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Building a Roadmap for the implementation of the Ocean Decade in the Tropical Americas and Caribbean (TAC) Region

**Guiding and Information Document for the TAC Task Force
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Introduction

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO Subcommission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions – IOCARIBE has the overall responsibility for planning and coordination of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021–2030 in the Tropical Americas and the Caribbean Region (TAC). The TAC Region encompasses the Western Tropical Americas (Western Tropical Atlantic and the Caribbean) and the Eastern Tropical Pacific.

The TAC region is regarded as one of the most geopolitically diverse and complex regions in the world. The culturally diverse countries and territories that border this maritime area range from among the largest to among the smallest, from the most developed to the least developed in the world. There are great differences in size, wealth, ethnic make-up, language and political situation among countries in the region, but there are also many common issues such as the cultural background, its geographical location, its natural resources and their associated environmental problems. Continental Coastal Latin-American countries and the Caribbean SIDS are two distinct regions from the ocean sciences capacity and economic development point of view. Nevertheless, both are greatly dependent on the ocean and coastal resources.

Caribbean Island countries are classified as middle-income countries, and most are Small Island Developing States (SIDS). This situation is indeed unique and brings a different set of dimensions and challenges in terms of ocean sciences. The principal features of these countries are smallness in geographical size and population; insularity; low resilience and high vulnerability to natural and human-made disasters and the impact of global climate change– as seen in the annual passages of hurricanes, and sea level rise; and high dependence on tourism.

It is clear that most SIDS countries are keenly aware of the importance of the marine environment and its resources to their sustainable development and economic stability. SIDS countries in the “SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway” of 2014, and more recently in The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) May 2024 – a Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity (Annex I) emphasize the need for capacity development in: i) climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, including improving understanding of the science of climate change; ii) marine biodiversity conservation, including the establishment and management of marine protected areas, sustainable fisheries management, and marine pollution control; iii) ocean governance and the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); iv) disaster risk reduction and resilience, including early warning systems, disaster preparedness, response, and recovery, and building resilient coastal communities and infrastructure; v) blue economy include

sustainable resource management, value-added processing, marketing and trade, and sustainable tourism practices; vi) enabling youth participation in economic participation.

Over the past decade, the ocean's critical role in shaping social, economic, and ecological systems has gained significant recognition. Initially receiving limited attention in SDG 14, it has now become a key element in most global agreements and frameworks (Ocean Decade Vision 2030 Outcomes)..¹

The Ocean Decade has been rapidly growing since its inception in terms of participants and Ocean Actions numbers. If this growth continues without a clearer pathway for achieving collective impact across themes and geographies, there is a significant risk that the massive ongoing efforts will become dispersed and disconnected, resulting in a missed opportunity to consolidate efforts for transformative change. Additionally, without a clear process to ensure that the identification of future priorities is driven by the “users” of science and knowledge, there is a risk that the generated science and knowledge will not be utilised where it is most needed,² especially among decentralised coordination structures.

The Ocean Decade is a multifaceted and dynamic initiative that operates across diverse temporal, geographic, and thematic dimensions. Its coordination presents challenges and is often described as complex to manage. Feedback from the White Papers commonly highlights that the coordination of the Decade fails to sufficiently promote collective action across its various initiatives, and that identifying entry points for new partners proves difficult. As well, during the Ocean Decade consultation process in the TAC Region, stakeholders stressed the need to strengthen coordination among different initiatives and communities.

The Roadmap for the implementation of the Ocean Decade in the Tropical Americas and Caribbean (TAC) *will / should* be crafted, taking into account the priority actions framework for each Challenge and the set of recommendations to meet the strategic ambition of the Ocean Decade Challenges for 2030 as delineated by the Vision 2030 process and summarised in the Barcelona Statement April 2024. This framework will then be adapted into regional and national priorities, in particular for SIDS, facilitating alignment among the entities linked to the Decade. This alignment will allow for concerted efforts to contribute effectively to the global initiative, all the while addressing locally pertinent needs.

