

# ECOPs

## IMPACTREPORT

UN Ocean Conference 2022

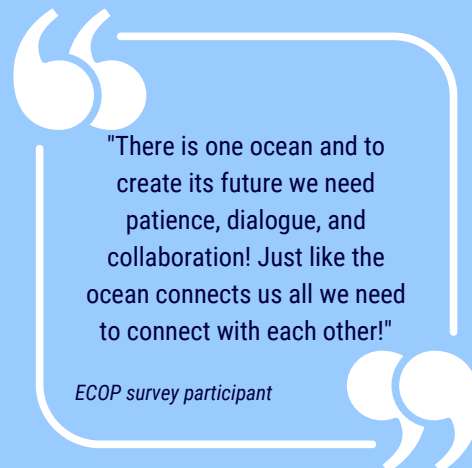


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# IMPACT REPORT



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Second UN Ocean Conference (UNOC) took place in Lisbon, 27 June to 1 July 2022, and was hosted by the governments of Kenya and Portugal. It was scheduled during the second year of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (“UN Ocean Decade”), and offered an incredible opportunity to engage “in person” with inter-governmental organisations, governments, NGOs, the academic and scientific community, the private sector and the public. Postponed from 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, navigating the virus was still a challenge in bringing together Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs) in Lisbon, along with several other challenges impacting ECOPs specifically, which we identify in this impact report.

The ECOP Programme is an endorsed Programme of the UN Ocean Decade, with Regional and National Nodes now set up in Africa, Asia, Brazil, Canada, Caribbean, Central America, Japan, Mexico, and the United States. We are a global network, reaching all corners of the Planet. Our Programme is organized under a polycentric framework, and does not have a legal entity status; therefore in order to attend the UNOC officially, we relied on partnerships. This meant working closely with established organisations in order to obtain accreditation for certain members to take part in official side events.

The ECOP Programme has compiled this UNOC impact report to chart the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities that we encountered in relation to the UNOC. The conference was considered a key event for the communications team and publicity of the ECOP Programme, and a timely opportunity to connect with peers, mentors and potential funders and partners, after an extended hiatus. Communications covers a broad area - from consistently producing cohesive and compelling key messages and content, internally and externally, to establishing and maintaining pertinent working relationships.

This report is split into three parts to investigate how and why members of the ECOP community were able to participate in the UN Ocean Conference, and document what their thoughts were regarding the event.

TO BE CONTINUED...

**ECOPs**  
COMMUNICATIONS **2**



# IMPACT REPORT



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### CONTINUED...

#### Part 1: Attendance

We find out key information points about ECOP attendance. Who from the ECOP network attended the UNOC? Where are they from? What do they do? Who couldn't attend and why?

#### Part 2: Engagement

We learn about how ECOPs engaged at the UNOC - were they involved in events, did they have access to high level discussions, were they included in the overall scope and vision of the UNOC?

#### Part 3: Feedback

Here we include answers to survey questions that are open, as well as metrics on funding and speaker roles. We find out suggestions directly from ECOPs who attended the UNOC on how it can be improved in the future.

To conclude, we provide a comprehensive overview of what needs to promptly change and why. Finally, from all the information in the report, we have reached four key outcomes, that if addressed would significantly increase the inclusion and participation of ECOPs at the next UNOC. Working from this baseline we will strive to amplify our engagement for the next UNOC, and request immediate consultation, in order for us to build our strategy in time for the next conference in France, 2025. The global community of ECOPs represent those who will inherit the decision making today regarding the Ocean, across policy, industry and conservation. It is imperative that they are part of that decision making process, and that there are adequate pathways to include the diverse voice of ECOPs, and the insights and new ways of thinking they bring to Ocean Sustainability. They are an integral part of the roadmap to address the challenges, outcomes and overall mission of the UN Ocean Decade. It is only possible by working together with ECOPs that we can achieve "the Science We Need for the Ocean We Want" by 2030.

We hope, if reading this report, you can see the tremendous work that ECOPs and the ECOP Programme do to be part of the UN Decade of Ocean Science. We believe it only fair that we have the right support and recognition to attend events such as the UNOC. Whether you are an ECOP or a partner with the ECOP Programme, we hope that you can share our vision in that the next UNOC features the ECOP community from all continents, Ocean basins and across all sectors in a mindful, authentic and integrated manner.



# THE UN OCEAN CONFERENCE



## INTRODUCTION

The first United Nations Ocean Conference was held in New York on 5 - 9 June, 2017. It sought to mobilize action for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources.

