and their respective coastal regions with biologically diverse, healthy, productive, conserved, restored and effectively used marine and coastal ecosystems for the benefit of people and nature." Its strategic goals and action measures aim to foster harmonized implementation across RSCAPs, while also respecting the diversity of regional approaches and contexts.

Understanding trends in marine and coastal health is vital for assessing the effectiveness of actions and the sustainability of our collective path. To this end, the RSSD continues to highlight the importance of monitoring. The re-establishment of the Regional Seas Indicator Working Group will further strengthen these activities through improved tracking and reporting.

As ocean threats grow, the updated RSSD provides a concrete roadmap for addressing pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate impacts. Through strengthened partnerships, clear targets, and renewed monitoring, it equips RSCAPs to drive coordinated, measurable action across marine and coastal regions.



Image: Andrea Pivari, *Dophins*

Background

The 18 Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs) with their legal and policy frameworks are tailored to respond to the increasingly urgent call to secure planetary health while respecting their regional specificities. This is achieved through strengthening capacity in each region to understand ongoing and emerging threats and respond to these threats in a united and targeted manner to protect and conserve the marine and coastal environment.

RSCAPs are widely recognised for setting and implementing advanced regional regulatory frameworks through the adoption of common measures and Protocols addressing different aspects of marine and coastal management. They are also known for the development of methodologies and innovative tools, such as Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), ecosystem approach and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), including monitoring and assessment of marine and coastal environment.

Several RSCAPs have negotiated and adopted specific protocols on 1) biodiversity conservation, including on specially protected areas, wildlife and specific ecosystems, 2) integrated coastal zone management (ICZM), 3) prevention and emergency response, 4) offshore activities, 5) land-based sources and activities, and 6) transboundary movements of hazardous waste. Combating marine pollution is a central objective woven throughout many of these protocols.

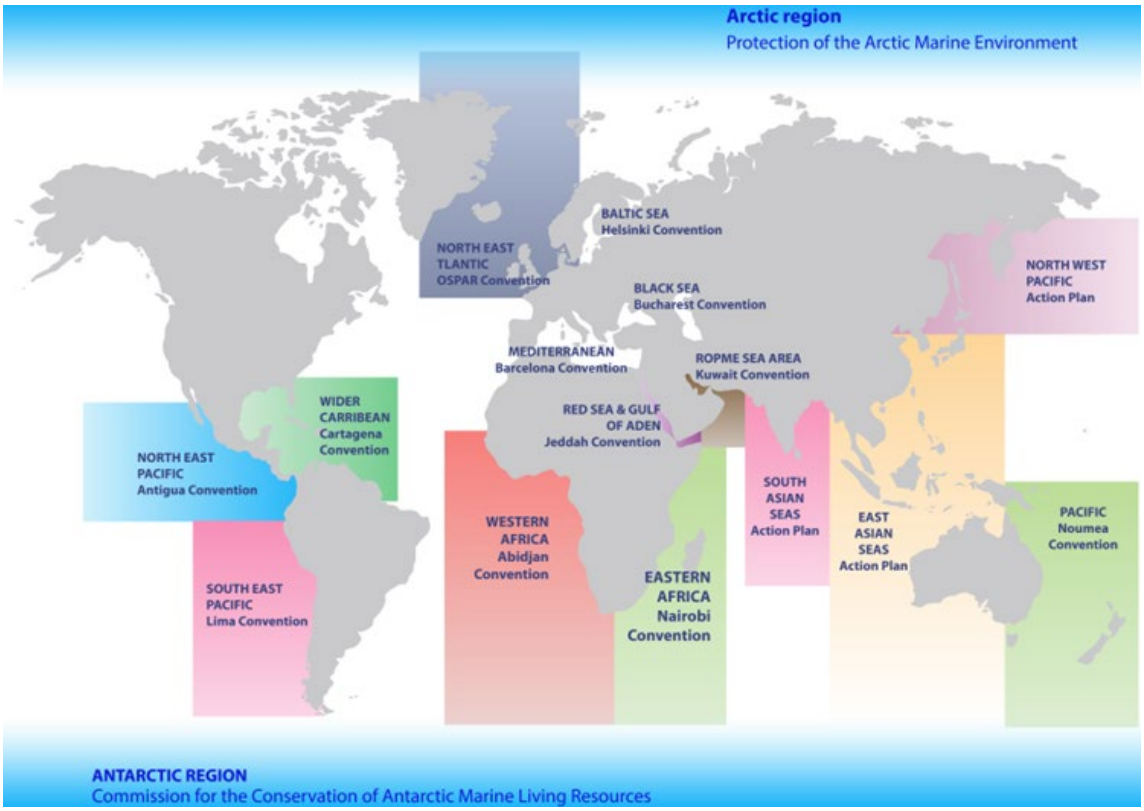


Figure 1: *The Regional Seas Programme covers 18 regions of the world, making it one of the most globally comprehensive initiatives for the protection of marine and coastal environments.*

The UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) adopted Resolution 6/15 that aims to strengthen ocean efforts to tackle the triple planetary crisis, recognising the key role of the Regional Seas Programme (RSP) and the RSCAPs and their importance in assisting countries and regions in applying an ecosystem approach to manage the marine and coastal environment. The resolution encourages Member States to adopt, ratify or implement the regional seas conventions, protocols and action plans, as well as relevant global multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), for the protection and conservation of the marine and coastal environment. It is recognized, however, that not all Member States are Parties to these instruments, and engagement may vary depending on membership and ratification status.

Resolution 6/15 also requested Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), subject to available resources, to strengthen the RSP and support Member States and UN agencies through technical assistance, reporting, planning tools, and collaboration on marine biodiversity. The Resolution further invited the RSCAPs secretariats upon request to contribute to activities that address the triple planetary crises, improving monitoring and assessments. Continued support was called for cooperation and coordination on marine issues among all relevant global and regional forums and organizations to deliver coherently on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 and other relevant ocean-related Goals.

While each of the RSCAPs functions independently and are accountable primarily to its own governing bodies, it has become evident that harmonization of efforts can bring efficiency gains and a more effective response to global ocean and marine-related goals. To this end, UNEP has coordinated the development of the Regional Seas Strategic Directions since 1995, aiming to provide a common [voluntary] framework for inspiring coherence as a global programme and ensure effective collaboration. The RSSD for 2026-2029 constitutes the sixth iteration, marking a continued commitment to enhancing coordination and addressing emerging environmental challenges.

The RSSD 2026-2029 focuses on three overarching goals to guide the Regional Seas Programme to deliver on its mandate in relation to the marine and coastal environment. This includes contributing to regional and global goals and agreements to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, while increasing the visibility and strategic involvement of RSCAPs in and contribution to key processes at global and regional levels. The strategic directions provide coherence across the global Regional Seas platform, while serving as a catalyst for tailoring actions specific to regional needs and provides a framework for addressing emerging global ocean and coastal commitments and a platform for tracking and reporting on progress towards achieving them.

The Regional Seas Programme in a nutshell

The Regional Seas Programme (RSP), launched in 1974 in the wake of the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, is one of UNEP's most significant achievements. Today, it operates in 18 regions, most of which have adopted a regional action plan underpinned by a legal framework in the form of a regional convention and associated protocols on specific issues. Commonly, they are referred to as Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAP). Regional Coordination Units (RCUs), often aided by Regional Activity Centres (RACs), service and facilitate countries' implementation of agreed action under the conventions and action plans. UNEP provides overall coordination and facilitation of the work and in so doing connects the programme to UNEA.

RSSD Roles and Responsibilities

- The RSSD 2026-2029 aims to be specific on the different roles, functions and mandates of the entities involved in its follow up and implementation:
- Eighteen RSCAPs, each with its own autonomous governing body consisting of the countries/Parties in the region, decision-making processes, work plans and budgets to which the Parties/countries contribute to through assessed or voluntary contributions.
- For seven of these eighteen RSCAPs, UNEP is designated as the secretariat, six being administered through the Ecosystems Division and one through UNEP's Europe Office.
- UNEP provides coordination and facilitation services, including convening the Global Annual Meetings of Regional Seas and Action Plans to facilitate dialogue between RSCAPs, endeavouring to harmonize and strengthen regional approaches thus helping to deliver as one.
- UNEA with its universal membership is uniquely positioned to provide overarching global policy guidance, helping to bring together work of RSCAPs, including facilitating partnering with relevant intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders.
- The UN General Assembly Resolutions on ICZM (Res. 78/159), Oceans and Law of the Sea (A/79/L.37), and on SIDS/SAMOA Pathway (Res. 69/15) are also supported in delivery through the Regional Seas governance framework, including through monitoring and regular reporting to the UN General Assembly.

Purpose of the Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2026-2029

The Regional Seas Strategic Directions (RSSD) 2026-2029 builds upon the objectives of the previous 4-year framework (RSSD 2022-2025) which seeks to achieve long-term health of the ocean in support of sustainable livelihoods for people who rely on the ocean, for subsistence or otherwise, by:

- fostering an integrated response to shore up resiliency to address marine biodiversity loss, climate change impacts, and pollution crisis
- more effectively mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and coastal environments into national and regional policies and programmes,
- harmonizing methodologies for tracking progress, including development of core indicators, and
- enhance visibility and impact, reach out and advocacy for RSCAPs delivery.

How does the RSSD 2026-2029 contribute to global processes?

The ocean supports the livelihoods of more than three billion people, provides a main source of protein for more than one billion, contains the greatest biodiversity of life on Earth, and helps stabilize the climate. However, ocean health is severely threatened by the triple planetary crisis. These challenges do not manifest in isolation but can reinforce each other. In recognition of these issues, global goals have been agreed, yet only five years remain to achieve them. Globally biodiversity continues to decline, and the effects of climate change are becoming visibly clear. Coral reefs could reach tipping points in the next five years. The benefits of biodiversity initiatives still do not trickle down to the communities who rely on it. It is clear that more action is urgently needed.

In response to the triple planetary crises, the RSSD 2026-2029 is harmonised with the objectives of UNEA and UNEP as they relate to marine and coastal environments and integrated with the mandates of relevant MEAs. Significant recent developments prominently reflected in the strategic directions include the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the adoption of the Agreement on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the adoption of the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC) and ongoing negotiations towards a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution (UNEA Res. 5/14). In addition, the role of the Regional Seas in combatting the effects of climate change has been strengthened towards the goals of the Paris Agreement with a specific focus on adaptation and resilience. Moreover, recognizing the impact

of chemicals of concern and waste on marine and coastal ecosystems and the need for coordinated action across environmental regimes to address pollution, the RSSD 2026-2029 has included new actions aiming to strengthen collaboration and implementation of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

The RSSD 2026-2029 will contribute to the implementation of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG-14) to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources. While SDG 14 remains a central focus, the Regional Seas Programme contributes to multiple SDGs with programmes, projects and activities being implemented in a coordinated manner. RSCAPs activities will be strengthened to help deliver on the aims of the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)** and the **UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)**, coordinated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO.

Incorporation of the triple planetary crisis in the RSSD 2026-2029 is central, in line with **UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (2026-2029**) and UNEA Resolution 6/15 on *"Strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution" (See Figure 2).* Harmonization will also be sought with UNEA resolutions addressing any cross-cutting issues relevant for oceans and coastal environments, including Resolution 5/5 on *"Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development," and Resolution 5/11 on "Enhancing Circular Economy as a contribution to achieving sustainable consumption and production."*

Global environmental assessments play a pivotal role in informing the strategic direction and implementation of activities under the RSCAPs. In particular, the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the International Resource Panel (IRP), and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP) is crucial in guiding regional responses to the triple planetary crisis. At the same time, the RSCAPs contribute to these global assessments by providing region-specific data, case studies, and insights, thereby reinforcing the science-policy interface at multiple levels.

