



Towards Partnerships and Collaboration on the Blue Economy

1. The oceans and seas are critical to sustaining Earth's life support systems. Globally, the market value of marine and coastal resources, services and industries is estimated at \$3 trillion per year or about 5% of global GDP. Approximately 350 million jobs are linked to the oceans, inter alia, through fishing, aquaculture, coastal and marine tourism, and research activities alone. Moreover, in excess of 1 billion people depend on fish as their primary source of protein.
2. Ocean economic values are, however, tied to assets that are in rapid decline. Overfishing, pollution and climate change are putting unprecedented stress on marine ecosystems and affecting the services they are able to provide. Overexploitation and poor management of marine resources have resulted in lost opportunities, heightened food insecurity and diminished economic opportunities for some of the world's poorest people.
3. The Blue Economy concept offers a way to redress the balance. Underpinning Blue Economy thinking is the de-coupling of socio-economic development from environmental degradation. In this regard, efficiency and optimization of natural marine resources within ecological limits becomes paramount. Blue Economy looks at oceans as "Development Spaces" where marine spatial planning, especially at national level integrates the interests and needs of conservation, sustainable use, extractive activities, marine transportation and coastal tourism, and ensures that the integrity and functioning of coastal and ocean systems is maintained.
4. Given the importance of the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources for developing countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in particular, a strong global endorsement of the concept has emerged with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the UN General Assembly with a stand-alone goal (SDG 14) "to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development".
5. There are a number of commonly accepted principles for a Blue Economy approach which can help to guide countries in defining Blue Economy and moving toward regional cooperation. The principles can be applied in any part of the oceans, seas and coasts, and should be applied by all actors involved in the economic development and protection of the seas including governments, private sector, development partners, scientific community and civil society groups. A Blue Economy should:
 - Provide social and economic benefits for current and future generations: securing people's need for food, water, energy, materials, recreation and health, as well as jobs, livelihoods, community wellbeing, and political stability.
 - Ensure ecosystem integrity: ensuring that ecosystem goods and services are harvested, processed and used in a way that does not contribute to further decline, but improves biodiversity and productivity.





- Recognize marine ecosystems as natural capital and protect and maintain them accordingly.
- Aspire for social and economic stability through the use of clean technology and renewable energy.

A sustainable Blue Economy should also be governed by processes that are:

- Based on mutual trust and respect, inclusive, allows equitable sharing of mutual benefits, marked by stakeholder participation;
- based on scientifically sound information or that adopt the precautionary principle in the absence of such information;
- accountable and transparent;
- holistic and cross-sectoral;
- innovative and proactive.

7. Active cooperation and partnerships are needed within and amongst public and private sectors to steer the concept of Blue Economy regionally and internationally with special recognition of the needs of developing nations, and in line with existing global, regional and local commitments.

8. The potential areas of cooperation among governments, civil society, private sector and the scientific community to advance the concept of Blue Economy in the region may include:

- Creating a **marine science-policy interface platform** to enhance knowledge and inform marine environmental policy making processes;
- Promoting **interdisciplinary training** initiatives to foster multi-sectoral learning, capacity building and programme implementation, including building national capacity on Integrated Coastal Management;
- Encouraging cooperation on **technology development and transfer** and promoting **South-South cooperation** for mitigating impacts from climate change and developing a regional coalition for negotiations in the UNFCCC process;
- Promoting initiatives for trans-boundary marine protected area networks and ecosystem protection through regional initiatives on **Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning**.