Thus, the *main purpose of the roadmap* for the implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development in the Tropical Americas and the Caribbean Region is to provide a strategic, coordinated framework that guides regional efforts to advance ocean science and achieve sustainable development goals, meeting the strategic ambition of the Ocean Decade Challenges for 2030. This includes aligning regional initiatives with global objectives, fostering collaboration among

¹ Ocean Decade Vision 2030 Outcomes Report, April 2024

² Ocean Decade Vision 2030 Outcomes Report, April 2024

stakeholders, and identifying entry points for [new] partners, ensuring that actions are effective, inclusive, and scientifically informed to sustainably manage and protect ocean resources in the region

1. OCEAN DECADE VISION 2030 AND (DRAFT) ROADMAP OF THE TROPICAL AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN (TAC) REGION

1.1. The Ocean Decade in the TAC Region

As part of the Ocean Decade TAC Preparatory and Consultative Process the following are the main milestones:

- **April 2017** Fourteenth Session of the IOC of UNESCO Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions SC-IOCARIBE-XIV Cartagena, Colombia, the Sub-Commission recognized the importance of and the need to support the IOC proposal for an International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021 2030).
- **April 2020** A virtual meeting for the Western Tropical Atlantic (WTA-Ocean Decade) with the support of Government of Mexico, UNAM and UNEP. Scientists, policymakers, programme managers, and government officials, UN, international and regional organisations, representatives from tourism and maritime sectors, private enterprises, non-governmental organisations, and communicators engaged before and during the meeting. Regional priorities were established and new and expanded stakeholders and partnerships were identified by Decade Outcomes.
- **Table 1.** *Ocean Decade co-design webinar series in WTA region (IOCARIBE, 2021)*

WORKING GROUP	PROPOSED DATE/TIME	TITLE OF WEBINAR
A safe ocean	08 July, 2021	Tropical Americas Safe Ocean Co-Design Workshop "Breaking down the Silos for More Effective Early Hazard Warning Services".
A transparent and accessible ocean	29 July, 2021	A transparent Ocean with open information and technologies access
Capacity Development	19 August 2021	Deep sea Capacity Development needs in the WTA and the ETP for the Ocean we want
A Clean Ocean	31 August, 2021	"The Year 2031, A Clean Ocean - Steps to Success".

WORKING GROUP	PROPOSED DATE/TIME	TITLE OF WEBINAR
A healthy and resilient ocean	09 September, 2021	"Co-designing the path to sail the Decade of Ocean Science to reach the knowledge we need for the ocean we want in the Western Tropical Atlantic and the Eastern Tropical Pacific."
A predicted ocean	23 September 2021	"Changing the vibe to predict smooth sailing in the Western Tropical Atlantic: A Theory of Change approach."
A sustainably harvested and productive ocean	07 October 2021	"Co-existing Opportunities and Synergies: Exploring Opportunities for a sustainably harvested and productive ocean in the Western Tropical Atlantic (WTA)."
TAC	9th December, 2021	Tropical Americas and Caribbean Region Regional Kick-off Conference

