



Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2022-2025

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Guiding the Regional Seas
towards global ocean-related
goals for the period 2022-2025

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Regional Seas Strategic Directions (RSSD) 2022-2025

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Abbreviations

BAT	Best available technique
BEP	Best environmental practice
DESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEO BON	The Group On Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
iDiv	German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research
IGO	Inter-governmental Organisation
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
MSP	Marine spatial planning
MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield
MTS	Medium Term Strategy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECM	Other effective area-based conservation measures
POW	Programme of Works
RAC	Regional Activity Centres
RACER	Relevant, Acceptable, Credible, Easy, Robust
RCU	Regional Coordination Centres
RFMO	Regional fisheries management organization
RSCAP	Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans
RSP	Regional Seas Programme
RSSD	Regional Seas Strategic Directions
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-WCMC	UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization



Sea Ice, Svalbard, 2015. Sea ice plays an important role for the climate and ecosystems. The extent and thickness of sea ice is significantly decreasing. Photo by Peter Prokosch. Courtesy GRID-Arendal. www.grida.no/resources/3636

Background

Since 1974, the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs) Programme has evolved to consist of eighteen unique instruments for enhancing marine environmental cooperation tailored to regional specificities, that are strategically placed to respond to the urgent call for securing planetary health. More specifically, the RSCAPs aim to strengthen the capacity within the region to protect and conserve the marine environment, through education, training, communication, and institution-building, as well as drawing in partnering institutions for delivering key functions, such as information management and pollution monitoring. In addition, testing of protocols and methodologies and setting of targets at the regional level help to inform the development of global responses.

Despite concerted action over the decades to protect the ocean, existing problems continue to escalate, and a new generation of threats are on the horizon. This is witnessed by the recent COVID-19 pandemic that has wreaked socioeconomic havoc on coastal communities and has increased awareness of the link between ecosystem health and human action that necessitates bringing together these aspects in efforts to save the ocean and secure peoples' livelihoods. This calls for bringing nature in as an ally and partner to combat climate change, prevent zoonosis outbreaks and to secure life-supporting ecosystem services. We will also need to rethink production and consumption patterns so that societies are assisted to transition from a linear to a circular economy with markedly less pollution and handling of wastes in a sustainable manner.

Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2022-2025 Goal

The Regional Seas Strategic Directions (RSSD) 2022-2025 aims to more effectively mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of oceans into policies and programmes, harmonize methodologies for tracking progress, and foster an integrated response to combat the ecological, climate, pollution, and health crisis for achieving long-term health of the ocean, as well as the people who rely on the ocean for subsistence or otherwise.

RSSD Roles and Responsibilities

The RSSD 2022-2025 aims to be very specific on the different roles, functions and mandates of the entities involved in its follow up and implementation:

- Eighteen RSCAPs, each with its own autonomous governing body consisting of the countries/Parties in the region, decision-making processes, work plans and budgets to which the Parties/countries contribute to through assessed or voluntary contributions.
- For seven of these eighteen RSCAPs, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is designated as the secretariat, six being administered through the Ecosystems Division and one through UNEP's Europe Office.
- UNEP provides overall coordination and facilitation of work, including convening the Global Annual Meetings of Regional Seas and Action Plans to facilitate dialogue between RSCAPs, endeavoring to harmonize and strengthen regional approaches thus helping to deliver as one.
- The UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) with its universal membership is uniquely positioned to provide overarching global policy guidance, helping to bring together work of RSCAPs, including facilitating partnering with relevant intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders.

How does the RSSD 2022-2025 contribute to global processes?

The RSSD will contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, in particular Goal 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.

More specifically, the RSSD 2022-2025 will contribute to and strengthen the delivery of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2025 and Programme of Work (PoW) 2022-2023, particularly regarding activities that address ocean-related components of the identified priority areas of climate action, nature action, chemical and pollution action, science-policy, environmental governance, finance and economic transformations and digital transformations.

In addition, the RSSD 2022-2025 promotes and provides further clarity on the contribution of RSCAPs to UN Decades on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) and Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).

In essence, the RSSD 2022-2025 outlines how UNEP's Regional Seas Programme will deliver on regional and global goals and agreements to protect and sustainably use the oceans.

The aim is to increase the visibility and strategic involvement of RSCAPs in key processes at global and regional levels, while ensuring that UNEP delivers on its mandate in relation to the marine environment.

To this end, the document functions as a catalyst of action for agreements, targets, measures and tools specific to regional needs, ensuring that global ocean-related commitments are addressed, tracked and reported. This document is also closely related to UNEP's Marine and Coastal Strategy, which describes actions to implement the main strategic directions of the RSSD 2022-2025.

The Regional Seas Programme in a nutshell

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

RSCAPs activities aim to strengthen the capacity within the region to enable countries to implement the action plans and work programmes, through education, training, communication and institution-building. The RSCAPs draw in partnering institutions for delivering key functions, including information management and pollution monitoring. In addition to functioning as an effective mechanism for regional marine cooperation, testing of protocols and methodologies and setting of targets at the regional level help to inform global responses.



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



Harvesting seaweed by hand at low tide in Jambiani, a village in Unguja, Tanzania, 2016. Photo by Yann Macherez.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Harvesting_seaweed_in_Jambiani.jpg

Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2022-2025

The objective of the Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2022-2025 is to achieve a diverse, resilient and pollution-free ocean that supports equitable sustainable livelihoods. This includes climate stability, living in harmony with nature, ocean sustainability and operating within planetary boundaries.

To achieve this objective, three strategic goals are outlined, taking into account current and emerging objectives at the international and regional level.

- I. Secure diverse, resilient, and productive marine and coastal ecosystems.**
- II. Support assessment, information and knowledge management at all levels to strengthen science-policy dialogue on marine and coastal issues and their interactions.**
- III. Increase reach and mainstreaming of the Regional Seas Programme, including advocacy, political support and dialogue for furthering action.**

The Strategic Directions outlines a holistic approach to deliver on existing commitments, as well as on ongoing and emerging activities of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, incorporating other approaches such as the ecosystem approach, the One Health approach and human rights-based approach. It promotes gender equality and human rights with a view to enhance the capacity of local

communities to pursue sustainable livelihoods. The Strategic Directions recognizes the critical role of the ocean in delivering the following goals to mitigate existential threats of the Anthropocene:

- Stabilize the climate to prevent ocean acidification and rising sea levels.
- Protect biodiversity to maintain ocean and coastal ecosystem functions.
- Create circular material flows to prevent ocean and coastal resource depletion and marine pollution.

The targets outlined in the three strategic goals present a hierarchy as illustrated in Figure 2. Goal I strengthens implementation of UNEP’s MTS and PoW and relevant global goals in addressing the drivers of ocean and coastal degradation. Goal II provides the tools to facilitate cooperation and achievement of Goal I through improved knowledge management and enhanced science-policy dialogue. Goal III outlines means to raise the profile of UNEP’s Regional Seas Programme at all levels and strengthen the role of the RSCAPs in achieving ocean-related elements of global goals.