This year, after a rescheduling due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the second United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC) finally took place during 27 June - 1 July 2022. The event was held in Lisbon, Portugal and hosted by the governments of Kenya and Portugal.

The overarching theme was: "Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions".

According to UNOC reports, the 2022 Lisbon UNOC featured 6000 attendees, participating from 150 countries, and included 5 days of plenary meetings, official and unofficial side events.

## UNOC 2022 OUTCOMES

There were many outcomes of the 2022 Ocean Conference, two of which being the Lisbon Declaration and a host of voluntary stakeholder statements submitted.

The unanimous adoption of the Lisbon Declaration, meant that a collection of science-based and innovative actions have been declared, and the UN will work towards achieving them.

The actions in particular, take into account the capacity challenges facing developing countries, in particular or including Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries who are at the frontline of the devastating impacts of the ocean emergency.



UN Delegates agree that under Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water: "We must conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development."

**5 DAYS**  
**6000 PARTICIPANTS**  
**2000 DELEGATES**  
**24 HEADS OF STATE**  
**8 INTERACTIVE DIALOGUES**  
**700 VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS**  
**1 DECLARATION**

**"WE RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE AND ARE COMMITTED TO HALTING AND REVERSING THE DECLINE IN THE HEALTH OF THE OCEAN'S ECOSYSTEMS AND BIODIVERSITY AND TO PROTECTING AND RESTORING ITS RESILIENCE AND ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY."**

The Lisbon Declaration, Point 7.

## ECOP UNOC IMPACT

Whilst there are several reports relaying and relating to the specific UNOC outcomes, this report focusses on the participation of Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs) in the UN Ocean Conference 2022.

The primary goal of the ECOP Programme - an endorsed UN Decade of Ocean Science (Ocean Decade) Programme - is to bring inter-generational diversity to the Ocean Decade by strengthening, elevating and empowering the voice of Early Career Ocean Professionals.

This report addresses ECOP participation in the UNOC by examining the role the ECOP Programme and members of its network played in the conference. It shows the opportunities conferences like the UNOC offer when it comes to supporting, networking and building collaborative partnerships, especially in a (post) Covid-19 world. It also uncovers and addresses the real challenges and barriers ECOPs have encountered when attempting to participate in events such as the UNOC. Finally, by highlighting the key points, we are able to make suggestions to enable and increase the inclusion of ECOPs in the communications and dissemination of the next UNOC and indeed, the rest of the Ocean Decade.

A few key commitments made at the UNOC:

- The Protecting Our Planet Challenge will invest at least 1 billion USD to support the creation, expansion and management of marine protected areas and Indigenous and locally governed marine and coastal areas by 2030.
- The European Investment Bank will extend an additional 150 million EUR across the Caribbean Region as part of the Clean Oceans Initiative.
- The Global Environment Facility approved a 25 million USD grant towards Colombia's marine protected areas.
- The Development Bank of Latin America announced 1.2 billion USD to support projects to benefit the ocean in the region.
- Portugal committed to classify 30% of their national marine areas by 2030.
- Kenya is currently developing a national blue economy strategic plan, as well as a national action plan on sea-based marine plastic litter.
- India committed to a Coastal Clean Seas Campaign and will work toward a ban on single use plastics, beginning with plastic bags.
- Sweden will support enhanced scientific cooperation, including by providing 400,000 USD in 2022 to IOC-UNESCO for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development in support of work on SDG 14 target 3.



"Observation, not old age, brings wisdom"  
~Pubilius Syrus

# SURVEY RESULTS



Only by charting our impact now, can we strive to build upon it for the future. As the ECOP Programme network grows to reach all the Ocean basins, and include more of the next generation of Ocean leaders working across all Ocean sectors, we aim to respond to the needs and challenges that this diverse community faces.

By delivering resources, interventions, initiatives, capacity development and pathways, we believe the ECOP Programme can help address complex Ocean Sustainability challenges and achieve "The Science We Need for the Ocean We Want" by 2030.

This impact report has been compiled thanks to ECOP Programme community members who were willing to share their information with us. We appreciate their time and input in order for us to gather, collate and interpret their data.

The results come from a series of informal surveys distributed to the ECOP Programme network before, during and after the UN Ocean Conference.

## SURVEY 1

67 respondents

In May 2022 we asked ECOPs to register their interest in attending the UN Ocean Conference. We disseminated two forms, one to 18 ECOP core team members (so they could also see the information others were inputting) and a private/protected one for the wider ECOP Community. In the interest of the quantitative results, both have been added together. In total 67 ECOP members participants responded to survey one, the results of which have been collated and can be found in Part 1: Attendance.

