

# SUSTAINABLE OCEAN INITIATIVE



## The Sustainable Ocean Initiative

10 years of building capacity and catalyzing  
partnerships to achieve global ocean goals

Report produced with the support of



Convention on  
Biological Diversity



Japan  
Biodiversity  
Fund



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*Seagrass beds in South-East Sulawesi, Indonesia*

# Contents

Acknowledgments.....	3
Foreword .....	4
Executive Summary.....	5
List of Acronyms .....	6
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Capacity needs for a healthy and sustainable ocean .....	7
Supporting progress towards global targets for biodiversity.....	7
<b>2. The Sustainable Ocean Initiative approach .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Bridging capacity gaps to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets .....	12
Mobilising a global community: the SOI partnership .....	13
<b>3. SOI Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Reflections on a global conversation between regional voices .....	17
Future steps for the Global Dialogue .....	19
<b>4. Regional Capacity-Building Workshops.....</b>	<b>24</b>
Future steps for the SOI regional capacity-building workshops .....	27
<b>5. National Capacity-Building Workshops .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Case study: National Capacity-Building Workshop in Namibia.....	33
Case study: National Capacity-Building Workshop in Vanuatu .....	34
Case study: National Capacity-Building Workshop in Cameroon .....	35
<b>6. Training of Trainers .....</b>	<b>38</b>
Reflections on the ToT workshops .....	39
Case study: Using roleplay in a marine spatial planning simulation exercise .....	41
<b>7. SOI in the global ocean community.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>8. Looking ahead .....</b>	<b>45</b>
Image credits.....	45

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- Various global and regional intergovernmental organizations for their collaboration with SOI and for building linkages with their respective processes.

The Secretariat and authors of this report wish to extend their thanks to the many colleagues who provided their views and input in the production of the report, in particular the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI). Grateful thanks are also due to those who kindly allowed the use of their photographs in this publication; credits are provided at the end of this document.



# Foreword

After 10 years of efforts to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, we have seen clearly that the most important tool for effective implementation is not high-tech lab equipment, advanced data analysis techniques nor boats and planes, but rather, it is people. It is people in whom we must invest if we hope to reverse trends in ocean degradation and biodiversity loss. From the local communities and park rangers, to project managers and analysts, up to decision-makers – the success or failure to achieve our goals lies in the hands of those who work every day to conserve and sustainably use marine and coastal biodiversity. But without the capacities needed to effectively carry out their duties, these people will not have the tools to be able to plot a path to sustainability.

This is why the work of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) has been so valuable over the years, and will continue to be important as the global community looks ahead to the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. At the outset, SOI outlined a people-oriented approach, understanding the need to invest in those who are tasked with translating global commitments into on-the-ground action, as well as the fact that enormous knowledge and experience resides across the world in experts who are willing and able to bring their expertise and resources to support capacity-building.

The failure to fully achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets does not negate the enormous strides that have been made around the world and the achievements these efforts have yielded. It only means that

we need to redouble our efforts, scale up successful approaches and invest more in those people who are working hard to change the tide for the ocean and bring stakeholders into our collective global efforts. The work of SOI therefore becomes even more important as we look ahead.



This report, produced with the generous support of the Japan Biodiversity Fund, was commissioned to take stock of the tremendous progress made through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative after more than 10 years of work to enhance capacity and catalyze partnerships towards the achievement of global targets for biodiversity. It aims to capture some of the perspectives and stories of those who have helped to drive SOI as well as those who have benefitted from the Initiative's capacity-building efforts.

Through this report, we also hope to inspire those who have not yet been part of the SOI journey to join in this work and be a part of the SOI global community.

**Elizabeth Maruma Mrema**  
**Executive Secretary**  
**Convention on Biological Diversity**



# Executive summary

Marine and coastal biodiversity – ecosystems, species and genetic material – provides enormous benefits for human well-being and is essential for the healthy functioning of the planet. Marine ecosystems are, however, increasingly facing threats that undermine their ability to provide critical life-supporting services and underpin sustainable development. The impacts of overfishing, pollution, habitat destruction and emerging consequences of climate change, among other threats, are causing unprecedented biodiversity loss in the ocean.

Global goals and targets have been put in place to catalyze collective global responses to address these crises. In particular, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, adopted in 2010 by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 10), focused specifically on means to reverse drivers of biodiversity loss and put the planet on a path towards the CBD 2050 vision of “Living in Harmony with Nature”. However, such targets cannot be achieved unless the enabling conditions are in place to ensure effective ground-level implementation and, namely, that those individuals and institutions charged with implementation are equipped with the tools and resources needed to ensure success.

Various capacity development efforts have aimed to address these needs, yet there is often inadequate focus on the holistic aspects of capacity needs with regards to the ocean and marine life therein. Additionally, the range of capacity development programmes are often not coordinated, resulting in fragmentation and gaps, as well as duplication of efforts.

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) was formed in the margins of CBD COP 10 to specifically address the capacity needs of

developing country Parties to support their efforts in achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. It offers a platform to bring together various sources of support and provide holistic capacity-building.

Over the past 10 years, SOI has taken an impressive journey around the world, working hand-in-hand with a range of stakeholders to tackle the challenges of developing country Parties, link together different sources of capacity-building support and build a global SOI community. A portfolio of activities has been implemented under SOI, including regional and national capacity-building workshops, training of trainers, dialogues among regional organizations and engagement on the margins of major global processes.

This report aims to synthesize the wide range of experiences and success stories that have emerged under SOI, and to take stock of the achievements, challenges and lessons learned through these efforts. It also provides recognition and acknowledgement to the wide range of supporters of SOI and those that have invested their time, resources and goodwill to contribute to SOI’s mission of enhancing capacity to achieve global targets for marine and coastal biodiversity.

SOI has evolved over the years to respond to new priorities and challenges that have emerged, including through decisions of the CBD Conference of the Parties. As the Aichi Biodiversity Targets have reached their 2020 deadline, CBD Parties are working to develop new global goals and targets through the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, expected to be adopted at CBD COP 15 in 2022. As such, SOI will need to evolve to these new goals and targets, and reorient its work to best support CBD Parties in their efforts to achieve them.

# List of acronyms

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
CORDIO	Coastal Oceans Research and Development – Indian Ocean
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
EBSA	Ecologically or biologically significant marine area
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
GIS	Geographic information system
GOBI	Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
LME	Large marine ecosystem
MPA	Marine protected area
MSP	Marine/maritime spatial planning
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NEAFC	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OBIS	Ocean Biodiversity Information System
OECM	Other effective conservation measure
OSPAR	Oslo-Paris Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
RFB	Regional fishery body
RSCAP	Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plan
RSO	Regional seas organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SOI	Sustainable Ocean Initiative
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
VME	Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem



# 1. Introduction

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) is a capacity-building programme established by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to support countries in their efforts to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in marine and coastal areas. SOI builds on the resources and experiences resulting from global efforts to conserve and sustainably manage ocean resources by providing a holistic, action-oriented and strategic framework through which to catalyze partnerships, build on lessons learned and knowledge gained, and facilitate improved coordination and two-way dialogue. Focusing on achieving a balance between the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity, the SOI community is committed to building bridges between biodiversity conservation and resource management sectors.

This publication aims to showcase the many achievements of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative since its inception in 2010, highlighting examples of where SOI activities have generated tangible benefits, and considering the impact of SOI at the local, national and regional levels. Above all, it aims to recognize the many individuals who have contributed to SOI's efforts and success in supporting countries on their journey towards achieving their marine biodiversity targets.

## Capacity needs for a healthy and sustainable ocean

Around the world, efforts are underway to improve the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity. New scientific information, generated by advances in technology, techniques and instrumentation, is contributing to our growing understanding of marine ecosystems, their drivers, functions and services. We are also increasingly aware of how human activities place those natural resources at risk through over-exploitation, pollution and habitat destruction, and that the biggest threat of all – climate change – will irreversibly harm the ocean unless collective action is taken to reduce and/or mitigate humankind's negative impacts on the marine environment.

Societies and coastal communities around the world are heavily dependent on marine resources for their food, livelihoods and general well-being. However, many countries lack the necessary resources and capacities to comply comprehensively with the requirements of national, regional and international agreements and targets on the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources.

While the lack of sound scientific information is often a significant factor, many countries' efforts are also hampered by limited access to appropriate methodologies, equipment, infrastructure and know-how. More fundamentally, for some countries the ability to develop sustainable management strategies or undertake conservation planning is overshadowed by economic or societal priorities that create barriers to securing the political support necessary to initiate or drive change in their environmental agenda.

Effective capacity-building empowers countries to better manage their marine biodiversity and benefit from the services they provide, also supporting the achievement of global goals and targets for biodiversity. Nearly all international environmental agreements and governance frameworks recognize the challenges as well as the rewards of capacity development, and a range of initiatives has been put in place over the years to try and bridge the gap between the aspirations of internationally agreed targets and their implementation at regional, national and community levels. While these efforts have delivered a range of benefits – including access to global datasets, case studies of lessons learned and best practice, mentoring opportunities and partnerships, and additional training resources – they have often been disconnected, fragmented or overlapping in many ways, reducing the overall impact of these efforts.

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative builds on these efforts, resources and experiences by providing a holistic and strategic framework through which to catalyse partnerships, consolidate lessons learned and knowledge gained, and facilitate improved coordination and two-way dialogue to address the capacity needs to support countries in their efforts to achieve global goals for biodiversity in marine and coastal areas. The Sustainable Ocean Initiative focuses centrally on facilitating partnerships to link various initiatives and ensure that the sum of these efforts is greater than its parts, using the convening power of the Convention of Biological Diversity.

## Supporting progress towards global targets for biodiversity

In October 2010, governments across the world agreed on and committed to an ambitious set of international targets designed to help protect and conserve the planet's biodiversity. Developed as part of the 10-year Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020<sup>1</sup>, the

<sup>1</sup> An overarching framework to safeguard biodiversity and enhance its benefits for people, adopted under decision X/2 at the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Nagoya, 18-29 October 2010. See [www.cbd.int/sp/](http://www.cbd.int/sp/)

## Aichi Biodiversity Targets 2011-2020

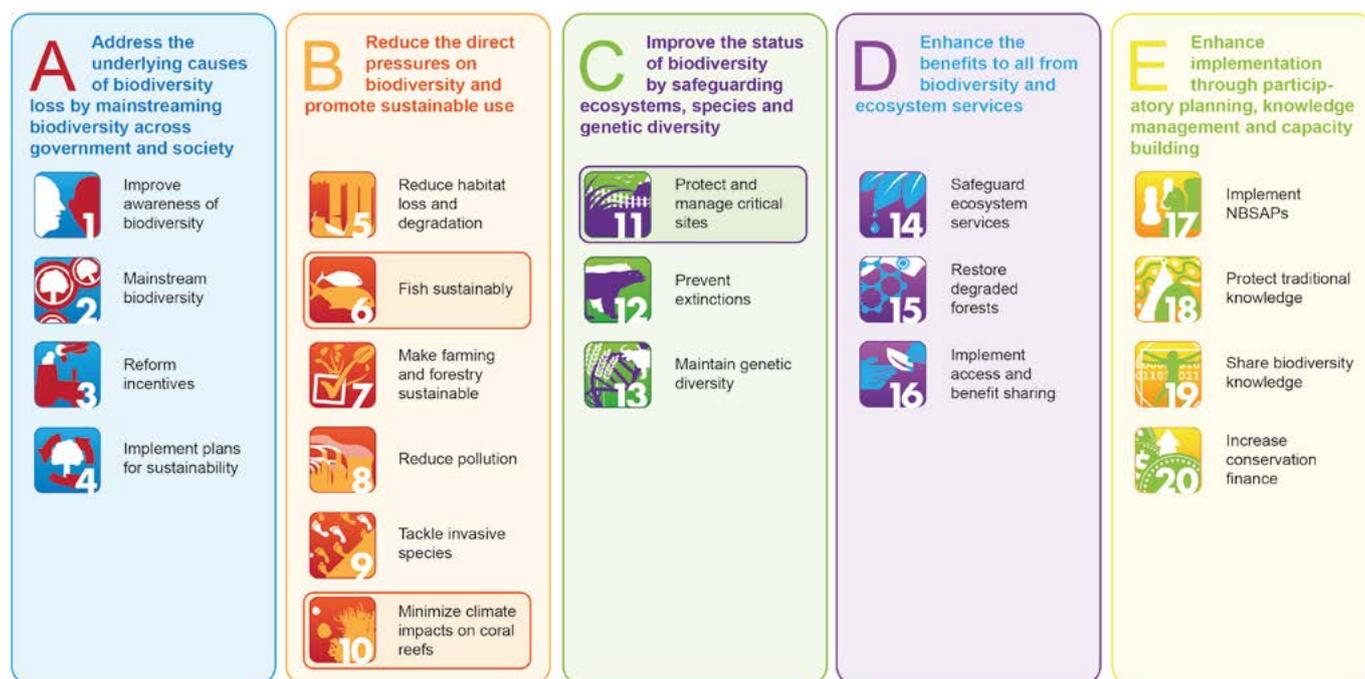


Figure 1: The Aichi Biodiversity Targets, devised to chart a path to achieving the CBD 10-year Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, 2011-2020. SOI was designed to support progress towards a number of these targets, notably Targets 6, 10 and 11 (highlighted).