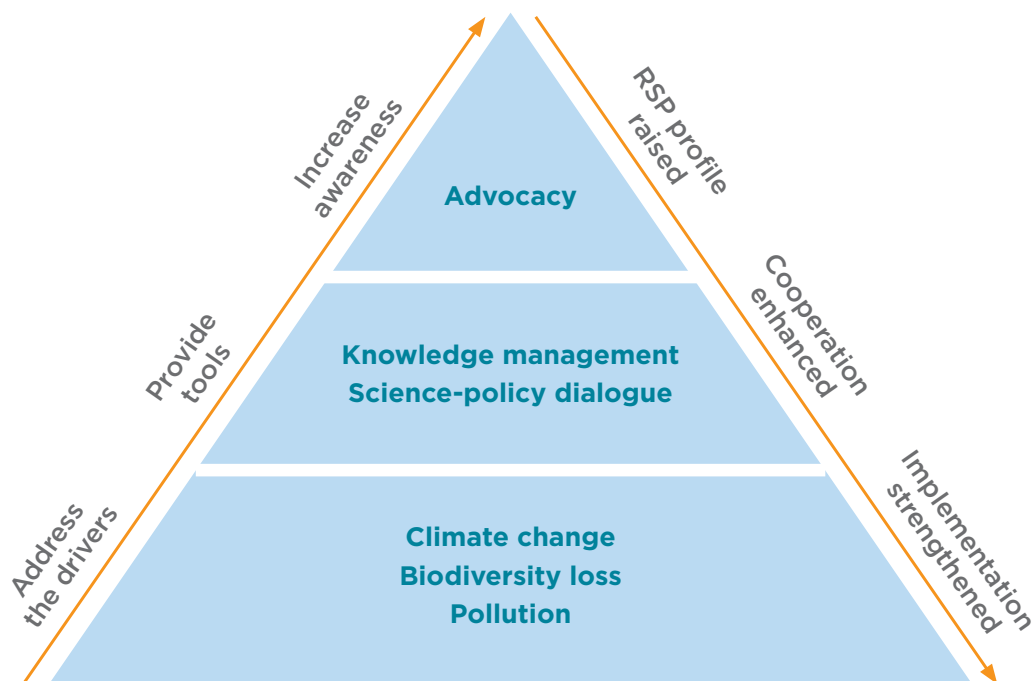


Figure 2: Illustrative hierarchy of the three RSSD 2022-2025 strategic goals.

Medium-term outcomes (to 2025)

Goal I:

1. Economically and socially sustainable pathway established to halt and reverse the loss of marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystem integrity through conservation, restoration, sustainable use of oceans, coastal and marine resources, ensuring connectivity of marine protected areas within and between RSCAPs.
2. Climate change mitigation and adaptation goals incorporated in all ocean-related decision-making for Regional Seas Programme target audiences: decarbonisation, dematerialisation and resilience pathways towards sustainable oceans, including use of nature-based solutions, adopted by decision-makers at all levels.

3. Reduced pollutants to ocean and coastal ecosystems.
4. Collective action to address sound management of chemicals and waste achieved, building on the implementation of related regulatory instruments of the RSCAPs leading to integrated policies at regional and national levels.
5. Marine environmental quality improved by pollution prevention and action.

Goal II:

1. Countries and stakeholders have increased capacity, finance and access to technologies to deliver on the adaptation and mitigation goals of the Paris Agreement and other relevant MEAs.
2. Policy/decision-making for ocean action is informed by the latest science-based analysis and data generation.
3. RSCAPs have promoted cooperation and coherence in countries in mainstreaming and delivering on the marine environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda.

Goal III:

1. Human health and marine environment outcomes optimised through enhanced capacity and leadership, including through enhanced cooperation between RSCAPs.
2. The Regional Seas Programme informs the UN Environment Assembly for setting the global marine environmental policy agenda.
3. National legislation and policies to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of marine ecosystems adopted.
4. Institutional capacity enhanced to adopt and act on national and international ocean-related commitments towards addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.
5. State and non-state actors adopt national action plans covering oceans under relevant MEAs.

Long-term outcomes or vision (beyond 2025)

- Oceans governed sustainably and holistically at all levels, and the Regional Seas Programme is recognized as a results-based organisation.
- All sectors contribute to maintaining ocean and coastal ecosystem functions, and the rate of marine biodiversity loss does not exceed the natural extinction rate.
- Natural and productive seascapes are healthy, resilient and sustainably managed.
- Good environmental status of marine and coastal environment achieved through action to eliminate leakage of plastics, prevent nutrient run-off, increase wastewater treatment, and achieve sound chemicals and waste management.
- Ocean and coastal ecosystems contribute to mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and ocean acidification ceases to threaten marine environments and ecosystem services.
- Circular material flows prevent pressure of resource extraction shifting to the ocean and seabed.

How does the RSSD 2022-2025 contribute to the theme of UNEA-5?

UNEP's report "Making Peace with Nature" communicates how climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution can be tackled jointly with the aim to inform policy under the theme of the fifth session of UNEA "Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the SDGs".¹ The report highlights that two-thirds of the ocean area has been significantly altered by human action, which necessitates a more synergistic and mutually supportive approach to achieve goals, targets, commitments, and mechanisms under the key multilateral agreements on climate change, biodiversity, oceans and pollution. In response, the RSSD 2022-2025 aims to address these challenges in parallel enabling UNEP and RSCAPs in cooperation with partner institutions to reap benefits from joint activities across thematic spheres and generate socio-economic benefits for those who rely directly or indirectly on marine and coastal ecosystem services (Figure 3).

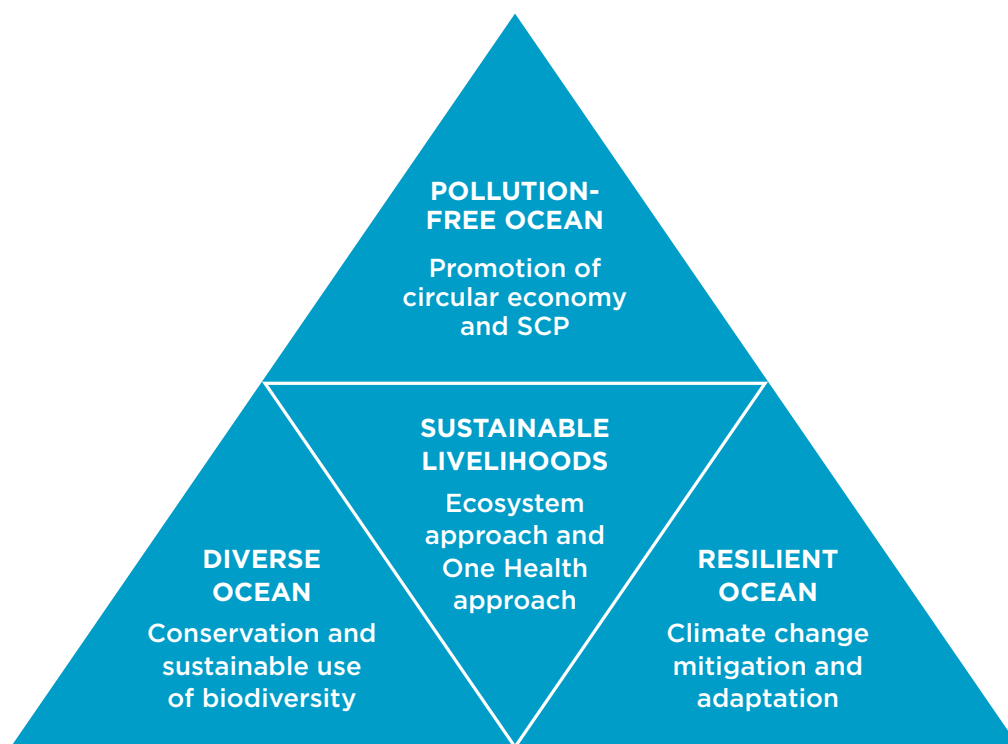


Figure 3. The complexities facing the marine environment require systems integration between thematic policy priorities, while ensuring the promotion of the ecosystem approach and One Health approach to anchor the RSSD 2022-2025 to the sustainable development realm.

¹ UNEP (2021). Making Peace with Nature: A Scientific Blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies. Available online: <https://www.unep.org/resources/making-peace-nature>



Fishermen from nearby Andranomavo village attempt to catch fish at dawn in Nosy Hara Marine National park, one of Madagascar's last remaining Dugong and seagrass habitats. Photo credit Lisa Murray, UN Environment.