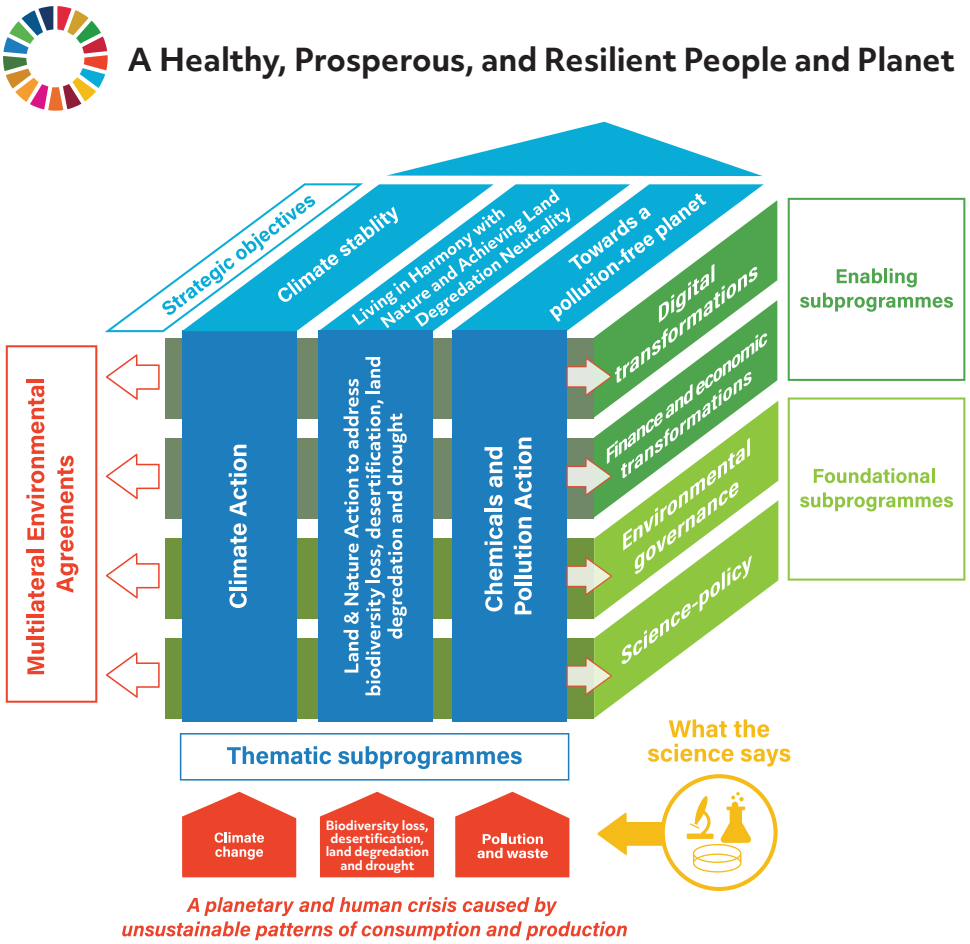


Figure 2: *Schematic diagram showing UNEP medium-term strategy 2026–2029: on the road to 2030*

The RSSD 2026-2029 also reflects other UNEA resolutions related to marine and coastal themes. These include resolutions on biodiversity, such as those on mangroves (Res. 4/12) and coral reefs (Res. 4/13). It also covers pollution, including marine plastics litter and microplastics (Res. 4/6 and 5/14) and single-use plastics (Res. 4/9). Additionally, it incorporates climate change, particularly Res. 2/6 on supporting the Paris Agreement and Res. 1/8 on ecosystem-based adaptation.

Lastly, **emerging issues** have been identified in global reports and scientific reports published by relevant intergovernmental organisations and MEA secretariats. These include, inter alia, hydrographic changes, releases of pharmaceuticals and light pollution. Where appropriate to the work of the RSP and recognising the cross-cutting nature of some emerging issues, these have been incorporated within the most applicable goals.



Image: Nattu Fuvahmulah, *Maldives*

II. Objective and strategic goals for 2026-2029

RSSD 2026-2029 Vision

Prosperous and climate resilient seas and their respective coastal regions with biologically diverse, healthy, productive, conserved, restored and effectively used marine and coastal ecosystems for the benefit of people and nature.

Medium-term outcomes (to 2029)

The RSSD 2026-2029 provides actions to deliver on **medium-term outcomes** to 2029. It directly supports the delivery of UNEA Resolution 6/15, aiming to achieve the following outcomes:

- Increased adoption, ratification and implementation of the regional seas conventions, protocols and action plans and relevant MEAs.
- Effective contribution by member states and contracting parties to the implementation of the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Enhanced engagement by member states and contracting parties in the process to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.
- Joint strategies and work developed and implemented on quality status assessments and monitoring programmes to address environmental challenges in a coordinated effort.
- Increased knowledge, advocacy, partnership engagement with multiple sectors ultimately leading to better informed decision making.

Long-term outcomes (beyond 2029)

The RSSD 2026-2029 is guided by the following **long-term outcomes:**

- Oceans are sustainably governed at all levels, with the RSP recognized as a results-based organisation.
- Decision-making is comprehensively informed across all relevant sectors through effective advocacy, increased knowledge and strengthened partnerships.
- All sectors help maintain ocean and coastal ecosystem functions, with marine biodiversity loss kept at natural levels.
- Natural and productive seascapes are healthy, resilient and sustainably managed.
- Good environmental status of marine and coastal environment achieved by eliminating leakage of plastics, preventing nutrient run-off, improving wastewater treatment, and achieving sound chemicals and waste management.
- Ocean and coastal ecosystems support mitigation and adaptation to climate change by Increasing blue carbon stocks and reducing disaster risk, with ocean acidification no longer a threat.
- Circular material flows reduce the pressure on ocean and seabed resources.
- Waste generation is minimized with more sustainable consumption patterns and lifestyles.
- Livelihoods of coastal- and ocean-dependent communities are strengthened and food security improved, with emphasis on blue foods and sustainable aquaculture.
- Local communities, cultural and indigenous values are recognized and integrated into governance processes.

Objective

The objective of the Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2026-2029 is **to secure healthy, productive marine and coastal ecosystems** leading to a more sustainable ocean economy, supporting human health and livelihoods while also tackling the interlinked and mutually reinforcing effects of biodiversity loss, pollution and climate change.

Strategic goals

The objective is supported by **three strategic** goals that aim to:

i. **Secure biologically diverse, climate resilient, and pollution free productive marine and coastal ecosystems.**

ii. **Support knowledge management** to strengthen science-policy dialogue on marine and coastal issues and their interactions.

iii. Elevate the Global Profile of the RSP through **outreach, advocacy and effective partnerships**.

The three strategic goals and their actions have distinct characteristics:

- **Goal I** outlines actions to strengthen the delivery in **addressing the drivers** of ocean and coastal degradation.
- **Goal II** provides actions to **facilitate cooperation and achievement of Goal I** through improved knowledge management and enhanced science-policy dialogue.
- **Goal III** outlines actions to **raise the global profile of the Regional Seas Programme** and increase awareness about RSCAPs contributions to achieving new global goals/frameworks.

Principles and approaches to guide activities

These strategic goals are supported by principles and approaches to guide actions in an integrated manner. These include the following approaches that are underpinned by internationally recognized definitions:

- **The Ecosystem Approach**, defined by the CBD as *"a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way."*
- **One Health Approach**, as defined by the One Health High-Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP) is *"an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimize the health of people, animals, and ecosystems."*[1]
- **The Precautionary Principle** is described in Principles 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development as: *"Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation."*
- **Human-Rights-Based Approach**, as defined by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), is *"a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights."*[2]
- **A Whole-of-Government and a Whole-of-Society Approach**, as embedded in the GBF includes involving all government sectors—national, regional, and local—as well as all segments of society, including indigenous peoples, local communities, civil society organizations, academia, and the private sector.

1 One Health High-Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP)

2 https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/human-rights-based-approach

Figure 3 illustrates how the complexities facing the marine environment require systems integration between thematic policy priorities, while ensuring the promotion of nature-based solutions, the One Health approach and other key principles and approaches, such as sustainable consumption and production (SCP), to anchor the RSSD 2026-2029 in the realm of sustainable livelihoods.

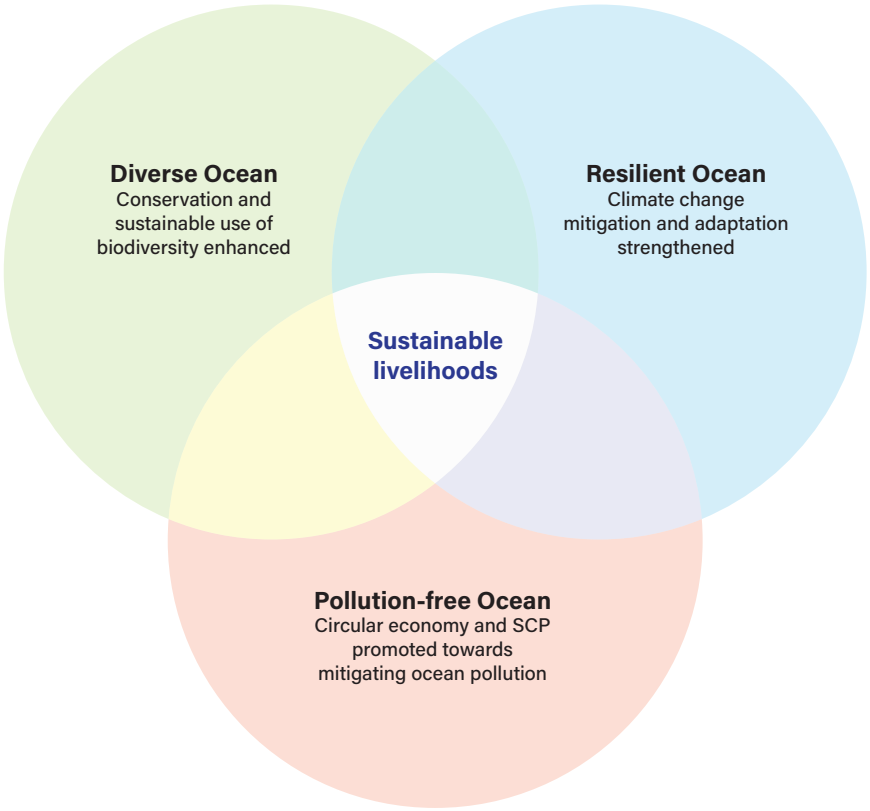


Figure 3: *The goals that anchor the RSSD 2026-2029 in the realm of sustainable livelihoods.*

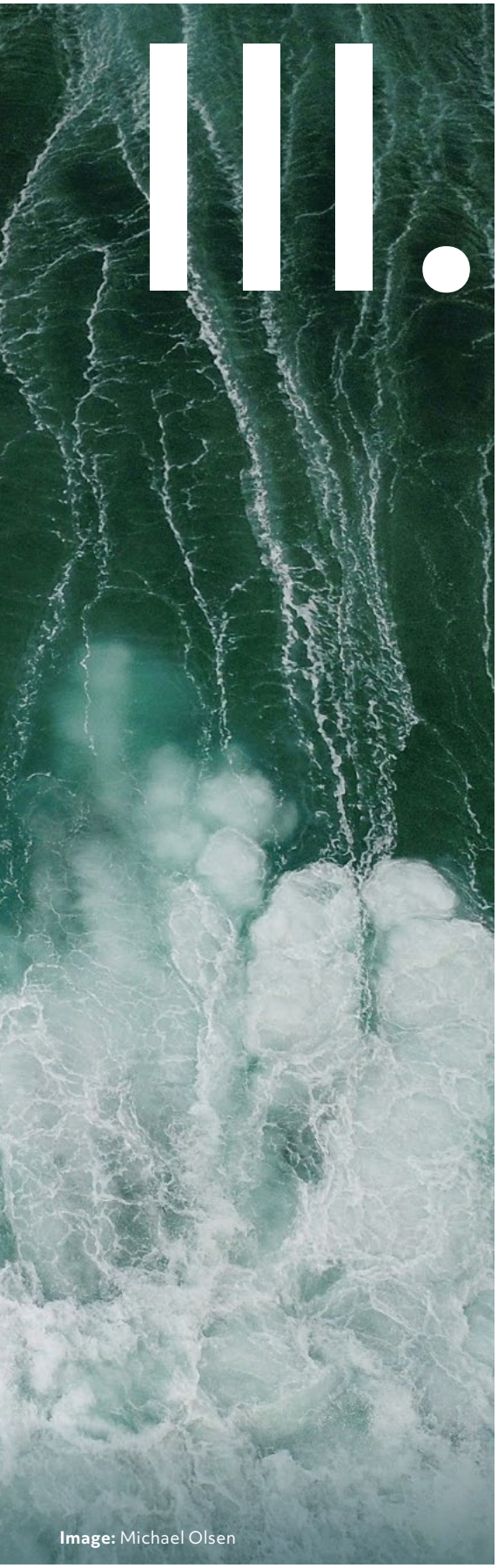


Image: Michael Olsen

III. Strategic actions to deliver the goals

This section details the strategic actions to deliver the goals to fulfil the normative and facilitative role of the RSP. They are accompanied by three types of indicators which help to track progress:

- **Process indicators** track the implementation of actions, policies, or strategies. They measure whether key steps are being taken to support progress toward a goal (e.g. development of management plans, adoption of legislation).
- **Status indicators** describe the current state or condition of a system, such as the extent, quality, or integrity of ecosystems. They provide baselines and help monitor trends over time.
- **Outcome indicators** assess the results or impacts of actions taken. They measure the degree of change achieved, such as improvements in ecosystem health or reductions in biodiversity loss.

