



# POLICY BRIEF ON THE OCEAN:

## SCALING UP ADAPTATION ACTIONS AND CO-OPERATION TO BUILD CLIMATE RESILIENCE OF THE OCEAN, COASTAL AREAS AND ECOSYSTEMS

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### Summary of Action Points

Urgent actions are needed to scale up adaptation to climate change in the ocean and coastal zones, and build resilience for the ocean, coastal areas and ecosystems. Under the NWP, knowledge needs identified by governments were initially scoped out in the paper. In collaboration with the expert group on the ocean\*, the knowledge needs were further refined through a technical expert meeting. The 13th NWP Focal Point Forum\*\* convened at COP25 provided a platform to discuss knowledge gaps and collaborative actions across the following thematic areas:

### What is the Nairobi Work Programme?

The Nairobi work programme (NWP), a UNFCCC knowledge-to-action hub for adaptation and resilience, supports the curation, co-production and exchange of knowledge among its partners and Parties. It convenes partnerships to close knowledge gaps on all aspects of climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation.

- (A) **Governance and participation:** Coordinate and strengthen approaches
- (B) **Data and methods:** Ensure availability of data and facilitate access to robust data
- (C) **Protection and restoration:** Provide a collective, long term and inclusive approach
- (D) **Facilitating support for:**
  - Capacity-building and Education: make social Inclusiveness as the new normal
  - Technology and Innovation: embrace system thinking, reduce risks & innovate
  - Finance and Funding: answer needs and provide long term vision and innovation

*\*\*Find more information about the 13th focal point forum at the end of this policy brief.*

# Building resilience of the ocean, coastal areas and ecosystems

Healthy oceans are instrumental in regulating the climate system and are integral to achieving the SDGs, the goals of the Paris Agreement, and the ambition needed to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special report on Oceans and Cryosphere (SROCC) highlights that Small Island Developing States (SIDS), coastal megacities and communities are on the frontline of increasing climate impacts. The IPCC special report tells us that the world's ocean and cryosphere have been 'taking the heat' from climate change for decades. The consequences for the ocean, nature and humanity are sweeping and severe. The Ocean is the foundation for vibrant economies. Goods and services from the ocean generate about \$2.5 trillion each year—an amount expected to double by 2030. This makes the ocean the seventh largest economy in the world today.

*\*\*\*Oceans, coastal areas and ecosystems are one of the thematic areas under the NWP prioritised by [SBSTA 50](#)*

The ocean provides a space for action – for governments, communities and stakeholders living with the ocean every day and living with the increasing risks in the next decades. Action on adaptation is a vital part of policy frameworks for strengthening livelihoods and protecting lives such as through fisheries and ecosystems management and marine protected areas.

While a number of ocean initiatives at global, regional and national levels have been launched and are in progress in support of ocean action, there are gaps for effective ocean adaptation, which represent challenges, particularly for developing countries.

This effort under the NWP\*\*\* aims to understand the knowledge needs of countries, curate and share knowledge as well as co-design actions in addressing knowledge gaps in collaboration with the IPCC and partners. This initiative aims to build resilience of the ocean, coastal areas and ecosystems.