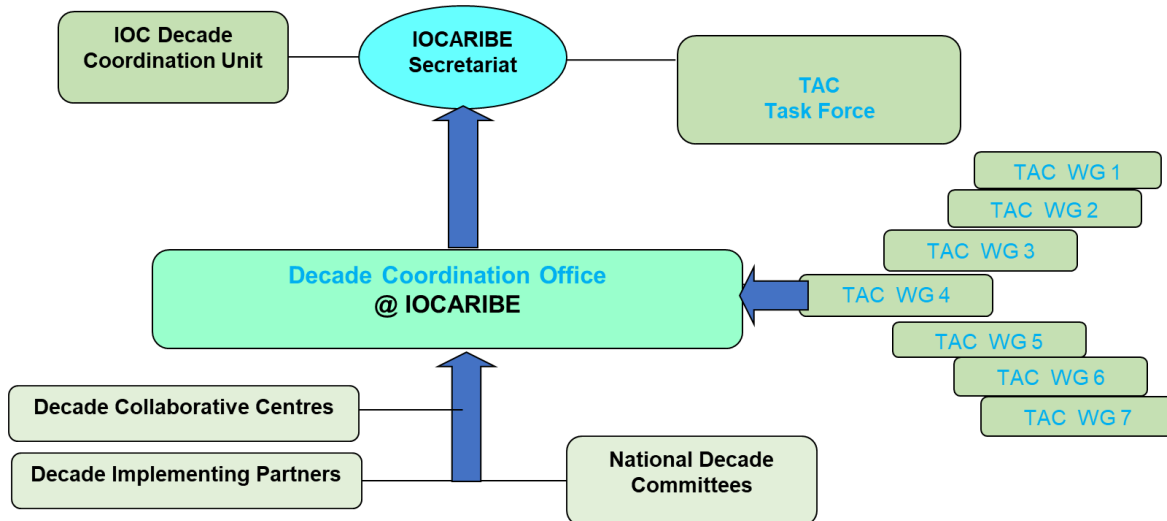
- **October 2020** A WTA **Regional Planning Group (RPG)** was established in to advance and coordinate strategic partnerships and actions for the engagement in the Ocean Decade. The RPG played both advisory and coordination tasks while advancing and coordinating Strategic Partnerships and Decade Actions.
- **October 2020** The RPG established **seven Working Groups** to promote multi-disciplinary, inclusive co-design and implementation partnerships to achieve each of the six initial Societal Outcomes and one specific for Capacity Development, recognising the efforts of the Working Groups and strategy for advancing the Ocean Decade in the Tropical Americas and the Caribbean Region. The seventh societal outcome, an Inspiring and Engaging Ocean, has been addressed as a cross cutting theme
- **November 2020** Workshop "Co-designing the Ocean Science we need for the Western Tropical Atlantic",
- **January 2021** Workshop "Co-designing the Ocean Science we need for the Eastern Tropical Pacific". Both workshops served to advance the preparation process and marked the beginning of coordination for the execution of the seven co-design workshops in the region.
- **May. 2021** At the Sixteenth Session of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (SC-IOCARIBE-XVI) Session, the Sub-Commission recognised the importance of working at national level to build connectivity between national and regional ocean science and management networks and underscored the value of creating national committees for the co-design and implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).
- **July – October 2021** Seven online workshops were organised around the corresponding WTA Working Groups. The workshops aimed to review knowledge gaps, barriers, identify priority areas and needs in capacity development, and catalyse a co-design process to find transformative ocean science solutions and develop potential Decade Actions (programmes / projects / activities / contributions) as part of the global collective effort under the Ocean Decade.

- **December 2021 A Kick-off TAC Regional Conference**, with the auspices of the Government of Colombia and Barbados, marked the launch of the UN Ocean Decade in the Tropical Americas and the Caribbean, and represent the beginning of the region-wide efforts in a substantive development and implementation of Decade Actions. As well, the Kick-off Conference highlighted emerging regional engagement in co-designing partnerships for Decade Actions and mobilised contributions and expressions of interest by UN and regional agencies, governments, industry and private sectors, and other stakeholder groups. In the Kick-off Conference Regional Call of Action Member States, partners and stakeholders called for engaging and inspiring stakeholders to develop and enhance partnerships for co-design and co-delivery of transformative solutions for the critical decadal sustainable development challenges, leaving no one behind in the design, implementation and access to benefits, and to strengthen the governance and coordination in the Region the Conference called to support the creation of National Committees for the Ocean Decade to mobilize local and national collaboration for co-designing and coordinating local, national and regional actions.
- In **2022**, As a follow-up of the TAC Regional Ocean Decade Kick-Off Conference (December 2021), IOCARIBE, with the support of the RPG and Working Groups drafted Decade Actions aiming to address TAC region priorities and help the region to overcome the identified challenges, including strengthening marine scientific cooperation and enhancing ocean capacity development. Partners and stakeholders reviewed the proposed transformative ocean science solutions and assessed the value, feasibility, and priority of the potential Decade Actions.
- The following actions were submitted to the Ocean Decade call for Action 02/2021 and endorsed by the Ocean Decade Coordination Unit:
 1. Project No. 133.2 – Gain knowledge to respond to multiple stressors
 2. Project No. 134.2 - TAC Pollutants Observatory
 3. Project No. 135.2 - TAC Ocean Observing and Forecasting System
 4. Project No 136.2. Enhancing capacity development in the TAC Region
 5. Project No. 137.2 Ocean Literacy in the TAC Region
 6. Project No 138.2. Integrating Coastal Hazard Warning Systems for TAC
 7. Project No 140.2. MACHC-IOCARIBE Seabed 2030 Project

