

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday 12 September 2019
10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
United Nations Office at Nairobi, Gigiri
Conference Room 4

**Background Document for Agenda Item 5:
Implementation of the UN Environment Programme Marine Strategy**

This note serves as a background document for consideration under Agenda Item 5: Implementation of the UN Environment Programme Marine Strategy, which covers implementation of three resolutions from the fourth session of UN Environment Assembly: UNEP/EA.4/Res.6 Marine plastic litter and microplastics; UNEP/EA.4/Res.11 Protection of the marine environment from land-based activities; and UNEP/EA.4/Res.14 Sustainable nitrogen management.

BRIEFING NOTE

Implementation of the UN Environment Programme Marine Strategy

SUMMARY:

The UN Environment Programme's Marine Strategy sets strategic directions over the short, medium and long-term, coinciding with Agenda 2030, guiding and enabling the achievement of objectives laid out in the current four-year Medium-Term Strategy and bi-annual Programme of Work of the United Nations Environment Programme, including land-based sources of pollution and overall sustainable management and conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems. The Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) work is core in ocean protection further exploring emphasis on its activities. Follow-up to the 4th Intergovernmental Review Meeting in Bali, the GPA was requested to present an analysis of options and alternatives for the overall programme and its associated coordinating mechanism. Based on informal consultations with members of regional groupings of the CPR on these options and discussions during UNEA-4, there is consensus on the continued role of the GPA and its relevance to UN Environment's Programme of Work. UN Environment is implementing the GPA project in close co-operation with key partners and stakeholders, including the Regional Seas Programme, and through three multi-stakeholder partnerships, namely: The Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML), the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM), and the Global Wastewater Initiative (GW²I). The three streams of the GPA's work are all contributing to the implementation of UNEA resolutions. In that regard, wastewater management related activities are contributing to the implementation of UNEA three resolution UNEP/EA.3. Res 10 on water pollution. Highlights from the implementation of related UNEA4 resolutions include:

- a) Implementation of UNEP/EA.4/Res.6 entitled Marine plastic litter and microplastics
 - Ad Hoc Open Ended Expert Group on marine litter and microplastics: Preparations for the Third meeting of the Group will be held 18-22 November 2019, Bangkok, Thailand;
 - A process is in place to establish of a Scientific Advisory Committee under the Group;
 - Capacity building supported through the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Marine Litter, and through regional courses on "Training of Trainers on the assessment and monitoring of marine plastics and microplastics";
- b) Implementation of UNEP/EA.4/Res.11 entitled Protection of the marine environment from land-based activities
 - Official establishment of an independent regional capacity centre in Bali focusing on land-based sources of pollution, to function as a Regional Activity Centre of Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)
- c) Implementation of UNEP/EA.4/Res.14 entitled Sustainable nitrogen management
 - Launch of a United Nations Global Campaign on Sustainable Nitrogen Management, a High-Level Segment and Science – Policy – Political Dialogue in Colombo, Sri Lanka during the last week of October 2019.

The Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA)

Background

1. At the 4th Intergovernmental Review Meeting (IGR) of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) held in Bali, Indonesia, 31 October - 1 November 2018, the representatives of the Governments and the European Union adopted the Bali Declaration on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities and agreed to work on the function, form, implication and the future of the GPA, as well as on the work it coordinates. The GPA Secretariat was requested to present an analysis of options and alternatives for the overall programme and its associated coordinating mechanism. The analysis was presented during the Committee of the Permanent Representatives (CPR)'s Sub-Committee Meeting held on 27 February 2019.

Informal consultations with CPR members

2. Following the initial consultations at the Open-Ended CPR held in Nairobi, 4-8 March 2019, the GPA Secretariat organized further informal consultations with members of the regional groupings. On 11 April 2019, a meeting was convened with representatives of the Asia-Pacific and African States. This was followed by a second round of informal consultations held on 25 April 2019 with representatives from Latin America and the Caribbean States, and North America and Europe. The meetings served as an opportunity to engage in informal discussions with the representatives of states before engaging in further deliberations at the CPR.