Strategic Directions Implementation Plan

This section outlines the implementation plan to fulfill the normative and facilitative role of the Regional Seas Programme. It includes the targets and supporting activities to achieve the three strategic goals:

Goal I.

Secure diverse, resilient, and productive marine and coastal ecosystems.

Goal II.

Support assessment, information and knowledge management at all levels to strengthen science-policy dialogue on marine and coastal issues and their interactions.

Goal III.

Increase reach and mainstreaming of the Regional Seas Programme, including advocacy, political support and dialogue for furthering action.

The implementation plan includes three columns, as explained below.

First, the plan outlines 16 RSP targets to assist in achieving the three strategic goals, enabling the coherent delivery of ocean-related aspects of UNEP's MTS and global goals in the 2030 Agenda, Paris Agreement, Post-2020 global biodiversity framework and Beyond-2020 framework for sound management of chemicals and waste.

Second, the targets have been accompanied with RSP-specific indicators. They include “activity-based indicators” to highlight the normative and facilitative role of the RSCAPs in their region. In addition, 22 indicators from the draft Regional Seas Core Indicator Set have been included for consideration in reporting for this period, and for possible further development and formalization in the future. While some of them are activity-based (response) indicators, the vast majority are “impact-based indicators” that are grouped separately. Future Strategic Directions may build on this set of indicators, based on trends and gaps illustrated through the progress reports of individual RSCAPs, towards a strengthened set of indicators that are “Relevant, Acceptable, Credible, Easy, Robust” (RACER). A phased approach for the development of RSP targets and indicators is outlined in Section 4.

Third, the targets have been accompanied with ocean-relevant targets of UNEP’s MTS, PoW, the SDGs and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to facilitate cooperation on implementation and follow-up with relevant lead and supporting agencies that may be consulted during project design. Thus, a partnership framework is outlined, describing the role of the RSP in achieving the ocean-related components of global targets and providing opportunities to strengthen individual RSCAP reporting as well as UNEA reporting on the RSP effectiveness in achieving the goals of the RSSD.

Lastly, the implementation plan for each strategic goal concludes with the UNEP activities that would support implementation of the RSSD 2022-2025 across all regions. Support may be in the form of administrative activities, financial provisioning and advocacy.



Hauling the net ashore Philippines, 2014. Marine fishing in the Philippines is more than an industry; it is a way of life ... notably net fishing from small boats and the beach. Photo by Bernard Spragg. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/volvob12b/41839135262/in/photolist-26Kbvg5-nP2ek9-urzu5x>



Bird's eye view of Kenya's mangrove forest, 2017. Taken during a site visit for the GEF Blue Forest project. Photo by Rob Barnes. Courtesy GRID-Arendal. www.grida.no/resources/11079

GOAL I

Secure diverse, resilient, and productive marine and coastal ecosystems

The ocean supports the livelihoods of more than three billion people, provides a main source of protein for more than one billion, contains the greatest biodiversity of life on Earth, and helps stabilize the climate. However, ocean health is severely threatened by a combination of anthropogenic stressors, including climate change, ocean acidification, over-harvesting, habitat destruction, the spread of invasive species and pollution, including plastic waste, sewage, nutrient runoff, substances of concern, etc. These challenges do not manifest in isolation, but can reinforce each other, for instance, without action to limit global warming, marine heatwaves, coupled with ocean acidification and loss of oxygen, will result in the crossing of critical thresholds in the ocean and in coastal systems, beyond which ecosystem functioning will be impaired.²

The focus of Goal I is to progress towards a holistic and integrated response by addressing the drivers of ocean health degradation resulting from climate change, loss of marine and coastal biodiversity and all forms of marine pollution. Addressing these drivers includes taking better advantage of innovative solutions that merge thematic policy responses. This requires integration of nature-based solutions that help to simultaneously protect critical ocean ecosystems and the services they provide and achieve climate goals, including absorbing atmospheric carbon and protecting coastal communities from extreme weather impacts. Similarly, strengthening the focus on moving towards a circular economy and sustainable consumption and production patterns will assist in targeting upstream activities, including greening the supply chain from use of substances of concern, while also tackling downstream activities, to limit both land- and sea-based sources, providing a pathway to good environmental status for marine and coastal ecosystems.

² UNEP (2021) Making Peace with Nature: A Scientific Blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies, p.81. Available online: <https://www.unep.org/resources/making-peace-nature>

Operational measures towards achieving Goal I

Table 1: RSP targets, indicators and global goals towards achieving Goal I by addressing relevant drivers.

	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
1.1	<p>Resilience increased through nature-based solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection, sustainable management and restoration of marine and coastal carbon sinks and reservoirs and other critical ecosystems supported, including mangroves, corals, seagrasses and salt marshes. Ecosystem-based adaptation promoted to enhance adaptive capacity and resilience, as well as reduced vulnerability to climate change. 	<p>ACTIVITY-BASED INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of formal and informal partnerships established and/or enhanced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-RSCAP Other IGOs and stakeholders Number of meetings and workshops hosted, including for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing of best practices, incl. BAT/BEP Monitoring and evaluation methods and standards Cross sectoral stakeholder cooperation Number of capacity building activities conducted (incl. number of participating member states) Number projects completed/initiated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot projects Regional projects (incl. number of participating member states) Number of reports and guidelines published Number of awareness and education activities undertaken (incl. number of participating member states) <p>IMPACT INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ocean acidification: aragonite saturation, pH, alkalinity (RS indicator 11) Annual mean sea surface temperature 25m below the surface (RS indicator 4) <p>Other – Reporting where additional data is available to highlight the projects, activities and impacts of individual RSCAPs towards the target.</p>	<p>MTS: Increase in territory of land/seascapes that is under improved ecosystem conservation and restoration.</p> <p>Post-2020 Goal A. The area, connectivity and integrity of natural ecosystems increased by at least [X%] supporting healthy and resilient populations of all species while reducing the number of species that are threatened by [X%] and maintaining genetic diversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global seagrass extent, coral reef extent and saltmarsh extent [UNEP-WCMC] (Post-2020) Trends in mangrove extent [Global Mangrove Watch] (Post-2020) <p>SDG Target 14.3 – Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations [IOC-UNESCO] (SDG Indicator 14.3.1) <p>Post 2020 Target 7. By 2030, increase contributions to climate change mitigation adaption and disaster risk reduction from nature-based solutions and ecosystems-based approaches, ensuring resilience and minimizing any negative impacts on biodiversity.</p>

	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
1.2	<p>Sustainable and equitable management, use and trade of marine and coastal biological resources strengthened in cooperation with relevant MEAs, RFMOs and other stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The biodiversity-pollution-fisheries nexus applied for delivering co-benefits. 	<p>ACTIVITY-BASED INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of formal and informal partnerships established and/or enhanced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-RSCAP Other IGOs and stakeholders Number of meetings and workshops hosted, including for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing of best practices, incl. BAT/BEP Monitoring and evaluation methods and standards Cross sectoral stakeholder cooperation Number of capacity building activities conducted (incl. number of participating member states) Number projects completed/initiated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot projects Regional projects (incl. number of participating member states) Number of reports and guidelines published Number of awareness and education activities undertaken (incl. number of participating member states) <p>IMPACT INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAO stock status: % stocks overfished compared to MSY (RS Indicator 12) Marine trophic index (RS Indicator 13) Fish catches within EEZs (tonnes) – total capture production (RS Indicator 5) Application of risk assessment to account for pollution and biodiversity impacts from aquaculture (RS Indicator 6) Destruction of habitat due to aquaculture (RS Indicator 7) Fisheries measures in place (by-catch limits, area-based closures, recovery plans, capacity reduction measures) and multilateral/bilateral fisheries management arrangements (RS Indicator 20) <p>Other – Reporting where additional data is available to highlight the projects, activities and impacts of individual RSCAPs towards the target.</p>	<p>MTS: Natural assets valued, monitored and sustainably managed.</p> <p>SDG Target 14.4 – By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels [FAO] (SDG indicator 14.4.1) Number of MSC Chain of Custody Certification holders by distribution country [Marine Stewardship Council] (Post-2020) <p>SDG Target 14.6 – By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing [FAO] (SDG Indicator 14.6.1) <p>SDG Target 14.B – Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries [FAO] (SDG Indicator 14.b.1). <p>Post-2020 Target 4. By 2030, ensure that the harvesting, trade and use of wild species of fauna and flora is legal, at sustainable levels and safe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels by fish type [FAO] (Post-2020)