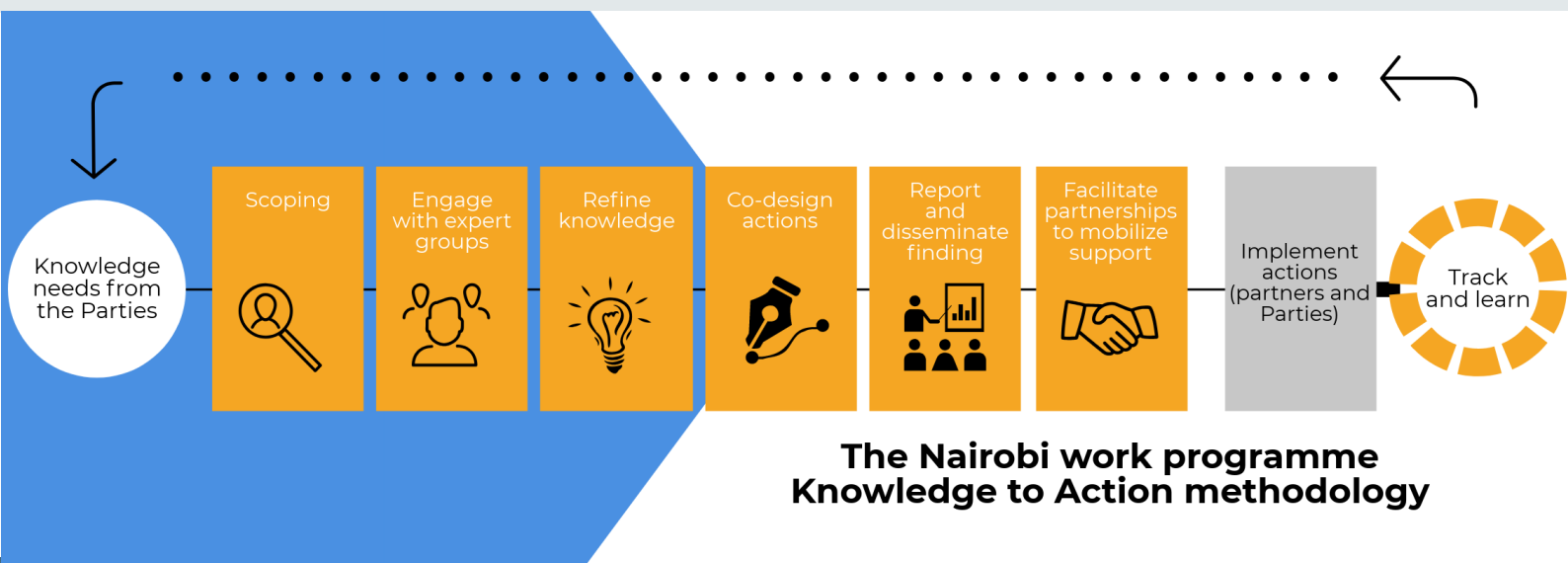
# Nairobi work programme knowledge-to-action methodology

For more effective collaborative action on closing knowledge gaps, the alignment of the supply of and demand for adaptation knowledge needs to be improved. This requires better understanding of such knowledge gaps on the basis of learning from practitioners and policymakers about the challenges they are facing on the ground.

The NWP articulates and responds to knowledge needs on relevant topics and thematic areas identified by Parties and constituted bodies under the UNFCCC process.

Based on this demand driven process, the NWP convenes relevant partners and explores partnerships and collaborations with thematic experts to facilitate and mobilize collaborative actions to close identified knowledge gaps and needs.

This iterative process can catalyse innovative partnerships between governments, non-State actors and other stakeholders. Such partnerships align resources and facilitate and catalyse the planning and implementation of actions to close knowledge gaps at all levels of governance.



**\*NWP Expert Group on the Ocean** includes experts from the following institutions: IPCC, FAO, the Nature Conservancy, UNESCO/IOC, IUCN, SLYCAN Trust, Future Ocean Alliance, Griffith University, World Ocean Council, Ocean and Climate Platform, U.S. Naval Academy, Caribbean Natural Resources Institute, Virginia Tech, UN Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations, UN Environment Programme, World Resources Institute, Rare, University of Pennsylvania, SPREP, UNDP, World Bank, The European MSP Platform.



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## Main Findings: Key knowledge gaps and collaborative actions

### Governance and Participation:

coordinate and strengthen approaches

There is a lack of coherence of multiple global agendas and effective linkage of multiple global processes with the national adaptation plans. This makes it challenging for the countries to implement the ambitious goals and targets as agreed in the Paris Agreement. The policy interlinkages between the ocean and climate, sectoral and inter and intra-ministerial actions at different governance levels also need to be strengthened.

#### Proposed collaborative actions:

- Map and share existing relevant global agendas/mandates including identifying synergies between different conventions and regulatory frameworks.
- Share information on and provide guidance for science-based ocean solutions by consolidating existing principles, including best governance practices at all level with the aim of enhancing understanding of ocean action across conventions and promoting collaboration and synergies.

### Data and Methods:

ensure availability of data and facilitate access to robust data

Knowledge gaps include the availability of and access to robust data and information, tools and methods for forecasting marine weather extremes, and knowledge of the adaptive capacity of ecosystems (e.g. mangroves and corals) and society.

#### Proposed collaborative actions:

- Help communities and policymakers understand what data are available and where the existing gaps are at both the local and national levels.
- Enhance capacity-building for data analysis and data integration at different levels; and developing information products and services.
- Ensure accessibility and applicability of robust data, particularly for SIDS, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and African countries, including by providing access to collected data; packaging relevant data in user-friendly formats.

## Protection and restoration:

provide a collective, long term and inclusive approach

Knowledge gaps around restoration includes the need for both capacity building and improved technical practices in site and species selection, integrated coastal planning, and long-term monitoring and maintenance coupled with better protection and governance of mature mangrove forests. Mapping distribution and loss of coastal ecosystems is also needed for effective planning, management, and restoration. Other identified gaps and needs include offsetting the impact of ocean acidification, involvement of indigenous peoples, women and communities as well as integrating different knowledge systems in restoration efforts and equitable benefits distribution.

### Proposed collaborative actions:

- Develop policy briefs including a set of criteria or principles for ecosystem-based adaptation for ocean and coastal ecosystems: developing countries could use these guides to develop proposals for accessing the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund, including for formulating and subsequently implementing national adaptation plans (NAPs).
- Develop guidelines for coastal and ocean nature based solutions for NAPs.

## Facilitating Support: Technology, Finance, and Capacity building

consider long term vision and innovation, system thinking and social inclusiveness

Knowledge gaps for facilitating various aspects of support exist. These include:

**Technology and Innovation:** Upgrading marine technological capabilities and expanding international cooperation; supporting local innovation and use of technologies by communities and micro-enterprises; assessing risks and uncertainties of technological developments, including risks to local livelihoods are some of the notable gaps.

**Finance and Funding:** There is an absence of long-term consistent financial support as well as lack of awareness and application of innovative financial tools for coastal adaptation. This also includes absence of micro-finance to support community adaptation.

**Capacity building:** There is a need to translate scientific knowledge into the local context and integrate local and traditional knowledge. There is also a need to create opportunities for dialogue between all involved.



## Support

## Conclusions and Next steps

### Proposed collaborative actions:

- Package existing materials and resources about climate resilient design to help formulate and subsequently implement national adaptation plans and related restoration plans.
- Disseminate information on available public and private finance mechanisms and instruments for coastal adaptation projects, and develop/repackage information as needed.
- Develop a technical paper focusing on constructing resilient coastal communities, highlighting practical constraints on the ground and innovation approaches.

The work on the topic of the ocean under the NWP has enhanced the engagement of relevant and diverse organizations and experts, provided an interactive space for expert dialogue and information-sharing, facilitated collaboration among ocean and climate experts.

The objective for 2020 and beyond is to further enhance partnership with the expert group and wider communities and facilitate actions to address knowledge gaps in this thematic area.

These actions will also involve working with relevant constituted bodies under the UNFCCC process, and support adaptation and resilient actions at all governance levels.

The UNFCCC secretariat will work closely with the expert group to organize various events and webinars and share the learning and outcomes at relevant regional and global events as well as package and disseminate the outcomes in knowledge products.





## The NWP thematic area : Oceans, coastal areas and ecosystems

As a demand-driven process, the knowledge needs of Parties were identified through the scoping paper based on rigorous review of reports submitted by governments to the UNFCCC process, IPCC SROCC report as well as relevant literature and reports. These knowledge needs were further refined through an engagement with the Expert group on oceans. The 13th NWP Focal Point Forum- mandated UNFCCC annual event- convened at COP25 provided an opportunity to discuss the actions in an inclusive manner with governments, experts and other partners.

Further on, the NWP is strengthening partnerships with the expert group to co-design actions to close these knowledge gaps, recognizing that these actions need to be aligned with existing work/mandates of our expert institutions and that these actions inform UNFCCC as well as relevant policy processes. In this manner, the outcomes of these collaborative actions could be directly relevant for countries, particularly LDCs and SIDS.



# Resources

- Nairobi Work Programme(NWP): <https://unfccc.int/nwp>
- NWP oceans page in the Adaptation Knowledge Portal:  
<https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NWPStaging/Pages/oceans-page.aspx>
- Adaptation of the Ocean, Coastal Areas and Ecosystems: NWP Scoping Paper on Closing knowledge gaps and advancing actions  
[https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Scopingpaper\\_Final%20version\\_300620.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Scopingpaper_Final%20version_300620.pdf)
- IPCC special report on the Ocean and the Cryosphere:  
<https://www.ipcc.ch/srocc/>

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