The following is a list of the main points discussed during the informal consultations.

Role of the GPA

3. The sustainability of our oceans is crucial, also because of the linkage to climate change, and the GPA is tasked to do very important work in addressing land-based pollution.

Relevance of the work of the GPA to the UNEP Programme of Work

4. The work of the GPA is aligned to the **Chemicals, Waste and Air Quality Sub-Programme**. It specifically contributes to Expected Accomplishment (a): Policies and legal, institutional and fiscal strategies and mechanisms for sound chemicals management developed or implemented in countries within the framework of relevant multilateral environmental agreements and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and Expected Accomplishment (b): Policies and legal and institutional and fiscal strategies and mechanisms for waste prevention and sound management developed or implemented in countries within the framework of relevant multilateral environmental agreements. Of emerging concern are micro-plastics, pharmaceuticals and other chemicals that disrupt hormone systems that are embedded in this sub-programme.
5. The work of the GPA has additional alignment to the **Healthy and Productive Ecosystems Sub-programme**. It contributes to Expected Accomplishment (a): The health and productivity of marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems are institutionalized in education, monitoring and cross-sector and transboundary collaboration frameworks at the national and international levels. The work of the GPA also contributes to and informs the **Resource Efficiency Sub-Programme** in enhancing circularity around minimization of waste streams at-source through more resource-efficient

practices and recovery of effluents. Further, it does contribute to and inform the **Environment Under Review Sub-programme** in bridging the gap between the producers and users of environmental information, empowering policymakers and other stakeholders to act based on sound science and environmental information.

Function and form

6. Given the environmental challenges, discussions included whether to have a legally binding agreement or not. Also, the debate highlighted that it would be important to identify any normative gaps.
7. An outcome of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting (IGR), highlighted the need for more technical discussions regularly, moving from a current five years interval to more frequent meetings, i.e. possible 2 years and consider having IGRs combined with or substitute by the UN Environment Assembly. UNEA could be the appropriate venue, as it is a universal membership and being the largest global environmental forum, with many events and discussions around pollution. The informal discussions also suggested the Annual Sub-Committee meeting where participants could give specific and technical inputs.
8. Consultations through the Ministerial Fora were considered to be more challenging. Informal consultation on the margins of these Fora is more advisable as to avoid conflicting views that could hinder the process.

Process

9. The timeline indicated in the roadmap for the consultations may be shorter than what is currently envisaged.
10. The informal consultations highlighted the need for bilateral talks with the key Member States who could help to steer the process successfully. It would also be important to deliver, through the President of the respective regional groups, the information regarding the future of the GPA to all the countries, to collect the largest possible feedback from the region.

The future of the Programme

11. Despite the three options presented in the analysis of options and alternatives, other options maybe brought up by Member States. Further information on the three options may be requested by the Members States, and regular contact between them and the Secretariat shall be kept.
12. The GPA as a programme has a history of good work that cannot be ignored. Hence, the discussion should be centered on what can be improved or changed in order to address the Governance issue.

Way forward

13. The informal consultations considered having one day dedicated to addressing the issue of pollution at UNEA, or at other relevant intergovernmental meetings as a good option. The details regarding the way forward are explained in the "Roadmap for the process leading to the decision on the future of the GPA" prepared by the Secretariat, attached to this document as Annex I. It is to be noted that any final decision taken by the Parties at an IGR will need to be submitted to the UN General Assembly who takes note of the decision and transfer the Review process to UNEA or any other forum that has been agreed upon.

a) Implementation of UNEP/EA.4/Res.6 entitled Marine plastic litter and microplastics

14. UNEP is preparing to carry out a stocktaking of all actions and activities on marine litter (as per operative paragraph 7a). Invitations have also been sent to all UN agencies to conduct a mapping of UN initiatives, programmes and activities on marine litter (OP 8) and inventory of technical resources and mechanisms is being initiated. An inventory of available finance resources and mechanisms for marine litter interventions is also being developed as requested by operative paragraph 7b, including both public and private finance. The focus will nonetheless be on non-traditional funding sources, with heatmaps of where the funding is coming from and going to. The overview will be accessible online accompanied by a report suggesting actions and strategies to close the finance gap and improve synergies.
15. This will include a trends and gap analysis will be conducted on who is doing what, where and how to flag where more work and resources are needed. This information will be captured through a cloud based online system and a database on financial opportunities. Similarly, a toolkit is under development to show progress and guide national level policy action for marine litter prevention.
16. UNEP is preparing for the next three Ad Hoc Open Ended Experts Group meetings as per the renewed mandate in operative paragraph 7. The next meeting will take place in Bangkok on 18-22 November 2019.
17. UN Environment is developing a methodology for national source inventories of marine litter in order to better inform national action plans on marine litter. These inventories aim to promote national data collection through e.g. in-situ monitoring of marine litter, plastic production, consumption and import/export data, estimated leakages from waste management, flows through freshwater pathways as well as accumulation zones and ocean flow.
18. The data driven approach of the national source inventory to inform upstream interventions and the pilot is being implemented in Kenya in collaboration with the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). Baseline setting monitoring has been carried out in order to provide Kenya with the data needed for evidence-based decision making as well as to measure the impact of future interventions. Seychelles work is being initiated on the same. This approach will be rolled out in the Asian Regional Seas next. It considers all relevant expertise in UNEP on the topic and seeks to bring together the work of all divisions in a streamlined approach for one UNEP (Science, Economy, Law, Communications Division and regional offices.).
19. The in-person regional course: "Training of Trainers in the Monitoring and Assessment of Marine Litter and Microplastics" has been initiated in Eastern Africa. It operationalizes and builds on the "Guidelines for the Monitoring and Assessment of Plastic Litter in the Ocean". The principle purpose of this report is to provide recommendations, advice and practical guidance, for the establishment of programmes to monitor and assess the distribution and abundance of plastic litter, also referred to as plastic debris, in the ocean. The intention is to promote a more harmonized approach to the design of sampling programmes, the selection of appropriate indicators (i.e. type of sample), the collection of samples or observations, the characterization of sampled material, dealing with uncertainties, data analysis and reporting the results and also to inform the establishment of national and regional field monitoring programmes to inform upstream interventions and measure their impact.
20. On the strengthening of scientific and technical knowledge, UNEP is coordinating the establishment of an Scientific Advisory Committee to support the development of the

Assessment on sources, pathways and hazards of litter, including plastic litter and microplastics pollution (operative paragraph 2b) and the identification of short, medium and long-term needs and solutions to feed into UNEA-5, the Decade of Ocean Science, and the SDG 14 Conference (scientific and technical assessment as an update of UNEP 2016 Marine Plastic Debris and Microplastics report developed for UNEA-2). UNEP is also continuing work through the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Environment Marine Protection (GESAMP) on risk assessment in relation to marine litter and microplastics (WG40) and quantification of sea-based sources (IMO and FAO).

21. UN Environment and the Open University have created a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Marine Litter. It is part of Clean Seas and contributes to the goals of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML). The MOOC on marine litter strives to teach students through action-oriented learning how they can apply successful and inspiring activities to their own local context, regardless of their profession or location. The Massive Open Online Course on Marine Litter is available in all UN languages plus Portuguese and Bahasa, and is a key activity of the GPML in collaboration with IMO and FAO. The course has two options; the 2-week Leadership Track and the 6-week Expert Track which only runs in English or Spanish. 22,000 people have registered for the MOOC since its initiation in 2015. UNEP is planning to re-package the content into shorter modules such as master classes on monitoring, single-use and disposable plastics action, etc.
22. Through the UNEP Finance Initiative, a study on insurance and marine plastic litter: “Unwrapping the risk of plastic pollution to the insurance industry” has been initiated. This is a pioneering study on how the insurance industry can support the global agenda of tackling marine plastic litter and microplastics. The aim will be to identify strategies and actions for the insurance industry to better manage plastic pollution risks in terms of risk assessment and analytics, risk reduction measures, insurance products, and investments; including the role of insurance regulators.

b) Implementation of UNEP/EA.4/Res.11 entitled Protection of the marine environment from land-based activities

23. The 24th Intergovernmental Meeting of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), held in Bali, Indonesia, 19-20 June 2019, considered Indonesia's proposal for the Regional Activity Centre for Clean Seas (R3CS) to function as a Regional Activity Centre of COBSEA. The purpose would be to function as a hub for capacity building, knowledge management and awareness raising related to land-based sources of marine pollution. Indonesia will provide office space, technical staff and support staff as well as USD 500,000 annual budget. Countries expressed appreciation of the effort by Indonesia and, in the resolution adopted at the meeting, encouraged Indonesia to further develop the R3CS, aiming at making it a COBSEA Regional Activity Centre, for consideration at the 25th COBSEA Intergovernmental Meeting.
24. UNEP and COBSEA are initiating activities with R3CS, including through a Training of Trainers on marine litter monitoring, to be held 9-13 September 2019 in Bali Indonesia, organized with the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia and other partners.
25. United Nations Environment Programme, under the Global Programme of Action (GPA) in association with IOC-UNESCO, brought together some 23 scientific experts, Regional Seas Programmes (HELCOM, NOWPAP, MAP) and earth observation specialists from NASA Ames Research Center and the European Space Agency working on the science of marine pollution indicators, data capture and dissemination, to advance the global methodology development on eutrophication and plastic debris assessment under SDG Target 14.1. target indicators, specifically, the index of coastal eutrophication potential (ICEP) and floating plastic debris, along with other relevant metrics. The meeting also explored the application of 'big data' through earth observation systems and how these can be applied in monitoring freshwater and coastal pollution. Participants considered the process to facilitate country adoption of a 'harmonized approach' to report on the SDG14.1 target.

c) Implementation of UNEP/EA.4/Res.14 entitled Sustainable Nitrogen Management

26. Under the nutrient pollution portfolio, the Secretariat continues to support the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM) within UNEP's Programme of Work. The GPNM, in collaboration with the GW²I supported through the GPA, delivered a relaunch of Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on nutrients and wastewater management over the first quarter of 2019 to assist in the outreach and availability of web-based resources. Concordia University of Montreal, Canada developed the MOOC sourcebook and online platform, and administered the MOOC roll-out which had an uptake of just over 1,080 registrants from 170 countries.
27. During the fourth meeting of the International Nitrogen Management System (INMS-4) held on 29 April –2 May 2019, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in close collaborations with key partners organized a high-level segment with Committee of Permanent Representatives and scientists to closely examine the multiple connections across the nitrogen cycle, while providing guidance on priorities. The meeting agreed that coordination is needed to address sustainable nitrogen management at three levels including the interactions between these levels:
 - Intergovernmental co-ordination, especially between countries, conventions, other MEA's and stakeholders
 - National co-ordination within countries, between different ministries, agencies and other stakeholders
 - Provision of science and technical information in support of national and international policy processes, under the guidance of governments.
28. The government of Sri Lanka will be launching the United Nations Global Campaign on Sustainable Nitrogen Management, a High-Level Segment and Science – Policy – Political Dialogue on 23 – 24 October 2019 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The launch will aim to raise public awareness of Nitrogen challenges and opportunities by bringing together a multi-actor discussion (governments, science, policy, business, civil society); promote appropriate training and capacity building for policy makers and practitioners in developing widespread understanding and awareness of the nitrogen cycling and opportunities for action; facilitate assessment of multiple environmental, food and health benefits of possible goals for improved nitrogen management, quantifying the net economic benefits for food and energy production, freshwater and marine environmental quality, air quality, greenhouse gas mitigation and stratospheric ozone depletion mitigation. The ultimate goal is to develop a comprehensive global strategy on Nitrogen management.
29. UNEP has reached out to CPR members to nominate a focal point to participate in the Working Group on nitrogen management resolution. The focal point will provide technical expertise and assist in drafting the Global Nitrogen Reduction Plan among other duties as mentioned in the resolution.
30. The concern over the impact of climate change related to ocean temperatures and influences on the proliferation and persistence of harmful algal blooms will continue to be tracked under the nutrient management portfolio of the GPA. Efforts will continue toward improving the understanding of the phenomenon through research, while bolstering national measures to reduce nutrient loading (agricultural discharges, municipal wastewater) to the environment require continued, and in some areas, stepped-up attention. The Sargassum proliferation events in the Caribbean and West Africa in recent years have been suggested by researchers to be potentially linked to this phenomenon.

Annex I

Roadmap for the process leading to the decision on the future of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA)

The Secretariat is proposing the following road map with a timeline for a consultative process:

- A)** Initial consultation at Open-Ended Committee of the Permanent Representatives (OECPR) in Nairobi during the week of 4-8 March 2019 – **Done**.
- B)** Informal consultation with regional members grouping (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, North America, Latin America and Caribbean) April 2019 – **Done**.
- C)** CPR regular meeting in Nairobi. This consultation aims to update the CPR member on the process and the roadmap and get their feedback – **June 2019 – December 2019**.
- D)** Informal consultations within the 5 Regional Ministerial Fora scheduled over the course of 2019 (Africa Ministerial Forum, Latin America and the Caribbean Ministerial Forum, Europe Ministerial Forum, Arab Ministerial Forum, and the North America Ministerial Forum (**pending**)).
- E)** Informal consultation during the Conference of the Parties (COPs) of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. Three of these are scheduled within 2019, while the remaining are planned for 2020. (Cartagena Convention COP and COBSEA IGM, June 2019, **Done**; Barcelona Convention, December 2019)
- F)** Bilateral consultations with the key Member States when feasible.
- G)** Final consultation round during 2020.

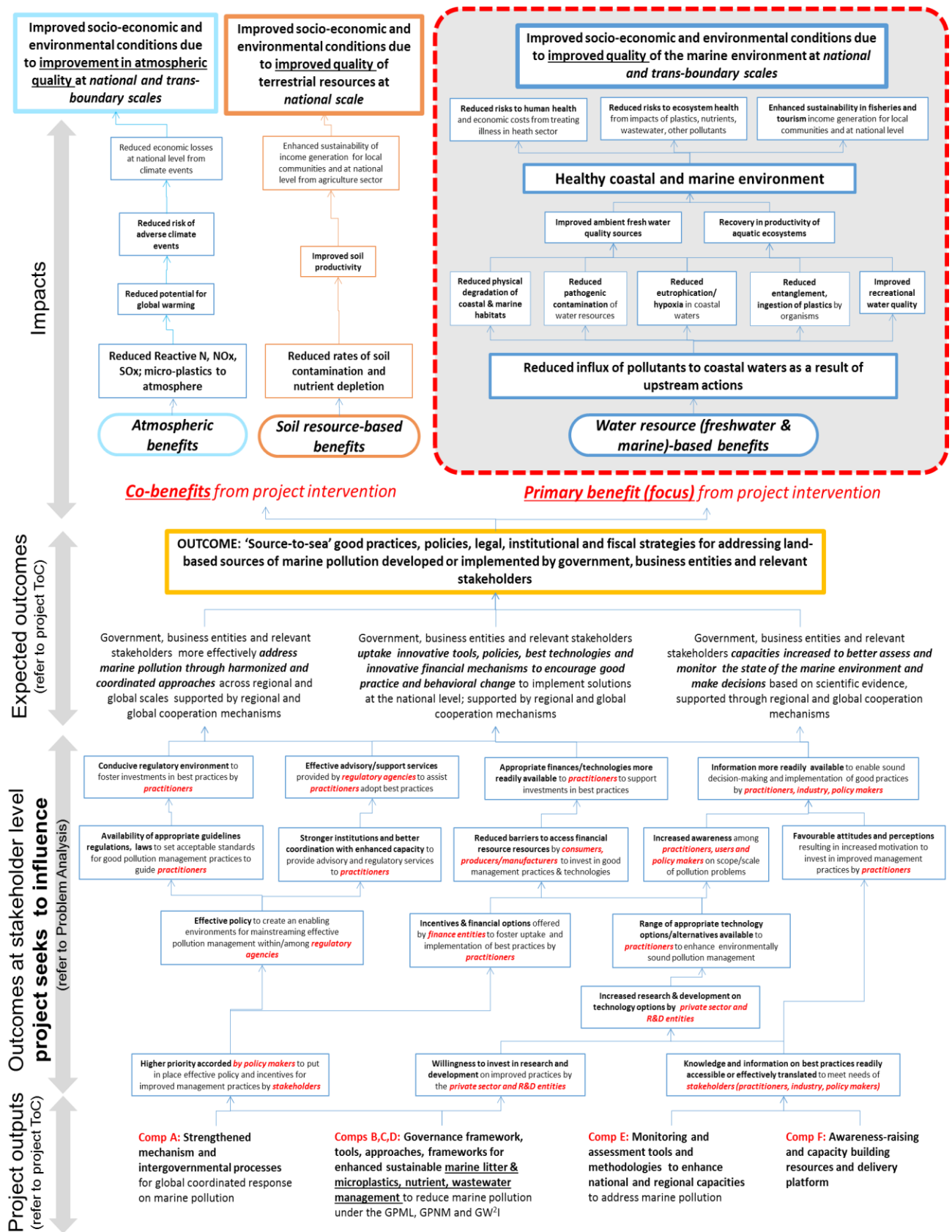
Final decision at an intergovernmental meeting in alignment with UNEA-5 or before if the Member States have come to agreement and conclusion on an outcome to the process. Details in the below table:

Item	Dates	Consultations	Content
1	11 April 2019	Africa CPR Representatives	Information sharing/briefing - Done
2	11 April 2019	Asia and the Pacific CPR Representatives	Information sharing/briefing - Done
3	25 April 2019	Europe and North America CPR Representatives	Information sharing/briefing - Done
4	25 April 2019	Latin America and the Caribbean CPR Representatives	Information sharing/briefing - Done
5	3-7 June 2019	Cartagena Convention COP Meeting, Honduras	Presentation of the option for the future of the GPA and the process leading to the decision – toward establishing consensus position- Done
6	19-20 June 2019	Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia	Presentation of the option for the future of the GPA and

		(COBSEA) Intergovernmental Meeting, Indonesia	the process leading to the decision – toward establishing consensus position Done
7	22-23 August 2019	African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN), South Africa	Presentation of the option for the future of the GPA and the process leading to the decision- toward establishing consensus position Tentative
8	3-6 September 2019	Noumea Convention, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Apia, Samoa	Presentation of the option for the future of the GPA and the process leading to the decision- toward establishing consensus position
9	September 2019	CPR regular meeting, update	Presentation of the outcomes of the consultations
10	7-11 October 2019	CPR Annual Sub- committee meeting	Update if needed
11	October 2019	Meeting with the presidency of UNEA-5	The decision process of the future of the GPA
12	3-5 December 2019	Barcelona Convention COP, Napoli	Presentation of the option for the future of the GPA and the process leading to the decision – toward establishing consensus position
13	December 2019	CPR regular meeting, update	update
14	TBD	IGR meeting for endorsement of the final decision (UNEA- 5 or before)	The decision on the future of the GPA
15	TBD	General Assembly	Endorse the decision of the IGR and agree on final position

It is envisaged that after these consultations toward establishing consensus position on the future of the Global Programme of Action, an open-ended intergovernmental meeting (i.e. Intergovernmental Review Meeting), possibly in conjunction with another one (such as UNEA-5 or any relevant Conference of Parties), will be organized to formally consider and decide on the future of the Global Programme of Action (function and form).