	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
1.3	<p>Marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) promoted towards the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework targets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine protected areas designated, effectively managed and ecological connectivity strengthened. • Sea areas under spatial planning increased. • Degraded marine ecosystems restored. • Cooperation and integration of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) strengthened between different RSCAPs and various sectoral organizations (e.g., fisheries and biodiversity organisations). 	<p>ACTIVITY-BASED INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of formal and informal partnerships established and/or enhanced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inter-RSCAP - Other IGOs and stakeholders • Number of meetings and workshops hosted, including for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing of best practices, incl. BAT/BEP - Monitoring and evaluation methods and standards - Cross sectoral stakeholder cooperation • Number of capacity building activities conducted (incl. number of participating member states) • Number projects completed/initiated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pilot projects - Regional projects (incl. number of participating member states) • Number of reports and guidelines published • Number of awareness and education activities undertaken (incl. number of participating member states) <p>IMPACT INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Marine protected areas designated (RS Indicator 21) • Length of coastal modification and km² of coastal reclamation (RS Indicator 8) • Trends in critical habitat extent and condition (RS Indicator 15) • National ICZM guidelines and enabling legislation adopted (RS Indicator 22) <p>Other – Reporting where additional data is available to highlight the projects, activities and impacts of individual RSCAPs towards the target.</p>	<p>MTS: Number/hectares of landscapes or marine areas under improved management.</p> <p>SDG Target 14.2. By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration to achieve healthy and productive oceans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas [UNEP, RSP] (SDG Indicator 14.2.1) <p>SDG Target 14.5 – By 2020, conserve at least 10% of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas [UNEP-WCMC, IUCN, UNEP] (SDG indicator 14.5.1) <p>Post 2020 Target 1. By 2030, [50%] of sea areas globally are under spatial planning addressing land/sea use change, retaining most of the existing intact and wilderness areas. [UNEP, RSP]</p> <p>Post 2020 Target 1. By 2030, restore [X%] of degraded marine ecosystems and connectivity among them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Ecosystem Restoration Index [GEO BON – iDiv] (Post-2020) <p>Post 2020 Target 2: Aiming by 2030 to protect and conserve at least 30% of the planet through a well-connected and effective system of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures with a focus on areas particularly important for biodiversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected Area Coverage of Key Biodiversity Areas [BirdLife International, UNEP-WCMC & IUCN] (Post-2020)

	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
1.4	<p>Threatened species protected and prevented from extinction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invasive alien species effectively controlled in marine and coastal areas. 	<p>ACTIVITY-BASED INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of formal and informal partnerships established and/or enhanced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inter-RSCAP - Other IGOs and stakeholders • Number of meetings and workshops hosted, including for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing of best practices, incl. BAT/BEP - Monitoring and evaluation methods and standards - Cross sectoral stakeholder cooperation • Number of capacity building activities conducted (incl. number of participating member states) • Number projects completed/initiated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pilot projects - Regional projects (incl. number of participating member states) • Number of reports and guidelines published • Number of awareness and education activities undertaken (incl. number of participating member states) <p>IMPACT INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of Red List Index species (RS Indicator 14) <p>Other – Reporting where additional data is available to highlight the projects, activities and impacts of individual RSCAPs towards the target.</p>	<p>SDG Target 15.8 – By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of countries adopting relevant national legislation and adequately resourcing the prevention or control of invasive alien species [IUCN] (SDG indicator 15.8.1) <p>Post-2020 Target 5. By 2030, manage, and where possible control, pathways for the introduction of invasive alien species (IAS), achieving [50%] reduction in the rate of new introductions, and control or eradicate invasive alien species to eliminate or reduce their impacts, including in at least [50%] of priority sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red List Index (impacts of IAS) [IUCN & BirdLife International] (Post-2020)

	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
1.5	<p>Sustainable consumption and production patterns promoted as a means to achieve a circular economy and towards expediting achievement of relevant international agreements and SDG13 targets where unsustainable patterns relate to impacts on ocean health and adaptation (acidification, coral reef management, coastal resilience), and where these reduce effectiveness of ecosystem-based mitigation (blue carbon, tipping points, ecosystem valuation).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrient runoff prevented. • Wastewater management enhanced. • Marine plastic pollution reduced. 	<p>ACTIVITY-BASED INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and implementation of regional measures • Implementation of regional action plans and dedicated monitoring schemes enhanced • Preparation of policies for prevention and management of marine plastic pollution • Discussion on a new global agreement for plastic pollution supported • Number of formal and informal partnerships established and/or enhanced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inter-RSCAP - Other IGOs and stakeholders • Number of meetings and workshops hosted, including for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing of best practices, incl. BAT/BEP - Monitoring and evaluation methods and standards - Cross sectoral stakeholder cooperation • Number of capacity building activities conducted (incl. number of participating member states) • Number projects completed/initiated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pilot projects - Regional projects (incl. number of participating member states) • Number of reports and guidelines published • Number of awareness and education activities undertaken (incl. number of participating member states) <p>IMPACT INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantification and classification of beach litter items (RS Indicator 3) • Chlorophyll a concentration as an indicator of phytoplankton biomass (RS Indicator 1) • Locations and frequency of algal blooms reported (RS indicator 9) • % port waste reception 14.1 facilities available; Incentives to reduce land-based sources; Amount of recycled waste on land (%) (RS Indicator 18) <p><i>(continued next page)</i></p>	<p>MTS: Global plastic pollution reduced.</p> <p>MTS: Land-based sources of pollution reduced in freshwater and ocean, including marine litter and nutrients.</p> <p>MTS: Resilient waste and wastewater systems and infrastructure upscaled.</p> <p>MTS: Consumer awareness and behaviours shifted towards products and services with lower environmental and nature footprints through digital nudging, green filtering, product labelling, certification schemes and value-chain indices.</p> <p>UNEA Res 3/7. Long-term elimination of plastic discharge into the oceans.</p> <p>SDG Target 14.1 – By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Index of coastal eutrophication and floating plastic debris density [FAO] (SDG indicator 14.1.1) <p>SDG Target 14.4 – By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels [FAO] (SDG indicator 14.4.1) <p>SDG Target 6.3 – By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of domestic and industrial wastewater flows safely treated [UN-Habitat] (SDG indicator 6.3.1) <p><i>(continued next page)</i></p>

