

G7 Future of the Seas and Oceans Working Group Statement to the International Community

At the 2018 G7 Summit, the Leaders of the G7 re-emphasized that the health of our seas and oceans is critical to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the planet and underscored the value of ocean science, observation and seabed mapping. The Future of the Seas and Oceans Working Group, comprised of marine scientists and government science ministries from across the G7, is well placed to help advance ocean priorities and lead collaboration and developments in this area.

In particular, the Working Group recognizes the importance of ocean observing and monitoring activities and, in December 2017, the Working Group agreed on action plans for five Action Areas to ensure continued strong progress on the G7 commitments. Those Action Areas are:

1. Support the development of a global initiative for enhanced, global, sustained sea and ocean observing system;
2. Support an enhanced system of ocean assessment through the UN Regular Process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment;
3. Promote the improvement of global data sharing infrastructure to address the challenges of physical, chemical and biological data;
4. Strengthen collaborative approaches to encourage the development of regional observing capabilities and knowledge networks;
5. Promote increased G7 political cooperation by identifying additional actions needed to enhance future routine ocean observations.

The Working Group has agreed that it can best add value by focusing on the underlying science that supports the G7 commitments, to ensure that the knowledge and data are there to address those commitments. Specifically, this includes the quality, the interoperability, and the geographic coverage of those data and the observing networks.

High quality, sustained ocean observations are required to improve climate models and underpin many international commitments, including environmental and societal issues, such as: climate change mitigation and adaptation; coastal management; ocean pollution, including marine litter and plastics; and, biodiversity conservation. As leaders in ocean observing, the G7 Future of the Seas and Oceans Working Group recognize that this cannot be done in isolation, and that it needs to be a coordinated, collaborative and global effort. We also recognize the importance of full representation, including gender, age and geographical balance, in these efforts. Therefore, through leading by example, we hope to promote and support partnerships, networks, and increase the availability of science through open data and scientific cooperation amongst the global community. We will also look to utilise synergies that may emerge as a consequence of, for example, the 30th session of the IOC Assembly and OceanObs'19 in the perspective of other relevant global initiatives, such as the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).

To support these endeavours and help address the Action Areas listed above, G7 members will establish a Coordination Centre for ocean observation platforms that will interface with the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) and be inter-linked with other G7 priority areas. This Centre will build upon and improve the coordination between existing programs and implement the action plans that have been developed for each Action Area. Where appropriate, the G7, in collaboration with GOOS, will explore options to use the Coordination Centre as a vehicle to usher forward recommendations forthcoming from the IOC Assembly and OceanObs'19 conference as well as support other relevant initiatives, such as the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).