GOAL I: Secure biologically diverse, pollution free, productive and climate resilient marine and coastal ecosystems

Actions to achieve Goal I are grouped into three sub-goals:

a) Protect biodiversity to maintain ocean and coastal ecosystem functions.

b) Prevent and reduce ocean and coastal pollution.

c) Strengthen ocean and coastal resilience to reduce impacts of climate change and disaster risk.

Sub-Goal I a): Protect biodiversity to maintain ocean and coastal ecosystem functions

Marine and coastal ecosystems are in crisis, in particular high-risk areas such as coastal zones and low-lying islands, with rapid declines threatening livelihoods and food security. Overfishing has depleted 37.7% of global marine fish stocks, while 62.3% are being fished within sustainable levels. Coastal wetlands have shrunk by half, mangroves by 25%, and coral reefs face critical tipping points due to climate change, with 77% experiencing bleaching-level heat stress. Saltmarsh coverage has dropped 25-50% since 1980, and one-third of seabird species face extinction, worsened by invasive species. At the species level, the cumulative impacts are stark: many marine species are declining. For example, one-third of seabird species are now facing extinction, a trend driven by habitat loss, by-catch and worsened by invasive alien species.

Conservation efforts remain insufficient. Marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) cover only 8.4% of the ocean. Achieving the 30x30 target requires securing 30 million km² more marine areas, a significant acceleration from current trends. Challenges also remain in management, enforcement, and ecological connectivity. Protection is also uneven, with most MPAs in Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) while the high seas—61% of the ocean—remain largely unprotected. The BBNJ Agreement presents an opportunity to extend protections.

Indigenous and local communities, key stewards of marine biodiversity, often miss out on conservation benefits that could enhance resilience and sustainable resource management. Protecting and sustainably managing marine and coastal ecosystems not only benefits these communities but also yields substantial national economic gains. Globally, these ecosystems provide services valued at approximately USD 29.5 trillion annually, contributing to food security, coastal protection, and climate resilience.[3]

The focus of Sub-Goal I a) is to enhance implementation and strengthen coherence of RSCAPs legal and policy frameworks as they relate to conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity, ecosystem stability and resilience, in particular the GBF and the newly adopted BBNJ Agreement, in support of the MTS strategic objective

3 https://ocean-climate.org/en/marine-and-coastal-ecosystem-services/

to live in Harmony with Nature and Achieve Land Degradation Neutrality by halting and reversing biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, and maintaining ecosystem functions and services. At its core, Goal I is underpinned by a commitment of respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples, children and youth, women and girls, marginalized groups, and local communities, taking a human rights-based approach. The Goal is also underpinned by the One Health Approach, including zoonotic diseases prevention and management, and is core in delivering the goal of Blue Foods security.

Sub-goal 1 a) focuses on protecting biodiversity and ecosystem functions by:

1. Enhancing **integrated management, conservation and restoration** of marine and coastal ecosystems,
2. **Halting the extinction and enabling the recovery** of marine and coastal species from extinction, and
3. Enhancing **sustainable use** of marine and coastal biodiversity and its **contribution to people**.

Collaboration across sectors and systems, and with global and regional MEAs and other institutions is enhanced, particularly with the CBD Secretariat and other biodiversity-related MEAs, including the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES),[4] and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).[5] Strengthening cooperation with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) is crucial for the sustainable and ecosystem-based management of fish stocks. Engagement with UN bodies is essential—for instance, with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on conservation efforts, including the designation of Special Areas and Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs) and preventing the spread of invasive species through ballast water and biofouling.[6] This includes support for initiatives, like the GloFouling Partnerships, a collaboration between the IMO, GEF and UNDP. Cooperation with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is also key, particularly on ecosystem restoration and the eradication of invasive alien species.

4 CITES Strategic Vision: 2021-2030. Available at: https://cites.org/sites/default/files/reports/Implementation/E-SV-indicators.pdf

5 Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2024-2032 (UNEP/CMS/COP14/CRP14.2/Rev.2)

6 See: https://www.glofouling.imo.org

Actions to deliver Sub-Goal Ia) on protecting biodiversity

	RSP Actions	Indicators	Sources and references
1a.1	By 2030, **integrated management, conservation, restoration** of marine and coastal ecosystems enhanced by: • **Expanding marine spatial planning** to cover all sea areas and incorporating **Integrated Coastal Zone Management** (ICZM). • **Protecting** 30% of marine and coastal areas – especially areas of high biodiversity - through MPAs and OECMs, while ensuring ecological representativeness, connectivity, and effective management. • **Mapping and restoring** 30% of degraded marine and coastal ecosystems.	**Priority indicators:** • **RS 21:** % of marine areas designated as protected **(P)** • **RS 22:** National ICZM guidelines and enabling legislation adopted **(P)** • **RS 15:** Trends in critical habitat extent and condition **(S)** • **SDG 14.2.1:** Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas [UNEP, RSP] **(P)** • **KM GBF A.1** Red list of ecosystems KM headline indicator **(S)** • **KM GBF A.2** Extent of Ecosystems **(S)** • **SDG 14.5.1:** Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas [UNEP-WCMC, IUCN, UNEP] **(P)** • **KM GBF 3.1** Coverage of protected areas and OECMs. **(P)** • **KM GBF 2.2**: Area under restoration **(P)** **Supplementary indicators:** • **KM GBF 1.1** Per cent of land and seas covered by biodiversity-inclusive spatial plans *(methodology under development)* **(P)** • **RS 8:** Length of coastal modification and km2 of coastal reclamation **(O)**	• SDG Target 14.2 • SDG Target 14.5 • GBF Target 1 • GBF Target 2 • GBF Target 3 • Paris Agreement Decision 1/CMA.5: Outcomes of the First Global Stocktake (para 35) • Ramsar Convention Resolution XIII.14 (para 12a) • CMS Target 2.2 • CMS Target 2.3 • BBNJ Agreement (Art 17a) • BBNJ Agreement (Art 17c) • UNEA Res. 6/15 (para 2a)



Image: USAID Biodiversity & Forestry

	RSP Actions	Indicators	Sources and references
1a.2	**Halt extinction and enable the recovery of marine and coastal species, in particular threatened species and migratory species,** by: • Adopting in situ and ex situ conservation and sustainable management practices. • **Protecting genetic diversity and managing human-wildlife conflicts** including through zoonotic diseases prevention and management. • **Preventing and reducing the rates of introduction of invasive alien species** by 50%, as well as controlling them in priority sites such as islands, including through management of introduced species through ballast water and biofouling. • **Ensuring sustainable, safe and legal trade** of wild species, including CITES marine species listings. • **Minimizing and mitigating the significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise**[7] on marine and coastal biodiversity. • Protect marine life from **light pollution**[8] from offshore oil and gas facilities and vessels, and **hydrography changes**[9] due to infrastructure projects, including submarine cables.	**Priority indicators:** • **RS 14:** Distribution of Red List Index species **(S)** • **KM GBF A.4:** proportion of populations within species with an effective population size > 500 **(S)** • **KM GBF 6.1:** Rate of invasive alien species establishment **(S)** • **SDG 15.8.1:** Proportion of countries adopting relevant national legislation and adequately resourcing the prevention or control of invasive alien species. [IUCN] **(P)** **Supplementary indicators:** • **A.3:** IUCN Red List Index **(S)**	• SDG Target 15.8 • GBF Target 4 • GBF Target 5 • GBF Target 6 • CBD COP decision XII/23: Marine and coastal biodiversity (para 3) • CITES Strategic Vision Objective 1.5 • CITES Strategic Vision Objective 3.4 • CMS Target 3.1 • CMS Target 3.5 • BWM Convention, Art 2

7 This is also emerging issues reflected in scientific literature: Anthropogenic noise is increasing and causing an emerging threat (UN, 2021a; p. 5; HELCOM, 2023; OSPAR 2023). The main anthropogenic noise sources in the ocean include vessels, industrial activity, including seismic exploration and renewable energy development, and sonar (UN, 2021b, p. 299). High levels of noise in the ocean can have a variety of consequences for marine life.

8 This is recognized as an emerging issue from scientific literature: Light pollution from marine infrastructure, including offshore oil and gas facilities, and vessels is an emerging threat for seabirds (UN, 2021a, p. 217).

9 This is recognized as an emerging issue from scientific literature: Hydrography changes result from Infrastructure projects altering marine water circulation (UNEP, 2024

	RSP Actions	Indicators	Sources and references
1a.3	• Marine and coastal biodiversity is **sustainably used** and its **contributions to people, including indigenous peoples and local communities** are enhanced by: • **Ensuring sustainable, safe and legal harvesting** of marine species including fisheries and aquaculture. • **Maximising the economic value of marine ecosystem goods and services** through integration of pollution prevention and biodiversity loss to support sustainable use of marine and coastal species and protection of their habitat. • **Ensuring economic and social benefits** arise from sustainable management and use of wild species, especially for people in vulnerable situations, youth, gender and IPLC. • Promoting the rights and traditional use of marine biodiversity by indigenous and local communities. • **Restoring and maintaining ecosystem services**.	**Priority indicators:** • **RS 12:** FAO stock status: % stocks overfished compared to MSY **(S)** • **SDG 14.4.1:** Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels [FAO] **(S)** **Supplementary indicators:** • **RS 5:** Fish catches within EEZs (tonnes) – total capture production **(S)** • **RS 13:** Marine trophic index **(S)** • **RS 7:** Destruction of habitat due to aquaculture **(O)** • **RS 20:** Fisheries measures in place (by-catch limits, area-based closures, recovery plans, capacity reduction measures) and multilateral/bilateral fisheries management arrangements **(P)** • **KM GBF 5.1:** Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels **(S)** • **SDG 14.6.1:** Degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing [FAO] **(P)** • **SDG 14.b.1:** Degree of application of a legal/regulatory/ policy/ institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries [FAO] **(P)** • **SDG 14.7.1** Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP in small island developing States, least developed countries and all countries. [FAO] **(O)** • **KM GBF B.1:** Services provided by ecosystems **(S)** • **UNEA Res 6/15: Para 3e:** Proportion of IPLC, youth and gender benefitting economically and socially from sustainable use of biodiversity **(O)**	• GBF Target 5 • GBF Target 9 • GBF Target 10 • GBF Target 11 • SDG Target 14.4 • SDG Target 14.B • SDG Target 14.6 • SDG Target 14.7 • CITES Strategic Vision Objective 1.1 • CITES Strategic Vision Objective 1.5 • UNEA Res 6/15 (para 6)

RS: Regional Seas Core Indicator; SDG: SDG indicator; KM GBF: Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework indicator
(P): *process indicator,* **(S)**: *status indicator,* **(O)**: *outcome indicator*

Sub-Goal I b): Reduce ocean and coastal pollution

Marine and coastal pollution action has been an ongoing focus of RSCAPs, yet strengthening collective and coordinated response must remain a priority. Despite positive many success stories, poorly managed connectivity between terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine environments allow point and diffuse pollution sources to degrade marine and coastal health and threaten safe water access. For instance, nutrient runoff and untreated wastewater discharges are contributing to eutrophication, while sedimentation damages coral reefs and other

vulnerable ecosystems, and deoxygenation drives the global expansion of marine dead zones. The magnitude of sewage and industrial waste entering freshwater daily alone is 2 million tonnes, as over 80% of global municipal and industrial wastewater is discharged without adequate treatment. Persistent organic pollutants (POPs)POPs and mercury continue to burden aquatic life despite the adoption of relevant legal frameworks, due to ongoing emissions and releases from industrial activities and inadequate waste management. At the same time, new threats to ocean health have emerged, such as microplastic pollution, pharmaceutical pollution, noise pollution and radioactive wastes.