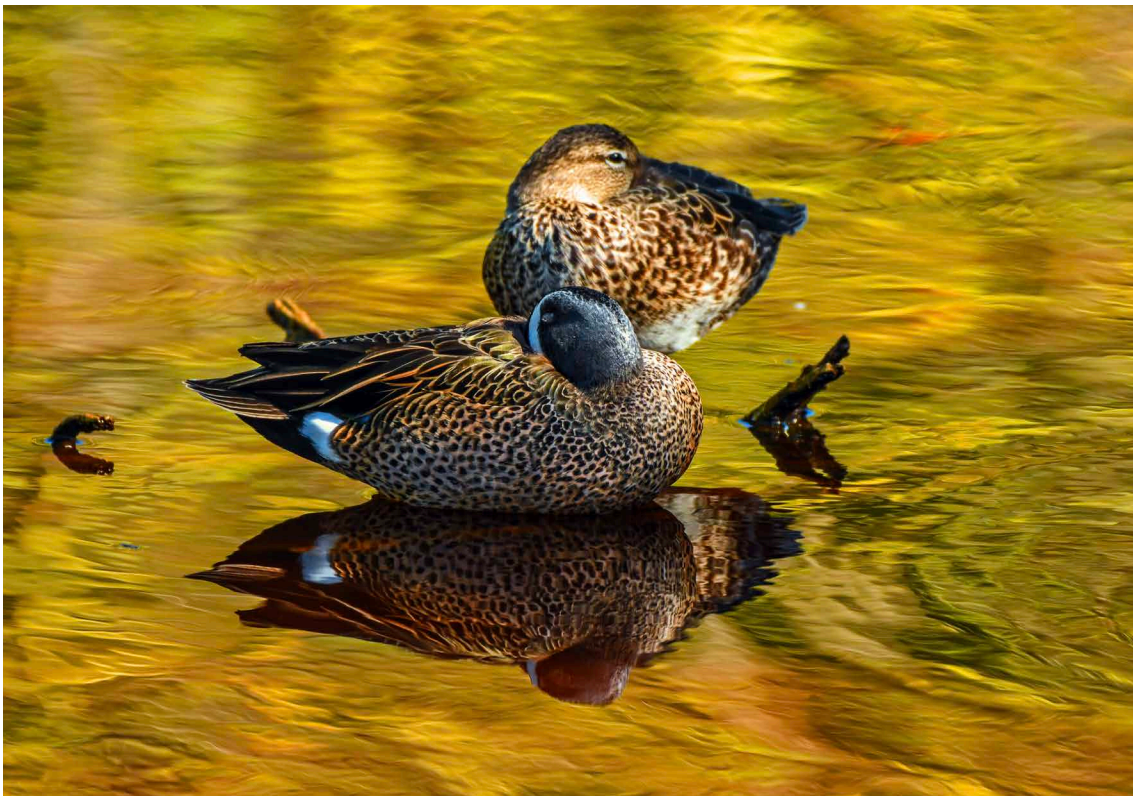
	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % coastal urban population connected to sewage facilities; % of wastewater facilities complying with adequate standards; % of untreated wastewater (RS Indicator 17) <p>Other - Reporting where additional data is available to highlight the projects, activities and impacts of individual RSCAPs towards the target.</p>	<p>SDG Target 12.1 - Implement the 10Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of countries developing, adopting or implementing policy instruments aimed at supporting the shift to sustainable consumption and production [UNEP] (SDG indicator 12.1.1) <p>SDG Target 14.7 - By 2030, increase the economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP in small island developing States, least developed countries and all countries [FAO] (SDG Indicator 14.7.1) <p>SDG Target 8.4 - Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic material consumption, domestic material consumption per capita, and domestic material consumption per GDP [UNEP] (SDG Indicator 8.4.2) <p>Post 2020 Target 6. By 2030, reduce pollution from plastic waste [by x%] to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and human health.</p> <p>Post 2020 Target 6. By 2030, reduce pollution from excess nutrients [by x%] to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and human health. [OECD]</p> <p>Post-2020 Target 14. By 2030, achieve reduction of at least [50%] in negative impacts on biodiversity by ensuring production practices and supply chains are sustainable. [Marine Stewardship Council]</p>

	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
1.6	<p>Pollution affecting marine and coastal areas prevented towards the achievement of the Beyond-2020 Framework for sound management of chemicals and waste:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synergies with the work of ocean-related measures of chemicals and waste MEAs contributed to and maximised. • Conventions and Protocols effectively implemented within the mandate of RSCAPs and where relevant to regional issues and priorities, for both land- and sea-based sources of marine pollution. 	<p>ACTIVITY-BASED INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of formal and informal partnerships established and/or enhanced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inter-RSCAP - Other IGOs and stakeholders • Number of meetings and workshops hosted, including for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing of best practices, incl. BAT/BEP - Monitoring and evaluation methods and standards - Cross sectoral stakeholder cooperation • Number of capacity building activities conducted (incl. number of participating member states) • Number projects completed/initiated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pilot projects - Regional projects (incl. number of participating member states) • Number of reports and guidelines published • Number of awareness and education activities undertaken (incl. number of participating member states) <p>IMPACT INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trends for selected priority chemicals including POPs and heavy metals (RS Indicator 2) • % National action plans ratified/operational (RS Indicator 16) <p>Other – Reporting where additional data is available to highlight the projects, activities and impacts of individual RSCAPs towards the target.</p>	<p>MTS: Number of policy, regulatory, financial and technical measures developed to reduce pollution to air, water, soil and the ocean with support of UNEP.</p> <p>MTS: Progress in the chemicals and pollution-related aspects of the 2030 agenda where UNEP focuses its work.</p> <p>SDG Target 12.4 – By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parties to MEAs on hazardous waste, and other chemicals that meet their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by each relevant agreement [UNEP] (SDG Indicator 12.4.1) • Hazardous waste generated per capita; and proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment [UNEP] (SDG Indicator 12.4.2) <p>SDG Target 6.3 – By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally. [UN-Habitat, UNEP]</p> <p>SDG Target 11.6 – By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in controlled facilities out of total municipal waste generated, by cities [UN-Habitat, DESA-UNSD] (SDG Indicator 11.6.1) <p>SDG Target 12.5 – By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National recycling rate, tons of material recycled [UNEP] (SDG Indicator 12.5.1) <p>Post 2020 Target 6. By 2030, reduce pollution from biocides [by x%] to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and human health. [OECD]</p>

UNEP supporting activities for achieving Goal I

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

- As implementing agency, facilitate access to GEF funding to RSCAPs priorities (e.g., implementation of NAPs).
- Inform the UN Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams to include RSCAPs priorities in UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.
- Provide guidance and necessary tools for implementation of relevant UNEA resolutions, UNEP's MTS and PoW, and joint RSCAP activities, including reports on emerging issues in response to findings from RSCAPs.
- Organize training workshops to address global drivers and emerging issues to facilitate the implementation of the ocean-related aspects of MEAs.



Blue-winged Teal, 2020. (*Anas discors*, Sarcelle à ailes bleues). At J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Sanibel Island, Florida. Photo by Joel Gambrelle. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/147880431@N05/50139182653/>



Underwater coral reef monitoring trip. Saint-Leu marine educational area. Photo by Bruce Cauvin, Réserve Naturelle Marine de la Réunion. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Exploration_du_r%C3%A9cif_coralien_de_l%27Aire_marine_%C3%A9ducative_de_Saint-Leu.jpg

GOAL II

Support assessment, information and knowledge management and science-policy dialogue on marine and coastal issues

International ocean action is most effective when it is rooted in information that enables to track progress, recognizes emerging threats and identifies new solutions. In addition, maintaining two-way science-policy dialogue on marine issues is critical for enhancing evidence-based decision-making and providing concrete examples of best practices. The Regional Seas Programme plays an important role in supporting assessment, information and knowledge management and science-policy dialogue on marine issues, including through peer learning and experience sharing in regional multi-stakeholder fora, also to fulfill growing needs and expectations from the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, and other relevant MEAs and processes.

