This Information document provides an overview of the activities implemented by the Marine Policy and Regional Coordination Section of IOC (IOC/MPR) during the last biennium, in support of the Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM) programme strategic objectives endorsed by the IOC Assembly at its 29th session (Paris, 21–29 June 2017, IOC-XXIX/3), including technical advice and support to Member states on marine spatial planning, sustainable blue economy and large marine ecosystems.
INTRODUCTION

Following the endorsement of the ICAM Strategy (Document IOC-XXVI/2 Annex 11), the Assembly at its 29th session endorsed new objectives for the IOC/ICAM Programme to support the implementation of SDG14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development) of the 2030 Agenda1. The activities described below cover the period June 2017–June 2019.

THEME 1: COASTAL AND MARINE ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

OBJECTIVE 1: Build collective capacities to respond to emerging ocean issues through ecosystem and area-based management tools such as Integrated Coastal Area Management, Marine Spatial Planning and Sustainable Blue Economy initiatives, including transboundary and large-marine ecosystem approaches for the sustainable use of marine resources and with a view to achieve a healthy and a productive ocean.

In support of building collective capacities, IOC/MPR organized in total 36 events related to integrated coastal area management, marine spatial planning, large marine ecosystems and sustainable blue economy. These events were organized in the context of projects such as SPINCAM (co-financed by the Government of Flanders), MSPglobal (co-financed by the European Commission) and GEF LME:Learn (co-financed by the Global Environmental Facility), key regional partners and Member States.

The training activities were implemented in 20 different countries and the training materials are available in four different languages (Spanish, French, English and Portuguese). More than 3,000 national officials and experts from 98 different countries benefited from both face-to-face and online trainings, as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: Nationality of experts trained by IOC/MPR from 2017 to 2019

(1) 14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans;

14.7 By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism;

14.a Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries.
In November 2018, the European Commission approved the MSPglobal Initiative led by IOC/MPR to support international marine/maritime spatial planning (MSP) for the sustainable development of the blue economy, by enhancing cross-border and transboundary cooperation where it already exists and promoting MSP processes in areas where it is yet to be put in place.

Transboundary MSP will be promoted in two pilot case studies, namely the Western Mediterranean region (Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Portugal and Mauritania) and in the Southeast Pacific (Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile) with a specific transboundary cartographic activity in the Historical Bay of the Gulf of Guayaquil in between Ecuador and Peru.

The IOC Secretariat organized trainings dedicated to Marine Spatial Planning in the Mediterranean in collaboration with the Priority Actions Programme/Regional Activity Centre (PAP-RAC) (Zagreb, Croatia) in April 2019 and with the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS) and Member States in the Southeast Pacific in June 2019.

Member States provided support to IOC Secretariat to strengthen institutional capacities in the context of marine spatial planning. The Government Offices of Sweden provided support for the organization of technical and high level events in the context of the 9th GEF International Waters Conference (Marrakesh, Morocco) and the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference (Nairobi, Kenya) both held in November 2018.

The Government of the Netherlands is supporting the Secretariat with multilingual training materials, technical advice and the provision of the MSP Challenge Game, available in English, French and Spanish, that is used in all trainings led by IOC/MPR.

The Government of Turkmenistan continue providing support to trainings in line with the Joint Roadmap to accelerate MSP worldwide. The 7th Training Programme on Sustainable Development and Governance of the Caspian Sea was organized by the State Enterprise on Caspian Sea Issues at the President of Turkmenistan and the International Ocean Institute (IOI), as part of the IOI’s Global Training Programme; this training event counted with the collaboration of IOC Secretariat. The event was organized in Turkmenbashi, Turkmenistan, with the participation of National Officials from the Caspian Sea countries and neighbouring regions.

As part of the priority actions agreed in the context of the Joint Roadmap to accelerate marine spatial planning processes worldwide, IOC/MPR jointly organized with the European Commission three workshops of the International Forum on Marine Spatial Planning (MSPforum): 1st MSPforum held in Brussels, Belgium, the 24 and 25 May 2018; 2nd MSPforum held in Saint Denis de la Réunion, France, from 26 to 29 March 2019; and the 3rd MSPforum held in Vigo, Spain, from 12 to 15 May 2019). Both institutions are committed to support the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and in particular the dedicated goal SDG 14, in a comprehensive, consistent and holistic way.

A dedicated technical secretariat was established at IOC to facilitate the sharing of knowledge related to transboundary water management, the building of technical capacity, as well as supporting South-to-South and North-to-South learning through effective regional networks of freshwater and marine practitioners in the context of the GEF LME:Learn project led by IOC and UNDP and co-funded by the Global Environmental Facility.