The focus of Sub-Goal I b) is to enhance implementation of RSCAPs legal and policy frameworks as they relate to land- and sea-based sources of pollution affecting marine and coastal areas in support of the MTS strategic objective of achieving a Pollution-Free Planet by reducing pollution and enhancing environmental quality and health for people and planet, and reducing exposures of people and planet to harmful chemicals and pollution. This is further supported through the promotion of sound management of chemicals and waste and the uptake of solutions to reduce air and source-to-sea pollution. Alignment with the One Health Approach is critical for achieving this goal. Addressing marine pollution is urgent not only for aquatic life but also for human health, as seafood contamination from hormones, antibiotics, and POPs remains a serious hazard.

Sub-Goal I b) focuses on reducing ocean and coastal pollution by:

1. Minimizing marine pollution by addressing **land-freshwater-marine connectivity**,
2. Reducing the overall risk from **chemicals of concern** to ocean health,
3. Preventing, reducing, and eliminating **plastic and chemical pollution** through a full life cycle approach, and
4. Preventing and reducing hazardous and other astes that are discharged into the sea.

Collaboration with global and regional institutions is essential for achieving Sub-Goal I b). The Stockholm Convention and Minamata Convention, along with the UNEP-hosted Global Framework on Chemicals, provide strong allies for action on chemicals of concern, while recognizing the need to deepen cooperation with the future international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. The Basel Convention provides a strong legal framework for the transboundary movement and sound management of hazardous and other waste, including technical assistance for the implementation of the Plastic Waste Amendments, thus helping the reduction, minimization and environmentally sound management of plastic waste. UN bodies, such as FAO and UNEP, through its Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), are important partners for tackling nutrient runoff, wastewater discharges and other land-based sources. Moreover, the UN-Water coordination mechanism provides a platform to increase collaboration between the freshwater and marine nexus. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) provides a global legal framework for the prohibition and reduction of sea-based sources of pollution, including from oil, dumping of wastes and discharge of vessel operational wastes, providing linkages on port reception facilities and other measures.

Actions to achieve Goal I b) on reducing ocean and coastal pollution

	RSP Actions	Indicators	Sources and references
1b.1	Marine pollution is minimized by addressing land-freshwater-marine **connectivity** by: • Reducing excess **nutrient runoff** to mitigate deoxygenation, hypoxia, sargassum blooms and other negative impacts. • Decreasing **wastewater discharge** and **waste dumping** to the marine environment, including from desalination plants[10], and becoming Parties of the 1996 London Protocol.[11] • Prohibiting **garbage and sewage** discharge from ships. • Promoting adequate infrastructure to sustainably manage wastes, including port reception facilities. • Applying the source-to-sea approach for delivering co-benefits. • Minimizing the generation of **hazardous wastes and other wastes** ensuring their environmentally sound management and reducing the transboundary movement of such wastes when feasible. • Protecting wetlands to strengthen their function as **filters for nutrients, toxins and pathogens**.[12]	**Priority indicators** • **RS 1:** Chlorophyll a concentration as an indicator of phytoplankton biomass **(S)** • **RS 9:** Locations and frequency of algal blooms reported **(S)** • **RS 16:** % National action plans to reduce input from LBS ratified 14.1 / operational **(P)** • **RS 17:** 1) % coastal urban population connected to sewage facilities **(P);** 2) % of wastewater facilities complying with adequate standards **(P);** 3) % of untreated wastewater **(S)** • **KM GBF 7.1:** Index of coastal eutrophication potential (ICEP) **(S)** • **SDG 14.1.1** a) Index of coastal eutrophication. [FAO] **(S)** • **SDG 6.3.1:** Proportion of domestic and industrial wastewater flows safely treated. [UN-Habitat] **(S)** **Supplementary indicators** • **RS 6:** Application of risk assessment to account for pollution and biodiversity impacts from aquaculture **(P)** • **18:** 1) % port waste reception facilities available (P); 2) Incentives to reduce land-based sources (P); 3) Amount of recycled waste on land (%) **(S)** • **SDG 11.6.1** Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in controlled facilities out of total municipal waste generated, by cities. [UN-Habitat, DESA-UNSD] **(S)** • **SDG 12.5.1:** National recycling rate, tons of material recycled. [UNEP] **(S)** • **KM GBF 7.2:** Aggregate Applied Toxicity **(S)**	• SDG Target 14.1 • SDG Target 6.3 • SDG Target 11.6 • SDG Target 12.5 • GBF Target 7 • UNEA Res. 5/2 (para 1) • IMO MARPOL Annex IV: Prevention of Pollution by Sewage from Ships (Res. MEPC.157(55)) • IMO MARPOL Annex V Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships (Reg. 3) • London Protocol, Art. 4 • CMS Target 3.3 • UNEA Res. 6/15 (para 2d) • Basel Convention, Art. 4 • Ramsar Convention, Art. 3,4

10 This is an emerging issue identified from scientific literature: **Desalination plants** produce highly concentrated brine as a waste product, which is typically discharged back into the ocean, posing environmental concerns due to its high salinity and potential for harming marine ecosystems (Panagopoulos & Haralambous, 2020).

11 This is also an emerging issue: **Shipping waste, including liquid input from ships, and the discharge of water from exhaust gas cleaning systems (scrubbers)**, is an emerging source of metals and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (UN, 2021b, p. 103; OSPAR, 2023).

12 Ferreira, 2023.

	RSP Actions	Indicators	Sources and references
1b.2	By 2030, the overall risk from **chemicals of concern** to ocean health is halved by: • Minimizing the production and use and mitigating the emissions and releases of **POPs, mercury and other chemicals of concern**, in line with the Stockholm Convention, Minamata Convention and the GFC. • Implementing sustainable **chemicals and waste management strategies** across key sectors, prioritizing chemicals threatening marine and coastal environments, including pesticides. • Enhancing synergies and policy coherence between chemicals, waste and marine policies. • Minimizing releases of **pharmaceuticals and personal care products**[13] **harmful** to aquatic life. • Preventing radioactive discharges into the marine environment and promoting safe removal of legacy nuclear materials	**Priority indicators** • **RS 2:** Trends for selected priority chemicals including POPs and heavy metal **(S)** • **RS 10:** 1) Concentration of Status of selected pollutant contamination in biota and sediments and temporal trends. 2) Number of hotspots **(S)** **Supplementary indicators** • **SDG 12.4.1:** Number of parties to MEAs on hazardous waste, and other chemicals that meet their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by each relevant agreement. [UNEP] **(P)** • **SDG 12.4.2:** Hazardous waste generated per capita; and proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment [UNEP] **(S)**	• SDG Target 12.4 • SDG Target 6.3 • GFC Target A7 • GFC Target D6 • GFC Target E6 • GBF Target 7 • Stockholm Convention, Art. 3, 6 • Basel Convention, Art. 4 (para 8,9) • Rotterdam Convention, Art. 10, 11, 12

13 This is recognized as an emerging issue from scientific literature: The demand for pharmaceuticals and personal care products are increasing across the world with many new ingredients being discovered from the ocean, including in the Arctic Ocean and the Southern Ocean (UN, 2021a, p. 8; HELCOM, 2023). Ingredients for production of pharmaceuticals in water are an emerging concern, as conventional wastewater treatment removes only 20-80% of them (UNEP, 2019).

	RSP Actions	Indicators	Sources and references
1b.3	Marine plastic pollution[14] is prevented, reduced, and eliminated through a full life cycle approach by: • Promoting **sustainable production and consumption** of plastics. • Minimizing **releases and leakages** of plastics waste, including microplastics. • Promoting **environmentally sound management of plastic waste**. • Controlling the transboundary movement of plastic waste in accordance with the Basel Convention • Safely removing and disposing of **existing marine plastic pollution**. • Engaging in the ongoing process to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. • Ensuring effective implementation of Regional Seas action plans and measures on marine litter.	**Priority indicators** • **RS 3:** Quantification and classification of beach litter items **(S)** • **SDG 14.1.1b** Index of floating plastic debris density [FAO] **(S)**	• UNEA Res. 3/7 (para 1) • UNEA Res. 5/14 (para 3b,c) • GBF Target 7 • UNEA Res. 6/15 (para 2c) • UNEA Res. 6/15 (para 6e) • Basel Convention, Art 4

RS: Regional Seas Core Indicator; SDG: SDG indicator; KM GBF: Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework indicator
(P)*: process indicator,* **(S)***: status indicator,* **(O)***: outcome indicator*

14 This is also identified as an emerging issue from scientific literature: Marine plastic pollution has not yet been identified as a direct cause of seabird population declines, but highly pelagic seabird species such as storm petrels, prions and auklets (Roman and others, are most likely to be at risk. (UN, 2021a, p. 217).

Sub-Goal I c): Secure ocean and coastal climate resilience to reduce climate change impacts and disaster risk

Climate change is an existential threat to marine and coastal ecosystems, requiring urgent action from RSCAPs. The impact of climate change on ocean is profound, as 90 % of heat from global warming is stored in the global ocean, thus the surface temperature is expected to warm by 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052. Alarmingly, ocean warming will continue for centuries after the anthropogenic driving force is stabilized, directly affecting coastal communities and ecosystem services, such as fisheries, nursery habitats, coastal wetland filtration and storm protection. Ecosystems are already showing signs of stress, including tropical coral reefs that have nearly halved over the past 150 years due to rising water temperatures and ocean acidification. Tropical coral reefs have crossed a critical threshold that is unlikely to reverse even over centuries. Climate change is also changing ocean chemistry, including acidification and deoxygenation, both weakening ecosystem services. While climate mitigation remains essential, it can also introduce new challenges requiring attention, such as threats to seabirds from changes to hydrography and water circulation from offshore infrastructure, such as wind farms.

Evidence shows that ecosystems experiencing fewer stressors from pollution, overfishing, and habitat degradation tend to be more resilient and recover more quickly from climate-related impacts. This underscores the need for integrated approaches that simultaneously address climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution to strengthen ecosystem resilience.

The focus of Sub-Goal I c) is to secure ocean resilience towards climate stabilization in support of the MTS strategic objective of achieving Climate Stability by reducing emissions and enhancing adaptation and resilience. Central to this goal is leveraging and accelerating **nature-based solutions**[15] to enhance blue carbon ecosystems[16], as well as promoting ocean-based adaptation. These efforts contribute to disaster risk reduction[17] by enhancing the natural capacity of marine and coastal ecosystems to buffer extreme events.

15 Nature-based solutions are defined in UNEA Resolution 5/5 as "actions aimed at protecting, conserving, restoring, and sustainably managing natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems, which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity benefits." Employment opportunities that make use of nature-based solutions must be increased and, importantly, worker rights and inclusiveness in such employment must be promoted.