To date, the total results after the Call for Decade Actions No. 06/2023 (that aims to fill gaps in knowledge and capacity development for Africa and Caribbean SIDS through a tailored and inclusive participatory process to co-design Decade Actions that meet local and regional needs). led to the endorsement of **516 Decade Actions** in the form of **programmes (52)**, **projects (364)** and **contributions (100)**. The endorsed Actions are characterised by a wide geographic reach, both in terms of the distribution of lead institutions, as well as the implementation locations. From those **516 Decade Actions** that are developed in the Tropical Americas and the Caribbean Region **4 programmes; 26 projects; and 2 contributions.**

Refer to the document 00 Endorsed Decade Actions March 2024 for a full description of the TAC Decade Actions.

Decade Coordination Structures established in the TAC Region



- **TAC Decade Coordination Office at IOCARIBE:** For the TAC Region the draft Terms of Reference for the establishment of a **Decade Coordination Office** were adopted by IOCARIBE of IOC/UNESCO XVII Session in May 2023. Presently, the Decade Coordination Unit, IOC/UNESCO and the IOCARIBE Secretariat (where the TAC DCO will be hosted) are working for implementing the DCO establishment recommendations starting by staffing the DCO. The main focus of the Decade Coordination Office (DCO) for IOCARIBE will be in supporting the effectiveness and impact of the Ocean Decade in the TAC region in following main areas i) coordinating and supporting endorsed Decade Actions operating in the Region and catalysing new Actions, ii) stakeholder facilitation and engagement, iii), resource mobilisation and communications, iv) monitoring and reporting efforts.
- **TAC Task Force:** The Tropical Americas and the Caribbean Region (TAC) Task Force was established in October 2023.
- **National Decade Committees:** Presently, only 6 IOCARIBE countries (Brazil, Colombia, France, Mexico, United Kingdom and the USA) out of 32 have established National Decade Committees

1.2. Meeting Strategic Ambition of the Ocean Decade Challenges for 2030 in the TAC region

The TAC Roadmap will be developed based on the Vision 2030 process, which serves as the operational framework focused on the ten Ocean Decade Challenges. These challenges form the central pillars of action for the Decade.

The Vision 2030 process has been developed to identify future priorities for the Decade in terms of science, knowledge, capacity, resources, or infrastructure that are needed to fulfil each Ocean Decade Challenge, as well as considering the needs to strengthen the linkages across Challenges. The Vision 2030 process has initially focused on the strategic ambition of the Ocean Decade Challenges at the global level but provides a framework for priority actions for each Challenge that will be translated to regional and national priorities in the TAC Region. The Recommendations were discussed during the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona (April 2024) leading to a final set of Vision 2030 outcome recommendations.

