

Implementing the UN 2030 Agenda

What role for marine science? 6 December 2017, Brussels

Marine science to support the UN2030 Sustainable Development Goals 6th EMB Forum Message

Seas and Ocean¹ are fundamental to life on Earth. Human impacts on our seas and Ocean are increasing and yet they remain the most poorly studied environments on Earth that continue to yield discoveries new to science and society.

Our seas and Ocean are largely governed through a fragmented patchwork of voluntary international agreements. Globalisation and increasing demand is driving exploitation of marine resources on an unprecedented scale. In response, there is an overriding need for science to inform the economic, environmental and societal context of related policy development and implementation. The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development², with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), provides a globally significant opportunity to focus scientific effort on delivering the knowledge and expertise required to underpin sustainable development in our seas and Ocean. SDG 14 refers specifically to the need to conserve and sustainably use the Ocean, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, but it is understood that the marine environment underpins about 60% of all SDGs. Co-ordinated scientific effort is fundamentally important to understanding and tackling these multiple and complex challenges.

The 6th European Marine Board Forum³ was held on 6th December 2017 in Brussels to discuss Implementing the UN 2030 Agenda and the role for marine science in this endeavour. Over 150 representatives from marine science organizations, NGOs and Government registered to attend the event. World leading authorities provided presentations and participated with delegates in discussions exploring the role of science in contributing to the sustainable development of our seas and Ocean.



Credit: Fred Guerdin, Scorpix

¹ <http://oceanliteracy.wp2.coexploration.org/>

² <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

³ <http://marineboard.eu/6th-marine-board-forum>



Key messages

During the Forum it was announced by the Executive Director of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO that the General Assembly of the United Nations has formally supported an International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030, and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO received the mandate to work together with all ocean stakeholders to develop a common Implementation Plan for the UN Decade of Ocean Science. This decade represents both a huge opportunity and a challenge to the marine science community. The preparations during the coming three years must be used to develop initiatives designed to ensure that marine science is aligned with and actively contributes to the achievement of the SDGs during the Decade of Ocean Science.

To this end, Forum participants highlighted the need to support:

- **Science integration** through multi-disciplinary, collaborative and holistic approaches to marine science, taking in account ecosystem-based and precautionary approaches.
- **Scientific capacity building** through more effective training, knowledge exchange and technology transfer both locally and globally.
- **Science engagement with society** to promote better understanding of the marine environment, the role marine science can play in helping to inform decision makers and the need to engage relevant stakeholders in defining scientific priorities.
- **Science-based societal debate** on how best to develop governance of our seas and Ocean using science to inform the development of policy, law and sustainable economic development.

In response to these key messages, the European Marine Board is committed to:

1. Helping support **ocean assessment** efforts with the best available science.
2. Helping support the transparent, systematic collection of **openly accessible data and observations**.
3. **Strengthening institutional frameworks** and specifically, encouraging the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) to become the lead advocate for ocean science and assessment in the United Nations.
4. Actively supporting preparations for the planned **United Nations Decade of Ocean Science in Support of Sustainable Development**.
5. **Facilitating informed dialogue** through the publication of authoritative marine science and ocean governance briefing documents designed to meet the needs of key stakeholders and decision makers.
6. Using the flagship European Marine Board *Navigating the Future* publication series to highlight research needs. *Navigating the Future V*, to be published in 2019, will include recommendations for high-impact and visible contributions by the European marine scientific community to the Decade of Ocean Science.
7. Contributing recommendations for marine graduate education and training needs in the context of SDGs by building upon its forthcoming publication: **Training the 21st Century Marine Professional- A new vision for marine graduate education and training programmes in Europe**.
8. **Facilitating the provision of scientific advice** to decision makers as part of the marine scientific community's contribution to the UN 2030 Agenda.