16 Blue carbon ecosystems are defined in Ramsar Convention Resolution XIII.14 as "the carbon captured by living organisms in coastal (e.g. mangroves, saltmarshes and seagrasses) and marine ecosystems and stored in biomass and sediments

17 Disaster risk reduction, as defined in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 is "the concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyze and reduce the causal factors of disasters. This includes reducing exposure to hazards, lessening the vulnerability of people and property, managing land and the environment wisely, and improving preparedness for adverse events."

Sub-Goal I c) focuses on strengthening ocean and coastal resilience by:

1. Applying nature-based solutions to strengthen coastal/ ecological resilience in the face of climate change, and
2. Minimizing **negative impacts** of climate change on oceans and bolstering mitigation efforts.

The gravity of the climate crisis and its impacts on oceans will require partnering with a multitude of actors operating in this field, many which have profound knowledge and a long tradition in this field. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, as well as, increasingly, the CBD, provide important partners for addressing marine and coastal nature-based solutions. The mandated Ocean and Climate Change dialogue[18] of the UNFCCC has to date identified more than 600 good practices and examples, including on marine and coastal nature-based solutions.[19] Other bodies include the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), and IMO. Global partnerships are required to achieve the goals of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) of "significantly reducing the impact of climate change on water scarcity through enhancing climate resilience to water-related hazards and supporting a climate and disaster resilient water supply and sanitation, and access to safe and affordable potable water and sanitation, and hygiene for all."[20]



Image: Dustan Woodhouse

18 See https://unfccc.int/topics/ocean/ocean-and-climate-change-dialogue

19 See https://unfccc.int/documents/641158 and https://unfccc.int/documents/631691

20 The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) – a Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity, para 26.ii.b

Actions to achieve Goal I c) on securing ocean and coastal resilience

	RSP Actions	Indicators	Sources and references
1c.1	**Nature-based solutions** are applied to strengthen the coastal/ecological resiliency in the face of climate change by: • Protecting, managing and restoring marine and **coastal carbon sinks and reservoirs ("blue-carbon ecosystems")**, including mangroves, corals, seagrasses and salt marshes. • Promoting **ocean-based adaptation** to enhance adaptive capacity and resilience and reduce climate vulnerability of ecosystems and coastal communities, including by promoting community-based management, reviewing land use planning, restoring degraded habitats and maintaining ecological corridors and promoting landscape connectivity.	**Supplementary indicators:** • **RS 19:** 1) % national number of adaptation plans in place **(P)**, 2) Sector based national adaptation plans **(P)**, 3) Number of existing national and local coastal and marine plans incorporating climate change adaptation **(P)** • **KM GBF 8.b:** Number of countries with policies to minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and to minimize negative and foster positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity **(P)**	• SDG Target 13.1 • GBF Target 8 • UNEA Res. 2/12 (para 7) • UNEA Res. 4/12 (preambular, para 1) • UNEA Res. 1/8 (para 2) • Paris Agreement, Art. 7 • Paris Agreement Decision 1/CMA.5 (paras 33, 55, 56, and 63d) • Ramsar Convention Res. XIII.14 (para 12e) • Ramsar Res. XIV.17 (para 8) • CMS Target 3.4 • UNGA Res. 71/257 (para 192) • CBD COP Decision XVI/22 (para 3b) • CBD COP Decision 14/5 (para 3) • CBD Decision XI/21 (para 6f) • Ramsar Convention Res. XI/14 (para 26)
1c.2	Negative **impacts on oceans from climate change are minimized and mitigation efforts** bolstered by: • Making significant efforts to tackle **ocean acidification** and its causes. • Mitigating impacts of fossil and renewable **offshore energy infrastructure**, including wind energy and ocean energy, on marine biodiversity[21] . • Suspending **ocean fertilization and other marine geoengineering activities**, unless justified by robust scientific evidence and regulatory frameworks. • Minimizing disturbances to **marine hydrates**[22] to prevent unintended methane emissions.	**Priority indicators:** • **RS 11:** Ocean acidification: aragonite saturation, pH, alkalinity **(S)** • **RS 4:** Annual mean sea surface temperature 25m below the surface **(S)** • **SDG 14.3.1:** Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations [IOC-UNESCO] **(S)** **Supplementary indicators:** • **KM GBF 8.b:** Number of countries with policies to minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and to minimize negative and foster positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity **(P)**	• SDG Target 14.3 • UNEA Res. 6/15 (para 2e) • CMS Res. 11.27 (para 3.1, 3.3) • CBD Decision IX/16 C (para 4)

RS: Regional Seas Core Indicator; SDG: SDG indicator; KM GBF: Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework indicator
(P)*: process indicator,* **(S)***: status indicator,* **(O)***: outcome indicator*

21 This is also recognized as an emerging issue in scientific literature: **Energy production** in an emerging threat to seabirds, in particular offshore wind farms (UN, 2021, p. 217, vol. I). **The offshore wind sector** is expanding globally to regions with no utility-scale (grid) installations at present. The use of floating platforms is a step change enabling the industry to open large areas with deeper waters (UN, 2021b, p. 323).

22 This is recognized as an emerging issue from scientific literature: **Marine hydrates (mainly methane hydrates)** exist primarily on continental slopes where there are large quantities of methane gas in the ocean, the pressure is high enough and the temperature is low enough. Concern has been expressed about the climatic risks resulting from the sudden release of large amounts of methane from marine hydrates. (UN, 2021b, p. 383).

UNEP supporting activities for achieving Goal I

UNEP will provide support as appropriate to countries towards effective implementation, including:

- As implementing agency, facilitate access to GEF funding to RSCAPs priorities, e.g., implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs) or national biodiversity strategic action plans (NBSAPs).
- Strengthen coordination with UNEP's regional, sub-regional, and national offices where Regional Seas Programme operates.
- Creation of thematic liaison groups, e.g. biodiversity liaison group, climate and pollution.
- Facilitate coordination with other MEAs and liaison groups (e.g., the Biodiversity Liaison Group).
- Request the UN Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams to include RSCAPs priorities in UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.
- Provide guidance and necessary tools for implementation of relevant UNEA resolutions, UNEP's MTS and Programme of Work (PoW), and joint RSCAPs activities, including reports on emerging issues in response to findings from RSCAPs.
- Organize training workshops to address the triple planetary crisis and emerging issues to facilitate the implementation of the ocean-related aspects of MEAs.



Image: Chesapeake Bay Program, *Water quality monitoring*

GOAL II: Support knowledge management and science-policy dialogue on marine and coastal issues

International ocean action is most effective when it is underpinned by science, including on emerging threats and solutions, as well as data enabling the tracking of progress. In addition, maintaining two-way science-policy dialogue on marine issues is critical for enhancing evidence-based decision-making and providing concrete examples of best practices. The RSP plays an important role in supporting scientific assessment, information and knowledge management and facilitating science-policy dialogues on marine issues, including through peer learning and experience sharing in regional multi-stakeholder fora, also to fulfil growing needs and expectations from the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, and other relevant MEAs and processes.

The focus of Goal II is the support of knowledge management that includes harmonized data assessment and information generation to enhance the dialogue with global science-policy bodies and platforms and providing early warning, including on cumulative impact analysis, enabling RSCAPs to inform other fora of emerging issues. Activities will support strengthening of transboundary and international cooperation to ensure more harmonized ecosystem management across national borders towards effective integration of sustainable management of biodiversity, land, water and ocean across sectors and systems, and the development and accessibility of reliable, coherent, and harmonized information, and knowledge to support interdisciplinary assessment for policy making.

Goal II focuses on supporting knowledge management and science-policy dialogue by:

1) Supporting regionally harmonized data collection, assessment and monitoring of ocean-related indicators,
2) Promoting capacity to enhance knowledge management on marine and ocean issues,
3) Fostering synergies across RSCAPs **reporting** requirements to reduce duplication of efforts,
4) Catalysing **research** to deepen understanding of marine environments, and
5) Enhancing **science-policy dialogue** on marine and coastal issues.

This includes making UNEP's role more effective in translating regional efforts to global outputs in areas of **monitoring** (e.g., harmonize indicator development and consolidate regional data), **assessment** (e.g., contribute to the preparation of global assessments, such as the World Ocean Assessment, that aggregate regional data), and application of digital transformation tools to support **information management/knowledge sharing** (e.g., display information and visualize trends). Funding support is critical, with GEF recognised as a critical partner, particularly in the development of Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs), Strategic Action Plans (SAPs) and Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDAs).

Actions to achieve Goal II on supporting knowledge management and science-policy dialogue

	RSP actions	RSP-specific Indicators	Sources and references
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT			
2.1	**Regionally harmonized data collection, assessment and monitoring** of ocean-related indicators supported by: • **Harmonizing and collecting data on SDG indicators** 14.1.1, 14.2.1 and 14.5.1 and relevant KM GBF indicators • **Refining the Regional Seas Core Indicators Set** (adopted at the 17th Global Meeting of RSCAPs[23]) and reporting thereon of progress. • **Enhancing cooperation with the regional and global monitoring programmes** such as the global monitoring plan under the Stockhlom Convention.	**Priority indicators:** • Number of Regional Seas monitoring frameworks populated with indicators – informed by the Regional Seas Indicator Working Group – to enable data collection and assessment of progress against established baselines **(P)**	• GBF Target 21 • CMS Target 2.1 • CITES Strategic Vision Objective 2.5 • UNEA Res. 6/15 (para 4c) • Stockholm Convention, Art.16
2.2	**Capacity promoted across all regions to enhance knowledge management** on marine and coastal issues by: • Enhancing peer learning and sharing of best practices and information between RSP member states and different RSCAPs enhanced. • Monitoring and data collection advanced. • **Developing and implementing joint strategies and work on quality status assessments and monitoring programmes** to address environmental challenges. • Strengthening stakeholder engagement, including relevant global MEAs, RFMOs and other sectoral organisations. • Leveraging AI-based tools to improve data analysis, early warning systems, and decision support for integrated marine and coastal management.	**Priority indicators:** • Number of joint strategies, guidelines and actions on quality status assessments, monitoring programmes and knowledge management to address environmental challenges in a coordinated effort, and disseminated to relevant stakeholders **(P)** • Number of knowledge management platforms actively sharing data, tools, or assessments through global knowledge management platforms such as WESR, GPML, GEF IW:LEARN, and other relevant fora, including cross-RS integration efforts (e.g. centralized web portals or joint knowledge products) **(P)**	• SDG Target 14.A • UNEA Res. 6/15 (para 3c, 4c)
2.3	**Synergies across reporting requirements** to reduce duplication of efforts fostered by: • Piloting (O) reporting, where appropriate, across relevant MEAs with associated reporting under Conventions and Protocols of the Regional Seas, including by using a modular data reporting tool, such as DART, on a voluntary basis.	**Priority indicators:** • Modular reporting streamlined under Regional Seas, and aggregated reporting to relevant MEAs piloted by countries or RSCAPs **(P)** • National and regional reporting templates aligned with relevant regional and international MEAs **(P)**	• CBD Decision 15/6 (para 12). • Stockholm Convention, Art. 15, 16 • Basel Convention, Art. 13

23 See UN doc. UNEP/WBRS.18/INF9, available online at: https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/regional-seas-core-indicators-set

	RSP actions	RSP-specific Indicators	Sources and references
RESEARCH AND SCIENCE-POLICY DIALOGUE			
2.4	**Research fostered** to deepen understanding of marine environments in sync with existing global assessment platforms by: • Improving knowledge on critical **deep-sea ecosystems**, such as seamounts and ridges. • Deepening understanding of **emerging issues**, including seabed mining[24], underwater noise pollution[25] and novel pollutants[26], and monitoring initiated thereof. • **Providing scientific support** to increase understanding of marine and coastal environmental changes, (in particular those that are abrupt, accelerating or irreversible with potentially significant global consequences), such as changes to pelagic habitats and plankton populations.[27] • Identifying relevant **policy, legislative and regulatory responses** and supporting their ongoing adaptation through science, monitoring, assessment, and research to evaluate the success and/or failure of policy decisions. • Developing **scientific and technological capacity** for conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, including recognition of complementarities, opportunities and co-benefits of conservation in areas within and beyond national jurisdiction.	**Priority indicators:** • Number of science-policy platforms established, strengthened, or operational, with demonstrated links to relevant global science-policy mechanisms addressing ocean issues **(P)**	• SDG Target 14.A • SDG target 3.9 • CMS Target 5.3 • BBNJ Agreement (Art. 40c) • Stockholm Convention, Art. 11

24 This is recognized as an emerging issue from scientific literature: **Seabed mining**, while not yet operational, can be a significant pressure on ocean ecosystems (UN, 2021a, p. 20). It is important to note that seabed mining is not yet operational, but the moratorium could be lifted, pending on the outcomes of the ISA General Meeting to be held July 2025.