*The Conference discussed and identified the following **future priorities for ocean knowledge and science generation** and uptake that could be fulfilled via the Ocean Decade framework.*

These include the co-design and co-delivery of science and knowledge to:

1. **Understand global distribution** and human health and ecosystem impacts of **marine pollution** across the land-sea continuum, including the identification of priority pollutants and consideration of emerging and unregulated pollutants.
2. i) Enhance and scale-up marine and coastal ecosystem-based management approaches, including a focus on better understanding of and solutions for multiple stressors. ii) Better understand deep-sea ecosystems, including vulnerability to climate change and new or emerging economic activities.
3. i) Encourage sustainable, resilient, and equitable small-scale fisheries and aquaculture and facilitate sustainable management of industrial fisheries. ii) Strengthen sustainable aquatic food production and innovation for new frontiers with a focus on developing countries and strengthened public-private partnerships.
4. Underpin evidence-based Sustainable Ocean Plans at the national level and in relevant transboundary areas.
5. Encourage sustainable and climate resilient ocean economy projects, prioritising those that integrate environmental conservation with socio-economic benefits for local communities.
6. i) Rapidly scale up climate mitigation including through marine renewable energy and management of coastal ecosystems. ii) Allow timely understanding of the technical,

ecological, and social feasibility, potential impacts of proposed marine carbon dioxide removal initiatives and contribute to future policy and regulation development.

7. Underpin adaptive governance and management systems and decision support tools for the assessment of vulnerability and risk to coastal communities and marine industries.
8. Develop economic models, policies, and innovative financial instruments to diversify and accelerate investment in ocean science, including for enhanced digital representation of the ocean and sustained and sustainable ocean observing and infrastructure.
9. Inform knowledge drawn from transdisciplinary social science and ocean literacy research on human-ocean connection, behaviour change, and cultural engagement that can be integrated into Ocean Decade digital infrastructure and used to map and measure the impact of ocean literacy initiatives.
10. Increase engagement with the health sector and better understand connections between ocean health and human health.

The Conference discussed and identified priority cross-cutting issues to ensure that the Ocean Decade is on track for success by 2030 including measures to:

1. Strengthen the role of national, regional, and international policy frameworks as drivers of priority science and knowledge generation through the Ocean Decade to ensure relevance and uptake.
2. Enhance the recognition and role of all knowledge systems in the Ocean Decade, including Indigenous and local knowledge.
3. i) Create greater impact through increased action at the national level including support to a strengthened national science-policy-society interface and delivery of ocean science for priority national policy needs, with a strong focus on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries. ii) Increase investment in capacity development, sharing, and coordination with a focus on SIDS, Least Developed Countries, and other under-represented groups including Early Career Ocean Professionals.
4. Encourage more meaningful engagement of industry and the innovation sector including in the co design and co-delivery of ocean science and capacity development initiatives.
5. Significantly increase targeted, expanded, and sustained financing and resourcing for Decade Actions and Decade coordination structures.
6. Continue to enhance diversity, inclusivity and equity in the Ocean Decade and systematically identify and remove barriers to generational, geographic, and gender diversity.
7. i) Curate strong links between the scientific community and professional communicators to enhance awareness of the importance of ocean science for action across all sectors of society. ii) Continue to expand efforts in ocean literacy to address all sectors of society including policy makers, resource managers, and industry.
- Further optimise Ocean Decade coordination for collective impact and ownership.

As well, **the Conference discussed and identified priority ocean science infrastructure needs** including for marine pollution monitoring, ocean observations, interoperable ocean data, and for the enhanced use of adapted, innovative technology to underpin the equitable generation, access, and use of observations, data, and knowledge across all Ocean Decade Challenges, and by all nations.

Action: *The TAC Task Force will review the endorsed Decade Actions, as well as those Decade Actions in the pipeline addressing TAC science and knowledge priorities in order to build the TAC Roadmap. Refer to the document 00 Endorsed Decade Actions March 2024.*

Policy needs as drivers of science and knowledge priorities

The Ocean Decade's core lies in its emphasis on science and knowledge geared towards solutions, aimed at fostering sustainable development. In this context, sustainable development encompasses a comprehensive array of policies, strategies, and decisions at various scales—local, national, regional, and international—that collectively advance the objectives outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.³

Decade Actions must actively engage with knowledge users, ensuring consultation and recognition of the applicability of their generated science and knowledge to policy and decision-making processes. However, this essential aspect has been inadequately addressed in numerous Decade programmes and projects seeking endorsement.

