



## Mid-term evaluation GOAP management response

March 2024



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## Forward from GOAP Co-Chairs



As Co-Chairs of the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (GOAP), we welcome this comprehensive mid-term evaluation. Its timing is particularly valuable as we work to strengthening ocean accounting approaches globally and support countries in measuring and managing progress towards sustainable ocean development. It provides a critically important assessment of the Partnership as a whole; interviewing a wide range of stakeholders across the board Partnership structure.

The evaluation highlights how ocean accounts have helped improve solid waste management, supported sustainable fisheries policy, and informed marine protection strategies - all contributing to healthier marine ecosystems that coastal communities depend upon for food security, income and livelihood support. Ultimately creating the conditions for long term and sustainable blue economic prosperity.

The evaluation findings affirm the considerable progress GOAP has made since its establishment in 2019. In just five years, the Partnership has grown from nine to forty members, established five regional Communities of Practice and successfully supported many countries in developing ocean accounts. The evaluation highlights the Partnership's unique strengths; flexible and adaptive approach, commitment to being member-driven, and ability to work effectively across national, regional and international levels.

We are particularly encouraged by the evidence of GOAP's contribution to policy change and sustainable ocean management and the evidence of the growing recognition of ocean accounts' importance in supporting evidence-based decision-making. The successful mainstreaming of ocean accounts in countries like Indonesia, Maldives and Vietnam demonstrates the real-world impact of ocean accounts.

The evaluation identifies important areas where we can strengthen our work. We accept all fifteen recommendations and are committed to working across the Partnership to implement them. Their implementation will require coordinated action across our entire network - from Members and Partners to the Expert Panel, Fellows, Regional Communities of Practice, Co-Chairs and Secretariat. Key priorities include developing a clear long-term strategy, strengthening operational capacity, enhancing communication across the Partnership, and mainstreaming gender equity and social inclusion considerations in both our implementation and technical work.

As we look ahead, securing long-term strategic funding remains crucial to building on our momentum and success. We are extremely grateful for the catalytic support provided by the UK Government's Blue Planet Fund and our other partners, which has enabled GOAP to establish itself as the global community of practice for ocean accounting. However diversifying and increasing the funding base for ocean accounts will be important to the continued success of our Partnership.



On behalf of all GOAP members, we express our gratitude to everyone who contributed to this evaluation. Your insights will help guide the Partnership's evolution and Secretariat's work as we continue working towards our shared vision of ensuring the diverse values of the ocean are recognised across all decision-making paradigms.

We welcome feedback on this evaluation and our work more broadly. If you would like to share your thoughts or discuss any aspect of GOAP's activities, please contact get in contact with the GOAP Secretariat at [info@oceanaccounts.org](mailto:info@oceanaccounts.org).

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## Introduction from GOAP Secretariat Co-Directors

The Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (GOAP) is a multi-institutional and stakeholder partnership established to support countries and stakeholders in moving Beyond GDP to measure and manage progress towards sustainable ocean development through ocean accounts. Co-chaired by the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) of Indonesia and the Charles Darwin Foundation for the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, GOAP has created a global community of practice for ocean accounting, bringing together governments, international organisations, and research institutions. The Secretariat is hosted by the University of New South Wales (UNSW) Centre for Sustainable Development Reform (CSDR).

Ocean accounts represent a standard measurement framework that informs national ocean and developmental policies and supports action for people and nature. As well as providing a framework for action at national and local levels, the accounts bridge multiple international environmental and developmental agreements. The Global Biodiversity Framework, Target 14 explicitly calls for the integration of biodiversity values into policies, regulations, and accounts; with ocean accounts providing a structured approach to measuring both marine biodiversity and its contributions to people. In the UNFCCC context, ocean accounts support countries' abilities to measure, report, and verify coastal and marine contributions to their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), particularly through blue carbon ecosystems like mangroves, seagrasses, and salt marshes. The accounts also make multiple contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals, for example the economic components of the accounts measure the sustainable blue economy aspects of 14.7; tracking economic benefits to small island developing states and least developed countries. Allowing the design of policies to achieve, and measure progress towards, No Poverty (SDG 1), Zero Hunger (SDG 2), Decent Work (SDG 8) and Reduced Inequality (SDG 10).