25 See action 1.2

26 This is recognized as an emerging issue from scientific literature: **Novel pollutants**, such as antibiotics, hormones, microplastics and nanomaterials (e.g., fullerenes, carbon nanotubes, metallic nanoparticles and nanoplastics), are a cause for concern (UN, 2021b, p. 32; HELCOM, 2023; OSPAR, 2023; UNEP, 2024). There are currently no standard operating protocols for the analysis of airborne microplastics (UNEP, 2021).

27 This is recognized as an emerging issue from scientific literature: **Changes to pelagic habitats and plankton populations** result from multiple drivers, including warming waters, eutrophication and pollution. Plankton is the foundation of the marine food web. More research and knowledge are needed to understand and mitigate food web changes and impacts further up the chain. (OSPAR Commission, 2023; HELCOM, 2023).

	RSP actions	RSP-specific Indicators	Sources and references
2.5	**Science-policy dialogue** enhanced on marine and coastal issues by: • **Contributing to the preparation of global environmental assessments**[28], including through RSP-specific assessment chapters/sections. • **Responding to the findings of global environmental assessments** by aligning regional actions and priorities with emerging scientific evidence and identified policy needs. • **Communicating findings of assessments** (produced by RSCAPs) and increasing engagement in dialogue with decision makers to support evidence-based decision-making to assist RSCAPs in advocating for enforcement of existing obligations under regional MEAs. • **Providing regional-specific knowledge** to support policymaking for protection and sustainable use of marine ecosystems towards ensuring food security and sustainable livelihoods in support of a sustainable **Blue Economy** and poverty eradication.	**Priority indicators:** • Number of Regional Seas quality status reports, state of the marine environment reports (SOMER) and other related assessments delivered, communicated to the public and decision-makers and incorporated in global environmental assessments **(P)** • Proportion of IPLC, youth and gender contributing to the science-policy communication (UNEA Res 6/15, para 3) **(O).**	• SDG Target 8.9 • SDG Target 14.7 • GBF Target 22 • CITES Strategic Vision Goal 2

UNEP supporting activities for achieving Goal II

UNEP will provide support as appropriate to countries towards effective knowledge management and science-policy dialogue, including:

- Establish a community of practice to support ocean and coastal climate action, with Terms of Reference, using the Regional Seas platform.
- Establish a Digital Platform for RSCAPs to share knowledge, best practices and resources, and possibly to provide networking space for stakeholders to engage in regional activities, building on similar efforts already undertaken by some RSCAPs.
- Develop and manage the Regional Seas knowledge management platform.
- Visualize trends and progress achieved through the World Environment Situation Room.[29]
- Coordinate Quality Status Assessments and monitoring programmes.
- Coordinate input from RSCAPs to UNEP's global environment assessment processes and facilitate input to other assessment processes, including Regular Process.
- Re-establish the RSP Indicator Working Group to develop a globally harmonized indicator set with supporting metadata, building on the RSP Core Indicators, and harmonizing indicator development, in particular for ocean-related SDG indicators, where UNEP is the custodian agency.

28 Relevant global environmental assessments include, inter alia, IPCC, IPBES, IRP and ISP-CWP

29 https://wesr.unep.org/topic/globalmonitoring

- Assess the RSSD indicators towards further development of impact and response indicators.
- Establish a committee to consider appointing "Regional Seas Champion(s)" to elevate the global profile of Regional Seas at major global fora and develop terms of reference for the position and criteria for selection.

GOAL III: Elevate the global profile of the RSP through outreach, advocacy and partnerships

The array of challenges facing the ocean places increasing expectations on the Regional Seas Programme. At the same time, the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development calls for enhancing the nexus between ocean agenda and socio-economic considerations. Increasing the reach and mainstreaming of the activities of the Regional Seas Programme is critical, at all levels.

The focus of Goal III is to intensify cooperation and coordination between relevant multilateral bodies (e.g. IMO) and other processes, both at national, regional and global levels, to achieve a systems response to meet growing needs and expectations. This necessitates fortifying partnerships and reaching out to new partners, including deepening interaction with UNEA to increase the role, visibility, and impact of the Regional Seas Programme. Participation in partner programmes can be increased, such as the CBD Sustainable Ocean Initiative, FAO Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides and the Basel Convention Plastic Waste Partnership. It may be necessary to seek new partners to address emerging issues, such as the International Seabed Authority (ISA) on seabed mining and the World Health organization (WHO) on pharmaceutical pollution affecting oceans.

To achieve Goal III, the RSP targets focus on:

1) Enhancing the relationship of the RSP with the UN Environment Assembly and raising RSP's profile as a mechanism for advancing ocean-related SDGs,
2) Enhancing cooperation with relevant UN bodies, MEAs, international financial institutions, philanthropies and other relevant processes,
3) Strengthening collaboration between Regional Seas, and learning exchanges, such as best practices and lessons learned,
4) The delivery of RSP activities promoted through strengthening of legal and policy frameworks in coherence with the GBF and other relevant global frameworks at the national and regional levels,
5) Mainstreaming RSP activities into national policy planning processes, and
6) Promoting equitable and participatory ocean governance that engages local communities, indigenous people and enhances gender balance and youth voices.

Actions to achieve Goal III on outreach, advocacy and partnerships

	RSP actions	Indicators	Sources and references
3.1	The **relationship of the RSP with the UN Environment Assembly** is enhanced and the profile of the RSP as a mechanism for advancing ocean-related SDGs is increased by: • Regularly informing UNEA of progress made by the RSP. • Promoting UNEA resolutions that provide guidance to further the work of the RSP. • Nominating Regional Seas Champions by identifying candidates with clearly defined roles, highlighting 2–3 core responsibilities that will elevate the RSP's impact on ocean-related SDGs.	**Priority indicators:** • Number of actions taken by Member States to implement UNEA resolutions, based on agreed indicator frameworks **(P)** **Supporting indicators:** • **SDG 14.c.1:** Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law, as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources **(P)**	• SDG Target 17.14 • SDG Target 17.16 • SDG Target 14.C
3.2	**Cooperation** enhanced with relevant UN bodies, MEAs, international financial institutions, philanthropies and other relevant processes by: • **Supporting ocean-related activities of MEAs**, including with regards to MPAs and other area-based management tools under the BBNJ agreement. • **Supporting ocean-related work of UN bodies and task forces**, including UNEP's role in the One Health High-Level Expert Council. • **Mobilizing resources and sustainable funding and promoting the use of economic instruments** for delivering RSP activities. • **Strengthening cooperation** between different RSCAPs and RFMOs to promote and implement ecosystem-based fisheries and aquaculture management, ICZM and MPA planning as well as MPA.	**Priority indicators:** • Number of partnerships established and operationalised to support Regional Seas agendas, including the mobilization of external funding **(P)**	• SDG Target 17.7 • SDG Target 17.14 • SDG Target 17.16 • BBNJ Agreement (Art. 22.3) • UNEA Res. 6/15 (para 3e)
3.3	**Collaboration between Regional Seas** strengthened, and learning exchanges, such as best practices and lessons learned, in particular through the Regional Seas Programme Annual Meeting by: • **Promoting twinning, capacity building and knowledge exchange** between RSCAPs. • Strengthening the capacity of **Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and regional action plans** to provide support at the national levels. • Enhancing collaboration with relevant **Basel and Stockholm conventions regional centres**.	**Priority indicators:** • Number of activities, tools, or best practices shared among Regional Seas Programmes to enhance implementation and learning **(P)** **Supporting indicators:** • **SDG 13.3.1:** Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment [UNFCCC] **(P)**	• SDG Target 13.3

	RSP actions	Indicators	Sources and references
3.4	The delivery of RSP activities promoted through strengthening of legal and policy frameworks that streamline the GBF and other relevant global frameworks at the national and regional levels by: • **Promoting adoption, participation and implementation of national action plans** of Regional Seas Conventions and Protocols. • Mainstreaming the marine environment and ecosystem approach into **national strategies and action plans** under relevant global MEAs, including the CBD and Paris Agreement. • Strengthening **coordination between national Focal Points** and designated authorities of relevant MEAs.	**Priority indicators:** • Number of action plans and programmes of measures adopted and/or operational to address biodiversity loss, pollution and climate adaptation (including regional, national and joint) **(P)** **Supporting indicators:** • **SDG 14.c.1** Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law, as reflected in the UNCLOS, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources **(P)**	• SDG Target 14.C
3.5	**RSP activities mainstreamed** into national planning processes by: • **Engaging Resident Coordinators**, UN Country Teams (including all agencies, funds and entities operating at all levels). • **Aligning RSP priorities and activities** in UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and other national planning processes.	**Priority indicators:** • Number of activities addressing ocean-related issues implemented, monitored, reported and evaluated in accordance with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks **(P)**	• SDG Target 17.6 • SDG Target 17.14 • SDG Target 17.16
3.6	**Equitable and participatory** ocean governance is promoted to engage local communities, indigenous people and enhance gender balance and youth voices, ensuring • Full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive participation in decision-making. • Access to justice and information related to biodiversity, pollution and climate impacts by indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities. • Full protection for environmental human rights defenders.	**Priority indicators:** • **KM-GBF 22.b:** Number of countries taking action towards the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision- making, and access to justice and information related to biodiversity by indigenous peoples and local communities, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources and traditional knowledge, as well as by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities, and the full protection of environmental human rights defenders **(P)**	• GBF Target 22 • GBF Target 23

UNEP supporting activities for achieving Goal III

UNEP will provide support as appropriate to countries towards effective cooperation and advocacy, including:

- Convene the Global Annual Meeting of Regional Seas and Action Plans. (Annual Coordination Meeting of the RSP Coordinators)
- Facilitate linkages between RSCAPs action and other UN Ocean agencies (FAO, UNESCO, IMO, ISA etc), international organizations, and global frameworks such as the GBF, BBNJ and Plastics Treaty.
- Advocate for the role of RSCAPs as one of UNEP's flagship programmes for delivery of ocean and coastal management goals (against SDG14 etc)
- Facilitate closer linkages between RSCAPs and other biodiversity MEAs (e.g. via respective Focal Points).
- Facilitate collaboration between RSCAPs, including learning exchanges, information sharing (newsletters, website, knowledge management tools, digital platforms etc).
- Enhance programmatic linkages between RSP, the MTS and other respective UNEP programmes, divisions etc. (nature pillar, climate pillar and pollution pillar).



Image: SPREP



Image: Peter Prokosch

IV. Reporting on Progress of the RSSD

Modes of reporting

Two modes for enhancing reporting on the implementation of the RSSD are described below.

1. **The Global Annual Meeting of RSCAPs reporting**

   Progress on implementing the Strategic Directions agreed for the period 2026–2029 shall be reported on by the RSCAPs in 2028, building on the baseline established in the final reporting and review of the RSSD 2022-2025.

   A final review can be provided at the Global Annual Meeting of Regional Seas and Action Plans in 2029. Reports should include outputs and outcomes towards achieving the RSP medium-term outcomes, according to the reporting template to be developed by UNEP.