To ensure that science and knowledge priorities are guided by policy needs, a comprehensive approach integrating collaboration, communication, and capacity development is essential. Firstly, fostering enhanced collaboration and communication channels between scientists and policymakers throughout the research process is essential. This entails early engagement of policymakers in setting research agendas, ongoing dialogue to ensure alignment with policy objectives, and effective dissemination of research findings in accessible formats. Secondly, integrating policy relevance criteria into the evaluation and selection of research proposals is crucial, ensuring that funded initiatives explicitly address policy needs and contribute to sustainable development goals.

Furthermore, capacity-development efforts for science-policy integration must be prioritised, providing training and workshops to enhance understanding and collaboration between scientists and policymakers. Strengthened user engagement and consultation processes should also be implemented, requiring Decade Actions to actively involve policymakers and stakeholders in research planning and decision-making. Additionally, incentivising policy-relevant research through funding mechanisms, awards, and institutional recognition encourages researchers to focus on addressing real-world challenges and translating scientific findings into actionable policy outcomes.

³ Ocean Decade Vision 2030 Outcomes Report, April 2024

Through these concerted efforts, science can effectively inform policy, leading to more impactful and sustainable solutions for ocean governance and management.

The TAC Roadmap must guarantee that as Decade Actions are co-designed to address science and knowledge priorities in the region, they are strongly rooted in responding to policy needs.

Creating greater impact through enhanced action at the national level

Real transformation will ultimately materialise when Decade Actions are translated into action at the national level.

While the Ocean Decade operates on a global scale, its effectiveness centres significantly on actions taken at the national level. National-level engagement is pivotal for realising tangible outcomes across various domains such as policy and governance, community involvement, and enhancing ocean literacy. Additionally, mobilising resources is notably facilitated at the national level, given the possibilities national funding agencies have of working directly with donors, banks and other funding sources.

As mentioned in the previous item, several Ocean Decade Challenges present evident opportunities for generating tangible outcomes and benefits at the national level. Among these opportunities, there is a notable emphasis on bolstering ocean-related policies, which may involve fulfilling international obligations or supporting national economic development.

Globally, close to 40 countries have created National Decade Committees as voluntary, multi-stakeholder platforms that have the broad objective of translating the global ambition of the Ocean Decade to the national level by fostering national dialogue on ocean science priorities and influencing national funding priorities. **Presently, only 6 IOCARIBE countries (Brazil, Colombia, France, Mexico, United Kingdom and the USA) out of 32 have established National Decade Committees.** However, many Committees have struggled to fill this role due to the absence of a clear mandate, lack of political influence, inadequate diversity in membership across sectors, or available resources. Creation of additional National Decade Committees is an aim of the Decade, but only where they are functional and have a clear and beneficial role to play. It will remain challenging to achieve this without a strong motivation for countries to invest the time and resources in the establishment and operation of these Committees.⁴

Optimising Ocean Decade coordination for collective impact and ownership

The Ocean Decade is a multifaceted and dynamic initiative that operates across diverse temporal, geographic, and thematic dimensions. Its coordination presents challenges and is often described

⁴ Ocean Decade Vision 2030 Outcomes Report, April 2024

as complex to manage. Feedback from the White Papers highlights that the coordination of the Decade fails to sufficiently promote collective action across its various initiatives, and that identifying entry points for new partners proves difficult. As well, during the Ocean Decade consultation process in the TAC Region, stakeholders stressed the need to strengthen coordination among different initiatives and communities, and that coordination should start by including key players in the co-design process.