## SURVEY 2

21 respondents

Survey 2 was released at the end of June and was a registration form for an informal mixer event, taking place on Monday 27 June. We decided to hold an event at the beginning of the week so people could make connections early on, especially as this may be their first conference and they might be on their own.

During the UNOC we organised and co-organised several informal events so that ECOPs could meet each other and network and we shared a schedule of events on our website that featured the ECOP Programme core team as speakers. The ECOP Programme also launched an online campaign, asking ECOPs to answer a key question: "In your ECOP perspective, how do you think we can achieve the science we need, for the Ocean we all want in the future?"

The campaign, events, demographics and insights we discovered through survey 2 are highlighted in Part 2: Engagement.

## SURVEY 3

20 respondents

Survey 3 was sent out to the ECOP community after the UN Ocean Conference had ended, on 2 July. It was open for 2 weeks and collected both qualitative and quantitative data. There were 20 responses, the results of which are in Part 3: Feedback.

Whilst the results from these surveys are just a sample of the ECOP Programme community (which currently stands at 1000+ members), this report allows us to present the findings and gain important insights into ECOP attendance, engagement and feedback from the UN Ocean Conference 2022.



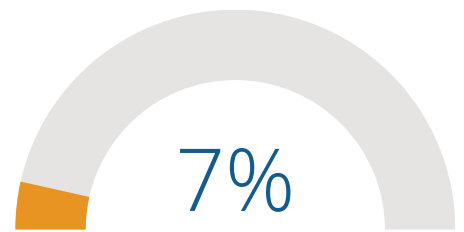
# PART 1

## ATTENDANCE

### WHERE ARE ECOPS ATTENDING THE UNOC FROM?

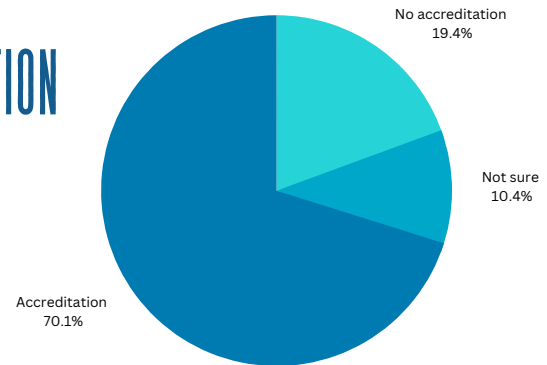
One of the ECOP Programmes top priority areas is to create a global network of ECOPs and foster collaborations across geographies, disciplines and sectors. The first global ECOP survey in 2020, which had 1344 respondents, indicated that there are significant challenges and barriers that relate specifically to geographical region. Therefore, it would be critical to know where ECOPs were attending from, whether they had full access to the conference and what organisations/sectors they were part of. 67 members of the ECOP Programme said they would be or might be attending the UNOC - that's 7% of the global registry (currently at 1000). Out of this: x13 did not have accreditation, x7 were not sure about accreditation and x47 had accreditation. When asked "where are you from?", the majority of ECOPs were European, followed by North American and African.

### ATTENDANCE



Only 7% of the 1000 ECOP Global Registry would be attending the UNOC.

### ACCREDITATION



These figures show 29.8% of ECOPs attending still weren't sure about or did not receive accreditation.

### GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

**EUROPE 35.8%**

N. AMERICA 22.4%

**AFRICA 20.9%**

ASIA 13.4%

OCEANIA 4.5%

**S. AMERICA 3%**



# PART 1 ATTENDANCE

## WHAT ORGANISATIONS ARE ECOPS AFFILIATED WITH?



**ECOP**  
Early Career  
Ocean Professionals

6 Representatives

(ECOPs part of the ECOP Programme core team)