In line with GOAP Secretariat's commitment to continuous improvement and accountability to Members and the global ocean accounting community, GOAP recently underwent a comprehensive mid-term evaluation. This was the first evaluation in the five year history of the Partnership. Drawing on consultations with 53 individuals across GOAP's stakeholder network, the evaluation assessed the Partnership's relevance, performance, management, and impact at both national and international levels. The assessment examined several critical dimensions of GOAP work, including:

- The effectiveness and appropriateness of our country-based implementation approach
- GOAP's routes to impact at national, regional, and international levels
- The alignment of GOAP work with member and country objectives
- GOAP approach to supporting gender equity and social inclusion
- The achievement of intended outcomes and impacts across our program areas
- The sustainability and diversity of GOAP funding arrangements
- The effectiveness of capacity-building initiatives, including the GOAP fellows programme
- Contribution to creating enabling environments for ocean accounting
- Role in influencing the international accounting agenda and sustainable ocean planning

This management response outlines the Secretariat's formal response to the evaluation findings and details planned actions to address the recommendations. It is recognised additional actions may be required by Members of the Partnership which are not within the competence of the Secretariat and are a decision for individual Members. As the Secretariat, we are committed to implementing these responses in a way that strengthens support for ocean accounting globally and enhances our ability to





serve Members and stakeholders alike. The evaluation also outlined a range of lessons learned from the last five years of operation of GOAP.

The actions outlined in this response will inform our strategic direction and operational improvements through to 2030, ensuring that the GOAP Secretariat continues to effectively support countries in developing and maintaining integrated ocean accounts that align with international standards and frameworks. These improvements will be crucial in our ongoing efforts to support sustainable ocean management and planning at national and international levels. We recognise that change processes take time but have the objective to fully implement all actions by the end of 2025 and will report to the Members administrative meetings on progress.

The evaluation highlights the significant funding challenge that the Partnership faces from March 2026. The growth of ocean accounting and the international recognition of the usefulness of accounts and the applicability of these methods to a range of economic developmental and ocean sustainability issues has seen an exponential increase in demand. It is clear that Members will need to work together to ensure the future viability of the Partnership and that these funding challenges are met, especially in underserved regions.

The evaluation findings were overwhelmingly positive, validating GOAP's approach and impact in advancing ocean accounting globally. While this management response focuses specifically on implementing the independent evaluator's recommendations for further improvement, it should be viewed in the context of these positive findings. For transparency and completeness, the following section reproduces the evaluation conclusion in their entirety, providing important context for the targeted improvements outlined in this response. The full evaluation can be found [here](#).



## Evaluation conclusion

The following is reproduced directly from the evaluation conclusion. To increase readability dot points and bolding has been added. Where text additions have been made these are made clear in *italics*, no text has been removed.

- Results from this mid-term evaluation demonstrate **GOAP has been successful in building an effective global partnership and network**, and achieving the initial results it has set out to, including those achieved across 15 ODA eligible countries. GOAP has remained aligned with its overarching objectives, implementing an effective demand-led model including awareness raising alongside the active promotion of ocean accounts and the Partnership.
- The Partnership's **structure was seen to be fit-for-purpose** and intentionally designed to reflect the systemic change GOAP aims to address. *GOAP's design and implementation has been intentional about supporting sustained and lasting change.*
- GOAP was seen to be **managed effectively and efficiently**, with a high level of stakeholder satisfaction and confidence in the Partnership and its leadership. As with all partnership-based approaches, opportunities were identified for further strengthening, including in areas of communication, engagement with partners and risk management. Year-on-year scaling has been successful but comes with challenges of maintaining pace with growing demand and momentum.
- The evaluation also noted GOAP had not yet fully integrated **gender equity and social inclusion into its work, with this being a critical gap**, but there is growing recognition of the importance of these issues and efforts underway to address them.
- **Internationally GOAP has played a key role in shaping and influencing the global discourse** on ocean accounts, contributing to the embedding ocean accounts in international frameworks and the development of international approaches and guidelines. The ability of GOAP to work successfully across all levels further amplifies its impact and relevance at national, regional and international levels.
- The review identified **strong alignment between GOAP's work and member and country development priorities for ocean accounting and sustainable use of the ocean** more generally. As the programme is at the mid-term, with just five years into the Partnership, evidence on higher-level outcomes and impact are still emergent. Despite this, GOAP was seen to contribute to national level ocean policies and strategies, including the use and integration of ocean accounts, including case studies on mainstreaming ocean accounts and improving ocean literacy in Maldives, establishing Indonesia as a global exemplar country and improving solid waste management in Quang Ninh Province, Vietnam.
- In relation to higher-level ODA development impact, **GOAP was seen to support sustainable ocean development, including healthy ecosystems and enhanced biodiversity**, by fostering a holistic approach to ocean management. Members also identified GOAP's connection to broader economic development and growth, which was also seen to have positive impacts on macro-level poverty reduction, as well as informing policy that better address poverty and inequality for coastal communities. The current development of GOAP's pathway to change and strengthening MEL systems should include focus on evidencing change at outcome and impact levels.
- GOAP's design and implementation has been intentional about supporting sustained and lasting change. Securing **long-term strategic funding to support the Partnership beyond 2026**, along with continued diversified funding sources, should be a priority to continue momentum and successes to date.
- GOAP has played a significant role in embedding ocean accounts at national and international levels and leveraging funds for ocean accounting.



## Management response to recommendations

The mid-term evaluation identified 15 priority areas for improvement. This section provides an overview of each of the recommendations and the planned actions from the Secretariat and management team of GOAP.