IOC/UNESCO is acting as Secretariat for the Large Marine Ecosystems’ Community; IOC/MPR organized the 19th Annual LME Meeting (LME19) held from 29 November to 1 December 2017 in Cape Town, South Africa, and the 20th Annual LME Meeting (LME20) that took place the 3 and 4 November 2018 in Marrakesh, Morocco, with the participation of 110 and 127 experts, respectively.
**SPINCAM 3** aims to lay the foundations of a long-term strategy to support sustainable growth of coastal, marine and maritime areas, recognizing the importance of these settings as drivers of the regional economy, with great potential for innovation and growth in line with the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the South-East Pacific, commonly known as the Lima Convention.

In relation to trainings, the Secretariat reinforced the synergies amongst project initiatives organizing specific trainings on transboundary marine spatial planning and sustainable blue economy in Dakar, Senegal, in French, in Panama in Spanish in collaboration with SPINCAM, and in Hanoi, Viet Nam, in English in collaboration with MSPglobal, GEF LME:Learn and SPINCAM projects. These trainings benefited more than 100 experts, national officials and LME practitioners.

IOC continue hosting the internship of students from the **Erasmus Mundus Master Course on Marine Spatial Planning** led by the Universities of Venezia, Italy, Sevilla, Spain, and Açores, Portugal. During the last biennium students from Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe have spent their six months’ internship in the premises of UNESCO Headquarters, IOCARIBE, IOCAFRICA, IOC Perth Project Office and IOC/IODE Project Office.

**THEME 2: COASTAL AND MARINE HAZARDS ADAPTATION AND PREPAREDNESS THROUGH EBM/AREA-BASED MANAGEMENT TOOLS**

**OBJECTIVE 2**: Promote the integration of ocean-related hazards and climate change adaptation within coastal and marine management and planning tools in order to improve preparedness and resilience of coastal communities

**AQUACROSS** has developed practical guidance on identifying threats to biodiversity, understanding links between ecosystems and the services they provide, data management, modelling and scenario development, and policy analysis, which fit together as parts of the integrated **AQUACROSS Assessment Framework** for ecosystem-based management of aquatic ecosystems. IOC Secretariat developed, tested, and applied this research in a pilot case study at the Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean: Andalusia (Spain) – Morocco (IBRM) to solve local biodiversity challenges. IOC/MPR used Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) as a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural landscape made up of “green” (land) and “blue” (water) elements with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services.

The GBI concept is about maintaining, strengthening and restoring ecosystems and the services they provide. All this makes GBI a useful tool for integrative spatial planning of the IBRM that addresses the conservation and societal goals existing in the Reserve.

On the one hand, due to the benefits that GBI provides against habitat loss and fragmentation, as well as against climate change and natural disasters, GBI per se is considered an ecosystem-based solution, since it offers a natural alternative to solve these environmental problems in contrast to purely technical solutions. On the other hand, by means of EBM restoration measures applied within the GBI, we might improve the GBI, maintaining healthy ecosystems, reconnecting fragmented habitats and restoring degraded ecosystems, so they can provide society with more and better goods and services.

The identification of ecosystem components, functions and services were possible thanks to the support of local experts on biodiversity, ecology, sustainable development and spatial planning in each study area sections, namely managers of the protected sites and of the IBRM, as well as coastal and marine planners, planners on water management, and actors playing a relevant role in the different economical activities developed in a sustainable way in the study area. Technical and local experts also helped during the data/information compilation. In addition, the involvement of the stakeholders was crucial in the process of defining indicators since they sourced the data required for their quantification. The stakeholder participation was also key during the modelling exercise for
the discussion of the modelling results. On a local level Biosphere Reserve’s Management Council and Stakeholders Network were involved. So were regional actors, namely, the Ministry of the Environment and spatial planning, Ecologic transition and Sustainable development. On a national level, actors of importance are the Ministry of the Environment and Planning. The international drivers are biodiversity, water and marine directives whereas the Sustainable Development Goals and Aichi Biodiversity Targets are also important.

Specifically, the results obtained may guide the different policies in the area and contribute to identifying spatial planning priorities: Biodiversity Strategies, National Marine Strategies, Coastal Management Plans, National Plans for Watershed Management and Directives for restoration as well as sustainable tourism strategies and strategies for the development of marine aquaculture. A publication on the Analysis of transboundary water ecosystems and green and blue infrastructures: Intercostal Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean: Andalusia (Spain) – Morocco (IOC/2019/TS/140) was published by IOC and is available in UNESDOC in English, Spanish and French.

IOC/MPR, the Tsunami Unit (TSU) and the Ocean Observation Section (OOS) are building synergies to promote the integration of ocean-related hazards and climate change adaptation within coastal and marine management and planning tools to improve preparedness and resilience of coastal communities: (i) Coastal cities adaptation and preparedness in collaboration with Member States; (ii) Coastal and Marine Risks; (iii) Resilience of coastal communities in collaboration with PADDLE and GEF LME:Learn and (iv) Scenarios for MSP and Blue Economy in the context of MSPglobal and the support of the European Commission and the Kingdom of Sweden.