2 Representatives

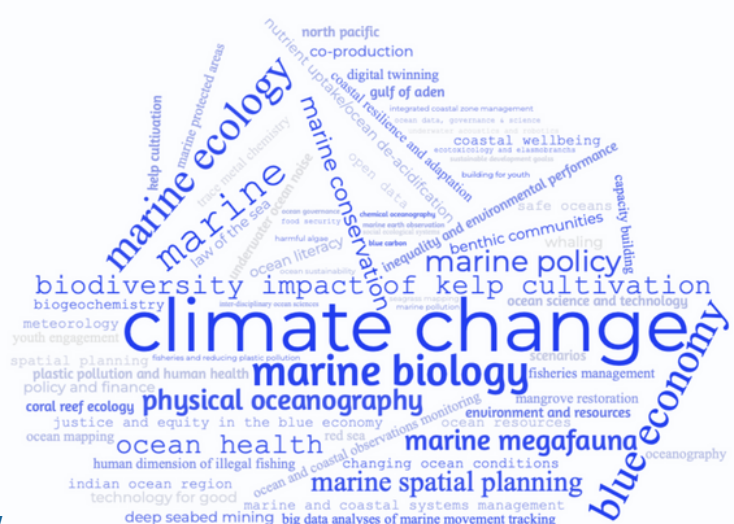


1 Representative



## WHAT OCEAN SECTOR ARE THEY WORKING IN?

From the results of the first survey we can see there is a much higher distribution of ECOPs from the Global North (in particular Europe), yet there is a wide range of organisations and indeed Ocean sectors, that support ECOPs. This helps identify opportunities to focus on: support and generate pathways for Global South ECOPs and utilise the skills, expertise and existing networks that already exist within the global ECOP community.



# PART 1

## ATTENDANCE

### WHO WAS DENIED ACCESS AND WHY?

Unfortunately, not all ECOPs who were due to attend the UNOC could make it. We spoke to two individuals with a similar story, who encountered barriers due to the visa process in their home country.

SPOTLIGHT:

**LASUNI**  
GULE GODDAGE



**SRI LANKA**

MPHIL FISHERIES, OCEAN UNIVERSITY  
OF SRI LANKA, WITH OCEANSWELL,  
ZSI AND NOVA UNIVERSIDAD LISBOA.

"I was supposed to attend "Our Ocean Future", one of the official side events of the UN Ocean Conference as a panelist representing Ocean Youth from the Global South. My role was to contribute to the panel discussion on accelerating EDI (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) changes in the field of marine science with my fellow panelists. The focus points were about the opportunities I see to build momentum and accelerate change, the ingredients that are needed to create such equitable opportunities, how the career development and pathways in marine science, conservation and policy can be developed and my personal story that shaped my view about marine science.

Unfortunately, I couldn't attend the event as planned because of the challenging and complex visa process in Sri Lanka. My visa was delayed for months and at the last moment, I received the message it was rejected without any valid reason. This was supposed to be my first international conference and a massive opportunity for me as an ECOP. I was representing Sri Lanka from the Global South, where most of the early career scientists get very few opportunities like this and I was going to communicate it to the world. And this was going to be a great opportunity for me to build connections with fellow scientists in the same field that would have been of much value at the start of my career. Further, my plan was to attend other events that are related to my ongoing research and collect many inputs beneficial for my research. Honestly, It was the best opportunity, which I missed."

SPOTLIGHT: **FORBI** PERISE EYONG. N

"I was really disappointed that I didn't get a Visa to attend UNOC, I didn't really expect that I would have been refused a visa for a UN event. After providing all necessary paper work for the conference I was refused visa by the embassy on the basis of insufficient justification for travel and on that they were not sure I will return after the conference. On the other hand I think my origin was the only reason why I didn't get a visa.

Young people from developing countries are denied opportunities to connect and benefit from international events on the basis of immigration intent which is unfair."



**SOALLIANCE CAMEROON**

**ECOPs** 9  
COMMUNICATIONS



# PART 2 ENGAGEMENT

## DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

In the run up to the UNOC, the ECOP Programme launched an online campaign asking members:

"In your ECOP perspective how do you think we can achieve the science we need for the Ocean we all want in the future?"

Answers were collected through surveys, sign up forms and emails, and then represented in graphics on Instagram (grid) and Twitter (banner) social channels. At least 30 ECOPs responded with a range of answers, with the content used to communicate the diverse perspectives of ECOPs that exist within our global network. This was also an opportunity to showcase the voice of ECOPs who could not attend the UNOC in person but were still keen to engage, as well as explore new partnerships through a joint campaign with "Marine Science" of the Bertolii Foundation by featuring their students.