### Recommendation 1: Strengthen operational capacity

Enhance internal processes and systems in the GOAP Secretariat and CSDR/UNSW host to support efficient and effective operations, including:

- Continued cooperation and coordination with broader university administrative processes to overcome administrative barriers contributing to contracting, payment and procurement issues.
- Further streamline processes to better support the more dynamic and adaptive development cooperation approach of GOAP.
- Consider additional staff resources in the secretariat to support operations, particularly in specialised areas such as partnership communications and coordination.

### Response

The GOAP Secretariat **accepts this recommendation** and recognises the need to strengthen operational efficiency and the impact the systems and administrative procedures have had on some Partners. Whilst the Secretariat is significantly constrained in many cases by the limitations of the university systems, it is committed to these wherever possible.

### Actions planned

#### 1.1 Internal Systems Enhancement

The GOAP Secretariat has limited ability to change UNSW-wide systems, and has developed a number of templates to aid reporting and contract development. However there is a need further enhance this. A full internal systems review and enhancement project will be undertaken, including improved invoice tracking, expedited processes for routine transactions such as standardised contract terms and enhanced financial reporting, and clearly documented administrative procedures. Whilst these internal systems improvements will not resolve the UNSW-wide issues these should avoid delays within the Secretariat control and improve tracking processes increasing clarity to partners.

- **Timeline:** Q1 - Q2 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat

#### 1.2 Clarity of timelines

The Secretariat recognises that the clarity of communications around payments and contracting needs to be improved, especially where systems cannot be adapted. We will make available standardised timelines for payments and contract implementations to inform both UNSW internal and external stakeholders. These are normally stipulated in the contract but wording can often be confusing.

- **Timeline:** Q2 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat

#### 1.3 Strengthen university administrative coordination





The team at the Secretariat are consistently looking to strengthen the coordination with the university systems and responsible departments. The Secretariat will continue to work with relevant University departments. We will work on a range of issues such as to reduce the standard payment terms, especially where the partner is based in a developing country.

- **Timeline:** On-going
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat and UNSW Research Office

#### 1.4 Secretariat staff resources

We have expanded the support team at the secretariat to meet additional requirements of funders (e.g. MEL Coordinator) and are conscious of ensuring to maximise value for money for Members. Whilst the options for staffing enhancement will be reviewed, to ensure value for money and to maintain the low running costs of the Secretariat administration functions, additional resources will need to be considered following a further injection of financial support from a large outside donor, beyond our current funder base. We can support one additional administrative position within the Secretariat. To support implementation of this recommendation and recommendations 4 and 11, we have identified funds for recruitment of a Partnership Communication and Coordination Manager. This additional role offers the best value for money due to the ability to address multiple recommendations. The Partnership Communication and Coordination Manager will be responsible for enhancing communications to and between members and identifying additional opportunities for engagement.

- **Timeline:** Q1 – Q2 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat Directors



## Recommendation 2: Better leverage the strengths of being positioned in the University of New South Wales

Better leverage the strengths of being positioned in the university: including identifying and utilizing the breadth of cross-disciplinary expertise in the University, along with the University's broad network connections.

### Response

The GOAP Secretariat **accepts this recommendation** and recognises the significant opportunity to better utilise UNSW's extensive academic resources and networks to enhance our work, as well as working closely with the Centre for Sustainable Development Reform (CSDR) leveraging the strengths of being based at this Centre. However, we would go beyond UNSW and suggest that the Partnership should leverage the universities and research institutions within the Partnership more effectively as a key lever to achieve global progress but also regionally-specific impact. Actions relating to this latter point will be complimented by actions taken under other recommendations (e.g. recommendation 4).

### Actions planned

#### 2.1 Map university resources and expertise

Conduct a comprehensive mapping of relevant UNSW, international, industry and GOAP Partner institutions expertise, identifying and documenting potential collaborators across disciplines and faculties.

**Timeline:** Q2 2025

- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat

#### 2.2 Increase interaction opportunities across UNSW

Following on from 2.1, long term, creating specific opportunities for GOAP and UNSW academics to interact, including joint research bids, seminar series and student engagement.

- **Timeline:** Q4 2025 - ongoing
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat and UNSW faculties

#### 2.3 Inclusion of UNSW staff in knowledge exchange mechanisms

Actively advertise across UNSW GOAP knowledge exchange events, webinars and community of practice gatherings. Potentially consider joint supervision arrangements for students.

- **Timeline:** Q1 2025 - Ongoing
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat

#### 2.2 Leverage the CSDR Steering Committee

Leverage the senior Steering Committee of the Centre for Sustainable Development Reform to bring Dean and D/PVC power to create and enhance bonds between the University and GOAP.

- **Timeline:** Q2 2025

**Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat Co-Directors (in their role as CSDR Directors)



## Recommendation 3: Further formalise GOAP's governance structure

Further formalise GOAP's governance structure including clear documentation of roles and responsibilities in the structure, as not all roles are included in the current Partnership ToRs.