Aichi Biodiversity Targets were designed to chart a pathway towards achieving the Plan's vision to value, conserve, restore and wisely use biodiversity, whilst maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people. Marine and coastal biodiversity is reflected prominently across the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, most notably in Targets 6, 10 and 11 (Figure 1).

Implementation of the CBD Strategic Plan required Parties to mobilize significant scientific, political, financial and societal effort in order to honour their commitments to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Recognising the challenges that this would bring for developing countries, the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) highlighted the urgent requirement for training and capacity-building to support progress towards the Targets.

In response to this urgent need, the Sustainable Ocean Initiative was conceived, through the support of Japan, as the President of CBD COP 10, and in collaboration with a range of partners willing and able to provide the necessary expertise, technical and financial resources. The SOI concept was further developed through a series of meetings over the following 24 months, including a SOI Programme Development Meeting (August 2011, Kanazawa, Japan) and the first SOI High-level Meeting in Yeosu, Korea in June 2012. The first SOI regional capacity-building workshop took place in Senegal in February 2013, followed by another for East, South and South-East Asia in China in December 2013, and later in 2014 by a SOI Global Partnership meeting that developed the SOI Action

Plan 2015-2020<sup>2</sup>. The SOI Action Plan set out the objectives and aspirations for the five-year period 2015-2020 and was adopted at the SOI High-Level Meeting on the margins of CBD COP 12 in 2014. Now, after more than 10 years, SOI has delivered 14 capacity-building workshops at national and regional level across the globe, trained some 76 marine and coastal managers through its Training of Trainers programme, and convened two SOI Global Dialogue meetings with regional seas organizations and regional fishery bodies, focused on accelerating progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (Figure 2). SOI has established itself as a global platform to engage partnerships and facilitate capacity development in order to accelerate countries' efforts toward implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and achieving its Aichi Biodiversity Targets in marine and coastal areas, in particular Targets 6, 10 and 11.

SOI activities are coordinated by the CBD Secretariat and have been supported by generous funding from a range of donors including the Government of Japan (via the Japan Biodiversity Fund), the Government of France (through the Office français de la biodiversité), the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea, the Ministry of Environment of Sweden, and the European Union. Of course, SOI has also drawn on and benefitted hugely from the expertise of many individuals and organizations who have contributed their time and shared their knowledge, skills and experiences with participants at the numerous SOI events that have taken place over the last decade.

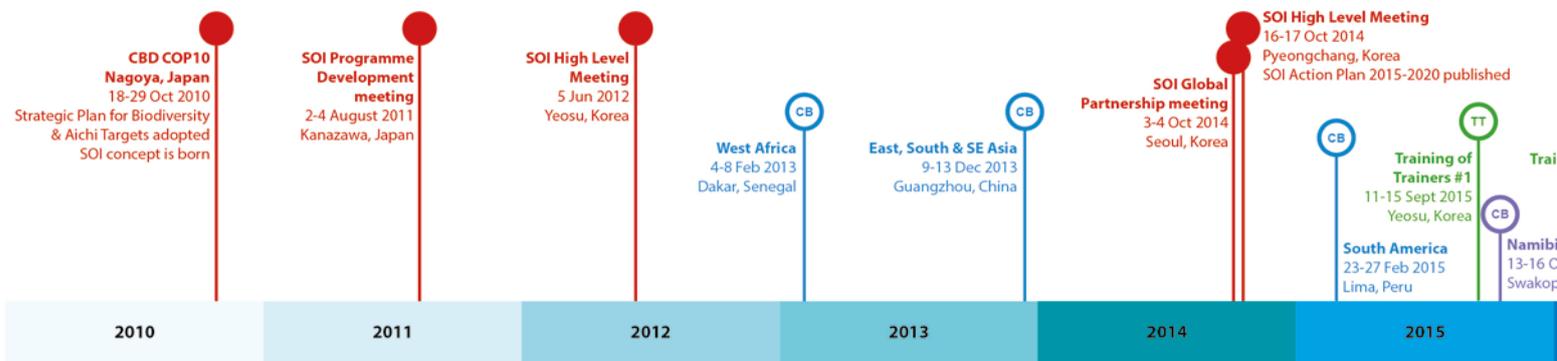
<sup>2</sup> [www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/mar/soiom-2014-02/official/soiom-2014-02-actionplan-en.pdf](http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/mar/soiom-2014-02/official/soiom-2014-02-actionplan-en.pdf)

# SUSTAINABLE



## A decade of global capacity-building

Established in 2010 • Financial support provided by governments of Japan, France, Korea



- High-level event
- SOI Global Dialogue meeting
- TT SOI Training of Trainers workshop
- CB SOI regional capacity-building
- CB SOI national capacity-building

# OCEAN INITIATIVE

## g for marine biodiversity protection

a, Sweden and the EU • Events to date have involved 760 participants from 154 countries

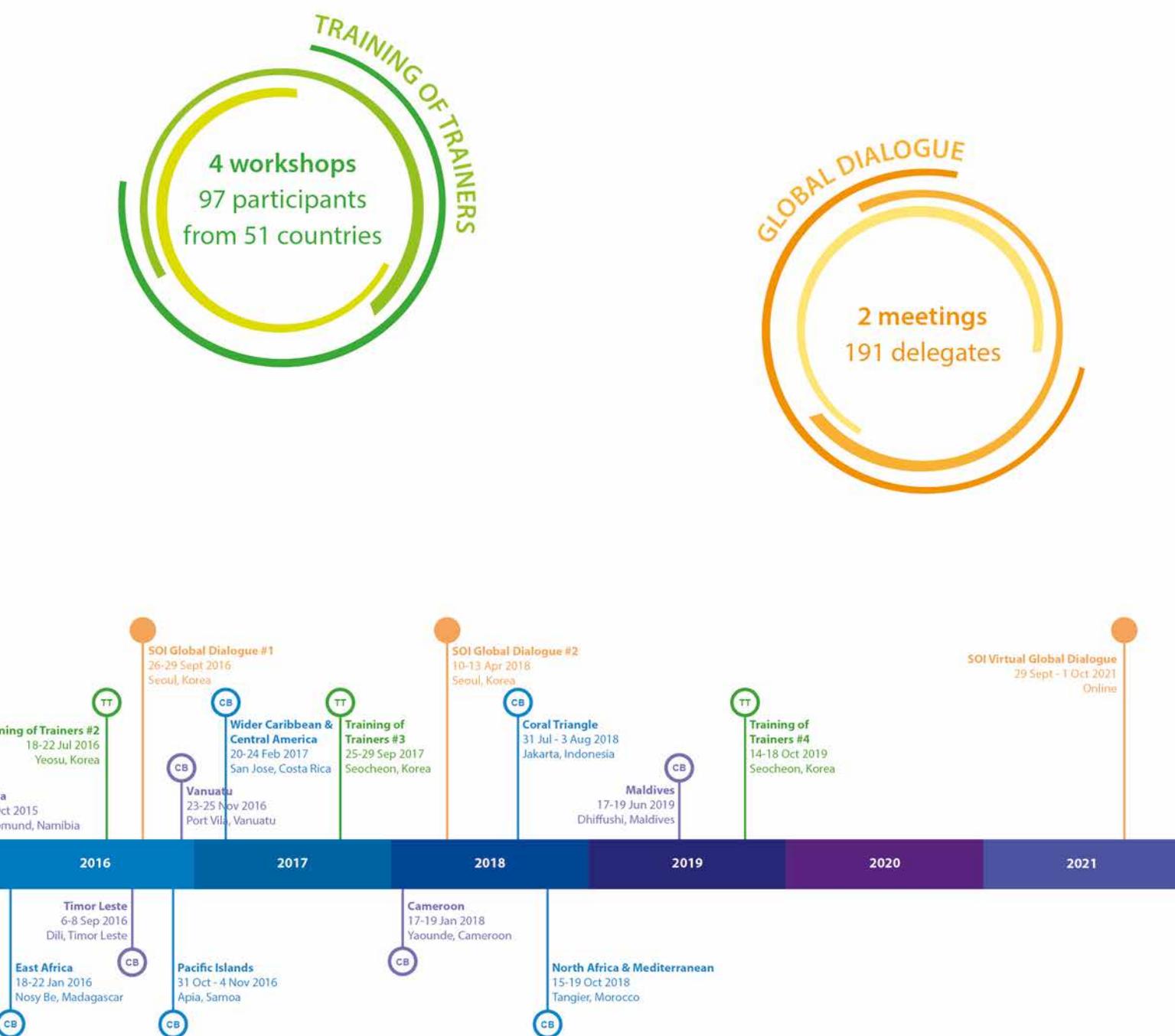


Figure 2: SOI timeline and key facts and figures

## Sustainable Ocean Initiative Capacity-building workshops, 2013-2021

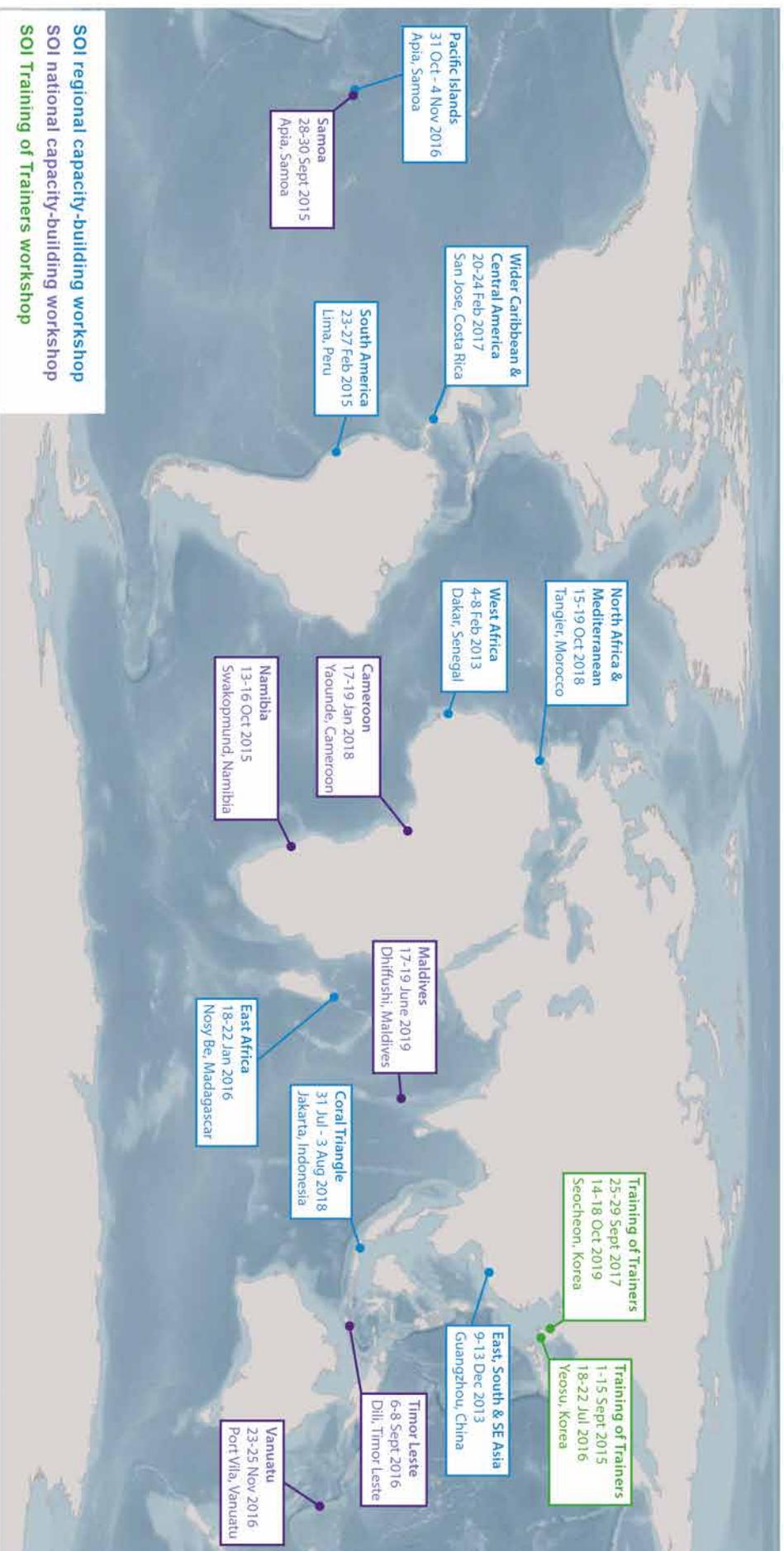


Figure 3. Location of SOI capacity-building workshops, 2013-2019



## 2. The Sustainable Ocean Initiative approach

Capacity-building in the field of ocean and marine resource management is undertaken by a multitude of organizations and entities at a range of scales across the world. However, transferring knowledge between sectors and across regions/nations presents a challenge, particularly in regions where gaps in knowledge or skills and limited resources are an issue. Understanding region-, country- or community-specific needs, priorities and challenges is key to developing effective conservation and management measures. Implementation to achieve tangible and effective outcomes whilst balancing social and economic priorities with conservation goals, is a challenge for all nations but especially so for developing countries.

SOI provides a platform for capacity development in order to help address these challenges and facilitate the exchange of knowledge between experienced marine managers, local practitioners, policymakers, knowledge generators and community leaders. It takes a multi-scale approach, providing support for implementation to meet global level commitments in line with national and regional priorities, as well as enhancing regional impact through scientific/technical collaboration and learning exchange.

SOI is not intended as a replacement or competition for ongoing capacity-building initiatives that address various aspects of ecosystem management, ocean governance, marine planning and sustainable use. Rather, its mission is to complement other capacity-building efforts by capitalising on the resources available and adding value by providing a link between the different sources of support. It is a platform to link the expertise and resources of a wide range of partners to the many developing countries in need of support. SOI brings people together across regions, sectors and disciplines to share their knowledge and experiences, from which new learning pathways can be created and new partnerships forged

### Bridging capacity gaps to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets

It is not a coincidence that SOI is coordinated by the CBD Secretariat in view of the core focus of SOI on supporting the achievement of global biodiversity targets. SOI focuses on the commitments of CBD Parties and the work undertaken through the CBD on marine and coastal biodiversity to identify opportunities to address capacity needs to achieve the global goals and targets for marine and coastal biodiversity in a holistic manner. By building bridges between biodiversity conservation and resource management sectors,

and through the application of an action-oriented and integrated capacity-building framework, SOI aims to catalyse partnerships, leverage resources, build on lessons learned and knowledge gained, and facilitate improved coordination and dialogue.

Key SOI aims:

- Promote a balance between sustainable use and conservation, and the promotion of flexible and diverse approaches;
- Identify best practices, facilitating information sharing, and learning from experiences;
- Create partnerships that can provide for targeted capacity-building, training, technical assistance and learning exchange;
- Provide for two-way communication among policymakers, scientific communities and local stakeholders;
- Facilitate the provision of guidance and guidelines that will help achieve global goals and targets for biodiversity.

In assessing the challenges for Parties to progress towards these targets, SOI identified three key areas of need that form the central pillars of the SOI approach:

- Capacity gaps:** Lack of institutional, technical, managerial and scientific resources; poor understanding of capacity needs at various levels in the context of cross-sectoral management; lack of cross-sectoral training for managers at the ground-level;
- Issues related to governance and engagement:** Sectoral conflicts; lack of coordination across governmental agencies and levels of governments; limited participation of indigenous and local communities;
- Limited information base:** Lack of policy-relevant information to support decision-making; inadequate coordination of existing knowledge.



*The ability of SOI to create memorable experiences to advance ocean management is really, really important. It is an emotional connection, a human dimension that can help achieve policies and find ways to connect.*

*Purificació Canals  
SOI Training of Trainers Facilitator*



Figure 4: Aims of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative

SOI has a clear focus on improving coordination and cooperation between the fisheries and biodiversity sectors in order to promote learning, exchange of knowledge and best practice, and to foster synergies among relevant initiatives/programmes, in order to address capacity needs in the context of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. SOI provides a platform to highlight positive examples of progress at different levels, catalyse leadership and encourage commitment to take further action.

To implement its vision, SOI established a programme of activities to be executed at different levels and targeted at different participant groups in order to deliver the capacity-building, information flow, resources and practitioner networking required to support progress towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

## Mobilising a global community: the SOI partnership

One of the core strengths of SOI is its wide range of partners and the opportunity to share and build upon the many experiences, knowledge, networks and resources of these partners to achieve common goals. The SOI partners comprise a range of global,

regional and national institutions, programmes and initiatives who share the SOI vision and values, and who are committed to achieving its goals and objectives through donation of knowledge, expertise, experiences, human resources and skills, as well as a range of in-kind contributions.

The SOI partners have, over the years, contributed a broad portfolio of scientific and/or technical expertise, materials and resources, and have hosted and/or provided training at workshops and events. In addition to in-kind contributors, SOI partners also include countries and organizations that participate in SOI activities workshops and training events, and then work to enhance implementation in their respective regions/countries/communities by using the tools, resources and knowledge gained through their involvement in SOI, and sharing their experiences and lessons learned through SOI for the benefit of CBD Parties and other SOI partners. SOI has sought to increase its impact through fostering an iterative dynamic where recipients of capacity-building activities not only use the knowledge and skills gained to enhance their own practices, but also ideally go on to share their experiences, lessons learned and knowledge with others in the SOI partnership.



*Mangroves provide both important habitat and coastal defences in many regions, such as here in the Seychelles*



### 3. SOI Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies on accelerating progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Sustainable Development Goals

Around the world, governments have come together at the regional scale to develop agreements and frameworks for the marine environment and resources. In particular, Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs), which deal with protection of the marine environment, and regional fishery bodies (RFBs), which deal with fisheries management, are present in various forms throughout the world. Given that biodiversity, a healthy environment and resilient ecosystems underpin sustainable fisheries and food security, and that the ecosystem approach to fisheries management contributes to sustained environmental functions and the provisioning of ecosystem services, there is a strong rationale for collaboration among these two different types of regional organizations.

Additionally, the level of ambition posed by global goals for fisheries and biodiversity necessitates action at multiple scales, including at the regional level, making regional organizations key players in facilitating the achievement of global goals.

Enhanced cooperation and collaboration across sectors require opportunities to strengthen exchange of information and lessons learned, explore shared objectives, and address issues of common

interest. This is particularly important at the regional level, as dedicated networks for sharing experiences between fisheries and environment institutions are often weak, or largely non-existent, in many parts of the world.

Recognising this potential and the need to foster and enhance communication and collaboration between the regional seas organizations (RSOs) and the regional fishery bodies (RFBs) to support and accelerate progress towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the CBD Secretariat came together with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) to develop the SOI Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies. The aim was to provide a platform to facilitate enhanced cross-sectoral collaboration, with a view to further strengthening their complementary roles in supporting national implementation towards achieving the global biodiversity targets and the relevant SDGs.

The first meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue was convened in Seoul, Korea on 16-18 September 2016, with financial support





Opposite page and above: Scenes from the first meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies in Seoul, Korea, September 2016.

from the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Government of Japan and the European Commission, and in collaboration with UNEP, FAO, the Secretariat of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), the Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention, the IUCN Fisheries Expert Group (IUCN/CEM/FEG), and the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI). The meeting aimed to facilitate the exchange of experiences, discussing specific tools and guidelines in order to enhance science-based, cross-sectoral and ecosystem-based approaches for addressing biodiversity and fisheries issues, and identify options and opportunities to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration among RSOs and RFBs.

Discussions highlighted that a number of existing mechanisms for cross-regional collaboration between RSCAPs and RFBs operate well, and that in some regions this function is facilitated by regional scientific bodies and Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) projects, including through cross-sectoral ecosystem-based scientific assessment. It was also recognized that regional cooperation was at different stages of development in various regions, and, as such, that the appropriate next steps would vary among different regions, ranging from the establishment of dialogue to support cooperation where it did not yet exist, to strengthening this cooperation where

it was already in place. Taking these considerations into account, participants at the first Global Dialogue meeting recognized that significant progress towards meeting the challenges of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets could be made by improved coordination and enhanced collaboration among the regional bodies, including through:

- a) Interacting and exchanging information on the respective measures and activities of regional organizations to promote mutual understanding, build trust and ensure that they take their respective outputs into account, thereby complementing each other's work while respecting their different mandates;
- b) Developing joint regional-level strategies, memoranda of understanding, or other collaborative arrangements to identify common objectives, outline joint and/or complementary activities, and clarify roles and expectations of respective regional organizations;
- c) Identifying specific issues of common interest around which to structure cooperation and coordination on scientific and technical matters as well as management tools and approaches;
- d) Promoting harmonized approaches for collecting and accessing

data, and exchanging scientific information produced by a wide range of entities, including governments, universities, research institutions/partnerships, non-governmental organizations, and United Nations agencies, e.g., information on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) and vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) as well as from the Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS) and the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS);

- e) Using the above information for the production of complementary and holistic assessments of the status and trends of the marine environment, fisheries, biodiversity and ecosystems;
- f) Supporting national reporting through regional frameworks, including through compatible approaches for data and reporting formats, using, where possible, existing indicators, and aligning this with reporting on progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals.

However, participants also recognized that achieving these aspirations could only be made possible through improved coordination of national activities, supported by further capacity-building at both a regional and national level. It was also agreed that further discussion and engagement between the regional bodies was critical for accelerating progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and participants were consequently highly supportive of the SOI Global Dialogue becoming a regular event.

Building on this success and momentum, a second meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue was held in Seoul, Korea from 10 to 13 April 2018, with financial support from the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Government of Japan, the Government of Sweden and the European Union, and in collaboration with UNEP, FAO, and many other international and regional partners.

This second meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue focused on further advancing the discussion on means and approaches to enhance cross-sectoral regional collaboration, in particular on the following key thematic issues of interest to both RSOs and RFBs:

- Enhancing the application of the ecosystem approach/ecosystem-based management (e.g., understanding ecosystem structure and function, strategic planning, stakeholder involvement, impact assessments, risk assessments);
- Strengthening the effectiveness of area-based management tools (e.g., marine spatial planning, marine protected areas, particularly sensitive sea areas, VMEs);
- Preventing, reducing and mitigating the impacts of pollution, including marine debris, on marine biodiversity and fisheries resources; and
- Strengthening monitoring and data/information sharing in support of scientific assessment of the status and trends of marine biodiversity and fisheries resources.

Participants shared their experiences and lessons learned in regional-scale cooperation under the theme of “unlocking the potential for transformational change towards sustainability”. In particular, discussions focused on how cross-sectoral cooperation could enhance the application of the ecosystem approach and ecosystem-based management, the effectiveness of area-based management tools, the prevention, reduction and mitigation of the impacts of pollution, including marine debris, environmental monitoring and data/information sharing.

Participants highlighted that the SOI Global Dialogue has facilitated cross-sectoral engagement among many regional organizations/bodies. Efforts to promote cooperation among RSOs, RFBs/RFMOs, LME projects/programmes and regional science organizations are ongoing, with many new examples emerging since the first meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue.

Regional group discussions at the meeting produced a series of possible roadmaps that identified pathways and resources to translate the “Seoul Outcomes” into concrete practice and further enhance cross-sectoral collaboration at the regional scale, including regional dialogues and partnership initiatives<sup>3</sup>.

Participants also emphasized the need for the meetings of the SOI Global Dialogue to become a regular forum in order to continue to facilitate productive exchange on the role and approaches for regional collaboration in view of the evolving global and regional institutional framework for oceans.

## Reflections on a global conversation between regional voices

The SOI Global Dialogue has gained global recognition for the benefits it provides, including recognition by the UN General Assembly, the Conference of the Parties to the CBD and the FAO Committee on Fisheries. Very few opportunities exist in the calendars of busy multilateral environmental agreements for regional ocean governance organizations to meet and interact *en masse*. Rather, it is typical for these organizations to be preoccupied with the intra-regional demands of their roles and provision of support to their Parties. The SOI Global Dialogues are such an opportunity and a genuine attempt to promote cooperation and coordination. The Dialogues represent the start of a conversation, seeking commonality of purpose and opportunities to share experiences, compare regional perspectives and find scope and opportunities for cooperation. And, through the Dialogue, numerous key stakeholders around the world have an increased understanding of the importance of regional collaboration and mechanisms to pursue such collaboration. The Dialogues have also elucidated key

<sup>3</sup> Seoul Outcome +2: [www.cbd.int/doc/c/a3e1/53e3/08fc2a8f36e21b2366d03aa9/soi-om-2018-01-02-en.pdf](http://www.cbd.int/doc/c/a3e1/53e3/08fc2a8f36e21b2366d03aa9/soi-om-2018-01-02-en.pdf)



factors and lessons that are essential to actually pursuing regional collaboration in different parts of the world, including:

- The wide range of different approaches for regional collaboration and the importance of tailoring approaches for regional collaboration to the unique political, economic, geographic, social and environmental characteristics, building on lessons learned elsewhere;
- The importance of enhancing understanding among regional organizations of the mandates and work of other organizations operating in their region;
- The need to build collaboration around issues that are essential to the achievement of goals that are shared across regional organization, and around which the complementary strengths of regional organizations can be utilized;
- The value of ensuring that regional organizations are able to fulfill their core mandate as a basis for regional collaboration.

The need for regional collaboration to be underpinned by cross-sectoral coordination at the national level. Many have commented that one of the key strengths of the SOI Global Dialogue is as an informal forum to explore opportunities and approaches for enhanced regional collaboration, and to learn from other regions. Building trust and getting together rather than talking across each other is the ethos of the SOI Global Dialogues, building bridges and raising awareness of respective mandates and responsibilities.

## Future steps for the Global Dialogue

The SOI Global Dialogue has been successful in elevating attention regional cross-sectoral collaboration for ocean governance and in advancing the conversation and the thinking around productive and effective mechanisms to do this. But, as the global and regional framework for the ocean continues to evolve, so too must the SOI Global Dialogue.

The failure to fully achieve any of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the continued degradation of marine and coastal ecosystems tells us that greater efforts and heightened ambition are needed to reverse trends in biodiversity loss and ensure the continued provisioning of ecosystem services from the ocean.

In addition to 2021-2030 being the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, we are also presently in the midst of major evolutions in the global policy landscape for the ocean, with important developments on the horizon, including:

- The development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework under the CBD, which will contain a new set of global goals and targets for biodiversity;
- Negotiations for an international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction;
- The development of a new agreement under the World Trade Organization on fisheries subsidies; and
- Increasing calls for a new global convention to address plastic pollution in the ocean.

Furthermore, there has been an increasing awareness and recognition of the critical role of regional organizations in achieving global goals for the ocean, as well as a strong focus on the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into sectoral policies and management, including fisheries.

These factors together signal that the discussions under the SOI Global Dialogue will become even more relevant into the future and provide an important “incubator” for practical approaches to enhance regional collaboration in support of national implementation with a view to achieving global goals.

*“The SOI Global Dialogue has been very successful in supporting strengthened cooperation and understanding among existing international organisations that have different roles regarding the marine ecosystem. It’s a great contribution to ensuring that such organisations are not isolated but provide appropriate contributions to the work of other bodies on a reciprocal basis. Building on what already exists is a very effective approach; that is something I have learned from my experience of taking part in building cross-sectoral cooperation in the North Atlantic between international organisations with different but complementary legal competences.*

*Stefán Ásmundsson  
Co-chair, SOI Global Dialogue  
Ministry of Industries and Innovation, Iceland*

## A view from...



### **Piero Mannini, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

*"The fisheries and aquaculture sector is among the food production sectors most dependent on a healthy ecosystem. Pressure on aquatic and coastal ecosystems is increasing even faster than the number of people on the planet. As awareness of this pressure rises, it becomes increasingly evident that sustainability can only be achieved through cooperation among all stakeholders, as recognized in SDG 17 (Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development).*

*More and more demands are made on the use of the coastal and aquatic environment, by an ever-growing array of sectors, and as demand for fisheries and aquaculture products increases worldwide, the need for cooperation between fisheries management organizations and organizations that deal with the management of human activities in other sectors rises rapidly. Working at the appropriate scale in most cases requires cooperation at the regional level, as processes related to the exploitation of natural living resources usually involve at least several countries. Regional cooperation can significantly increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of management processes.*

*The international community has increasingly recognized the importance of regional cross-sectoral collaboration and cooperation in facilitating the achievements set by the 2030 Agenda that aim at maintaining the health of the ecosystems, including the oceans, so that they can increase their ability to contribute to food security and poverty reduction. Cooperative partnerships that build on synergies should become a central tenet for all regional fishery management and environmental conservation mechanisms, as there is an evident nexus between fisheries management and environmental protection. Cooperation is not only an option, but an absolute necessity.*

*Regional organizations that work toward enhancing the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity can make such cooperation effective through formal mechanisms and joint activities, especially by creating linkages between existing fisheries management and biodiversity conservation initiatives, as the achievement of food security will require fisheries and environmental management agencies to work together.*

*The FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) welcomed and is fully supportive of the joint efforts of the CBD Secretariat, FAO and UNEP within the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies on Accelerating Progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets to strengthen collaboration on issues of common interest, taking into account their different mandates and roles. COFI also recognizes the existing cooperation between Regional Fishery Bodies and the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. The so-called "Seoul Outcome", an important landmark for the joint management of the oceans and their living resources that has paved the way to promising and substantive results.*

*While in some regions of the world there are examples of collaboration between the environment and fishery sectors aimed at facilitating an integrated, holistic approach to management, such connections do not exist or are still very poorly developed in others.*

*FAO recognizes the importance of this nexus and is in favor of strengthening regional platforms by working actively on practical possibilities aimed at increasing and further defining this cooperation, ensuring its inclusiveness. FAO stands ready to support the further expansion of these cooperating mechanisms with the hope to achieve an integrated approach to secure a sustainable food provision based on the healthy and functional marine and coastal ecosystems."*

## A view from...



### **Takehiro Nakamura, United Nations Environment Programme**

*"I participated, as a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) participant, in the two meetings organized on the Global Dialogue with the Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies on Accelerating Progress Towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, respectively in 2016 and 2018. In UNEP I worked on the regional Ocean Governance, particularly the cooperation between the Regional Seas programmes which UNEP coordinates and the regional fisheries bodies, which the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) coordinates. In some regions cooperation between them had started under the UNEP-FAO cooperation framework. When the experiences of the cooperation between regional seas programmes and regional fisheries bodies accumulated, the Global Dialogue was an appropriate platform to share such experiences across various regions and demonstrated that the marine environment organizations and marine fisheries organizations worked together to embody the ecosystem approach which was also a principle underlining the Convention on Biological Biodiversity."*

## A view from...



### Dixon Waruinge, Nairobi Convention Secretariat

*The integrated and strategic framework provided by the Sustainable Oceans Initiative (SOI) has catalysed partnerships among stakeholders at the global and regional level for the conservation and sustainable utilization of coastal and marine resources. SOI has brought together Regional Seas Programmes (RSP), Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs), and Conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), to create a holistic and dynamic platform for interaction and cooperation between different institutions and bodies. In specific terms, and building on the 2014 cooperation agreement between UNEP and FAO, the Nairobi Convention for the protection, management and development of coastal and marine environment in the Western Indian Ocean (Nairobi Convention), and the Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) signed a partnership agreement in early 2019 for the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) countries (Comoros, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa and Tanzania), in addition to Yemen and Maldives. The Nairobi Convention and SWIOFC are administered by UNEP and FAO, respectively. The partnership has benefitted from an 8-million-dollar project supported by SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency). The elements for the programme were discussed and agreed during the 2018 second meeting of the SOI global dialogue in Seoul, Korea.*

*Under the partnership, the Nairobi Convention and SWIOFC agreed to set common goals for conservation and sustainable management of the coastal marine and environment in the WIO region and identified a number of potential areas for collaborative activities, key among these being on the protection of marine biodiversity and vulnerable species, addressing impacts of climate change in the marine environment, and management of current and emerging environmental impacts that can affect fisheries. Other important areas included policy coordination between the fisheries and environment sectors, support to States in the development, promotion and implementation of blue growth initiative, and promotion and application of area-based management tools, ecosystem-based management and ecosystem approach to fisheries.*

*To strengthen the partnership, the Nairobi Convention and SWIOFC have initiated a number of activities to a) enhance the resilience of coastal communities and livelihoods dependent on marine and coastal ecosystems, b) to promote the sustainable management of coastal fisheries and c) to improve coordination between fisheries and environment management institutions in the region. The activities are equally aligned to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals 14, 1, 5, 8 and 17 on conserving and sustainable utilization of Ocean; minimizing poverty; gender equality and women empowerment; decent work opportunities; and revitalizing the partnership for sustainable development.*

## A view from...



### Darius Campbell, North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission

*"I have been involved in the SOI Global Dialogue since the first meeting in Seoul in 2016. I did not really know what to expect at that first meeting, but it was an amazing experience to see regional fisheries management organizations and regional seas organization secretariats meeting together, discussing common issues and objectives, and improving understanding. While that sort of cooperation had been an evolving understanding in the North East Atlantic, it was great to see that this was by no means a unique experience and that similar cross sectoral and regional dialogues were getting going elsewhere in the world. At the time of the 2016 meeting I was the Executive Secretary of OSPAR, a regional seas organization. By the second meeting of the Global Dialogue in 2018 I was the Secretary of NEAFC, a regional fisheries management organization. So I guess that is concrete proof that some of the old barriers between sectors are being overcome with more trusting relationships! This is in the face of many outside this understanding saying that such cross-sectoral cooperation is unrealistic.*

*My experience of the two dialogues so far is deepening understanding between the sectors, what we are doing, what we plan and how we can cooperate together. The last Global Dialogue focused on practical cooperation in particular regions, with some of the rest of us aiming to facilitate the dialogue. One thing that is also becoming clearer and clearer are the immense differences between regions both for the fish side and environment side. For instance, the difference between the North East Atlantic and Pacific in terms of coastal states or distant water states doing the majority of the fishing, or the significance of differing marine pollution sources. And, of course, the difference in resource and capacity between regions. Identifying the common objectives in all this has been important, the CBD biodiversity objectives have been very useful in doing that function, given all the sectors have some element of the ecosystem built in - in particular in fisheries and the environmental sectors. Given the huge challenges facing the marine environment, in particular from climate change, the dialogues can help keep the focus on improving our cooperation and effectiveness across such organizations in delivering practical sustainable food, economic and social benefits and urgent conservation outcomes."*

A view from...



## Fernando Felix, Permanent Commission for the South Pacific

*"In the South-East Pacific region, we value positively the possibility of participating in the SOI Global Dialogue because it allowed us to exchange experiences with other regional organizations with similar challenges. One of the most relevant aspects of the SOI experience is the multisectoral participation of stakeholders with different interests, which allows a better understanding of the different sectoral visions and brings positions between conservation and development. During the Dialogue, the importance of regional organizations and the role they should play in the international scenery according to their mandates and interests of their member countries have also been highlighted. Promoting cooperation between regional organizations and large-scale initiatives is necessary to ensure an ecosystem approach to management, as environment problems must be addressed on a scale large enough to have a positive impact. Through SOI Global Dialogues, the main problems of marine biodiversity as well as the best governance options are reviewed in order to identify key issue for sustainability. Since regions vary greatly in their political, economic, geographic, social and environmental characteristics, there are no unique approaches appropriate for everyone. Thus, the SOI Dialogues allow experiences to be shared and lessons learned from a variety of regions that can be transferable and applicable to others. The SOI Dialogues have also allowed the identification of knowledge and capacity gaps that must be strengthened in particular in developing countries to reduce gaps. The identification of these cooperation mechanisms by bringing the different stakeholders in the same discussion room facilitates the exchange and transfer of knowledge."*



Schooling fish, Indonesia



*Traditional pole fishers in Sri Lanka*



## 4. Regional capacity-building workshops

In line with its overarching mission to help support progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, SOI has undertaken a series of capacity-building workshops at the regional level, responding to specific capacity needs and focusing on the challenges and priorities that are unique to each region. The workshops are tailored to regional agendas, implemented in close collaboration with relevant regional bodies, organizations and countries, and take into consideration the different types of institutional arrangements and mechanisms for cooperation in the region.

These workshops are generally targeted at practitioners and managers from different national sectors (e.g., environment, fisheries, etc.), and managers/project leaders at regional/sub-regional levels. The workshop programmes are built on the foundations of information exchange, experience sharing and peer-to-peer learning, with the key aims of:

- Supporting the development of strong links, networking and partnership development for scientific and technical collaboration at a regional level;
- Enhancing peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange between countries;
- Developing regional-level partnerships to foster and promote synergies among various capacity-building providers;
- Providing national officers and practitioners with the skills and resources they need for sound management of marine resources;
- Creating a strong community of “SOI practitioners”;
- Building and strengthening links between global and regional/sub-regional initiatives on marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

To date, eight regional capacity-building workshops have taken place, involving more than 400 participants from 99 countries. The workshops have addressed a wide range of issues, some unique to particular regions, some common to all. The main focus and lessons learned from these workshops are summarized below.

The **SOI Capacity-Building Workshop for West Africa** (Senegal, February 2013) concentrated on integrated ecosystem-based management to enhance capacity to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Targets 6 and 11. West Africa hosts a diverse and extensive range of marine ecosystems and there is a need for States to facilitate access to nationally held datasets and promote data sharing. This workshop made a particular effort to raise understanding of the ecosystem approach to fisheries and the need for associated risk

assessment, especially for community co-management of fisheries resources. Planning tools, such as Marxan, were also explored for marine protected areas (MPAs) in order to explain and underline the value of representative MPA networks. National inter-ministerial cooperation was encouraged, as well as efforts to secure surveillance, enforcement and compliance with MPA regulations. Finally, in the context of EBSAs, the workshop included training in use of geographic information systems (GIS) for marine conservation and sustainable use. Information from the OBIS database was downloaded by participants and integrated into QGIS<sup>4</sup>. Kernel density estimations were then demonstrated as a means to identify important areas for specific species. This training was considered by participants to be an excellent grounding for the South East Atlantic Regional EBSA Workshop that took place in Namibia in April 2013.

The **SOI Regional Capacity-Building Workshop for East, South and South-East Asia** (China, December 2013) was directed at officials responsible for addressing the Aichi Biodiversity Targets concerning marine and coastal biodiversity, particularly within the context of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). The intention was to exchange information and experiences, promote active learning of skills and tools and build regional-level partnerships. The workshop brought together experts with collective responsibility, showcased regional experiences, facilitated preparations for a possible future regional EBSA workshop (which then took place in 2015), and identified awareness/interests/concerns of coastal States as well as knowledge gaps. It also exemplified close collaboration between CBD and FAO.

At the **SOI Regional Capacity-Building Workshop for South America** (Peru, February 2015) methodological approaches were shared on implementing MPAs and other aspects of the CBD coastal and marine programme agenda. Discussion on existing tools, knowledge and capacities was related to implementation and progress against the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. A balance was achieved between the understanding of theoretical targets and practical actions within the region – an applied policy approach. Participants highlighted both the willingness to share case studies and the broad spectrum of experience, emphasizing that there are many different entry points for the implementation of the Convention and all of them are relevant.

The **SOI Regional Capacity-Building Workshop for East Africa** (Madagascar, January 2016) was convened in response to interest from the Nairobi Convention to promote marine spatial planning at the regional level. It addressed a specific topic at a strategic point in time. The Coastal Oceans Research and Development – Indian

<sup>4</sup> QGIS is a free and open-source cross-platform desktop geographic information system application that supports viewing, editing, and analysis of geospatial data. See <http://qgis.org>

Ocean (CORDIO) East Africa<sup>5</sup>, a champion of the ecosystem approach, was instrumental in providing a focus through its Northern Mozambique Channel Initiative. The SOI workshop was perceived as the best way to bring the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, government partners and other stakeholders together, and the convening power of the CBD ensured interaction between governance processes, research processes, NGO partners and communities. Co-funding from other sources, such as WWF Madagascar, enabled attendance by a diverse range of participants. In all around 40 participants, with different experience and expert skill sets, were able to work on different aspects of marine spatial planning, such as mandate, trade-offs and stakeholder engagement. In the margins informal discussion was also valuable in terms of aligning interests and moving forward. Draft proposed strategies and/or action plans for initiating or enhancing the application of marine spatial planning at different scales included an emphasis on long-term vision considerations. They included a national strategic/ action plan for Madagascar; a regional approach for the Western Indian Ocean; and sub-regional group ideas for the Northern Mozambique Channel.

The SOI/Pacific Ocean Alliance Regional Capacity-Building Workshop for the Pacific Islands (Samoa, October 2016) was organized in partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the Office of the Pacific Commissioner (OPOC), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). It recognized the role of the Pacific Ocean

Alliance to foster understanding and integrated approaches between partners involved in different maritime sectors of ocean development (e.g., fisheries, tourism, transport, energy, conservation, extractive industry and pollution control). This workshop sought to maximize sustainable development outcomes by fostering collaboration and joint programming. This was addressed through a series of thematic sessions that considered: (i) new and emerging opportunities to increase economic benefits to Pacific Islands from the sustainable use of marine resources, (ii) the means to enable Pacific Islands to benefit economically, (iii) the context of regional priorities, decision processes, and (iv) approaches to operationalize planning and management.

The SOI Regional Capacity-Building Workshop for the Wider Caribbean and Central America (Costa Rica, February 2017) benefitted from partnering with the CLME+ Project – the second phase of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Project that has already brought together regional fisheries and regional seas programme interests. An interim coordination mechanism among eight central government organizations had already been formed and was well aligned with what SOI wanted to achieve. The SOI workshop brought an expanded group of people together from different sectors, providing a platform to bring forward ideas and creating an important opportunity for information exchange and knowledge transfer. It is rare to have opportunities to bring together representatives from across the region from the environment and fisheries sectors, but there are cross-fertilization benefits, and feedback from the workshop suggested the region is now looking

5 [www.cordioea.net](http://www.cordioea.net)



*Participants and trainers working together at the SOI Regional Capacity-Building Workshop for South America, 2015.*



*Developing a subregional integrated marine resource management proposal at the SOI Regional Capacity-Building Workshop for the Wider Caribbean and Central America, 2017.*

for avenues to have that exchange more often. Proposed strategies and action plans for initiating/enhancing the application of marine spatial planning at different scales were explored by sub-regional groupings.

The **SOI Sub-regional Capacity-Building Workshop for the Coral Triangle** (Indonesia, July 2018) concentrated on the Priority Actions to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 for Coral Reefs and Closely Associated Ecosystems, with associated implications such as ensuring food security and regulation of coral transplantation. Experts and managers from different sectors and areas of work relevant to coral reefs and associated ecosystems from countries in the Coral Triangle region sought to promote flexible and diverse approaches through identification of best practices; recognition of partnerships for targeted capacity-building training, technical assistance and learning exchange; promotion of two-way communication among policy-makers, scientific communities and local stakeholders; and ways to improve the scientific basis for implementation of the ecosystem approach. Participants shared experiences on Coral Triangle Initiative plans and efforts in line with Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 Priority Actions. The outcome was a review of sector-based and cross-sectoral tools and approaches to reduce the impacts of multiple stressors and enhance resilience of coral reefs and associated ecosystems. Implementation planning exercises resulted in a strategic review and actions proposed for Indonesia (national plan of action); Malaysia (marine park

management plan); Papua New Guinea (improvements for Locally Managed Marine Area effectiveness and sustainability); the Solomon Islands (an exercise to improve the National Sea Cucumber Fishery Management and Development Plan); and Timor-Leste (leveraging implementation strategic action plan of the Timor-Leste NBSAP: Mangrove).

The **SOI Capacity-Building Workshop for Northern Africa and the Mediterranean** (Morocco, October 2018) focused on progress in national implementation of area-based conservation and fisheries management. In the context of enabling policies adopted by the Barcelona Convention it was noted that real challenges for ensuring effective marine protected areas include lack of resources, poor enforcement mechanisms and minimal local involvement. The workshop undertook a strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT) analysis of national efforts that informed a 'back casting' exercise from the 2050 Vision of the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity on the basis of rapid self-assessments of national positions. The workshop outcome was a series of concrete strategies and action plans directed at improving national implementation and cross-sectoral approaches for Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Djibouti, Eritrea, Malta, Morocco, Sudan, Syria and Tunisia, as well as a potential regional-scale approach with possible pilot actions.

There is a close relationship between SOI capacity-building and the EBSA process. Most SOI regional capacity-building workshops have

facilitated preparations by Parties and organizations considering regional and/or national EBSA workshops. This has included providing the necessary background on the EBSA process under the Convention as well as other global processes, including FAO's work on VMEs.

## Future steps for the SOI regional capacity-building workshops

Regional capacity-building workshops were an integral part of the SOI Action Plan 2015-2020. In the future, there is a need to orient the capacity-building efforts of SOI regional capacity-building

workshops with the goals and targets of the CBD post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the Sustainable Development Goals. In this way the means of implementation to support such processes can be elevated to a higher level. There is also a delicate balance between delivering technical support and bringing workshop results to the attention of high-level decision-makers – regional workshops try to do both! Lessons from the regional capacity-building workshops can be of interest to other regions around the world.



*Clockwise from top left: Participants at the Regional Capacity-Building Workshop for South America, Peru, February 2015; the SOI Sub-Regional Capacity-Building Workshop for the Coral Triangle, Indonesia, July 2018; and the SOI Regional Capacity-Building Workshop for East Africa, Madagascar, January 2016.*

## A view from...

### Daniel Cebrian, Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre of the Barcelona Convention



*"The Sustainable Ocean Initiative has allowed the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) to exchange on tools and approaches for biodiversity conservation within and beyond national jurisdiction at regional and sub-regional levels. It helped to share the progress made by the Mediterranean countries along last decade on the topic of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs).*

*SOI meetings facilitated UNEP/MAP to link with expertise and resources of various organizations around the world regarding legal frameworks and governance, availability of funding, management of planning, adapted human resources, regulation and monitoring, stakeholder engagement and integration of marine spatial planning. All those matters are of major importance for synergic development, since Aichi Target 11 is not limited to 10% MPAs and OECM managed effectively and equitably by 2020, but also implies many qualitative improvements, such as the above ones.*

*Thanks to the Meetings on Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies on Accelerating Progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Sustainable Development Goals, SOI provided further opportunities to enhance exchanges for cross-sectoral approaches in the Mediterranean and to show some of them as models that could be extended to other marine regions, such as the cooperation frame among UNEP/MAP and the General Commission for Mediterranean Fisheries on area-based conservation.*

*The SOI Regional Capacity-building Workshop for Northern Africa and the Mediterranean facilitated Mediterranean countries to reflect realistically on their state of progress with regard to the Aichi Targets in the region. They could themselves conduct through this support a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis of their national efforts towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets related to marine and coastal biodiversity, in particular identifying specific gaps and needs for effective implementation".*

## A view from...

### Sharifah Nora Ibrahim, Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security Regional Secretariat



*"Our participation at the SOI Sub-Regional Capacity-Building Workshop for the Coral Triangle opened big opportunities to learn from, link and synergise with other regional and global experts, partners, resources including potential to enhance databases and cooperation. One example is an enhanced work with CBD and partners such as SOI and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, in particular on other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM) and marine databases. The Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF) has many community-based and locally-managed marine areas (LMMAs) that are OECMs, but are not included in calculations for Aichi Target 11. CTI-CFF promotes the participation of indigenous and local communities in governance and supports our six Member Countries to incorporate LMMAs as part of OECM, in order to help achieve their international obligations under, inter alia, the CBD Aichi Target 6, 10 and 11, as well as SDG 14. We were inspired by the women leaders participating at the CBD SOI workshop. In September 2019, the CTI-CFF Women Leaders Forum produced a Competency Leadership Training of Trainers working in the areas of marine and coastal conservation and management, as part of enhancing capacity to achieve Aichi Targets 10 and 11. CTI is also implementing gender and social equity policy in CTI as part of CTI Women Leaders Forum and as part of SDG 5. SOI has indeed been Bridging Gaps to Achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets."*

## A view from...

### Jacquis Rasoanaina, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Madagascar



*"On behalf of the Ministry of Environment Madagascar, it is with profound gratitude that we thank the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) for the guidance, leadership and the support that was extended to the framework of the Nairobi Convention in the preparation of the SOI Regional Capacity-Building Workshop for East Africa. It is an honor of my country to host the first meeting to discuss and set up the pillar of marine spatial planning for the region. This workshop could not be done successfully without the support from the partners, and in particular from SOI."*

## A view from...

### **Adla Kahrić, Center for marine and freshwater biology Sharklab ADRIA, Bosnia and Herzegovina**



*"Participating in SOI activities gave me opportunity to advance my knowledge and skills for better understanding of existing laws and policies relating to protected areas. Particularly of the effective approach in integration of various interests, needs and perspectives of different multi-stakeholders, their engagement for sustainable use of marine biodiversity related to the process of utilization of current available scientific data in decision making and planning. It was a great opportunity to learn from experienced experts from different parts of the world who already have various methods, tools and approaches in conservation for sustainable ocean which are useful for our research, assessment and strategies as a developing country without any historical data and research nor well-managed marine resources or protected species and habitats. Linking with the worldwide and regional experts, especially with organizations from MedPAN and AdriaPAN network improved my work and allowed me to present my organization and share our data on identified key biodiversity and gaps. This was important for future cooperation and contribution to the Mediterranean region especially because Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Mediterranean region is presented as a country without any scientific information and assessment.*

*Furthermore, It was the first time for Bosnia and Herzegovina to have a marine biologist as representative in SOI activities that provides the very first scientific data collected in the last few years with the initiative to establish the first marine protected area, protect species and improve coordination between the fisheries and biodiversity sector across the science and ocean policy. Finally, beside my personal benefits from SOI activities there is also significant contribution to stakeholders, communities, individuals and marine ecosystems improving the country progress in scientific, technical and ocean policy approaches. Keeping in mind that Bosnia and Herzegovina is still without marine protected areas, SOI workshop and training motivated me to work harder in order to understand and achieve their goals more easily and finally establish and develop marine science, education and policy with the aim to create the sustainable blue world in my country."*

## A view from...

### **Larbi Sbai, Government of Morocco**



*"As part of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity organized a capacity-building workshop for the North African region, on 15-19 October 2018 in Tangier (Morocco), in collaboration with the Moroccan Maritime Fisheries Department, the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention (UNEP/MAP), the General Commission for Mediterranean Fisheries (GFCM) and the Regional Centre for Protected Areas (RAC/SPA). This meeting made it possible, on the one hand, to exchange experiences and information from the different participating countries, and on the other hand, to actively learn skills and tools for building a regional-level network to share and build capacity to achieve the Aichi Targets, in particular targets 6 and 11, in the marine and coastal areas. In my humble opinion, this large-scale Mediterranean experience sealed a process that the Parties to the CBD initiated to explore the most appropriate and best indicated means to ensure the long-term sustainability of the oceans, and to strengthen the awareness of all stakeholders in order to guarantee better governance of the oceans and seas of our planet."*

## A view from...

### **Ruth Spencer, Marine Ecosystems Protected Areas (MEPA) Trust, Antigua and Barbuda**



*"Having been a founding member of the MEPA Trust in 2015 and with my training, capacities and skill sets in International Development Economics, the SOI regional capacity-building workshop for the Wider Caribbean (Costa Rica, February 2017) opened my appetite for the issues raised by SOI in our marine and coastal areas. I learnt how actions on the land can impact the marine areas, destroying habitats for our marine assets, our ecosystems and livelihoods threatened, so issues of pollution, chemicals and waste on the land must be addressed. I am now a great activist and enabler supporting and empowering local groups in multiple ways from hearing ideas to implementing solutions. Looking back, I built some contacts that remain to this day and the panel I participated on local knowledge solutions has enabled me to experience development in marine and coastal areas through the eyes of local people so respecting, utilizing and sharing local knowledge has been the strength in my work."*

## Support from the Japan Biodiversity Fund

The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 10) held in Nagoya, Japan, urged Parties and other Governments to step up conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal habitats in order to safeguard marine and coastal biodiversity, marine ecosystem services, sustainable livelihoods; and to adapt to climate change.

The Government of Japan, through its role as the COP 10 Presidency, led the formation of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI), in collaboration with various other partners. The Japan Biodiversity Fund (JBF), also established at COP 10 as part of the COP 10 Presidency's legacy to help develop the capacities of developing country Parties to implement the Nagoya outcomes, has supported SOI activities since its inception.

In line with the SOI's objectives, the JBF's support for the SOI has focused on holistic capacity-building support to achieve a balance between conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity and to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Targets 6 (sustainable fishing), 10 (minimizing climate impacts on coral reefs), and 11 (protecting and managing critical sites). The fund has supported numerous capacity building workshops organized under the SOI banner.

Another foundational element supported by the JBF are the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogues with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies. The first SOI Global Dialogue was a historic moment in ocean policy where both regional seas organizations and regional fisheries bodies were assembled to discuss a common set of global goals and targets. The success of the first Global Dialogue initiated the recurrence of this type of forum to support in the progress of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The 10 years of the SOI has raised awareness of the different tools and opportunities available to implement effective marine conservation actions, encouraged inter-ministry dialogue and motivated local stakeholders and community groups to engage in such efforts. This report, culminating 10 years of collaboration, provides an opportunity for the JBF to reflect on the achievements of the SOI, and the successful collaboration with various donors and partners that have been brought about by the SOI.

The JBF's efforts would not have been as fruitful had it not been for the dedication of the hundreds of experts who participated in the workshops, both from governments and organizations, technical teams such as the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI) and the National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea (MABIK), the governments who hosted the workshops and participated in the dialogues, and our partners at the Secretariat, who expertly guided the SOI to successful outcomes. The SOI is a collaborative process, and this report makes the extent of this collaboration abundantly clear. It has been the JBF's great privilege to have supported it.

*The Japan Biodiversity Fund Team, CBD Secretariat*

## Support from the French Biodiversity Agency

The French Biodiversity Agency (OFB) has been a strategic partner with the CBD Secretariat in support of SOI from the outset of the initiative. At the official launch of SOI, in Japan in 2011, the former French MPA Agency (the precursor to OFB) had the pleasure to co-chair, together with the Japanese Ministry of Environment, a session focused on the achievement of Aichi Target 11 through ecologically-connected MPA networks. Within the framework of its mandate, OFB contributes to France's efforts to advance the use of MPAs in pursuit of global goals for the ocean and biodiversity. Thus, OFB provided support to SOI regional capacity building workshops, in association with the secretariats of Regional Seas Conventions and other regional organizations, in the Pacific ocean, the Indian ocean, the Caribbean and the Mediterranean Sea. The OFB also worked with the CBD Secretariat and SOI collaborators to showcase the valuable outcomes of SOI and solutions identified through SOI efforts during CBD COPs, as well as during the series of international MPA congresses (IMPAC3 in France, in 2013, as co-organizer; and IMPAC4 in Chile, in 2017), aiming to inform decision-makers and MPA managers. The relevance of SOI comes from its multi-level Action Plan, which aims to engage a diversity of stakeholders, strengthen networking and support the scaling-up of scientific and technical collaboration to enhance the management of MPA. Essentially, the experiences of SOI tell a human story about people whose goodwill is a light to open new horizons.

*Office Français de la biodiversité / French Biodiversity Agency*

## 5. National capacity-building workshops

Training activities at a national level also feature strongly in the SOI portfolio. These events are initiated at the request of a government and are focused on addressing the specific capacity needs of developing countries.

To date, six national capacity-building workshops have taken place within the SOI framework, each with a programme tailored to the country's own situation and priorities. Key elements of the training delivered at national workshops to date have included: (i) exploring the availability of marine scientific information (often using the global datasets used at relevant regional EBSA workshops as a starting point) as well as determining what exists in national records, community knowledge, etc; (ii) raising awareness of different types of spatial management tools and methodologies; (iii) stimulation of cross-sectoral and/or cross-ministry cooperation to identify common priorities that will support a more coordinated (and politically acceptable) approach to sustainable management

of national marine resources; (iv) bringing together different actors from different sectors and communities to discuss a way forward; and (v) guidance and advice for taking first steps towards whatever process is most appropriate for that country. In many cases, the workshop provides a forum for representatives from different ministries to discuss marine issues for the first time, in a space that is conducive to open and informal discussion, based on knowledge and information exchange.

An important feature of the national workshops is that the learning experience is driven by the country itself: identification of issues, potential solutions, pathways and actions are driven by workshop participants rather than being dictated by the trainers. Trainers are there to facilitate discussion, present options, raise awareness of data sources, tease out conflicting priorities, and help work towards consensus on a way forward. The principle aim is to enable countries to take (often first) steps towards a more sustainable approach



*Participants at the National Capacity-Building Workshop for the Maldives, Dhiffushi, June 2019*



“Although themes may be similar, the challenges are different for individual countries so discussions at each SOI national capacity-building workshop evolve to suit the situation.

Piers Dunstan  
SOI National Capacity-Building Workshop Facilitator

Cabo Pulmo, Mexico

to managing marine resources, even if that first step is simply identifying that they want or need to move to a more sustainable set of national priorities, or at least recognizing that there is a need to do so.

National workshops reflect national priorities and often explore the trade-offs between sustainable use and conservation. This demands working through nationally relevant exercises that help to address specific issues over a 3-5 day period. Questions have been raised about whether one-off workshops of this nature can have a lasting impact; evidence from the SOI national workshops shows substantial continued engagement in some but not all cases. However, external experts also observe that an additional benefit is building confidence and identifying internal expertise. Solutions that might work in one national context do not always work in another. Piers Dunstan (CSIRO), who has helped facilitate three national SOI workshops, in Vanuatu, Timor-Leste and the Maldives, stresses the importance of being humble. “Everyone who is participating is an expert in their own location, all external facilitators can do is help set the agenda, then provide technical options that participants can explore, supported by highlighting relevant data sources. Although themes may be similar, challenges are different for individual countries, so discussions at each national workshop evolve to suit the situation. For example, in Vanuatu there was a strong focus on culture and traditional knowledge – a key objective for marine spatial planning there was to make sure that culture was maintained”. There is also a perception that the SOI national workshops have been successful at generating cross-disciplinary enthusiasm. They do not set out to produce a plan or a programme of work, rather they aim to generate understanding about what is possible.

Participants attending SOI national workshops tend to be technical experts and a mix of ages, abilities and interests. Surprisingly, in

many instances, the SOI national workshop was the first occasion for many of the local experts to meet each other and identify areas of collaboration. The combination of research scientists, fisheries managers and development officers is helpful. The inclusive nature of the workshops is also helped by avoiding the use of high-tech tools and rather working with available information and knowledge of the local experts using printed maps and group work focused on very specific and practical steps.

Feedback from workshop participants highlighted the usefulness of understanding the necessary steps in a process leading to the development of a management strategy or measures, including the preparatory work required. For many, a better understanding of the groundwork required served to identify national capacity and data gaps, and the need to develop a strategy to address them. In many cases, this highlighted the need to stimulate cross-department or cross-ministry collaboration, share data and understand where clashes in policy/priorities present a barrier to achieving conservation or management objectives. A number of workshop participants recognized the potential to break down jurisdictional barriers using an ecosystem-based approach.

Data sources were often a topic of much discussion: understanding where international datasets can be useful (and their limitations), recognizing the breadth and value of indigenous and local knowledge, and acknowledging that NGOs can also be an important source of information and data. Effective engagement of stakeholders was another common theme that workshop participants identified as important learning points in the workshops: understanding the full spectrum of stakeholders that need to be engaged is essential, and local community support and participation is an essential and powerful contributor to enabling change.

## Case study

# National Capacity-Building Workshop for Namibia

**Swakopmund, 13-16 October 2015**

A SOI National Capacity Workshop for Namibia was held in Swakopmund, Namibia, 13-16 October 2015, with financial support from the Government of Republic of Korea (through the EXPO 2010 Yeosu Korea Foundation and the Korea Maritime Institute) as well as the Federal Republic of Germany (through the BCC-GIZ Benguela Current Marine Spatial Management and Governance Project, financed by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, BMUB).

The workshop focused on identifying the potential impacts of commodity mining activities in the context of the environmental and socioeconomic values of Namibia's marine resources. The intention was also to enhance the capacity of relevant policymakers and managers in Namibia to apply integrated assessment and planning tools to strengthen existing national efforts toward the long-term sustainable development of Namibian marine resources.

Workshop participants explored the use of tools and approaches such as the application of biodiversity-inclusive impact assessments (i.e., environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment) and marine spatial planning. It was particularly valuable to have participation from representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Mining and Energy and Ministry of Transport contributing to ideas and insights for a long-term vision for the sustainable development of marine resources and conservation of marine biodiversity in Namibia. Sharing experiences from South Africa and New Zealand also enriched discussions on cross-sectoral coordination and decision-making. Key issues recognized by participants were the unique coastal upwelling and exceptional productivity of the Benguela Current system, a need for data sharing to promote better scientific understanding of ecosystem functioning and the importance of understanding and applying opportunity cost scenarios linked to resource management.



## Case study

# National Capacity-Building Workshop for Cameroon

Yaounde, Cameroon, 17-19 January 2018

The workshop aimed to provide an opportunity for: (i) dialogue and discussion among different stakeholders and sectors in Cameroon; (ii) discussion on various national-level priorities and objectives for Cameroon regarding marine and coastal resources and how these relate to each other; (iii) describing and mapping out areas in Cameroon's waters that may meet the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs); (iv) identification of how EBSA information can be used to support planning and management in Cameroon, including marine spatial planning; and (v) identification of approaches and necessary steps for the use of EBSA information to inform planning and management and how it contributes to the national priorities and objectives of Cameroon.

The marine waters of Central West Africa are dominated by the Guinea Current. The marine ecosystem is heavily influenced by river discharge and relatively low biological productivity, low salinity and high turbidity. Cameroon has a relatively small EEZ (15,400 km<sup>2</sup>) and in the past, conservation efforts have focused on terrestrial ecosystems. However, the Cameroon coastline supports significant mangrove stands, and its beaches are important nesting areas for marine turtles. Mangroves and associated coastal forests cover 2,300km<sup>2</sup>, one of the most extensive national coverages in Africa. Marine areas support threatened species such as the Atlantic humpback dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*) and West African manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*), as well as five species of endangered sea turtles. Tidal marshes are distributed widely, seagrass beds can be found in Ntem-Nyong and Mounjo-Ideneau, and coral reefs are present off the Kribi coast.

This workshop provided an opportunity for dialogue and discussion among different stakeholders and sectors in Cameroon, as well as a chance to focus on national-level priorities for Cameroon regarding coastal and marine resources. It also promoted scientific and technical collaborations to describe EBSAs and consider potential threats to biodiversity. Discussions were closely aligned to the priorities outlined in Cameroon's second National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, which includes 10 specific coastal and marine targets. Input was also provided by the Abidjan Convention Secretariat. Considerations raised by the workshop emphasized synergy among neighbouring coastal countries, the value of marine spatial planning, and the need for national collation of marine data and a network of marine experts. Consideration of results from the CBD regional EBSA workshop for the South-East Atlantic region (Swakopmund, Namibia, April 2013) provided a baseline. However, the regional workshop only described one EBSA in Cameroon waters.

Over an intensive three-day interactive session, a group of 30 national experts scoped four potential national EBSAs. Lack of sufficient data is a clear challenge for Cameroon, as some of the regional-scale datasets used at the CBD South-East Atlantic Regional EBSA Workshop in 2013 are not refined enough to be used at national level.