For the TAC Region the Terms of Reference for the establishment of a Decade Coordination Office were adopted by IOC/UNESCO XVII Session in May 2023. Presently, the Decade Coordination Unit, IOC/UNESCO and the IOC/UNESCO Secretariat (where the TAC DCO will be hosted) are working for implementing the DCO establishment recommendations starting by staffing the DCO. The main focus of the Decade Coordination Office (DCO) for IOC/UNESCO will be in supporting the effectiveness and impact of the Ocean Decade in the TAC region in following main areas i) coordinating and supporting endorsed Decade Actions operating in the Region and catalysing new Actions, ii) stakeholder facilitation and engagement, iii), resource mobilisation and communications, iv) monitoring and reporting efforts.

2. KEY ENABLERS

Key enablers for achieving the region's priorities within the Ocean Decade roadmap for the Tropical Americas and the Caribbean include:

Political Commitment:

- Strong regional governance and commitment from Caribbean and Tropical American countries to implement and support the roadmap's goals.

Financial Resources:

- Secure long-term funding through a combination of public and private sources, including grants, philanthropic donations, and innovative financing mechanisms.

Infrastructure Development:

- Invest in upgrading and expanding oceanographic observation networks, data processing facilities, and high-performance computing capabilities.

Innovation and Technology Transfer:

- Foster collaboration and knowledge exchange to bring cutting-edge oceanographic technologies and methodologies to the region.

Capacity Development Programmes:

- Develop training initiatives to strengthen the scientific workforce across the region, including training in data management, analysis, and communication skills.

Regional Collaboration:

- Encourage partnerships and knowledge sharing between Caribbean and Tropical American nations, fostering a collaborative approach to ocean challenges.

Public Awareness and Education:

- Implement educational Programmes to raise public awareness about the importance of a healthy ocean and encourage responsible ocean stewardship.

Data Sharing and Open Access:

- Promote open access to oceanographic data to support scientific research and informed decision-making.

3. REVIEWED STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE INTERACTION WITH REGIONAL PARTNERS

Regional organisations hold a pivotal role in the Ocean Decade by translating global priorities into tangible regional initiatives. These entities serve as vital fora to bring together stakeholders from across national borders, fostering transboundary cooperation on critical ocean science matters. Their importance lies in their ability to effectively coordinate actions, spearhead programmes that address the Ocean Decade Challenges, and take the lead in enhancing regional capacity development and data management efforts-

Reviewed strategies to enhance interaction with regional partners are important because they enable leveraging the strengths and resources of regional partners, make informed decisions, and promote inclusivity, ultimately increasing the likelihood of achieving the initiative's objectives on a global scale while addressing regional characteristics and challenges.

Cross-disciplinary collaboration plays a pivotal and transformative role in the UN Ocean Decade, serving as a key for addressing the complex and interconnected challenges facing the ocean. The Ocean Decade recognises that ocean health is influenced by a multitude of factors, spanning the realms of natural sciences, social sciences, engineering, and policy. Cross-disciplinary collaboration brings together experts from these diverse fields to foster a holistic understanding of ocean ecosystems and to develop integrated solutions. This collaborative approach allows for a comprehensive examination of ocean issues and ensures that strategies and solutions are not only scientifically sound but also culturally and socially relevant.



Following interviews and meetings with stakeholders and partners, including the leadership of the TAC endorsed Decade Actions, TAC Working Groups, UN and Intergovernmental Organisations, DCC NEPO, WESTPAC DCO, and TAC DNCs, a series of recommendations has been formulated that contribute to reviewing strategies to enhance interaction with regional partners (Annex 2).

ANNEX 1.

Extract from The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) – a Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity (May 2024)

Science, technology, innovation and digitalization

i. Harness the potential of science, technology and innovation and advance the benefits of digitalization in SIDS by:

a. Providing SIDS the necessary means of implementation to strengthen their scientific and technological capacities;

b. Taking action to harness digital technologies to achieve sustainable development in SIDS by strengthening digital cooperation, developing digital infrastructure, bridging digital divides and ensuring an open, and inclusive digital future for all;

c. Assisting SIDS in developing national roadmaps for digitalization, science, technology and innovation (STI) and to support SIDS to build up national capacities for developing and utilizing the state-of-the-art technologies, including renewable energy technologies, marine technologies for the ocean-based economy and other areas significant to sustainable development, including digital technologies;

18. We underscore that SIDS face substantial structural challenges building the necessary ecosystem, institutions and capacity for promoting and using science, technology, innovation and digitalization to drive economic growth and sustainable development.