### Response

GOAP **partially accepts this recommendation** and acknowledges the need to strengthen and clarify the governance framework to reflect the Partnership's evolution and increased complexity beyond the Terms of Reference which makes clear many, but not all, of the formal roles within and across the Partnership.

### Actions planned

#### 3.1 Single documentation outlining governance structure

Map existing roles and identify where those roles are not specified in GOAP governance documentation, draft expanded role definitions to fill the gaps, potentially including an organogram of the GOAP structure. Create a single governance structure document for reference by all stakeholders and a landing page of the GOAP Website for governance documentation.

- **Timeline:** Q2 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat with oversight from Co-chairs and Members

#### 3.2 Governance reference manual for GOAP Secretariat

Draft a reference manual for the GOAP Secretariat outlining key roles of Secretariat staff members and make available of GOAP Website governance documentation page.

- **Timeline:** Q3 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat

#### 3.3 Governance section on website

To enhance visibility, and understanding of, both the governance structure of the Partnership and the expertise within the Secretariat and the wider Partnership we will add dedicated sections to the website that outline the governance section and the technical expertise available. Should any Members also wish their technical expertise to be listed in this section we will make that available also.

- **Timeline:** Q2-3 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat



## Recommendation 4: Improve consistency of, and opportunity for, internal communication and information sharing

Improve consistency of, and opportunity for, internal communication and information sharing among members, partners, fellows, experts and stakeholders: This could include more regular meetings and information sharing among key groups. Information sharing on progress, achievements and collective contributions to shared goals, will continue to build on existing commitment. Improved internal communication with members and partners on internal lines of communication and decision-making, particularly as the Partnership continues to grow, would also support coordination. Broader engagement from the wider network could include regular surveys to gather feedback and virtual options for wider participation like webinars, social media and online forums.

### Response

The GOAP Secretariat **accepts this recommendation** and acknowledges the need to strengthen communication across the Partnership to foster greater collaboration and knowledge sharing across our growing network. This recommendation can also provide an enabling role for implementation of other recommendations.

### Actions planned

#### 4.1 Partnership communications and coordination manager

GOAP has identified funds to employ a partnership communications and coordination manager<sup>1</sup> to focus on improving communications and coordination both internally and externally (see recommendation 1 and 11). The partnership coordination manager will lead the implementation of all activities associated with this recommendation as well as external communications and visibility (recommendation 11).

- **Timeline:** Q1 - Q2 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Directors

#### 4.2 Strategic engagement plan

GOAP will develop a strategic engagement plan to operationalise this recommendation, especially identifying opportunities to improve communications and material dissemination.

**Timeline:** Q1-Q2 2025

**Responsibility:** GOAP Directors

#### 4.3 Annual progress report

GOAP will develop an annual progress report for the Partnership to share activity of Members and Partners of the organisation.

**Timeline:** Q2 2025

- **Responsibility:** GOAP Partnership communications and coordination manager in consultation with Directors

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<sup>1</sup> Specific title to be consistent with UNSW employment and job assessment requirements.



## Recommendation 5: Introduce a more formalised and tailored approach to risk management for GOAP

Introduce a more formalised and tailored approach to risk management for GOAP: As the scope and size of the Partnership has grown, risk management for GOAP now requires a more dedicated approach beyond the overall risk management of the CSDR in which it is hosted.

### Response

The GOAP Secretariat **accepts this recommendation** and acknowledges the need for a more robust, Partnership-specific risk management framework that reflects the GOAP's growing scale and complexity. Noting that the Secretariat's competence does not extend to Partnership risk management, which will be owned by Co-Chairs and actioned by Members. The Secretariat risk management framework must follow the guidelines and processes within the host institution (currently UNSW) risk and compliance policies.

### Actions planned

#### 5.1 Establish dedicated risk management framework and tools

Develop a GOAP Secretariat-specific risk assessment and management templates tailored to ocean accounting activities, establishing clear ownership of risks within the sphere of Secretariat control and Members control.

- **Timeline:** Q1 – Q2 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat with oversight from Co-chairs and Members

#### 5.2 Implement specific risk governance structure

Implement monthly risk reviews at the Secretariat level. Establish regular (quarterly) meetings with Co-Chairs to review risk management register, and review risks at the annual Member's administrative meeting. Develop and implement risk escalation protocols within the GOAP governance frameworks.

- **Timeline:** Q1-Q2 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Co-chairs and Secretariat

#### 5.3 Build Risk Management Capacity

Provide risk management materials, templates and training for secretariat staff and rollout of templates and procedures to GOAP Partners where necessary.

- **Timeline:** Q2 – Q3 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat





## Recommendation 6: Develop a clear long-term strategy to support a shared understanding among delivery partners

Develop a clear long-term strategy to support a shared understanding among delivery partners:  
Develop a clear vision and strategy, such as a strategic plan, outlining the GOAP's vision, goals, objectives and expected outcomes.