The focus of Goal II is supporting harmonized data collection, monitoring and reporting, enhancing dialogue with global science-policy bodies and platforms and providing early warning, including on cumulative impact analysis, enabling RSCAPs to inform other fora of emerging issues. This includes also utilizing UNEP's role to translate regional efforts to global outputs in areas of **monitoring** (e.g., harmonize indicator development and consolidate regional data), **assessment** (e.g., coordinate the preparation of global assessments that aggregate regional data), and **information management** (e.g., display information and visualize trends).

Operational measures towards achieving Goal II

Table 2: RSP targets, indicators and global goals towards achieving Goal II by supporting assessment, information and knowledge management and science-policy dialogue.

	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT			
2.1	<p>Regionally harmonized data collection, assessment and monitoring of relevant SDG indicators supported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG indicators 14.1.1, 14.2.1 and 14.5.1 harmonized and data collection ongoing. • The Regional Seas Core Indicators Set (adopted at the 17th Global Meeting of RSCAPs³) refined and reporting thereon progressed. 	<p>ACTIVITY-BASED INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work of the Regional Seas Indicator Working Group revived towards collection of regionally harmonized data, including consideration of indicators to track and report on progress towards improved resource efficiency, sustainable consumption and production and food security, amongst others • DPSIR approach incorporated in assessment of effectiveness of measures • Appropriate SDG and Regional Seas indicators tracked <p>IMPACT INDICATORS:</p> <p>Other – Reporting where additional data is available to highlight the projects, activities and impacts of individual RSCAPs towards the target.</p>	<p>MTS: Number of national or sub-national entities that adopt integrated approaches to address environmental and social issues and/or tools to value monitor and sustainably manage biodiversity supported by UNEP.</p> <p>MTS: Number of policy, regulatory, financial and technical measures developed to reduce pollution to air, water, soil and the ocean with support of UNEP.</p>

³ See UN doc. UNEP/WBRS.18/INF9, available online at: <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/regional-seas-core-indicators-set>

	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
2.2	<p>Capacity promoted across all regions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer learning and sharing of best practices and information between RSP member states and different RSCAPs enhanced. • Monitoring and data collection advanced. • Preparation of regional assessments advanced. • Regional reporting strategies designed. • Stakeholder engagement strengthened, including relevant global MEAs, RFMOs and other sectoral organisations. 	<p>ACTIVITY-BASED INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regionally harmonised methods for data collection, assessment and monitoring established • Number of workshops hosted on data collection, assessment and monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intra-regional - Inter-regional - Other stakeholders • Number of relevant guidelines published <p>IMPACT INDICATORS:</p> <p>Other – Reporting where additional data is available to highlight the projects, activities and impacts of individual RSCAPs towards the target.</p>	<p>MTS: Institutional capacity enhanced and accountability frameworks strengthened to adopt and act on national and international commitments.</p> <p>MTS: Number of countries, national, regional and subnational authorities with strengthened capacity to develop sound environmental data, statistics, scientific assessments, and early warning systems with UNEP support.</p> <p>MTS: Number of relevant global, regional and national fora, institutions and governments using data, statistics, scientific assessments, early warning and foresight provided by UNEP for catalysing policy making and action.</p> <p>SDG Target 14.A – Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of total research budget allocated to research in the field of marine technology [UNESCO-IOC] (SDG Indicator 14.a.1)

	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
2.3	<p>Synergies across reporting requirements to reduce duplication of efforts fostered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modular reporting piloted across relevant MEAs with reporting under Conventions and Protocols of the Regional Seas. 	<p>ACTIVITY-BASED INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility of modular reporting across or harmonized reporting across relevant MEAs assessed Modular reporting piloted across relevant MEAs piloted by select countries or RSCAPs National and regional reporting templates aligned with relevant regional and international MEAs <p>IMPACT INDICATORS:</p> <p>Other – Reporting where additional data is available to highlight the projects, activities and impacts of individual RSCAPs towards the target.</p>	<p>MTS: Coherent UNEP delivery and integrated implementation of environmental policies and priorities within the UN system through UN Reform.</p> <p>MTS: Strengthened transparency and accountability of UNEP as a results-based organisation and improved sustainability of its operations.</p> <p>MTS: Number of entities reporting on mainstreaming and implementing the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda including under the System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment.</p> <p>MTS: Number of United Nations agencies, and multilateral environmental agreements using data/statistics on environmental trends and assessments identified through UNEP.</p> <p>MTS: Releases of pollutants to the environment reduced with UNEP support.</p> <p>MTS: Implementation of accepted evaluation recommendations within the time frame defined in the implementation plan.</p>

	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
SCIENCE-POLICY DIALOGUE			
2.4	<p>Research fostered to deepen understanding of marine environments, in particular deep-sea ecosystems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging threats identified, including seabed mining, underwater noise pollution and other novel pollutants. • Scientific support provided to increase understanding of marine and coastal environmental changes, in particular those that are abrupt, accelerating or irreversible with potentially significant global consequences. • Relevant policy responses identified. 	<p>ACTIVITY-BASED INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of relevant scientific studies undertaken • Number of regions where emerging threats have been identified • Number of RSCAPs that have communicated emerging threats regionally and to UNEP, using the DPSIR approach where possible • Number of expert groups supported e.g. One Health High-Level Expert Council <p>IMPACT INDICATORS:</p> <p>Other – Reporting where additional data is available to highlight the projects, activities and impacts of individual RSCAPs towards the target.</p>	<p>MTS: Policy/decision-making for Climate Action is informed by the latest science-based analysis and data generation.</p> <p>MTS: Number of countries, national, regional and subnational authorities with strengthened capacity to develop sound environmental data, statistics, scientific assessments, and early warning systems with UNEP support.</p> <p>MTS: Nature integrated in national and international public health decision making.</p> <p>SDG Target 14.A – Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of total research budget allocated to research in the field of marine technology [UNESCO-IOC] (SDG Indicator 14.a.1) <p>SDG target 3.9: By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene (exposure to unsafe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) services) (SDG indicator 3.9.2) • Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisoning (SDG indicator 3.9.3) <p>Post-2020 Target 8. By 2030, ensure benefits, including nutrition, food security, livelihoods, health and well-being, for people, especially for the most vulnerable through sustainable management of wild species of fauna and flora. [FAO, IUCN & BirdLife International]</p> <p>Post-2020 Target 11. By 2030, increase benefits from biodiversity and green/blue spaces for human health and wellbeing, including the proportion of people with access to such spaces by at least [100%], especially for urban dwellers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ocean Health Index [NCEAS] (post-2020)

	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
2.5	<p>Science-policy dialogue enhanced on marine and coastal issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of global environmental assessments contributed to, including through RSP-specific assessment chapters/sections. Findings of assessments (produced by RSCAPs) communicated and engagement in dialogue with decision makers increased to support evidence-based decision-making to assist RSCAPs in advocating for enforcement of existing obligations under regional MEAs. Regional-specific knowledge provided to support policymaking for protection and sustainable use of marine ecosystems towards ensuring food security and sustainable livelihoods in support of a sustainable Blue Economy and poverty eradication. 	<p>ACTIVITY-BASED INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant marine and coastal environmental assessments undertaken Assessment results communicated to appropriate fora RSP assessments incorporated in global environmental assessments <p>IMPACT INDICATORS:</p> <p>Other – Reporting where additional data is available to highlight the projects, activities and impacts of individual RSCAPs towards the target.</p>	<p>MTS: Sound science, data/statistics, analysis, information and knowledge generated and shared.</p> <p>MTS: Number of plans, approaches, strategies, policies, action plans or budgeting processes of entities at the national, regional and global levels that integrate environmental goals as a result of UNEP support.</p> <p>MTS: Improved science and indigenous and local traditional knowledge contribute to sustainable management of Nature.</p> <p>MTS: Number of countries, national, regional and subnational authorities or entities that incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem-based approaches into development and sectoral plans, policies and processes for the sustainable management and/or restoration of terrestrial, freshwater and marine areas with UNEP support.</p> <p>MTS: Number of regional Issue-based coalitions that focus on environment-related themes/ incorporate environmental perspectives into their work through use of UNEP’s tools and support.</p> <p>SDG Target 8.9 – By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate [UNWTO] (SDG indicator 8.9.1) <p>SDG Target 14.7 – By 2030, increase the economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP in small island developing States, least developed countries and all countries (SDG Indicator 14.7.1)

UNEP supporting activities for achieving Goal II

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

- Develop and manage the Regional Seas knowledge management platform.
- Visualize trends and progress achieved through the World Environment Situation Room.⁴
- Coordinate input from RSCAPs to UNEP's global environment assessment processes and facilitate input to other assessment processes, including Regular Process.
- Assess the RSSD indicators towards further development of impact and response indicators.
- Harmonize indicator development, in particular for ocean-related SDG indicators, where UNEP is the custodian agency.