**THEME 3: COASTAL AND MARINE DATA, INFORMATION AND DECISION SUPPORT TOOLS**

**OBJECTIVE 3:** Increase collective knowledge supporting management actions on the status and change of coastal and marine ecosystems and sustained services through use and dissemination of data, information and decision support tools.

**SPINCAM** project aims to develop a harmonized coastal and marine environmental management framework for the Southeast Pacific, thereby providing the right tools to apply the ecosystem approach in their national waters, as a foundation for planning sustainable economic development (blue economy) through inter-institutional capacity-building, which will translate into concrete recommendations and strategies at the regional level.

SPINCAM reinforced the regional atlas providing the necessary maintenance and improvements in terms of functionality linking the national atlases. National and regional indicators have been updated and a new set of indicators for sustainable blue economy is under development.

In line with the development of data and information to support planning processes and to determine levels of coherence in current marine and coastal environmental protection policies and instruments, SPINCAM developed the compendium of coastal and marine policies for the Southeast Pacific (IOC/INF-1365 Rev). SPINCAM also launched a Regional compendium of national and regional capacity-building needs and offers for the Southeast Pacific.

The project has also developed the coastal and marine ecosystem information system for the Southeast Pacific, identifying coastal and marine ecosystems, pressures and ecosystem services across borders. This joint task helped the project partners to develop ocean health and cumulative impact indices for the region and to consider the ecosystem approach in the management of coastal and marine ecosystem services. The outputs of this task are currently in use, as decision support tools, by national coordinating authorities in charge of marine spatial planning to develop national recommendations for marine spatial planning and sustainable blue economy and to establish a
monitoring and evaluation protocols for the state of coastal and marine ecosystem services, including in Biosphere Reserves (IOC/BRO/2018/4).

SPINCAM countries have provided more than 2,000 new entries in OceanDocs during the biennium 2017–2019.

IOC/MPR continues promoting coastal and marine atlases and storytelling tools to support both the International Coastal Atlas Network and Ocean Literacy activities led by IOC. The Secretariat also supports Member States with decision support tools to effectively manage and plan coastal and marine resources.

In the context of AQUACROSS, IOC/UNESCO designed, built and launched the Transboundary waters (freshwaters, coastal and marine) data and information portal. The data portal contains more than 700 datasets from 17 registered organizations. The portal is taking advantage of the latest developments and interoperability standards for harvesting and collecting relevant data and metadata files from other European reference’s data portals. The aim of this functionality is to create an access point to the different existing data portals without replicating the information by developing a decentralised information system.

IOC/MPR created a multilingual storytelling tool in the context of AQUACROSS to support communication, dissemination and participation activities in the transboundary management of the Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean in Andalusia (Spain) and the Region of Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima (Morocco). The storytelling tool is available in Arabic, Spanish, French and English and contains the results of the work of IOC Secretariat. The storytelling tool is currently integrated at the Environmental Information Network of Andalusia (REDIAM).

IOC/MPR led 10 trainings dedicated to data, information and decision support tools from 2017 to 2019.

**FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

In the context of the MSPglobal Initiative and the Joint Roadmap to accelerate Marine/Maritime Spatial Planning worldwide and in support to the Agenda 2030, IOC/MPR has strengthened the collaboration with the European Commission for the development of International MSP Guidelines, including transboundary aspects for the development of the sustainable ocean economy (blue economy) enabling ecosystem-based MSP and pursuing capacity building for mutual understanding and for communicating MSP.

In order to respond to the needs of IOC Member States, the IOC/ICAM programme will continue to seek extra-budgetary resources to facilitate training on marine spatial planning, sustainable blue economy and decision support tools in the context of the MSPglobal Initiative, particularly in Africa, Central and East Asia, Latin America and Caribbean and the Pacific Islands.

The GEF funded project “Strengthening Global Governance of Large Marine Ecosystems and their Coasts through Enhanced Sharing and Application of LME/ICAM/MPA Knowledge and Information Tools” – LME:LEARN (Document IOC/INF-1380) will continue providing an essential platform for implementing transboundary marine spatial planning and sustainable blue economy activities and training at the level of LME Projects.

Collaboration with the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB) has been strengthened in the context of the Flemish funded project “Biosphere Reserves as a Tool for Coastal and Island Management in the Southeast Pacific Region (BRESEP)”, in which IOC has an important role in terms of ICAM, MSP and capacity development. IOC/MPR is willing to continue this fruitful collaboration.
The collaboration with the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (IHP) will continue in the context of the International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network Project (IW:Learn), to benefit from its rich history, and to feed LME information into IW:Learn for the continuation of the mission as portal for information on international waters (both freshwater, coastal and marine).