3. During this period, SIDS have and continue to provide stable and democratic governance for their citizenry and have strived to provide productive economies and safe societies throughout unrelenting turbulent global times. SIDS were heavily affected by two “once in a generation”, crises that struck in 2008 and 2020, while grappling with even more intense and frequent disasters and natural hazards. In addition, they have assumed leadership roles in areas such as finance, climate change and plastics, and are stewards of the ocean, including managing 19.1 percent of the world’s Exclusive Economic Zones and the resources they hold. SIDS have paved the way for many of the most progressive movements in these areas in policy development and the establishment of concrete actions in the multilateral arena.

4. We remain concerned that SIDS are facing the unrelenting and compounding impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, disasters and natural hazards, health and other social related challenges and economic vulnerabilities, as well as the progressive deterioration in their ability to withstand external shocks and enhance their resilience. Successive global crises, along with the COVID-19 pandemic have further exacerbated and negatively compounded the sustainable development of SIDS.

iv. Promote sustainable ocean-based economies by:

a. Assisting in the pursuit of opportunities in sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, mariculture, marine and coastal tourism, ocean-based renewable energy, and mineral and other related resources, sustainable shipping and maritime transport and ports; Agreed ad ref

b. Establishing public-private sector partnerships and appropriate capital market instruments and provide technical assistance to stock exchanges and security market regulators to enhance bankability and feasibility of projects; and Agreed ad ref

c. Creating and supporting an enabling policy environment to maximize diaspora remittances, investment, skills and experience for research, innovation, economic development and diversification to shift towards environmentally sustainable practices and technologies.

30. SIDS seek the support of the international community to:

b. Supporting the recruitment and development of technical expertise to facilitate the development of loss and damage response plans and actions, including risk assessment, loss modelling, governance, management, disbursement, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on loss and damage solutions and impacts;

ii. iii. Conserve and sustainably use the ocean and its resources by:

a. Ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of aquaculture, mariculture, tourism and fisheries, such as through the implementation of measures to end Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing for mutually reinforcing economic and environmental benefits; Agreed ad ref

b. Addressing biodiversity loss caused by harmful human activities including inadequate waste management and unsustainable production and consumption; including of plastics; overfishing; Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing; introduction of alien invasive species; noise and light pollution; coral bleaching, ocean acidification, eutrophication and Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs); and coastal erosion, including through measures such as inter alia satellite monitoring, and the establishment and strengthened management of area-based management tools, including Marine Protected Areas and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM); and other effective area based conservation measures (OECMS) and locally managed marine areas (LMMAs); and

c. Strengthening partnerships at the sub-regional, regional and international levels to prevent and reduce plastic pollution in the marine environment and support investment in modern integrated solid waste management systems.

ANNEX 2.

Key Reviewed Strategies to Enhance Interaction with Regional Partners

Coordination and Communication

- Stakeholder Mapping and Engagement:
- Partnership Agreements:
- Regular Communication:

Collaborative Projects and Resource Sharing

- Collaborative Projects:
- Coordinated Funding Applications:
- Resource Sharing:

Outreach and Promotion

- Joint Communication Strategies:
- Cross-Promotion and Outreach:

Capacity Development and Inclusivity

- Cross-Representation:
- Mutual Learning and Capacity Development:

Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration and Adaptability

- Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration:
- Flexibility and Adaptability:

Network Building and Sustainability

- Building a Collaborative Network:
- Long-Term Sustainability Strategies:

Inclusivity and Local Engagement

- Local Community Engagement Strategies:

Evaluation and Ownership

- Regular Progress Check-ins:
- Clear Communication and Information Sharing:
- Shared Ownership: