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Summary of the Visioning Processes in 2014

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1. Introduction

Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans envisioned future long-term directions at a Visioning Workshop held in Geneva, Switzerland, 3-4 July 2014. The Visioning Workshop, based on 40 years of experiences since the onset of UNEP Regional Seas Programme, identified four (4) key priority areas for the future of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans¹: **(1) governance; (2) pollution; (3) extraction (living and non-living resources); and (4) impacts of climate change and ocean acidification**. The following table shows the expected outcomes for each of the four themes identified in the Visioning Workshop.

Table 1: Four key themes and expected outcomes for long and medium terms

Theme	Outcome (5-10 years)	Impact (10+ years)
Governance	Competency and visibility of regional seas conventions and action plans in service to the decision making and action(s) by member states are increased through coordinated and collaborative actions	Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans are more effective at taking consensus-achieved, results-based actions and enforce decisions that maintain or improve the quality of the marine and coastal environment in order to ensure increased human wellbeing
	Effectiveness of decisions agreed in regional seas conventions and action plans is increased through strengthening of integrated cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial approach	
Pollution	Regional Seas have adopted a source to seas approach for pollution mitigation and management	Within Regional Seas Convention and Action Plans areas of responsibility, pollution inputs to the marine environment are reduced to levels that do not negatively impact the healthy functioning of ecosystems
	Regional Seas have adopted a baseline on respective pollution levels from which progress is measured	
	Regional seas member states have implemented and enforced LBS protocols and action plans	
	Regional Seas have adopted respective and relevant chemicals and POPs conventions? into their policy framework (allowance for emerging issues and protocols)	
Extraction	Regional Seas build capacities in member states to implement ecosystem-based management approach	Within Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans areas of

¹ UNEP(DEPI)/RS.16/WP.3 RS Visioning Workshop Report

	Emergency response mechanisms/regulations/protocols/action plans are designed and implemented by member states of the regional seas	responsibility, ecosystem services are maintained and/or restored
	The values of ecosystem services within regional seas areas of responsibility are defined and integrated in planning and policy	
Impacts of a changing climate and ocean acidification	Regional Seas Conventions have supported the adaptation and resilience needs of SIDSs and Low-lying coastal areas by supporting integrating into national plans	The Regional Seas conventions have helped maintain ecosystem health, human wellbeing and overall resilience in the face of impacts of a changing climate and ocean acidification
	Regional Seas Conventions and action plans have developed through collaborative efforts, vulnerability and impact assessments, including ocean acidification adaption and have supported their integration into appropriate response plans to ensure systemic resilience at the regional and local level,. in the face of climate change.	

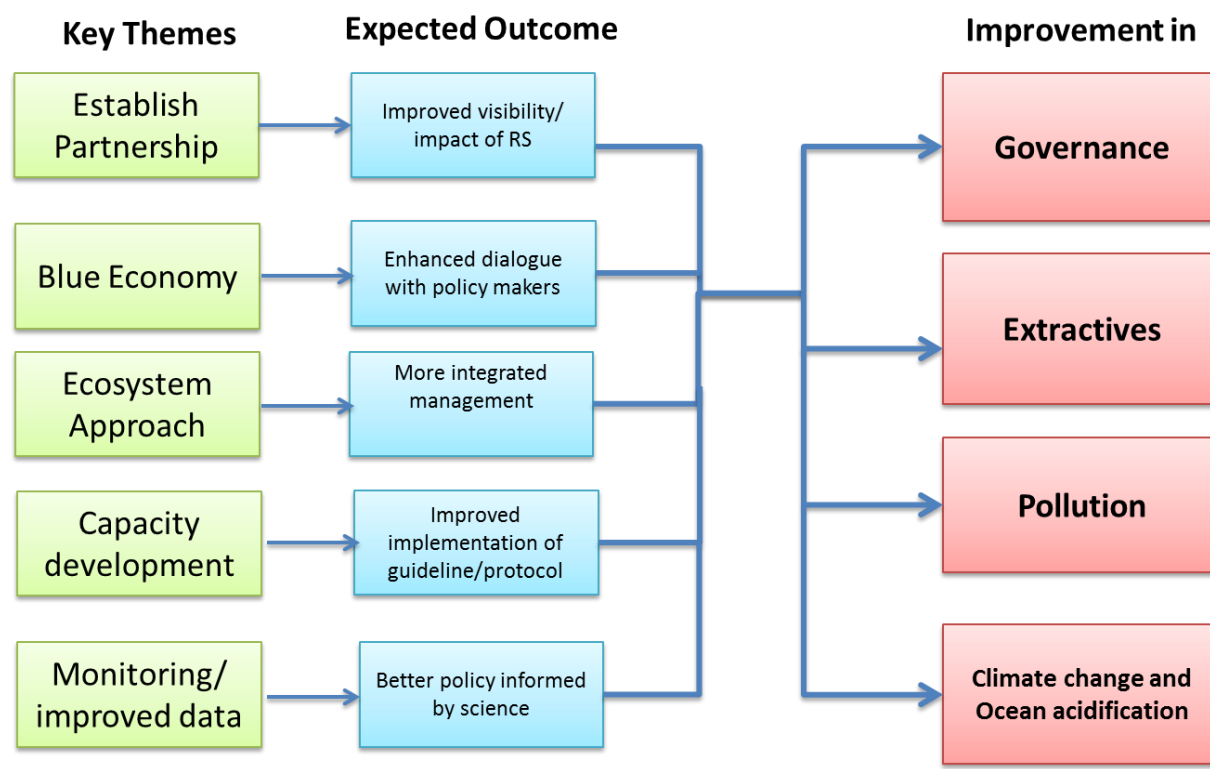
The Visioning Workshop recommended making a results-oriented matrix clarifying indicators of success for the expected outcomes. By taking a results-oriented approach, it will be possible to identify the level of achievement and gaps in the desired outcome. Thus the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans are encouraged to develop indicators for associated actions to achieve the expected outcomes.

Following the Visioning Workshop in Geneva, the 16th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans in Athens, Greece, 29 September – 1 October 2014 held the session entitled “*The Development of roadmap for implementing visioning priorities for 10+ years*”. During the session, participants developed ideas with regards to the four priority areas. Using flipcharts, the participants discussed action points that could serve as the basis for the “Roadmap”. This report summarises the key findings from the session. The summary of the action points identified through the session is shown in Annex 1.

2. Key Themes

Through the analysis of the action points on the four key priority areas, it was found that five themes recurrently appeared: (1) Partnership; (2) Blue Economy; (3) Ecosystem Approach; (4) Capacity development; and (5) Improved monitoring and data collection. Hence, these five themes could be considered to be strategically important in order to deal with the four priority areas of the Regional Seas.

Figure 1: Conceptual diagram on the key themes



(1) Partnership

Formulation of partnerships emerged as a key theme for all the four priority issues. The types of partnerships identified are:

- Fishery bodies (RFMO / RFB)
- Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs)
- Regional enforcement network (Interpol, WCO, wildlife enforcement)
- Among Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans
- Extractive industries (non-living)
- Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)
- UN and international agencies
- Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) groups

Regarding extractive activities (fisheries), it was identified to be important to strengthen relationships between Regional Seas and Regional Fisheries Bodies. Existing mechanisms such as FAO instruments including IPOA-SEA birds and SHAAES IUU need to be better used. Cooperation with global biodiversity

MEAs such as CBD was also identified to be important in order to conserve marine resources and establish Marine Protected Areas with suitable control on extractive activities.

Closer collaboration with chemical MEAs is also suggested to deal with pollution. As Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans started as pollution focused agreements, benefits can be reinforced by exchanging knowledge and experiences with relevant MEAs.

In relation to non-living extractive industries (e.g. oil, mining), partnership with the industry could also be a good strategy to influence the sector. For example Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans could assist the sector to establish best environmental practices and guidelines for environmental assessment. The partnership with extractive industries will also improve ocean governance to move towards more integrated governance. Better collaboration is necessary in future, in order to address current fragmented ocean governance with sector-specific approaches².

It was also pointed out that stronger programmatic cooperation between UNEP and UNEP-administered Convention Secretariats is necessary. Strategic partnerships with other international organisations will also increase opportunities for funding of Regional Seas. At the same time, Regional Seas would be able to deliver their messages to other UN agencies. Through this coordination, cooperation among Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans could also be facilitated.

In dealing with climate change and ocean acidification, a common ground between Regional Seas and Disaster Risk Reduction Group (DRR) may be found. As established regional mechanisms, Regional Seas can surely contribute to regional adaptation mechanisms working closely with climate change related agencies and organisations.

In conclusion, it is clear that stronger partnerships are crucial to deal with the four priority issues. The Regional Seas and Conventions and Action Plans could develop a partnership strategy, while at the same time, each region identifies key regional partners and collaborative methods.

(2) Blue Economy

Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans have identified Blue Economy as well as financial instruments such as Green Tax as opportunities for an improved communication with policy makers. Regional Seas could establish guidelines to perform economic valuation to be used by policy makers in the region. Identification of ecosystem values will help policy makers take ecosystem values into consideration in formulating policies.

Evaluation of ecosystem services will also improve science-based policy making for the oceans. Economic valuation will require data collection of ecosystem services and its use. Thus through economic evaluation, we will also be able to improve our understanding of marine and coastal ecosystems in the region.

² UNEP (DEPI)/RS.15/P.8.RS Governance White Paper

(3) Ecosystem Approach

Ecosystem-based approaches recurrently appear as a key theme to tackle four key priority issues of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. Regional Seas put emphasis on the importance of ecosystem approach particularly in the context of climate change adaptation. The opportunities for mainstreaming climate change into the ecosystem approach and integrated coastal zone management were highlighted³.

Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans have introduced the ecosystem approach to varying degrees⁴. A long-term objective could be to urge participating governments of each Convention and Action Plan to implement an integrated ecosystem approach to the marine and coastal environment. Regional Seas can lead this process based on established relationships with contracting parties.

UNEP (2015)⁵ summarizes necessary actions for Regional Seas to implement Ecosystem Approach (Annex 2). Each Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plan is thus, encouraged to assess its current status and to plan necessary actions for its region.

(4) Capacity development

Capacity development emerged as a key aspect especially to improve implementation of conventions and protocols at national level. Since commitments by countries are essential in achieving objectives of the Conventions and Action Plans, improvement of implementation is necessary to improve the health of ecosystems. Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans are able to implement capacity development programmes in order to assist their participating countries. For example, it is possible to conduct capacity development courses and workshops to improve monitoring and control of pollution.

At country level, inter-ministerial cooperation is also important to harmonize national ocean management plans. For example, the ministry that deals with fishery and the one that deals with environment tend to be separate institutions. Participation of relevant ministries is an important aspect to move towards integrated management. Regional Seas are, thus, encouraged to consider an integrated approach rather than sectoral-approach when planning capacity development.

(5) Improved monitoring and data collection

Scientific data serve as the basis for evidence-based policies. Without monitoring efforts, it is difficult to know the effectiveness of protocols and regulations implemented in the regions. Furthermore, if no reliable data and information are available, policy makers will be forced to take uninformed decisions.

³ IISD Reporting Services (2015) A Summary Report of the Sixteenth Global Meeting of the UNEP Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans

⁴ UNEP/EARS/WG.1/INF.3 Ecosystem Approaches to Regional Seas

⁵ UNEP/EARS/WG.1/INF.3 Ecosystem Approaches to Regional Seas

It is suggested that unified data collection approaches across sub-regions could be organised. Each country has its own monitoring programs and standards, which makes it difficult to capture the entire picture at the regional level. A regional joint monitoring program using indicators could be developed aligning with monitoring on the indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals⁶. Moreover, the result of monitoring could be summarised as regional state of the marine environment reports, which may feed into global status reports.

In order to develop a standardised monitoring system, a common set of indicators⁷ for Regional Seas Programmes has been proposed. Monitoring on the same set of indicators will allow inter-regional comparisons. This set of indicators could also serve as a common set of indicators for member states of each Regional Seas Convention and Action Plan. Further discussion along this line will be conducted in the First meeting of the Regional Seas Indicators Working Group, 23 October 2015, Istanbul.

3. Way Forward

Through the visioning processes in 2014, desired outcomes for medium and long term milestones have been identified. Key action areas for achieving the desired outcomes were described in this report. As proposed in the Visioning Workshop, it is recommended that indicators will be assigned to each action point so that it will be possible to measure progress towards the expected outcomes identified. Without clear indicators and monitoring on them, it will be difficult to assess the level of achievements and to identify gaps to be filled.

The result of visioning processes in 2014 could serve as a basis for the Strategic Directions 2017-2020 / 2021 – 2025 that set coherent strategies for the Regional Seas Programmes as a whole. By setting a common strategy, fragmentation of objectives and priorities across the region may be overcome, creating a joint force as Regional Seas Programmes.

Therefore at the 17th Global Meeting for the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, participants are invited to consider the above mentioned key action areas in order to formulate Strategic Directions and associated measurements for success.

⁶ UNEP (2015) Discussion paper on the SDG and Regional Seas (in preparation)

⁷ UNEP/EARS/WG.2/INF5 Measuring Success: Indicators for Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans

Annex 1:

Summary of Visioning Session at 16th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans

1. Governance

Challenges	Opportunities
<u>Multiple governing bodies</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Existing strong Regional and sub-regional bodies (e.g. EU, CARICOM, OECS)Fragmented regulations for fishing management, LMENo clear definition for each actor <u>Difference among countries</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Level of democratizationNorth-South differenceTerritorial disputes among MS <u>At country level</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Harmonization of national plansInter-ministerial cooperationCorruptionInsufficient capacityLack of commitment by government to implementMore ownership is needed <u>Priorities</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Economic development vs. environment <u>Lack of data</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Need for more accurate data <u>RS Programme visibility</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Need to increase visibility and impact	<u>Science- Policy Interface</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Governance to include management = RSP to lead the MSP/EB science-policy and practice <u>Cooperation among RS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Common assessment of the effectiveness of implementation and gap identificationRegulations/ guidelines/ EIA processes.Easier identification of and access to implementation means (exchange of information) <u>RS -LME</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">RSC – LME: harmonization = Streamline vision activities into ESCRegional projects bring LMEs together (e.g. GEF/LMEs etc) <u>Cooperation with Fishery organizations</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Direct messages to FAO committee on FisheriesBetter collaboration with RFMOs / RFBs <u>Funding</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Regional Integration, Domestic Funding, Strategic Partnership, Public AwarenessPossibilities of funding <u>Blue Economy</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Interests in Green Economy/ Blue Governance <u>Partnership</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Consider link to regional enforcement networks (e.g. Interpol, WCO, wildlife enforcement networks), private sector and other regional institution

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