



Terms of Reference: European Community of Practice for Ocean Accounting

Introduction

The Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (GOAP) is a multistakeholder partnership established to enable countries and other stakeholders to go Beyond GDP¹ to measure and manage progress towards ocean sustainable development. Co-Chaired by the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Indonesia and Charles Darwin Foundation for the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, GOAP brings together governments, international organisations and research institutions to build a global community of practice for ocean accounting to ensure that the diverse values of the ocean are recognised in all decision making related to social and economic development.

GOAP supports the acceleration of progress of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (the Sustainable Development Goals; SDGs), in particular national implementation of the targets underpinning SDG 14 (life below water), target 15.9 (valuing nature in decision-making) of Goal 15 and target 17.19 (measurement of progress complementing GDP) of Goal 17. GOAP further supports implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework targets, especially target 14 (value of nature). GOAP is an Action Group of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (Ocean Panel), and is committed to supporting all countries to pursue the commitment to 100% sustainable management of national waters and associated sustainable ocean plans and the priority actions for ocean accounting in the Ocean Panel's Transformations for a Sustainable Ocean Economy.

The GOAP has created regional collaboration platforms (namely in Africa and Asia Pacific regions), bringing together governments, international organisations and research institutions who are interested in learning about and developing ocean accounts in specific regions.

The European Community of Practice for Ocean Accounting (ECoP) is established to promote collaboration, knowledge sharing, and capacity development in the field of ocean accounting within the European region. Ocean accounting encompasses the measurement and valuation of marine ecosystem services and advising on the management of marine and coastal ecosystems to support sustainable development, conservation, and policy decision-making. This document outlines the terms of reference for ECoP.

Objectives

The primary objectives of the European Community of Practice for Ocean Accounting are as follows:

- a) **Knowledge Sharing:** the ECoP will act as a communication channel providing an open platform for the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and best practices related to ocean accounting.
- b) **Capacity and Knowledge Development:** Promote capacity and knowledge development in ocean accounting through training, workshops, and the dissemination of educational resources.
- c) **Policy Support:** Contribute to improve evidence-based policy development by providing and illuminating the latest information and research on the state of marine and coastal ecosystems, their economic value, and sustainability.
- d) **Collaboration and coordination:** Foster collaboration among CoP members to work on joint research, projects, and initiatives related to ocean accounting and to act as a coordinating

¹ [Beyond GDP Publications - European Commission \(europea.eu\)](https://europea.eu) and publications from the United Nations and United Kingdom.



body for this work and learning lessons from work supported by European organisations outside the region (e.g. Africa, Asia).

- e) **Awareness and Advocacy:** Raise awareness of the importance of ocean accounting for sustainable ocean management and advocate for its inclusion in policy and decision-making processes.
- f) **International learning:** In addition, being supported by the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership, this Community of Practice has the unique opportunity to also learn from the experiences in other regions of the world.

Membership

The ECoP welcomes the participation of a wide range of stakeholders, practitioners, and interested parties, including but not limited to:

- a) Government agencies responsible for statistics, natural capital, investment, marine and coastal management and overseas and diplomatic arenas, among others.
- b) Academic and research institutions specializing in SEEA accounting, economics, statistics, the natural environment marine and environmental sciences.
- c) Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) focused on sustainable ocean development.
- d) Private sector entities engaged in activities related to the ocean area which are aligned with GOAP goals and objectives.
- e) International organisations and funding agencies with an interest in ocean accounting.

Governance and Structure

The ECoP will be co-chaired by at least two European organisations with a deep interest in ocean accounting. The co-chairs will provide the strategic direction for the group and provide overall guidance.

Working groups may be established as deemed necessary by co-chairs to provide focus to specific areas of interest or expertise, such as data collection methodologies, economic valuation, or policy development.

The GOAP Secretariat, hosted by the Sustainable Development Reform Hub at the University of New South Wales, will provide administrative support, coordinate activities, and facilitate communication among members.

Activities

The ECoP will undertake a variety of activities to achieve its objectives, including:

- a) **Regular Meetings:** Organise regular meetings, both virtual and in-person, to discuss progress, share knowledge, and foster collaboration.
- b) **Webinars and Workshops:** Conduct webinars, workshops, and training sessions on topics related to ocean accounting.
- c) **Research and Data Sharing:** Promote research and data sharing among member organisations, and facilitate the development of common datasets and standards.
- d) **Policy Briefs:** Develop and disseminate policy briefs and reports to inform decision-makers on the value of sustainable ocean management.
- e) **Communication:** The Secretariat will maintain a section on the GOAP website and communication channels to disseminate information, share resources, and raise awareness about ocean accounting.

Documentation will be held on the public GOAP website and a Google Drive accessible to all members.



Funding

ECoP may seek funding as agreed by the community.

Duration

The ECoP will operate indefinitely. The objectives of the ECoP will be subject to periodic reviews to ensure relevance, effectiveness and need.

Reporting

The Co-Chairs and Secretariat will provide reports of meetings and on the progress and activities of ECoP to its member organisations and stakeholders.

Amendments to the Terms of Reference

These terms of reference can be amended as appropriate by agreement of the ECoP Co-Chairs and GOAP Secretariat Director.

Adoption

These terms of reference are adopted and will come into effect upon approval by members of this ECoP during the first meeting.