📷 CAMPAIGN ANALYTICS: 20 JUNE - 20 JULY

**TOTAL REACH 1784**

INCREASE BY **↑ 722.1%**

**62 NEW FOLLOWERS**

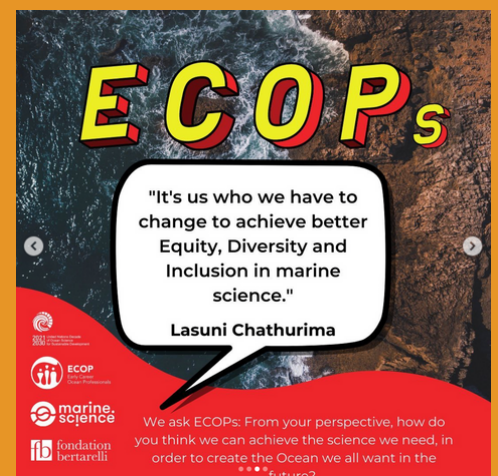
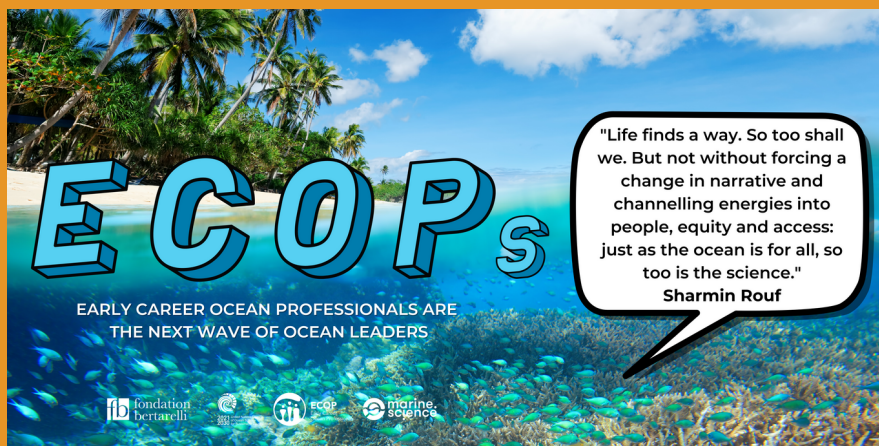
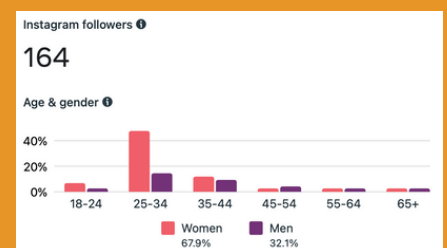
**WED 29 JUNE: 9 NEW FOLLOWERS\***

**224 PROFILE VISITS**

INCREASE **↑ 21.7%**

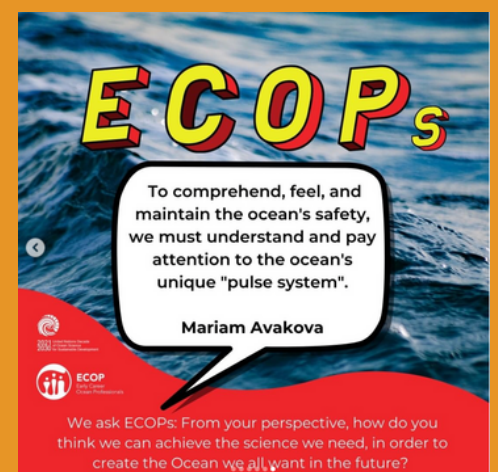
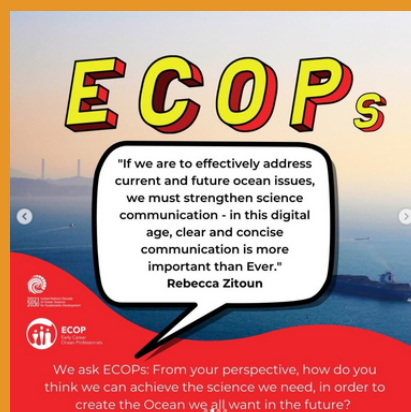
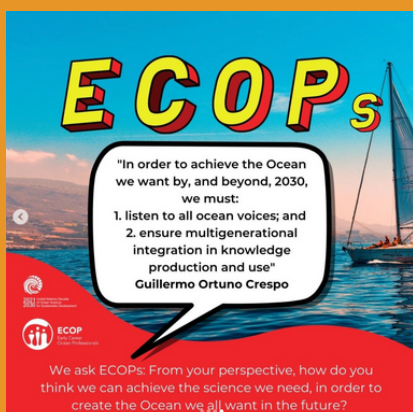
\*Best daily performance so far

Instagram gender demographics



## SAMPLE POST

As the UN Ocean Conference begins today in Lisbon, we asked the ECOP community what needs to happen in order to achieve the science we need for the ocean we ALL want. Join Rebecca Zitoun, @gortunocrespo and Raphaël Roman in Lisbon this week to establish inter-generational action within the UN Ocean Decade strategy. Their efforts, along with many other Young people and ECOPs participating at the UNOC and within the @unocandecade, prove that new perspectives, inclusivity and accessibility in Ocean Science and sustainability is vital to work towards the challenges we face, making sure no one is left behind.



**ECOPs 10**  
COMMUNICATIONS

# PART 2 ENGAGEMENT

## CONFERENCE RESOURCES

In addition to the digital campaign, the ECOP Programme produced two versions of printed leaflets to be able to pass out at events and communicate the vision, mission and activities. The first leaflet is a general one, with the second version containing results from the recent Regional surveys conducted across Africa, Asia and Canada.

**THE ECOP PROGRAMME**  
serves as the backbone organization for enabling global ECOP engagement with all activities of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

**A COLLECTIVE VOICE**  
of ECOPs will incorporate new ways of thinking into the UN Ocean Decade, helping address global ocean sustainability issues and tackle stewardship challenges through inter-generational diversity.

**FOR ECOPs BY ECOPs**  
An ECOP is considered as a person that self-identifies as being early in their career (10 years or less of professional experience) in any field related to the ocean.

**AN OFFICIAL UN DECADE OF OCEAN SCIENCE PROGRAMME**  
ESTABLISHED AND ENDORSED IN 2021 TO STRENGTHEN, EMPOWER AND ELEVATE THE DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES OF NEW GENERATIONS OF OCEAN PROFESSIONALS

**ECOP Early Career Ocean Professionals**  
EMPOWER THE NEXT GENERATION OF OCEAN LEADERS

ECOPs ARE THE NEXT WAVE OF OCEAN LEADERS CONTRIBUTING TO THE SCIENCE WE NEED FOR THE OCEAN WE WANT

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY AT [WWW.ECOPDECADE.ORG](http://WWW.ECOPDECADE.ORG)

Logos: UN, UNESCO, ECOP, Norad

**ENDORSED PROJECTS**  
establish links between endorsed UN Decade of Ocean Science Actions and the ECOP Programme and the ECOP Programme Network.

**REGIONAL NODES**  
create capacities for ECOPs in specific geographical areas, and through networks of networks actively engage them in the ECOP Programme and ocean sustainability activities beyond the Decade.

**TASK TEAMS**  
are priority areas that drive the work of the ECOP Programme

**OCEAN LITERACY**  
Developing an inclusive ocean narrative (which includes science, indigenous knowledge, and traditional practices) for all of society to participate in.

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION**  
Fostering inclusivity, eliminating discrimination, whilst respecting and celebrating the diversity of all participants.

**OCEANBRIDGES**  
Bridging ocean research, innovation and diversity across generations of experts and stakeholders by addressing specific challenges the global ocean is facing today.

**TRAINING & MENTORING**  
Promoting relevant training for ECOPs and creating meaningful and enriching mentor opportunities to facilitate ECOPs to become future ocean leaders.

THE ECOP PROGRAMME ACHIEVES ITS OBJECTIVES OF MEANINGFUL NETWORKING, DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND FOSTERING COLLABORATIONS ACROSS GEOGRAPHIES, DISCIPLINES AND SECTORS THROUGH A GLOBAL NETWORK AND ACTIVITIES DELIVERED BY ECOPs FOR ECOPs.

THE FIRST ECOP SURVEY IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES TO ESTABLISH TASK TEAMS BASED ON PRIORITY AREAS - IN PARTICULAR, CAPACITY BUILDING. THIS RESEARCH HAS HELPED THE ECOP PROGRAMME PLACE SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON GIVING FURTHER SUPPORT (TRAINING, FUNDING) TO ECOPs FROM COUNTRIES THAT HAVE TRADITIONALLY NOT HAD ACCESS TO THEM.

Logos: ECOP, Norad, UNESCO, UN

**COLLECTING ECOP DATA**  
since the ECOP Programme began in 2021, global and regional surveys have served to understand the needs, challenges and barriers ECOPs are facing.

**THE ECOP PROGRAMME REPRESENTS A COLLECTIVE VOICE FOR EARLY CAREER OCEAN PROFESSIONALS AND A CALL FOR MORE INCLUSIVE AND INTER-GENERATIONAL HIGH LEVEL DECISION MAKING.**

**THE LATEST ECOP SURVEYS**  
were distributed via the regional nodes in Africa, Asia and Canada from January - May 2022 to build on the knowledge gained through the first global ECOP survey in 2020, which had 1344 respondents. As the first ECOP survey indicated, there are significant challenges and barriers that relate specifically to geographical region, which confirms the importance of regional nodes.

**HIGHLIGHTING SYNERGIES**  
These surveys also recognize global, regional and local gaps and opportunities for communities of ECOPs to collaborate and work towards Ocean Decade challenges together.

**THE ECOP PROGRAMME IS AN OFFICIAL DECADE OF OCEAN SCIENCE PROGRAMME DESIGNED TO EMPOWER THE NEXT GENERATION OF OCEAN LEADERS**

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY AT [WWW.ECOPDECADE.ORG](http://WWW.ECOPDECADE.ORG)

Logos: UN, UNESCO, ECOP, Norad

**AFRICA KEY RESULTS**

Gender: 58% Male, 42% Female

Location: (Distribution of respondents by country)

Which of the following Ocean Decade Outcomes are your skills/expertise addressing the most?

ECOP word cloud: What is one word that comes to mind when you think about ECOPs?

Which sub-regions does the ECOP Africa Network cover?

What are the challenges facing ECOPs in Africa?

**ASIA KEY RESULTS**

Gender: 51% Male, 48% Female, 1% Prefer not to say

Location: (Distribution of respondents by country)

Are you part of any ocean related or Early Career Networks and Initiatives (including UN Decade Actions)?

ECOP word cloud: What is one word that comes to mind when you think about ECOPs?

Understanding the importance of funding needs for ECOPs in Asia

**CANADA KEY RESULTS**

Gender: 70% Female, 28% Male, 2% Non binary

Location: (Distribution of respondents by province/territory)

How many years have you been working/employed in a marine field?

What are the top 5 words that come to mind when you think about Early Career Ocean Professionals?

Barriers constraining ECOPs to participate in the Decade

Logos: ECOP, Norad, UNESCO, UN



As the start of the UNOC drew closer, in order to assist the communication between attendees, a whatsapp group was made up of the core ECOP members (see the ECOP Team page on website). This was also useful in order to disseminate the leaflets, and spread out the distribution across different locations, days and events. This group was not exclusive or exhaustive, and grew throughout the week, as more ECOP connections were made and currently stands at 52 participants.

During the week 27 June - 1 July, the ECOP website: [www.ecopdecade.org](http://www.ecopdecade.org) saw its highest ever traffic including 1925 sessions (up 30%), 6282 page views (up 26%) and 1275 total users (up 38%).



# PART 2 ENGAGEMENT

## ECOP EVENTS

### NETWALK

MONDAY 27 JUNE

Organised by Erin Satterthwaite  
- 20 participants



### ECOP MIXER

MONDAY 27 JUNE

Informal gathering and meal  
at Honest Greens  
- 15 participants



### BLUE MIND MORNING

WEDNESDAY 29 JUNE

Tejo river and swim  
trip with  
Oceanscape  
- 8 participants



### SEATREES WATERBREAK

FRIDAY 1 JULY

Surfing session in Cascais  
with Protect Blue -  
12 participants



"The ECOP walk followed by dinner was a great initiative at the start of the Conference. It was an ice breaker for many and led to many interesting discussions and information exchanges about interesting events to attend. It would be great if ECOP would get a consultative status with the UN."

*ECOP survey participant*

## RESULTS FROM HONEST GREENS MIXER

A voluntary registry was collected for the Honest Greens mixer to learn more about the attendees, below is a list of key stats.

Top 5 answers to:

"From your ECOP perspective, how do you think we can achieve the science we need, in order to create the Ocean we all want in the future?"

1. COLLABORATION
2. DATA
3. INTERGENERATION NETWORKS
4. INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE
5. (JOINT) YOUTH LEADERSHIP & 5.(JOINT) ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Top 5 answers to:

"What are you looking forward to most about the UNOC?"

1. MEETING/NETWORKING
2. CONNECTING/COLLABORATING
3. LISTENING/LEARNING
4. DISCUSSING
5. TAKING ACTION

"I'm finally meeting ECOPs that I've been working with remotely for the past 2 years!"

*ECOP survey participant*

**21 REGISTERED**  
**81% ECOP**

(within first 10 years of career)

**47.1% IN YEAR 3 OF  
PROFESSIONAL CAREER**

**95% FEMALE**

**52.4% FROM N. AMERICA**

**42.9% FROM EUROPE**



# PART 2

# ENGAGEMENT

## SPOTLIGHT ON OFFICIAL SIDE EVENT: OUR OCEAN FUTURE

On the morning of Tuesday 28 June, The Bertarelli Foundation co-hosted "Our Ocean Future – Empowering the Next Generation of Ocean Leaders" with IOC-UNESCO and the Zoological Society London at the Oceanario's #seathefuture cafe. This official side event led with the reasoning that networks of early career marine scientists are central to the innovation of transformative solutions. These networks can be further improved by encompassing diversity of disciplines, racial diversity, and gender. However, the contribution young marine scientists and conservationists can make is often overlooked and the level of support offered to them differs widely among countries. This event took the form of a conversation between three ocean leaders and three ocean youth from the Global South, with the goal of identifying clear actions to overcome barriers and really giving a platform for ECOPs to voice their own thoughts and experiences.