### Response

The GOAP Secretariat **accepts this recommendation** and recognises the importance of establishing a clear, shared strategic direction to guide our collective efforts through to 2030 and beyond.

### Actions planned

#### 6.1 Long term strategy

In consultation with Members and Partners, develop a document which clearly and accessibly lays out the long-term vision and strategy of GOAP, including objectives and focal areas for both the Members and the Secretariat. This will be delivered in coordination with the recommendations to review the GOAP's objectives and update the pathways to change for the partnership. The strategy would need to be adopted at an official Members administrative meeting in 2025/6.

- **Timeline:** Q1-Q4 2025

- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat and Members and Partners



## Recommendation 7: Provide clear guidance on how to engage with GOAP and access its services and support

Provide clear guidance on how to engage with GOAP and access its services and support: Offer guidance and resources to members and the GOAP network on the services GOAP provides and how to access its services and support.

### Response

The GOAP Secretariat **accepts this recommendation** and recognises the need to make how to access our services and support mechanisms increasingly transparent and accessible to all partners and potential collaborators.

### Actions planned

#### 7.1 Develop comprehensive service directory

Create easily accessible materials that outline GOAP Secretariat services and support offerings, including eligibility criteria and prerequisites for each type of support and decision making processes. Specifically identifying Member and Non-Member benefits. Document procedures for requesting support and establish service timeframes to manage expectations.

- **Timeline:** Q3 – Q4 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat, with sign-off by Co-Chairs

#### 7.2 Develop engagement materials

Create user-friendly engagement guidance clearly outlining how Members can engage with GOAP, the services and a quick-start or engagement toolkit for Members, including a FAQ section in the Member website.

- **Timeline:** Q2 – Q3 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat



## Recommendation 8: Further strengthen, build and diversify the membership

Further strengthen, build and diversify the membership: Build on support provided to new members to ensure their successful orientation and active engagement, continue to grow membership and consider creating different membership tiers or categories to accommodate diverse needs and interests as membership grows.

### Response

The GOAP Secretariat **partially accepts this recommendation** and recognises the opportunity to enhance our membership structure and support systems to accommodate our growing and diverse network. In the Members administrative meeting December 2023, Members were asked to consider if changes to Membership structure and eligibility would be appropriate, this was rejected by Members. We will ensure that our membership structure maintains GOAP's high standards while providing flexible pathways for engagement that reflect Members' diverse capacities and interests but not implement a new tier or categories of Membership. The role of Members, Partners, Non-Members is recognised as needing further clarity under recommendation 3.

### Actions planned

#### 8.1 Enhanced onboarding of new Members and Partners

Develop a new Members welcome package and orientation material. Offer regular meetings to all new Members to design a work package and approach for engagement with the Secretariat and Membership. Ensure Partners understand their role in the Partnership and the requirements this places upon them, including reporting policies, due diligence and other basic important requirements.

- **Timeline:** Q3 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat and Membership Coordinator

#### 8.2 Strategic membership growth approach

Identify target sectors and regions where new Members need to be prioritised to ensure global coverage of the Partnership, recognising that not all organisations or Partners can be Members of GOAP. Drawing on renewed regional strategies and GOAP strategy (6.1). Document this in a one page, publicly available document, for easy access for new Members, to be published on the GOAP Governance section of the revamped website.

- **Timeline:** Q2 – Q4 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat

#### 8.3 Enhanced member support systems

Create and implement a member support and management platform. Reform the current website to provide improved functionality such as a member resource library or help desk function as requested by Members.

- **Timeline:** Q2-Q4 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat



#### 8.4 Increase opportunities for Members' involvement

Identify methods for increase involvement of Members and opportunities to provide feedback e.g. regular surveys, Provide regular one to one sessions for each Member and relevant GOAP Secretariat Director to identify collaboration pathways and joint institutions.

- **Timeline:** Q2 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat



## Recommendation 9: Continue to invest in and engage expert talent

Continue to invest in and engage expert talent: Continue to attract and retain expert talent in the Secretariat and among partners, expert panel and fellows. Implement a more structured approach to the fellows programme and research management.

### Response

The GOAP Secretariat **accepts this recommendation** and acknowledges the critical importance of building and maintaining our expert capacity, including within the Secretariat and associated external programmes. We recognise that this requires strategic multi-year funding to enable contracts to be of sufficient length to attract such talent to the Secretariat and Fellows programme and the importance of providing sufficient opportunities to ensure we retain this talent (Recommendation 15).

### Planned Actions

#### 9.1 Restructure the Fellows programme

The GOAP Fellows programme is a cornerstone for creating expert knowledge and experience on ocean accounts across multiple sectors. We recognise that to maximise the benefits of this programme improvements need to be made. Specific identified improvements include improvements in the connectivity of the Fellows both internally and externally and increasing the formality of the network to increase access to resources and impact of outputs. Input from the Fellows will be crucial in identifying priorities to improve the network and the Secretariat will consult the Fellows in early 2025 to understand their needs and wants.

- **Timeline:** Q1 - Q3 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat, Partnership Communications and Coordination Manager, Fellows

#### 9.2 Expert panel

Enhancing the Expert Panel and increasing the impact of their work is vital to responding to key country questions on the accounts and driving forward the development of ocean accounts. This will involve a review and update of the expert panel terms of reference and a formalisation of the expert panel process including a dedicated Expert Panel page of the new GOAP website. We will also develop an expert panel contribution tracking system to ensure contributions are appropriately acknowledged.

- **Timeline:** Q2 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat Director responsible for the Expert Panel and Expert Panel lead

#### 9.2 Retain talent

The University of New South Wales, as host of the GOAP Secretariat, already offers a wide range of professional development opportunities and lifelong learning courses. Talent retention and review mechanisms are already in place, including six-monthly workplan reviews between all senior staff and individuals across the Secretariat. However, the loss of key staff at the Secretariat who hold both deep technical knowledge and vital relationships is a significant risk to the Partnership as a whole. Formal recognition opportunities and development pathways are limited by the host institution's career





development and progression frameworks. The GOAP Secretariat Directors will work with HR and Secretariat staff to identify what more can be done to ensure that the Secretariat retains the talent within it. Programme-based finance limits the opportunities to support staff with CPD budgets, but where these are flexible we will do so.

- **Timeline:** Q2 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat Director with UNSW HR.

#### 9.4 Knowledge management

Key to improving research management will be an effective and easily navigable knowledge management system which ensures research and analysis is shared and available across all parties; both internally and externally. The expert talent across the Partnership is vital for the creation of this knowledge and must be supported to deliver such a system.

- **Timeline:** Q2 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat Directors

#### 9.4 Knowledge access

The renewal of the website (see recommendation 11) will also show case the high quality outputs from the Partnership, increasing visibility and attracting experts to the Partnership. Further, the development of an expert's list and database will increase access and knowledge of the wider Partnership as to the available expertise across the Partnership.

- **Timeline:** Q2 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat Directors



## Recommendation 10: Further explore regionalised approaches

Explore opportunities for building on current regional implementation to meet the needs of countries particularly as work continues to scale. Ensure funding allocation supports equitable distribution across regions.

### Response

The GOAP Secretariat **accepts this recommendation** and recognizes the importance of ensuring equitable regional implementation as we scale our work, acknowledging the diverse needs and capacities across different regions. GOAP already implements regional approaches through the regional community of practice model. The GOAP Secretariat has limited control on funding allocated to regions; the funding that GOAP currently receives constrains the regions and countries that the Partnership can work in. The GOAP secretariat will make further efforts to diversify its donor base to meet regional needs in a more equitable manner.

#### 10.1 Diversify and increase funding

Work together with Member and Non-Members to develop targeted projects for regions and countries which are currently underserved and identify opportunities for diversification of the GOAP funding base to increase support beyond the currently funded Members. In coordination with recommendation 15.

- **Timeline:** Q1 2025 - ongoing
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat Directors, Members and Partners

#### 10.2 Open call

To increase the transparency and funding opportunities for all Members, work towards the identification of funding for an open call for ocean accounts projects to assist in identifying and supporting under-served countries and new Partners.

- **Timeline:** Q1 – Q2 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat Directors

#### 10.3 Strengthen regional Communities of Practice

Strengthen the regional Community of Practice networks to ensure they meet the needs of the regions as identified by CoP Members. Collaborate with the regional Community of Practice networks to identify and access funding opportunities. Increase the presence and use of the Website for informing Members across the community of what is happening and increasing the ability for within regional connections of experts and practitioners. Where relevant, and the need identified, develop regional specific implementation guidance materials and document success stories and lessons.

- **Timeline:** Q1 – Q4 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat Directors



## Recommendation 11: Enhance external communications and explore new ways to disseminate knowledge.

Enhance external communication and explore new ways to disseminate knowledge, including a more accessible website. Ensure knowledge products are easily available, such as an easily accessible information hub or platform that consolidates all available resources, making it easier to find relevant information.

### Response

The GOAP Secretariat **accepts this recommendation** and acknowledges the need to strengthen our external communications and make our knowledge resources more accessible to all stakeholders.

#### 11.1 Partnership coordination

Under recommendations 1 and 4 the GOAP Secretariat agreed to identify fundings for a partnership communications and coordination manager to lead the implementation of a number of recommendations both internally and externally. A key focus of this position will be to identify new ways to disseminate knowledge and increase the availability and accessibility of GOAP resources.

- **Timeline:** Q1 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat

#### 11.1 Website redevelopment

Redesign the GOAP website to increase functionality and navigability, including the development of a digital resources platform or database for the technical guidance and other important guiding documentation.

**Timeline:** Q1-2 2025

- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat and Partnership communications and coordination manager.



## Recommendation 12: Mainstream GESI considerations

Mainstream Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) considerations in both GOAP's implementation and technical work on ocean accounts: Actions could include developing a GESI action plan for GOAP, the collection of GESI specific MEL data and supporting inclusive representation in decision-making roles. At the technical level, continue efforts and focus relating to social accounts development and GESI policy relevance and inclusion in decision-making.

### Response

The Secretariat **accepts this recommendation** and recognises the critical importance of embedding GESI principles throughout our organisational practices and technical frameworks. We have always acknowledged that effective ocean accounting must reflect and address social equity considerations and make visible the importance of coastal communities and the important role the ocean plays for these communities. Individual Members will need to decide if, and how, to implement GESI recommendations.

### Actions planned

#### 12.1 Develop social account framework and technical guidance

GOAP's ambition is to fully develop the third dimension of the accounts; the social account, and in addition, enable the environmental and economic dimensions to take account of local and traditional knowledge. GOAP have recently launched the social accounts working group to facilitate and support collaboration across the Partnership to develop the technical guidance and case studies for the implementation of social accounting frameworks. GOAP will work with the community to complete a series of briefings, secondary data analysis, primary data collection and pilots to inform the technical and practical basis of these accounts. Ultimately publishing new technical framework guidance on the implementation of social accounts within the ocean accounting framework and the role of these in sustainable ocean development policy.

- **Timeline:** Q1 2025 – Q2 2026
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat in collaboration with Social Accounts Working Group.

#### 12.2 Gender equity and social inclusion baseline analysis

The GOAP Secretariat will include in existing contracts, commission, or identify existing relevant, GESI baseline analysis for priority area with which it works. This analysis will be used as the basis to inform Secretariat planning prior to project implementation as well as project delivery. The Secretariat competence in this area extends only to directly supported, funded and implemented ocean accounting activities. Partners and Members implementing activities with no funding from the Secretariat are recommended, but not required, to implement such activities.

- **Timeline:** Q1– Q3 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat and Partners

#### 12.3 Gender equity and social inclusion thematic analysis

The GOAP Secretariat will include in existing contracts, commission, or identify existing relevant, GESI thematic analysis on ocean accounts. The analysis will assist in identifying opportunities within the programming to support GESI and ensure that we thoroughly identify and address related risks. The



thematic analysis will be published in a GOAP briefing paper to be used by all stakeholders as needed.

- **Timeline:** Q3 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat and Partners

#### 12.4 Data disaggregation

The GOAP Secretariat will work towards, where appropriate and locally acceptable, gender disaggregated data for monitoring and evaluation purposes. It is our ambition to go beyond gender disaggregated data to account for other inclusion metrics, however we recognise the challenges faced in the collation of these data.

- **Timeline:** Q1 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat





## Recommendation 13: Revise the wording of the current GOAP objectives and improve the articulation of higher-level ODA impacts, including poverty alleviation

Revise the wording of the current GOAP objectives and improve the articulation of higher-level ODA impacts, including poverty alleviation: This could be done as part of an overall theory of change or strategy. The wording of objective 2 needs updating given the timing has now passed (2023), and the wording of objective 3 should be updated to reflect the range of country priorities in relation to ocean accounts (i.e. reflecting those wanting targeted accounts for specific objectives as well as those building complete sequences of ocean accounts).

### Response

GOAP Secretariat partially **accepts this recommendation** as a basis for fully reflecting the collective objectives of Members and strengthening opportunities for securing financial security for the Partnership. However, we recognise that Members are from both ODA-eligible and non-ODA-eligible countries and we should continue to effectively serve all Members.

### Actions planned

#### 13.1 Objective review

GOAP Secretariat will, in consultation with Members and Co-chairs, conduct a thorough review of the current objectives against the contemporary context. The review will focus on the relevance and clarity of the current objectives, the emerging priorities and opportunities to better align the objectives with developmental outcomes and international frameworks. Based on this review we will develop updated objectives for 2030 relevant across the Partnership to be presented to Members for consultation. This will be coordinated with the overall strategy update and pathways of change revision (see recommendation 6 and 14).

- **Timeline:** Q2 – Q4 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat in consultation with Members and Co-chairs.



## Recommendation 14: Monitor and evaluate impact

The current development of GOAP's pathway to change and strengthening MEL systems should include focus on evidence gathering of contributions to change at the outcome and impact level, the inclusion of poverty alleviation in GOAP's overall pathway to change and sharing learnings.

### Response

The GOAP Secretariat **accepts this recommendation** and acknowledges the need to strengthen our evidence base for higher-level outcomes and impacts, particularly supporting well-being, resilient and less vulnerable livelihoods and poverty alleviation. After five years of implementation, it is timely to review and revise GOAP Pathways to Change to reflect and apply the learning from 5 years of implementation.