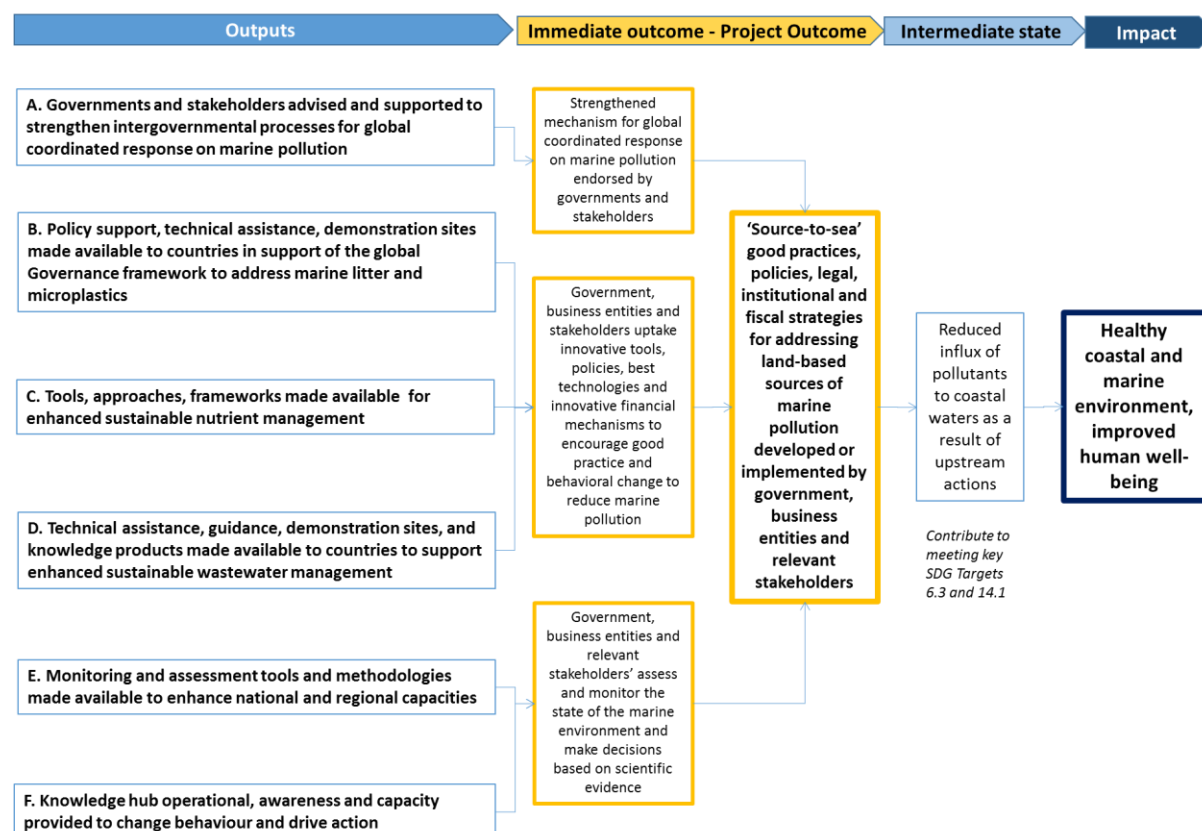
GPA Project Theory of Change



GPA Project Theory of Change (showing the overall ambition and logic of the marine pollution programme)

Assumptions

- Governments commit to coordinated action across global and regional levels
- Active support and commitment from private sector in advocacy and demonstration of good practice at national level
- Willingness of all stakeholders to cooperate on scientific exchange and application of scientific principles in decision making
- Marine pollution partnerships are empowered and remain actively engaged
- Knowledge resources are easily available, accessed and used by stakeholders in decision making in application of best practices



Drivers

- The SDGs have committed countries to action to address and report on national efforts to address marine pollution; UNEA resolutions on pollution; commitments under Regional Seas Programmes and Action Plans
- Growing and heightened awareness of impacts of LBS pollution on ecosystem & human health, particularly in respect to emerging pollutants and influences of climate change
- Resource constraints are being realized and there is recognition of the need for more sustainable consumption and production approaches

GPA Project Governance Arrangement