Recollection of plankton net after sampling is depicted, Isfjorden in Svalbard, during the fieldwork of Arctic microbiology course, 2017. Plankton net is used to collect small organisms from ocean or sea. Photo by Kertu Liis Krigul. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Planktoniv%C3%B5rgu_korjamine.jpg

4 <https://wesr.unep.org/topic/globalmonitoring>



Cuttlefish congregate off the coast of Whyalla, Upper Spencer Gulf Marine Park, in South Australia. Many species of fish and sea creatures abound in this unique marine habitat, being one of only a handful of inverse estuaries in the world. Photo Dr. Karen Raubenheimer.

GOAL III

Increase reach and mainstreaming of the Regional Seas Programme, including advocacy, political support and dialogue for furthering action

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

The focus of Goal III is to intensify cooperation and coordination between relevant multilateral bodies and other processes, both at national, regional and global levels, to achieve a systems response to meet growing needs and expectations. This necessitates fortifying partnerships and reaching out to new partners, including deepening interaction with UN Environment Assembly to increase the role, visibility, and impact of the Regional Seas Programme.

Operational measures towards achieving Goal III

Table 3: RSP targets, indicators and global goals towards achieving Goal III by increasing reach and mainstreaming of the RSP.

	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
3.1	<p>The relationship of the RSP with the UN Environment Assembly is enhanced and the profile of the RSP as a mechanism for delivering on ocean-related aspects of SDGs is increased.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEA is regularly informed of progress made by the RSP. • UNEA resolutions provide guidance to further the work of the RSP. 	<p>ACTIVITY-BASED INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of RSP member states taking action to implement UNEA resolutions of ocean-related measures • Number of RSP member states assisted in support of UNEA resolution implementation of ocean-related measures • Summary of RSP supportive activities and, where possible, outcomes to UNEA provided <p>IMPACT INDICATORS:</p> <p>Other – Reporting where additional data is available to highlight the projects, activities and impacts of individual RSCAPs towards the target.</p>	<p>SDG Target 17.14 – Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development (SDG Indicator. 17.14.1) <p>SDG Target 17.16 – Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of countries reporting progress in multi-stakeholder development effectiveness monitoring frameworks that support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals [OECD, UNDP] (SDG Indicator 17.16.1) <p>Target 14.C – Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of “The future we want”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law, as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources (SDG Indicator 14.c.1)

	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
3.2	<p>Cooperation enhanced with relevant UN bodies, MEAs, international financial institutions, philanthropies and other relevant processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ocean-related activities of MEAs supported, including the process towards the BBNJ agreement. • Ocean-related work of UN bodies and task forces supported, including UNEP's role in the One Health High-Level Expert Council. • Resources and sustainable funding mobilized for delivering RSP activities. 	<p>ACTIVITY-BASED INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of partnership MoUs signed • Number of RSCAP partnership frameworks established • Number of meetings and task forces Supported • Financing options identified and communicated to RSCAPs, RACs and member states • Quantities of funding mobilised <p>IMPACT INDICATORS:</p> <p>Other – Reporting where additional data is available to highlight the projects, activities and impacts of individual RSCAPs towards the target.</p>	<p>MTS: Number of impact-oriented interagency partnerships or joint initiatives addressing inter alia integrated approaches related to climate change, nature and pollution as well as internal UN sustainability management as a result of UNEP's support.</p> <p>SDG Target 17.7 – Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed.</p> <p>SDG Target 17.14 – Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development.</p> <p>SDG Target 17.16 – Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries. [OECD, UNDP]</p>

	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
3.3	<p>Collaboration between Regional Seas strengthened, in particular through the Regional Seas Programme Annual Meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twinning, capacity building and knowledge exchange between RSCAPs promoted • The capacity of Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and regional action plans to provide support at the national levels strengthened. 	<p>ACTIVITY-BASED INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of inter-RSCAP and RAC meetings and workshops hosted, e.g. for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing of best practices, incl. BAT/BEP, relating to the development and implementation of RSP action plans - Harmonised reporting on progress towards development and implementation of RSP action plans • Number of RSCAP member state meetings and workshops hosted, e.g. for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of relevant national action plans giving effect to RSP conventions and action plans. - Sharing of best practices, incl. BAT/BEP for implementation of national action plans giving effect to RSP action plans • Number of twinning projects, capacity-building projects organise between the RSCAPs <p>IMPACT INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National ICZM guidelines and enabling legislation adopted (RS Indicator 22) <p>Other – Reporting where additional data is available to highlight the projects, activities and impacts of individual RSCAPs towards the target.</p>	<p>MTS: Institutional capacity enhanced and accountability frameworks strengthened to adopt and act on national and international commitments.</p> <p>MTS: Number of plans, approaches, strategies, policies, action plans or budgeting processes of entities at the national, regional and global levels that integrate environmental goals, as a result of UNEP support.</p> <p>SDG Target 13.3 – Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment [UNFCCC] (SDG Indicator 13.3.1)