### Planned Actions

#### 15.1 Pathways of Change

GOAP will completely revise our pathways of change in line with the recommendations contained within the evaluation, providing for a detailed articulation of the institutional systems GOAP works within and a description of how we are engineering systems change. This will provide the basis for revised and strengthened MEL structures, beyond the main funder.

- **Timeline:** Q1 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat

#### 15.2 Enhance MEL system

In line with the Pathways to Change revision (15.1), the MEL system already in place will be enhanced to increase the evidence gathering for contributions made at the outcome and impact levels, recognising that these are likely to be longer term changes that may not be apparent until three or five years after initial engagement. The system will also be designed for dissemination of knowledge and lessons learned for new Members to increase the speed of change in future engagements.

- **Timeline:** Q2 - Q3 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat



## Recommendation 15: Prioritise securing long-term strategic funding with ongoing diversified funding for GOAP beyond 2026

Prioritise securing long-term strategic funding with ongoing diversified funding for GOAP beyond 2026: Despite success in leveraging substantial funds for ocean accounts at national level, this has not occurred for the Partnership itself, including long-term resources for the secretariat. Secretariat and members should continue to explore sustainable long-term funding options, particularly through the current UK Government partnership. Continue ongoing diversified, alongside exploring new funding partnerships, ensuring funding remains aligned with strategic priorities. Consider the addition of specialised partnership development expertise in the secretariat given the urgency of securing a long-term future for GOAP to continue to build on the successes and momentum achieved to date.

### Response

The evaluation recognised that strategic funding provided by the UK government to GOAP has been vital in supporting the growth of the Partnership. It also noted that this funding period ends in March 2026 and GOAP is facing a shortfall of funding if it is continue the current level of support it provides – let alone meet ambitions to scale up the global support. GOAP Secretariat **accepts this recommendation** and acknowledges the critical importance of establishing sustainable, diversified funding streams to ensure the Partnership's long-term effectiveness and impact.

### Planned Actions

#### 15.1 Strengthen Partnership Development Capacity

GOAP Secretariat will recruit a Partnership Development Manager/Finance Mobilisation Manager<sup>2</sup> to lead the implementation of this recommendation. They will develop new strategic partnerships and focus on resource mobilisation efforts to support the Secretariat, Members and Partners to ensure the sustainability of ocean accounts programming nationally and internationally.

- **Timeline:** Q1 2025 and On-going
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat Directors

#### 15.2 Develop comprehensive funding strategy to 2030

Create long-term funding sustainability plan and fundraising/partnership engagement strategy (2025-2030), specifically focused on filling the gap left by the UK funding ending in March 2026. Develop a comprehensive mapping of potential funding sources and partnership opportunities across all paradigms, creating clear value propositions for different donor types.

- **Timeline:** Q2 2025
- **Responsibility:** Partnership Development Manager/Finance Mobilisation Manager and GOAP Secretariat Directors with Co-chairs

#### 15.3 Enhance current funder relations

Build on and strengthen the relationship between GOAP and the UK Government, ensuring that the visibility of the UK and contribution is fully recognised in GOAP materials. GOAP Secretariat to work with the UK Government to leverage the UK political power to engage donors beyond the UK. GOAP

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<sup>2</sup> Title to be consistent with UNSW position descriptions and accountabilities.



will work to place the Partnership in the best possible position to receive further multi-year funding from the UK and other donor countries. Develop similarly close relationships with current donors, increasing the understanding of the alignment between their objectives and ocean accounts implementation. Implement a funder communication strategy ensuring regular and aligned updates are communicated to GOAP funders.

- **Timeline:** Ongoing
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat Directors with Co-chairs, Partnership Development Manager/Finance Mobilisation Manager

#### 15.4 Explore new funders and funding mechanisms

Explore new opportunities and funders to support countries, Members and Secretariat operations. Ensure Senior GOAP presence within relevant international fora to build widespread interest and knowledge of ocean accounts and ensure engagement with potential funders and partners.

- **Timeline:** Ongoing
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat Directors with Co-chairs, Partnership Development Manager/Finance Mobilisation Manager

#### 15.5 Implement agile fundraising systems and approaches

Establish a donor database and tracking system, proposal templates and development tools, and active funding pipeline and opportunity monitoring processes to ensure the depth of knowledge on the funding landscape.

- **Timeline:** Q2 2025
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat Directors, Partnership Development Manager/Finance Mobilisation Manager

#### 15.5 Reporting

Funding is a joint exercise between Members, countries and the GOAP Secretariat. It is important that all Members support this exercise and buy into this approach. To enhance transparency and recognition of this coordinated approach across all Members, GOAP will report on funding and financials to Members administration meetings, ultimately ensuring that Members acknowledge the risk that the GOAP Secretariat will not exist without diversification of funding and this being a joint endeavor across all Members.

- **Timeline:** Next Members Meeting
- **Responsibility:** GOAP Secretariat Directors