Lessons learned from previous SOI capacity-building national workshops were helpful, in particular for considerations of scale, relative importance/significance, spatial and temporal variability of biological features, data precision, taxonomic accuracy and uncertainty. During a detailed review of the EBSA criteria, participants considered relevant information held in OBIS (the global open-access data and information clearing-house on marine biodiversity) with access to, for example, data on IUCN Red List Species such as the "vulnerable" royal threadfin fish (*Pentanemus quinquarius*). Working groups also considered ways of using EBSA information for planning and management of marine and coastal resources. This took note of ongoing projects in Africa, including Operation Phakisa (South Africa), the Benguela Current Commission's MARISMA sub-regional project, and Mami Wata, an integrated ocean management project coordinated by GRID-Arendal, which is producing a capacity-building guide.

Next steps in Cameroon envisage further internal work, sharing information and interaction with regional organizations such as the Council of Ministers of the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) and the Abidjan Convention.



## Case study

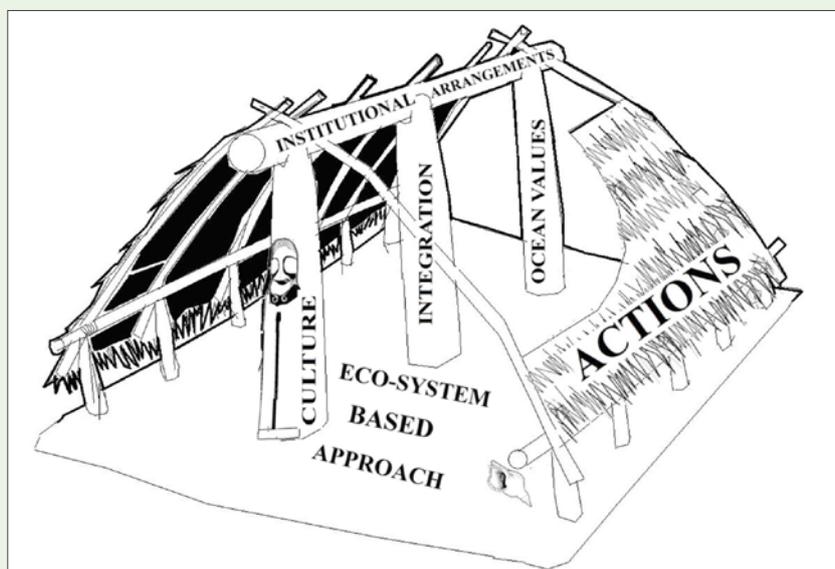
# National Capacity-Building Workshop for Vanuatu

Port Vila, 23-25 November 2016

The Republic of Vanuatu is a small island nation in the South Pacific comprising around 80 islands. Following adoption of their National Ocean Policy in 2016, the government of Vanuatu requested support from the Sustainable Ocean Initiative to enhance cross-sectoral dialogue and coordination related to marine biodiversity, and to develop their capacity to achieve national priorities as well as global goals under the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals.

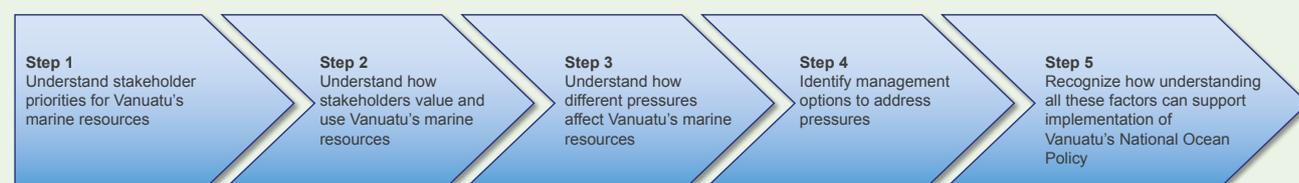
Consequently, a three-day national capacity-building workshop was organized with financial support from the Government of the Republic of Korea (through the EXPO 2012 Yeosu Korea Foundation and Korea Maritime Institute), and in collaboration with CSIRO and the Government of Vanuatu, with additional technical input from the Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Management in Pacific Island Countries (MACBIO) project. Workshop participants comprised representatives from the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Lands and Natural Resources, Education and Training, and Fisheries, as well as representatives from the port and harbour authority, the police department, local councils and community/cultural groups, and the Environmental Protection and Conservation department.

The workshop focused in particular on cross-sectoral dialogue and marine spatial planning as tools to support effective conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity, balancing different uses and priorities for the marine environment and contributing to healthy ecosystems, sustainable economic growth and societal well-being. Vanuatu's National Ocean Policy embeds the culture of the ocean into ocean management and merges across different uses, users and ocean managers, and this was strongly reflected in the workshop considerations. The workshop provided an opportunity to outline tools and approaches to facilitate implementation of the National Ocean Policy, also in the context of the issues and priorities laid out under the National Sustainable Development Plan and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, both of which were close to being finalized at the time of the workshop. The mechanisms to achieve these aspirations are set out in the National Ocean Policy and are framed around the Nakamal, an institution for traditional custom governing systems for Vanuatu, shown below.



*The Nakamal model: the foundation is an ecosystem-based approach to management as envisaged and implemented by the forefathers using traditional marine resource management systems. Upon the foundation are three pillars: (i) the multi-dimensional value of the ocean; (ii) the integration across uses, boundaries, sectors and governance structures, and (iii) Vanuatu's resilient ocean culture. The beam across the Nakamal is the overarching institutional arrangements, and the thatched roof is emblematic of the sectoral and cross-sectoral policy actions that will protect the Nakamal.*

The workshop programme centred on MSP, and in particular on an exercise in applying each step of the MSP process (below) using the knowledge and experiences of the workshop participants on the values, uses, pressures, interactions and future aspirations for the marine environment of Vanuatu. Specific focus was placed on opportunities to provide management of the ecosystems and species in Vanuatu, also considering nationally, regionally and globally important ecosystems and species. The workshop ran through a process that can be easily adapted to meet the specific needs of communities and government at any level of marine management maturity. A particular focus for the workshop was on identifying areas of social and ecological value and investigating opportunities for establishing marine and coastal managed areas.





# Implementation strategies into National Ocean Policy begins

Compiled by Glenda Willie

**A THREE-DAY WORKSHOP** currently taking place at Le Lagon provides opportunities to different stakeholders to contribute towards the implementation strategies of the Vanuatu National Ocean Policy.

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative National Workshop is facilitated by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) under the United Nations Environment Programme.

This workshop will assist in setting the implementation plans, identifying values of marine resources in Vanuatu and their current uses, and strategize pathways which may be used to achieve the objectives of the policy.



Workshop facilitators and participants

Speaking on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, First Political Advisor, Charles Lini, acknowledged that the Vanuatu Government made

two important undertakings to demonstrate its strong commitment to begin to better address the management of its ocean.

"Firstly by resolving its outstanding maritime boundary issues, since 1983, with Solomon Islands and secondly, after a nationwide consultation

agreed to Vanuatu having a National Ocean Policy."

Lini added that the process in achieving these two outcomes was not easy, but, working

together within the country and with important regional partners, the policy can be completed and approved.

He called on the workshop participants to acquire as much as they can from the workshop in order to practically implement the ocean's policy to ensure the sustainability of the marine resources and ongoing prosperity for the people of Vanuatu.

Lini thanked the Secretariat of the CBD and CSIRO for conducting the workshop, MACBIO project funded by the German Ministry of Environment and implemented by IUCN, GIZ and SPREP for their ongoing support in assisting Vanuatu to better manage its ocean.

## A view from...

### **Ilham Atho Mohamed, Environment Department, Maldives**



*"I was privileged to participate in the Sustainable Ocean Initiative National Workshop for the Maldives where relevant national stakeholders participated. The workshop provided information on steps towards developing a national strategic plan for ocean management as well as information on description of areas within national waters that may meet EBSA criteria. The workshop also introduced stakeholders to relevant information and data management, as well as planning approaches in marine ecosystem. I found the workshop informative and engaging, especially for the stakeholder Ministries who received comprehensive understanding of the topic. This workshop was useful also from the perspective of decision making in identifying significant areas, and gave me the opportunity to create much-needed awareness among national stakeholders on EBSAs."*

## A view from...

### **Vatu Molisa, IUCN Marine Program Liason Officer, Vanuatu**



*"I appreciate the Sustainable Oceans Initiative as a valuable cross-sectoral, cross-regional, and global cross-country learning experience, for national marine resource managers, technical experts and practitioners that have a chance to take part in them.*

*It gives you a wide perspective of views and ideas, similarities, opportunities and challenges we all face in countries around the world, of how to sustainably manage our oceans, to have these face to face interactions broaden your outlook and encourage you, and opens up avenues for you, resources, linkages and partnerships you wouldn't really be exposed to otherwise. This has helped me in my role of technical support of implementing Vanuatu marine management initiatives, such as delivering a National Ocean Policy, and currently developing our National Marine Spatial Plan.*

*Thank you CBD and SOI for these continuous programs to help us safeguard our oceans."*





## 6. Training of Trainers

Traditional capacity-building events such as workshops can provide highly effective, targeted training directly to participants, but its impact is usually limited to those immediately engaged in the event itself. SOI recognizes that there are significant benefits to be gained by providing training to individuals who are in a position to not only use new skills themselves, but also transmit that knowledge and experience to their colleagues, peers and local communities. The SOI Training of Trainers programme aims to do exactly that by investing in training of key individuals who can then create a multiplier effect by spreading their knowledge and skills more widely on return to their workplaces and communities, either directly by hosting their own training events, or by leading through example in relevant projects and initiatives.

The SOI Training of Trainer events have been convened on four occasions in Korea, in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2019. Aimed at experts with responsibility for ocean and coastal management in national-level agencies of developing country Parties, these week-long events have focused on providing the tools, guidelines and information needed to develop and implement successful training programmes on a range of issues in their respective countries at national and/or subnational levels. The workshop programmes encompass a range of training exercises and discussion sessions designed to strengthen national scientific, technical and managerial capacity on: (i) key elements of integrated cross-sectoral approaches to conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity, including integrated coastal management and marine spatial planning; and (ii) approaches to training, capacity development and multi-stakeholder engagement. In this way, the SOI Training of Trainer workshops aim to equip the participants with knowledge and information in integrated approaches to management, and to enhance their skills and understanding of how to share this information through capacity development activities within their respective countries, in order to support their progress towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in marine and coastal areas.

Interspersed with discussion sessions and opportunities to share experiences and ideas, and presentations of key concepts by external resource speakers, the workshop programmes followed a common structure of theme presentations and practical exercises, comprising the following elements:

*i) Identification of the national/subnational context for developing training programmes towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in marine and coastal areas. Each participant was asked to consider, in the context of their national perspective, the following:*

- Value of marine and coastal biodiversity, the key threats and the existing policy responses in each country;

- Priority areas for national capacity development to enhance current national efforts for addressing key threats and effectively achieving Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
- Important stakeholders to collaborate in developing national capacity development programmes.

Participants work in small discussion groups to consider the key challenges and barriers to progress, and propose possible priorities to the development of future training programmes.

*ii) Key elements and processes of capacity development and training activities, covering:*

- Key elements of capacity development to support integrated marine and coastal management, including designing, developing and undertaking training activities, and how to become effective trainers;
- Key challenges in addressing capacity needs;
- Sharing experiences and lessons learned;
- Key factors to design, develop and implement successful training programmes;
- Identifying priority needs of participants within their respective national/subnational contexts.

This element of the training uses one-to-one discussions between the workshop participants, and establishes a mentor-mentee group dynamic to expand further on the themes emerging from the exchanges in this session, culminating in the development of a draft plan for a national/subnational training programme.

*iii) Tools, communication and stakeholder engagement, including a cross-sectoral marine spatial planning simulation exercise:*

- Cross-sectoral collaboration for information gathering and analysis, and area-based planning;
- Use of GIS tools for marine spatial planning;
- Approaches to cross-sectoral planning and management and multi-stakeholder engagement, including cross-sectoral planning approaches, integrated marine and coastal area management, environmental impact assessment, strategic environmental assessment and marine spatial planning;
- Communication approaches with different stakeholders as well as indigenous peoples and local communities, stakeholder involvement, and incorporation of traditional knowledge;
- Mentoring session on cross sectoral, multi stakeholder approaches in the development of training programmes, focusing on the needs of individual participants within their national/subnational contexts.

*iv) Development of national/subnational training programmes towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in marine and coastal areas:*

- Building on previous workshop discussion, participants – with the support of the resource persons/mentors – identify specific strategies and actions to develop and implement a national/subnational training programme in their respective countries to support integrated cross-sectoral marine and coastal planning and management to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Results are presented to the wider workshop group and discussed in plenary.

The SOI Training of Trainers workshop content has been iteratively refined and improved over time, but messaging has remained consistent. The workshop delivery team has also been consistent, based around a core team of expert practitioners. This means that the different elements of the course fit together well and complement each other very effectively, reinforcing messages and providing a solid structure, whilst allowing flexibility to adapt to training needs and providing opportunity to explore issues raised during discussions. A special feature of the workshop programme is the amount of time set aside for small group or one-to-one discussions on particular issues, enabling the promotion and support of experience-sharing and knowledge exchange as a primary learning tool. For each workshop approximately 20 participants come from all over the world and efforts are made to ensure they mix and have the opportunity for cultural exchange. It helps that facilitators speak several languages. Overall, these workshops represent a very dynamic and intensive process.

## Reflections on the Training of Trainer workshops

Opportunities exist to develop relationships with other global training initiatives such as the IOC's Ocean Teacher Global Academy, which has developed a platform with all that is needed to put on

an online course and keep a repository of materials. However, the face-to-face nature of the Training of Trainers workshops is highly valued: people learn a lot through personal interaction, even in a social context.

Eduardo Klein, a core member of the facilitation team, explains “I consider myself as a teacher, a professor, and I always learn from others. For me the SOI Training of Trainers is a very rich experience: a diversity of participants, cultures, experience, and ways of doing things”.

Tangible outcomes are achieved, for example, by asking participants to prepare an action plan for training adapted to their own national situations. More attention is required to follow-up and track implementation after the training. One suggestion is the possibility of a SOI alumni network with individuals nominated to keep links and connections alive.

Purificació Canals, another core member of the facilitation team says “I think that the ability of SOI to create memorable experiences to advance ocean management is really, really important. It is an emotional connection, a human dimension that can help achieve policies and find ways to connect.”

Her views are echoed by Vivienne Solis Rivera, a regular member of the facilitation team, and a keen proponent of the role of indigenous and local communities and small-scale fishing coastal stakeholders – voices with a long history and different perspectives. Vivienne regards the SOI opportunity as providing a very open platform to develop skills on how to learn from listening to views. Feedback from participants suggests she is right: they very much appreciate what they have learned and request follow-up videos and training materials. She summarizes “When I go on these training sessions I take everything I have with me, all the knowledge acquired in the last 30 years working with indigenous people and local communities close to the coastal zones in Central America. Training often looks at our relationship with the Convention: translating words to action. The rights of small-scale fishers to actually be able to undertake conservation and receive recognition for their efforts, and the aspirations of youth”.

*“I consider myself as a teacher, a professor, and I always learn from others. For me the SOI Training of Trainers is a very rich experience: a diversity of participants, cultures, experience, and ways of doing things.*

*Eduardo Klein  
SOI Training of Trainers Facilitator*



## Case study

### Using roleplay in a MSP simulation exercise

A core component of the SOI Training of Trainers workshops is a simulation exercise using marine spatial planning, developed and facilitated by expert Eduardo Klein. This exercise uses roleplaying to explore stakeholder perspectives and dynamics, and has been used at all the Training of Trainer workshops. As well as demonstrating practical aspects of the marine planning process, it is also invaluable to highlight the importance of engaging a wide range of stakeholder groups and demonstrating how conflicts in use of marine resources can be resolved through discussion, collaboration, compromise and trade-offs.

Participants are presented with a hypothetical scenario of competing uses and conservation priorities for a given coastal area that must be reconciled using cross-sectoral collaboration for marine spatial planning. The goals of the exercise are:

1. To demonstrate the use of a GIS as a tool for visualizing geographical information in the context of a marine spatial planning process;
2. To demonstrate approaches to structuring multi-stakeholder discussions to reconcile different uses and priorities regarding marine resources in a spatial context;
3. To encourage participants to make justified trade-offs to maximize achievement of priorities of various stakeholders to the greatest extent possible;
4. To encourage participants to define a set of management actions to support long-term conservation and sustainable development of marine biodiversity in the area, in particular taking into account the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The exercise was designed using open and free GIS software (<http://qgis.org>), and all the data layers are made available for the participants in the form of printed maps and overlay transparencies. These include information on basic infrastructure (coastline, urban areas, roads, submarine cables, hydrology, bathymetry, etc), maritime usage (oil/gas, shipping, fisheries, aquaculture), biodiversity (protected areas, biodiversity data, habitat information, etc), and oceanography data.

Participants are divided into several working teams, each representing a specific stakeholder group – for example, oil industry, artisanal fishers, private tourism, biodiversity conservation group. Each team is invited to study the available GIS information and discuss the strategy of their respective stakeholder group for use and/or management of the area. They are also asked to evaluate all the possible trade-offs they are willing to accept during the negotiation with the other sectors. Then, during a second session, one or more members of each stakeholder group participate in a small round table discussion with the representatives of the other sectors. During those discussions, they are tasked with agreeing on the best approaches to spatial management of the area and produce a document with the trade-offs and agreements made. They are also asked to produce a document with a set of management actions to support long-term conservation and sustainable development of marine biodiversity in the area, in particular taking into account the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

There are some rules of engagement that participants must adhere to:

- a) Each of the stakeholder groups must make decisions that guarantee the continuity of its activities, but at the same time they should be prepared to make some trade-offs;
- b) Spatial plans for the broader area can utilize any type of management tools/approaches (e.g., MPAs, functional use zoning of marine waters/coastal lands, fishery reserves, reference areas for research and monitoring, EIAs);
- c) There must be at least one managed area with a higher level of protection than surrounding areas, in particular considering Aichi Target 11. Groups must decide the ideal shape and size of this managed area. Within this managed area, the following rules apply:
  - The maritime transit of commercial vessels will be allowed through the managed area, but no anchoring inside the area;
  - No activity related to the extraction, transport or transformation of oil or gas will be allowed inside the managed area;
  - Fishing activities inside the managed area will be allowed but it should be reduced to 25% of the fishing effort related to the actual effort (or 25% of the actual fishing grounds).



## A view from...

### Ilham Atho Mohamed, Environment Department, Maldives



*"I was privileged to participate in two SOI workshops in 2019. The second meeting I attended was the SOI Training of Trainers workshop held in Seocheon, Republic of Korea from 14-18 October 2019 where we received training on planning tools, guidelines and information that could guide the participants to develop and implement national level training programmes and initiatives at national and subnational level on marine and coastal biodiversity. Through this training I was able to plan a training programme for the Local Government Authority of the Maldives on incorporating biodiversity conservation and environmental considerations into the development of local development plans for islands and atolls. This plan is currently being implemented.*

*This workshop opened up opportunities to interact with experts from various parts of the world as well understand the best practices, lessons learned and make linkages with resources available in different organizations that could further contribute to the conservation work I am responsible for."*

## A view from...

### Candacie Brower-Thompson, Environmental Protection Agency, Guyana



*"The SOI Training of Trainers event in 2019 has left an indelible impression of the prospects for sustainable oceans despite escalating challenges. MABIK provided the ideal environment for transformational learning; we experienced application of concepts in a tangible way. Their commitment to sustainable oceans through strategic, extensive research is inspiring. I was delighted to represent Guyana for the first time at SOI, which enabled me to garner knowledge and skills from experts representing various parts of the world, as well as, share my experiences. Consequently, I was equipped with information, resources and tools to leverage greater intervention in marine resources management in my country.*

*SOI provided a prolific learning platform for shared experiences, learning resources, networking, as well as, to collectively focus on pertinent issues critical to sustainable oceans such as: Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM); Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); Marine Spatial Planning; Traditional knowledge and Strategic approaches to Stakeholder engagement. Moreover SOI's approach of inclusive and active participation and the signature proposal development which formed a core component of the training was profound. Crafting a way forward to integrate and apply what would have been learnt at SOI within my country in a substantial way was an insightful objective. I do look forward to future opportunities where countries like Guyana can continue to build their capacity to sustainably manage its marine resources and contribute to the global thrust of sustainable oceans."*

*"I did a very interesting exercise in the last Training of Trainers session, where I gave roles to the students, for example one was a member of an indigenous community, one was a woman that had two kids but worked by herself, one was a fisher folk. Then I gave them stories and scenarios to work with, exploring who had rights to do certain activities... in scenario X, if you are a formal fisher take a step forward; if you are a fisher but you don't have the right to fish you take two steps back. If you are a politician and you have a voice and you are present when decisions are being taken you can move five steps ahead. And at the end we assessed the different roles and where everybody was standing. It provoked the most amazing discussion. The women and indigenous peoples speaking different languages were well behind in the movement to work in the conservation of the sea. It was so much better than any speech I could have given."*

*Vivienne Solis Rivera  
SOI Training of Trainers Facilitator*

## Support from the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, Republic of Korea

The Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea would like to congratulate the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) on the achievements of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI). Without the Secretariat's devotion and the support of the many SOI partners, these achievements would not have been possible.

The Republic of Korea has been a strong supporter of SOI since the inception of this initiative in 2010. As Korea's history and culture are deeply related to the ocean, its strong involvement in the SOI partnership is very natural.

As a part of the SOI partnership, the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries was honored to host the first and second meetings of the SOI Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies on Accelerating Progress toward the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Sustainable Development Goals in 2016 and again in 2018.

The Ministry is very proud of the resulting "Seoul Outcome" and "Seoul Outcome Plus 2", which were adopted by the participants in these meetings SOI Global Dialogue. In particular, the Seoul Outcome set a milestone for ocean governance by welcoming the Republic of Korea's effort to make the SOI global dialogue a regular forum in collaboration with the SCBD, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, regional seas organizations, regional fishery bodies and other interested donors. The Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries believes in the convening power of the SOI Global Dialogue as a forum to connect international organizations and bodies for the betterment of our ocean. The Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries is looking forward to a third successful meeting of the SOI Dialogue in the Republic of Korea later this year.

The Republic of Korea was also honored to host all four SOI Training-of-Trainers workshops, in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2019. Over the course of these workshops, we welcomed 97 participants from 51 countries. In 2017 and 2019, the National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea, a newly established institution dedicated to the conservation and sustainable use of marine bio-resources, invited the participants to its campus for the workshops. The SOI Training of Trainers workshop successfully built networks among participants as well as with local organizers and institutions.

Over the past dozen years, SOI has succeeded in building bridges and connecting those who are dedicated to building a sustainable future for our ocean. The Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries looks forward to many more years of this successful partnership.



## 7. SOI in the global ocean community



Through its activities all over the world, SOI has built up a network of stakeholders in the global ocean community. As SOI work is directed at supporting the achievement of global goals for the ocean, it has also served as a valuable mechanism by which to bring the messages and key lessons that emerge through SOI work into various global processes.

SOI side events and special events have been convened on the margins of many different global fora, including meetings of the CBD Conference of the Parties and the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, FAO Committee on Fisheries, UN deliberations on marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, the International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC), and the UN Ocean Conference, among

others. These events bring together SOI collaborators, recipients of SOI capacity-building and meeting delegates, and provide valuable opportunities to:

- i) Provide a forum on important capacity-building elements of the issues being discussed/deliberated at the meeting;
- ii) Bring lessons and stories from across the SOI community to inform the deliberations;
- iii) Showcase how SOI can further support capacity-building efforts and encourage countries and organizations to get involved in SOI; and
- iv) Hear from participants about how SOI activities can further support their implementation efforts.



*Blacktip reef shark, French Polynesia*



## 8. Looking ahead

SOI has been a major catalyzing force for capacity-building and implementation to work towards achieving global goals for marine biodiversity. It has not only brought another dimension to work under the CBD on marine and coastal biodiversity, but also a deeper sense of community among the wide range of stakeholders working to achieve global goals and targets for biodiversity.

However, the global ocean framework continues to evolve, with new instruments, agreements and mechanisms under development to respond to worsening trends in marine biodiversity loss and the urgency of changing the course for the ocean. The CBD post-2020 global biodiversity framework will bring heightened ambition and targets that require broader engagement across all facets of society. At the same time, the Covid-19 pandemic continues to limit means for in-person meetings and interactions, which has been a core focus of SOI activities to date.

SOI must continue to evolve to respond to these challenges, also considering the valuable lessons learned through its experiences thus far. Indeed, SOI has always benefitted from a flexible and adaptive approach; a number of important SOI activities were not even foreseen when SOI was created. New challenges also present

new opportunities: although the Covid-19 pandemic has placed huge constraints on how we work, it has also rapidly evolved new and increasingly accessible tools for virtual meetings and engagement, making it easier and more cost-effective to reach a large audience - subject to investment in technology and access to information.

SOI must also fit into the evolving landscape of other entities and initiatives supporting capacity-building. A plethora of new initiatives and programmes have emerged since the creation of SOI that can provide enormous benefits for realizing the achievement of global biodiversity goals. SOI should seek complementarities and collaboration to support the delivery of holistic capacity-building where Parties are in greatest need of support.

But, in all this, SOI should seek to maintain its core strength: people and relationships. The foundation of SOI has always been in the people it has engaged, their collective goodwill and shared vision. SOI has focused on bringing people together to share their stories, learn from each other, seek support and connect with those who can help, and strengthen the sense of a global ocean community at all levels. Maintaining this core focus, while evolving with changing times can ensure the continued long-term success of SOI.

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## **The Convention on Biological Diversity**

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 196 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 172 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and to date has been ratified by 124 Parties.

For further information on the work of the CBD, please visit [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int)