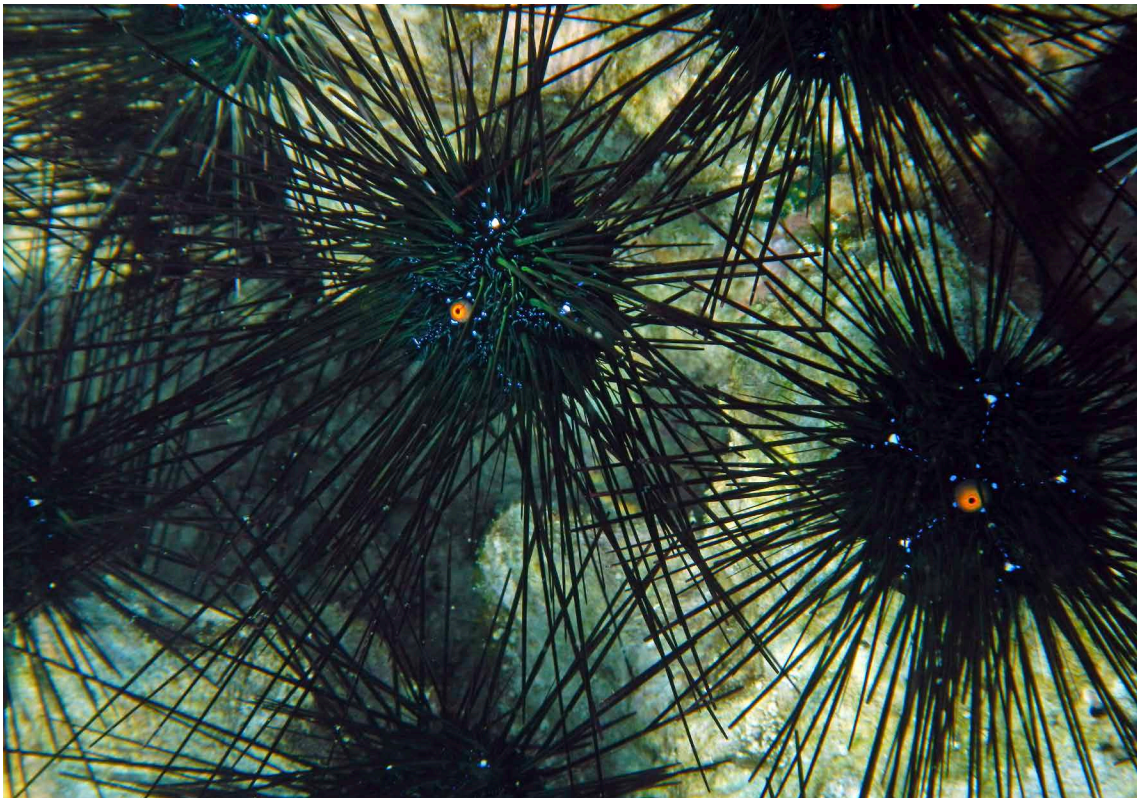
	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
3.4	<p>The delivery of RSP activities promoted through national action plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption, participation and implementation of national action plans of Regional Seas Conventions and Protocols promoted. • The marine environment and ecosystem approach mainstreamed into national strategies and action plans under relevant global MEAs, including the CBD and Paris Agreement. 	<p>ACTIVITY-BASED INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of member states informed of ecosystem-based measures relating to the marine environment for possible inclusion in national strategies and action plans that give effect to relevant MEAs • Number of relevant model policies developed and shared with RSCAPs, RACs and member states <p>IMPACT INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RS Indicator: National Action Plans to reduce input from land-based sources • % national adaptation plans in place; Sector based national adaptation plans; Number of existing national and local coastal and marine plans incorporating climate change adaptation (RS Indicator 19) • % National action plans ratified/operational (RS Indicator 9) <p>Other – Reporting where additional data is available to highlight the projects, activities and impacts of individual RSCAPs towards the target.</p>	<p>MTS: Number of entities at the national, regional or global levels that UNEP has supported in developing integrated approaches and tools for enhanced coordination, cooperation and synergies for the coherent implementation of multilateral environmental agreements.</p> <p>SDG Target 14.C – Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of “The future we want”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law, as reflected in the UNCLOS, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources (SDG Indicator 14.c.1)

	RSP Targets	RSP-specific Indicators (for consideration in RSCAP reporting where information is available)	Global targets, indicators and lead/supporting agencies (UNEP MTS and PoW, UNEA, SDG, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)
3.5	<p>RSP activities mainstreamed into country programming.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resident Coordinators, UN Country Teams (including all agencies, funds and entities operating at the national level) engaged. RSP priorities and activities aligned in UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and other national planning processes. 	<p>ACTIVITY-BASED INDICATORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RSSD communicated to UN Resident Coordinators/UNCTs RSCAP progress reports communicated to UN Resident Coordinators/UNCTs Emerging issues for all regions communicated to UN Resident Coordinators/UNCTs Number of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks addressing ocean-related issues <p>IMPACT INDICATORS:</p> <p>Other – Reporting where additional data is available to highlight the projects, activities and impacts of individual RSCAPs towards the target.</p>	<p>MTS: Number of regional issue-based coalitions that focus on environment-related themes/ incorporate environmental perspectives into their work through use of UNEP’s tools and support.</p> <p>MTS: Number of impact-oriented interagency partnerships or joint initiatives addressing inter alia integrated approaches related to climate change, nature and pollution as well as internal UN sustainability management as a result of UNEP’s support.</p> <p>MTS: Sustained engagement of Member States and UN representatives, in particular from the Multilateral Environmental Agreements, in the Environment Assembly.</p> <p>SDG Target 17.6 – Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism.</p> <p>SDG Target 17.14 – Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development (SDG Indicator 17.14.1) <p>SDG Target 17.16 – Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of countries reporting progress in multi-stakeholder development effectiveness monitoring frameworks that support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals [OECD, UNDP] (SDG Indicator 17.16.1)

UNEP supporting activities for achieving Goal III

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

- Convene the Global Annual Meeting of Regional Seas and Action Plans.
- Function as a link to other UN agencies and other international organizations.
- Facilitate collaboration between RSCAPs.
- Provide guidance to facilitate cooperation between RSCAP focal points and other MEA focal points.



Black Diadema Sea Urchin (*Diadema antillarum*), Mu Ko Lanta Marine National Park, Thailand, 2015. The Black Sea Urchin is characterized by its exceptionally long black spines. It is an important herbivore on the coral reefs. When the population of these sea urchins is at a healthy level, they are the main grazers which prevent algae overgrowth of the reef. Photo by Peter Prokosch. Courtesy GRID-Arendal. www.grida.no/resources/3483



This superb Leafy seadragon is endemic to Australian temperate waters. It's colouration and leafy appendages give it excellent camoflouge on kelp-covered rocky reefs. Photo Dr. Karen Raubenheimer.

Reporting on Progress of the Implementation Plan

Options for developing reporting

Two options for enhancing reporting of the implementation plan are described below.

1. The Global Annual Meeting of RSCAPs reporting

Progress on implementing the Strategic Directions agreed for the period 2022 – 2025 shall periodically be reported on by the RSCAPs. A final review will be provided at the Global Annual Meeting of Regional Seas and Action Plans to be held in 2025. Reports should include outputs and outcomes towards achieving the RSP medium-term outcomes, according to the reporting template to be developed by UNEP.

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

- Providing a template for RSCAP reporting.
- Consolidation of regional data and regional/national progress reports to inform UNEA and MTS review.

2. UNEA reporting

The Strategic Directives can serve as a high-level instrument that enables the RSCAPs to regularly report on progress to the UN Environment Assembly, reciprocally, enabling the Assembly to take decisions, when necessary, to guide further action by the RSP. Ideally, this option would require the fifth session of UNEA in 2022 to invite the RSCAPs to report on progress achieved in delivering the RSSD.

A phased approach to developing RSP targets and indicators

A phased approach for the development of indicators during 2022-2025 is described in Table 4. It is intended to further harmonize the work of the RSCAPs, helping to better understand global progress that will be essential to interpret the state of ocean health and adopt necessary global responses. The development of indicators will benefit reporting in both options presented above.

Table 4: Phases of development for RSP indicators.

	Activity	Progress in development of RSP targets and indicators
1	RSSD 2022-2025 adopted	Initial set of targets and indicators agreed at the Global Annual Meeting of RSCAPs 2021
2	Mid-term RSSD reporting	RSCAPs report against indicators for which information is available, indicating N/A where information is not available
3	UNEP leads development of RSP impact and response indicators	RSSD mid-term reporting reviewed by UNEP and RSCAPs for preliminary assessment of trends, gaps and suitability of RSP indicators going forward
4	Global Annual Meeting of RSCAPs 2025 reporting	RSCAPs report against indicators for which information is available, indicating N/A where information is not available



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Above: Humpback whale calf Ha'apai, Tonga, 2015. Humpback whales are known for their magical songs, which travel for great distances through the world's oceans. These sequences of moans, howls, cries, and other noises are quite complex and often continue for hours on end. Humpbacks are powerful swimmers, and they use their massive tail fin, called a fluke, to propel themselves through the water and sometimes completely out of it. Photo by Glenn Edney. Courtesy GRID-Arendal. www.grida.no/resources/3544