   Note: The framework for setting up such a global report in 2029 should be discussed at the upcoming annual meeting in 2025 to set the stage with agreed upon performance measures and process for monitoring/reporting for delivery at the 2029 annual meeting. (See Integrated Planning Management and Reporting framework and Regional Seas Core Indicators, amongst others).

UNEP supporting activities for the reporting on progress of the RSP as a whole include:

- Providing a template for RSCAPs reporting in 2028 and 2029.
- Develop reporting templates for relevant global and regional meetings, such as UNEA, CPR.
- Develop a template to report annual updates against indicators, as appropriate, at each periodic Regional Seas Meeting.
- Consolidation of regional data and regional/national progress reports to inform UNEA and MTS review.
- Prepare a RSSD Terminal Evaluation in 2030 mapped to delivery of SDGs (14, 6, and SCP).

2. **UNEA reporting**

The Strategic Directives can serve as a high-level instrument that enables the RSP as a whole to regularly report on progress to the UN Environment Assembly, and reciprocally, enabling the Assembly to take decisions, when necessary, to guide further action by the RSP. Ideally, this option would require the seventh session of UNEA in 2025 to invite the RSP to report on progress achieved in delivering the RSSD. Additional reporting to the relevant fora of the triple planetary crisis may be facilitated through RSCAPs reporting against the appropriate indicator sets.

A phased approach to developing RSP targets and indicators

A phased approach for the development of indicators during 2026-2029 is described in Table 1. It is intended to further harmonize the work of the RSCAPs, helping to improve understanding of global progress, essential to interpreting the state of ocean health and adopting necessary global responses. The development of indicators will benefit reporting at the RSCAPs level and by UNEP.

Table 1: *Phases of development for RSP indicators*

	Activity	Progress in development of RSP targets and indicators
1	RSSD 2026-2029 adopted	Initial set of targets and indicators agreed at the Global Annual Meeting of RSCAPs 2025.
2	Global set of indicators adopted	The RSP Indicator Working Group reestablished to develop a globally harmonized indicator set with supporting metadata, to be adopted in 2027.
3	Mid-term RSSD reporting	RSCAPs report against initial set of indicators in 2028 for which information is available, indicating N/A where information is not available or not sufficiently mature to report on.
4	Global Annual Meeting of RSCAPs 2029 reporting	RSCAPs report against globally harmonized indicator set for which information is available, indicating N/A where information is not available.



Image: Torsten dederichs

Appendix

Appendix I: Full text of global targets referenced

This appendix provides the full text of global targets referenced in third column "Sources and references."

Actions to deliver Sub-Goal I a) on protecting biodiversity

Action	Sources and references
1a.1	• **SDG Target 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 to achieve healthy and productive oceans. • **SDG Target 14.5:** By 2020, conserve at least 10% of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information. • **GBF Target 1:** Ensure that all areas are under participatory, integrated and biodiversity inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes addressing land - and sea use change, to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030, while respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. • **GBF Target 2:** Ensure that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and marine and coastal ecosystems are under effective restoration, in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity. • **GBF Target 3:** Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and of marine and coastal areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories. • **Paris Agreement Decision 1/CMA.5:** Outcomes of the First Global Stocktake: Invites Parties to preserve and restore the ocean and coastal ecosystems and scale up, as appropriate, ocean-based mitigation action. (para 35) • **Ramsar Convention Resolution XIII.14:** Apply ecosystem-based and integrated approaches in managing ecosystems in order to ensure recognition of their values, functions and services, including their role in climate change mitigation and adaptation (para 12a). • **CMS Target 2.2:** By 2032, all important habitats for migratory species listed in CMS Appendices are protected, effectively conserved, managed and restored through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures. • **CMS Target 2.3:** By 2032, the loss, degradation and fragmentation of important habitats for migratory species listed in CMS Appendices is reduced, and habitats are restored to ensure that such habitats support their viability. • **BBNJ Agreement:** Conserve and sustainably use areas requiring protection, including through the establishment of a comprehensive system of area-based management tools, with ecologically representative and well-connected networks of marine protected areas (Art 17a). • **BBNJ Agreement:** Protect, preserve, restore and maintain biological diversity and ecosystems, including with a view to enhancing their productivity and health, and strengthen resilience to stressors, including those related to climate change, ocean acidification and marine pollution (Art 17c). • **UNEA Res. 6/15:** Also encourages Member States, as appropriate, to: consider signing and ratifying the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction at the earliest possible date (para 2a).

Action	Sources and references
1a.2	• **SDG Target 15.8:** By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species. • **GBF Target 4:** Ensure urgent management actions to halt human induced extinction of known threatened species and for the recovery and conservation of species, in particular threatened species, to significantly reduce extinction risk, as well as to maintain and restore the genetic diversity within and between populations of native, wild and domesticated species to maintain their adaptive potential, including through in situ and ex situ conservation and sustainable management practices, and effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to minimize human-wildlife conflict for coexistence. • **GBF Target 5:** Ensure that the use, harvesting and trade of wild species is sustainable, safe and legal, preventing overexploitation, minimizing impacts on non-target species and ecosystems, and reducing the risk of pathogen spillover, applying the ecosystem approach, while respecting and protecting customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities. • **GBF Target 6:** Eliminate, minimize, reduce and or mitigate the impacts of invasive alien species on biodiversity and ecosystem services by identifying and managing pathways of the introduction of alien species, preventing the introduction and establishment of priority invasive alien species, reducing the rates of introduction and establishment of other known or potential invasive alien species by at least 50 per cent, by 2030, eradicating or controlling invasive alien species especially in priority sites, such as islands. • **CBD COP decision XII/23:** Marine and coastal biodiversity: Encourages Parties and other Governments as well as indigenous and local communities and other relevant stakeholders, to take appropriate measures, as appropriate and within their competencies, and in accordance with national and international laws, to avoid, minimize and mitigate the potential significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity (para 3) • **CITES Strategic Vision Objective 1.5:** Parties improve the conservation status of CITES-listed specimens, put in place national conservation actions, support their sustainable use and promote cooperation in managing shared wildlife resources. • **CITES Strategic Vision Objective 3.4:** Parties recognize illegal trade in wildlife as serious crime and have adequate systems in place to detect and deter it. • **CMS Target 3.1:** By 2032, any take, use and trade of migratory species listed in CMS Appendices is sustainable, safe and legal, overexploitation is prevented, risk of pathogen spillover is reduced and negative impacts on non-target species and their ecosystems are minimized. • **CMS Target 3.5:** By 2032, the negative impacts of invasive alien species on migratory species and their habitats are reduced or eliminated.

Action	Sources and references
1a.3	• **GBF Target 5:** ensure that the use, harvesting and trade of wild species is sustainable, safe and legal, preventing overexploitation, minimizing impacts on non-target species and ecosystems, and reducing the risk of pathogen spillover, applying the ecosystem approach, while respecting and protecting customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities. • **GBF Target 9:** Ensure that the management and use of wild species are sustainable, thereby providing social, economic and environmental benefits for people, especially those in vulnerable situations and those most dependent on biodiversity, including through sustainable biodiversity-based activities, products and services that enhance biodiversity, and protecting and encouraging customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities. • **GBF Target 10:** Ensure that areas under agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry are managed sustainably, in particular through the sustainable use of biodiversity, including through a substantial increase of the application of biodiversity friendly practices, such as sustainable intensification, agroecological and other innovative approaches contributing to the resilience and long-term efficiency and productivity of these production systems and to food security, conserving and restoring biodiversity and maintaining nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services. • **GBF Target 11:** Restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services, such as regulation of air, water, and climate, soil health, pollination and reduction of disease risk, as well as protection from natural hazards and disasters, through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches for the benefit of all people and nature. • **SDG Target 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. • **SDG Target 14.B:** Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets. • **SDG Target 14.:** 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. • **SDG Target 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.

Actions to achieve Goal I b) on reducing ocean and coastal pollution

Action	Sources and references
1b.1	• **SDG Target 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. • **SDG Target 6.3:** By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally. • **SDG Target 11.6:** By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management. • **SDG Target 12.5:** By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse. • **GBF Target 7:** Reduce pollution risks and the negative impact of pollution from all sources, by 2030 to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, considering cumulative effects, including: reducing excess nutrients lost to the environment by at least half including through more efficient nutrient cycling and use; reducing the overall risk from pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals by at least half including through integrated pest management, based on science, taking into account food security and livelihoods; and also preventing, reducing, and working towards eliminating plastic pollution. • **UNEA Res. 5/2:** Sustainable Nitrogen Management: Encourages Member States to accelerate actions to significantly reduce nitrogen waste globally by 2030 and beyond through the improvement of sustainable nitrogen management (para 1). • **IMO MARPOL Annex IV:** Prevention of Pollution by Sewage from Ships: Prohibit the discharge of sewage into the sea within a specified distance from the nearest land, unless otherwise provided (Resolution MEPC.157(55). • **IMO MARPOL Annex V Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships:** Discharge of all garbage into the sea is prohibited, except as provided otherwise in regulations 4, 5, 6 and 7 of this Annex (Regulation 3). • **CMS Target 3.3:** By 2032, the negative impacts of pollution including transboundary effects, and poisoning on migratory species and their habitats are reduced to levels that are not harmful to species' viability. • **UNEA Res. 6/15:** Encourages Member States to, as appropriate, to ratify, accept, approve or accede to the 1996 Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and other Matter, 1972 (para 2d). • **Basel Convention Strategic Framework (SF) Goal 2** Parties implement their obligations on transboundary movements of hazardous and other wastes. • **Basel Convention SF Goal 3** Hazardous wastes and other wastes are managed in an environmentally sound manner by Parties

Action	Sources and references
1b.2	• **SDG Target 12.4:** By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment. • **SDG Target 6.3:** By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally. • **GFC Target D6:** By 2030, sustainable chemical and waste management strategies have been developed and implemented for major economic and industry sectors that identify priority chemicals of concern and standards and measures, such as the chemical footprint approach, to reduce their impact and, where feasible, their input along the value chain. • **GFC Target E6:** By 2030, stakeholders identify and strengthen, as appropriate, synergies and linkages between chemicals and waste management and other key environmental, health and labour policies, such as those related to climate change solutions, biodiversity conservation, human rights protection, universal health coverage or primary health car. • **GBF Target 7:** Reduce pollution risks and the negative impact of pollution from all sources, by 2030 to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, considering cumulative effects, including: reducing excess nutrients lost to the environment by at least half including through more efficient nutrient cycling and use; reducing the overall risk from pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals by at least half including through integrated pest management, based on science, taking into account food security and livelihoods; and also preventing, reducing, and working towards eliminating plastic pollution.
• 1b.3	• **UNEA Res 3/7:** Long-term elimination of plastic discharge into the oceans: Stresses the importance of long-term elimination of discharge of litter and microplastics to the oceans and of avoiding detriment to marine ecosystems and the human activities dependent on them from marine litter and microplastics. (para 1) • **UNEA Resolution 5/14:** End plastic pollution: towards an international legally binding instrument: To promote sustainable production and consumption of plastics through, among other things, product design and environmentally sound waste management, including through resource efficiency and circular economy approaches (para 3b), and to promote national and international cooperative measures to reduce plastic pollution in the marine environment, including existing plastic pollution; (para 3c). • **GBF Target 7:** Reduce pollution risks and the negative impact of pollution from all sources, by 2030 to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, considering cumulative effects, including: reducing excess nutrients lost to the environment by at least half including through more efficient nutrient cycling and use; reducing the overall risk from pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals by at least half including through integrated pest management, based on science, taking into account food security and livelihoods; and also preventing, reducing, and working towards eliminating plastic pollution. • **UNEA Res. 6/15:** Also encourages Member States, as appropriate, to engage in the ongoing process to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution (para 2c). • **UNEA Res. 6/15:** Support their contracting parties and participating countries in participating in the ongoing negotiations on an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, by, among other things, making available relevant information (para 6e).

Actions to achieve Goal I c) on strengthening ocean and coastal resilience

Action	Sources and references
1c.1	• **SDG Target 13.1:** Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries. • **GBF Target 8:** Minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience through mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction actions, including through nature-based solution and/or ecosystem-based approaches, while minimizing negative and fostering positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity. • **UNEA Resolution 2/12:** Sustainable coral reefs management: Encourages Governments to prioritize coral reef conservation and sustainable management, including through the establishment and active management of marine protected areas, as well as through other spatial and relevant sectoral approaches, consistent with national and international law and based on best available scientific information, with a view to enhancing climate change resilience and securing continued coral reef ecosystem services provision (para 7). • **UNEA Resolution 4/12:** Sustainable management for global health of mangroves: – Recognizing also the role of mangroves as carbon sinks and reservoirs, their contribution to reducing the adverse impacts of climate change (preambular). – Encourages Member States, together with other relevant stakeholders, to use ecosystem-based approaches for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of mangroves (para 1). • **UNEA Resolution 1/8: Ecosystem-based adaptation:** Encourages all countries to include and improve ecosystem-based adaptation and community-based adaptation in their national policies, including those on climate change adaptation, food security and sustainable management of forests, according to their national circumstances and priorities (para 2). • **Paris Agreement Decision 1/CMA.5: Outcomes of the First Global Stocktake:** – Further emphasizes the importance of conserving, protecting and restoring nature and ecosystems towards achieving the Paris Agreement temperature goal, including through enhanced efforts towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030, and other terrestrial and **marine ecosystems** acting as sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases and by conserving biodiversity, while ensuring social and environmental safeguards, in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (para 33). – Encourages the implementation of integrated, multi-sectoral solutions, such as land use management, sustainable agriculture, resilient food systems, nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches, and protecting, conserving and restoring nature and ecosystems, including forests, mountains and other terrestrial and **marine and coastal ecosystems** (para 55). – Notes that ecosystem-based approaches, including **ocean-based adaptation** and resilience measures, as well as in mountain regions, can reduce a range of climate change risks and provide multiple co-benefits (para 56). – Urges Parties and invites non-Party stakeholders to increase ambition and enhance adaptation action and support, in line with decision -/CMA.5,4 in order to accelerate swift action at scale and at all levels, from local to global, in alignment with other global frameworks, towards the achievement of, inter alia, the following targets by 2030, and progressively beyond Reducing climate impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity and accelerating the use of ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions, including through their management, enhancement, restoration and conservation and the protection of terrestrial, inland water, mountain, marine and coastal ecosystems (para 63d). • **Ramsar Convention Resolution XIII.14: Promoting conservation, restoration and sustainable management of coastal blue-carbon ecosystems:** Further encourages Contracting Parties with coastal blue-carbon ecosystems in their territories to maintain and restore coastal blue-carbon ecosystems alongside coastal infrastructure to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts that detrimentally affect these ecosystems and lead to significant greenhouse gas emissions and reductions in ecosystem services (para 12e). • **Ramsar Resolution XIV.17: The protection, conservation, restoration, sustainable use and management of wetland ecosystems in addressing climate change:** Encourages Contracting Parties, in their plans and strategies, to deploy wetland-focused nature-based solutions or ecosystem-based approaches to address climate change (para 8).

Action	Sources and references
1c.1 *(Cont.)*	• **CMS Target 3.4:** By 2032, the impact of climate change on migratory species and their habitats is reduced through mitigation and adaptation, including through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches and disaster risk reduction actions, while minimizing negative and fostering positive impacts on biodiversity. • **UNGA Resolution 71/257:** Oceans and the law of the sea: Notes the vital role that coastal blue carbon ecosystems, including mangroves, tidal marshes and seagrasses, play in climate adaptation and mitigation through carbon sequestration, and in increasing the resilience of coastal ecosystems to ocean acidification, and the range of other benefits that these ecosystems provide , including sustainable livelihoods, food security and biodiversity conservation, and coastal protection, and encourages States and relevant international institutions and organizations to work collaboratively to protect and restore coastal blue carbon ecosystems (para 192). • **CBD COP decision XVI/22:** Maintain **ecological corridors** and promote **landscape connectivity** for enabling species to either migrate to suitable climatic locations or adapt to new conditions (preamble) and identify and maximize potential synergies between biodiversity and climate actions, including by prioritizing the **protection, restoration** and **management of ecosystems and species** important for the full carbon cycle and contributing to climate change adaptation (para 3b). • **CBD COP Decision 14/5:** Design, implementation and monitoring of ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, including ensuring effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth and elders and broad stakeholder engagement (para 3). • **CBD Decision XI/21:** Review **land-use planning** with a view to enhancing ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change, such as the role of **mangroves** in adapting to changes in sea level (para 6f) • **Ramsar Convention Resolution XI/14:** Maintain or improve the ecological character of wetlands, including their ecosystem services, to enhance the resilience of wetlands in the face of climate-driven ecological changes, including to promote the restoration of degraded wetlands and the ability of wetlands to contribute to nature-based climate change adaptation, and minimize the release of stored carbon (para 26).
1c.2	• **SDG Target 14.3:** Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels. • **UNEA Resolution 6/15: Strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution:** Also encourages Member States, as appropriate, to make significant efforts to tackle ocean acidification and its causes and to further study and minimize its impacts (para 2e). • **CMS Resolution 11.27: Renewable energy and migratory species:** Urges Parties to implement, as appropriate, the following priorities in their development of renewable energy technologies: – 3.1 wind energy: undertake careful physical planning with special attention to the mortality of birds (in particular of species that are long-lived and have low fecundity) and bats resulting from collisions with wind turbines and the increased mortality risk to cetaceans from permanently reduced auditory functions and consider means of reducing disturbance and displacement effects on relevant species, including deploying measures such as 'shutdown on demand' as appropriate. – 3.3 ocean energy: give attention to possible impacts on migratory species of increased noise and electromagnetic field disturbance especially during construction work in coastal habitats, and injury. • **CBD decision IX/16 C: Ocean fertilization:** Bearing in mind the ongoing scientific and legal analysis occurring under the auspices of the London Convention (1972) and the 1996 London Protocol, requests Parties and urges other Governments, in accordance with the precautionary approach, to ensure that ocean fertilization activities do not take place until there is an adequate scientific basis on which to justify such activities (para 4).

Actions to achieve Goal II on supporting knowledge management and science-policy dialogue

Actions	Sources and references
2.1	• **GBF Target 21:** Ensure that the best available data, information and knowledge are accessible to decision makers, practitioners and the public to guide effective and equitable governance, integrated and participatory management of biodiversity, and to strengthen communication, awareness-raising, education, monitoring, research and knowledge management and, also in this context, traditional knowledge, innovations, practices and technologies of indigenous peoples and local communities should only be accessed with their free, prior and informed consent, in accordance with national legislation. • **CMS Target 2.1:** By 2029, all important habitats for migratory species listed in CMS Appendices are identified, assessed and monitored to ensure their functionality and ability to support migratory species throughout their life cycles. • **CITES Strategic Vision Objective 2.5:** Information gaps and needs for key species are identified and addressed. • **UNEA Res. 6/15:** Invites the RSCAP secretariats upon request by their contracting parties or participating countries to further develop and implement joint strategies and work on quality status assessments and monitoring programmes to address environmental challenges in a coordinated effort (para 4c).
2.2	• **SDG Target 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. • **UNEA Res. 6/15:** Requests the Executive Director of UNEP to continue to provide technical support to Member States and members of specialized UN agencies, upon request, in implementing their respective obligations and activities under RSCAPs and MEAs and other relevant environmental instruments, including through the dissemination and sharing of best practices (para 3c).
2.4	• **SDG Target 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. • **SDG target 3.9:** By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination. • **CMS Target 5.3:** Parties use best available science, as the basis for evidence-based advice and decision-making to address the conservation of migratory species, their habitats and threats under CMS. • **BBNJ Agreement:** Develop the marine scientific and technological capacity, including with respect to research, of Parties, in particular developing States Parties, with regard to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, including through access to marine technology by, and the transfer of marine technology to, developing States Parties (Art. 40c).
2.5	• **SDG Target 8.9:** By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products. • **SDG Target 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. • **GBF Target 22:** Ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making, and access to justice and information related to biodiversity by indigenous peoples and local communities, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge, as well as by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities and ensure the full protection of environmental human rights defenders. • **CITES Strategic Vision 2021-2030 Goal 2:** Parties (individually and collectively) have the tools, resources and capacity to effectively implement and enforce the Convention, contributing to conservation, sustainable use and the reduction of illegal trade in CITES-listed wildlife species.

Actions to achieve Goal III on outreach, advocacy and partnerships

Actions	Sources and references
3.1	• **SDG Target 17.14:** Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development. • **SDG Target 17.16:** Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries. • **SDG Target 14.C:** Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 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".
3.2	• **SDG Target 17.7:** Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed. • **SDG Target 17.14:** Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development. • **SDG Target 17.16:** Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries. [OECD, UNDP] • **BBNJ Agreement:** The Conference of the Parties shall make arrangements for regular consultations to enhance cooperation and coordination with and among relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional, subregional and sectoral bodies with regard to area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, as well as coordination with regard to related measures adopted under such instruments and frameworks and by such bodies. (Art. 22.3) • **UNEA Res. 6/15:** Requests the Executive Director of the UNEP to provide technical support to Member States and members of UN specialized agencies, upon request, for the development of marine and coastal planning and management tools within areas under national jurisdiction, in particular marine protected areas, integrated coastal zone management and marine spatial planning, based on the best available science, including, where appropriate, traditional knowledge, innovations and practices (para 3e).
3.3	• **SDG Target 13.3:** Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.
3.4	• **SDG Target 14.C:** Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (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".
3.5	• **SDG Target 17.6:** Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism. • **SDG Target 17.14:** Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development. • **SDG Target 17.16:** Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.
3.6	• **GBF Target 22:** Ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making, and access to justice and information related to biodiversity by indigenous peoples and local communities, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge, as well as by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities and ensure the full protection of environmental human rights defenders. • **GBF Target 23:** Ensure Gender Equality and a Gender-Responsive Approach for Biodiversity Action.



Image: NOAA's National Ocean Service, *Kelp of Cat Rock, Anacapa Island*

References

References for emerging issues included in the RSSD 2026-2029

Ferreira, C. S. S. (2023). Wetlands as nature-based solutions for water management in different environments. *Current Opinion in Environmental Science & Health,* 33, 100476. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.coesh.2023.100476

Panagopoulos, A. & Haralambous, K.-J. (2020). Environmental impacts of desalination and brine treatment - Challenges and mitigation measures. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*,161, 11173. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2020.111773

HELCOM (2023). State of the Baltic Sea 2023. *Third HELCOM holistic assessment 2016 – 2021*. Available online: https://helcom.fi/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/State-of-the-Baltic-Sea-2023.pdf

OSPAR Commission (2023). QSR 2023: *Synthesis Report*. Available online: https://oap.ospar.org/en/ospar-assessments/quality-status-reports/qsr-2023/synthesis-report/introduction/

United Nations (2021a). World Ocean Assessment II, Volume I. United Nations, New York. Available online: https://www.un.org/regularprocess/woa3

United Nations (2021b). World Ocean Assessment II, Volume II. United Nations, New York. Available online: https://www.un.org/regularprocess/woa3

United Nations Environment Programme. (2019). Global Chemicals Outlook II: Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Available online: https://www.unep.org/resources/report/global-chemicals-outlook-ii-legacies-innovative-solutions

United Nations Environment Programme. (2021). From Pollution to Solution: Global Assessment of Marine Litter and Microplastics. Available online: https://www.unep.org/resources/pollution-solution-global-assessment-marine-litter-and-plastic-pollution

United Nations Environment Programme. (2024). Mediterranean Quality Status Report: The state of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast from 2018-2023. Available online at: https://medqsr2023.info-rac.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2023-MED-QSR-full-version-English-1.pdf



UN environment programme | Regional Seas