The event demonstrated how inter-generational diversity can be integrated into a panel format and galvanized real life advice to accelerate opportunities for next generation ocean leaders.

## SPOTLIGHT ON OFFICIAL SIDE EVENT: INTEGRATING MARINE LITTER



The event facilitators, organisers and moderators: Dr. Delphine Lobelle, Dr. Christine Knauss, Dr. Audrey Hasson, Dr. Refilwe Mofokeng, Dr. Tomoko Takahashi, Mafalda de Freitas and Lillian Diarra.

# 20+ECOPS

## TOOK PART IN 12+ OFFICIAL EVENTS

TOPICS INCLUDED:

**MARINE PLASTICS**  
**OCEAN BASED CLIMATE SOLUTIONS**  
**EMPOWERING WOMEN**  
**ECOPS FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH**  
**INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP**  
**THE ROLE OF AFRICA IN THE OCEAN DECADE**  
**OCEAN LITERACY**  
**AND STORYTELLING**



This photo shows: Ocean youth panelists: Inès Boujmil (National Institute of Marine Sciences and Technologies), Camille Rivera (Oceanus Conservation, Philippines), Sivajyodee Sannassy (Bangor University, UK) (Lasuni Chaturima Gule Godage from Ocean University of Sri Lanka also joined via video message). Moderator: Professor Heather Koldewey (Bertarelli Foundation's Marine Science Programme). Ocean leader panelists: Dr Asha de Vos (Oceanswell, Sri Lanka), Angelique Pouponneau (Alliance of Small Island States, UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development Advisory Board) and Professor Rashid Sumaila (University of British Columbia, Canada). The event included an introduction by Dona Bertarelli (Bertarelli Foundation), Alison Clausen (IOC-UNESCO), and concluding comments from Dr Sylvia Earle (Mission Blue).

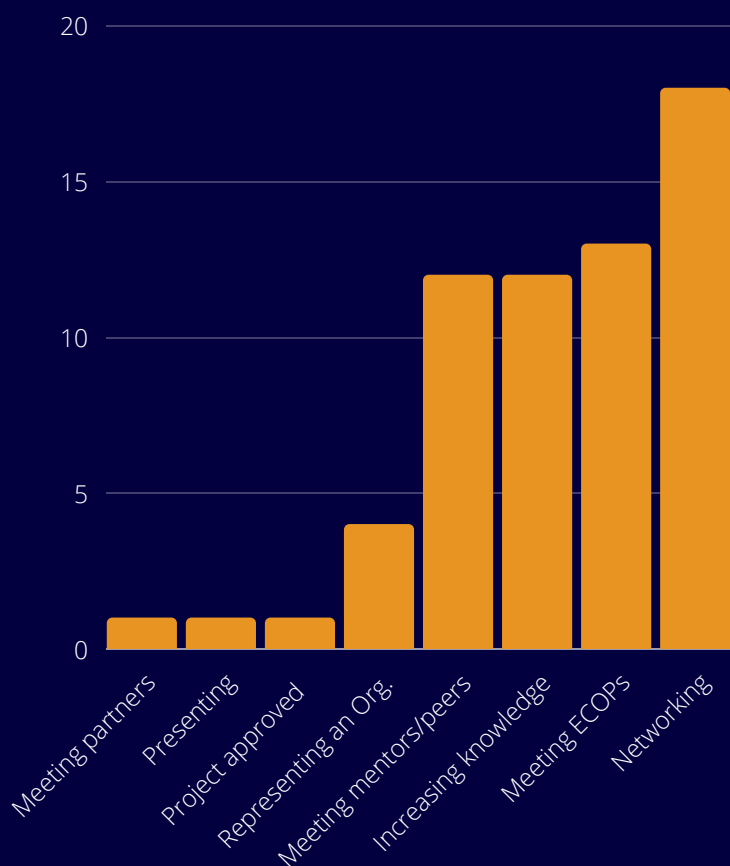
"Integrating Marine Litter Monitoring to Inform Action" took place on Wednesday 29th June in Cascais, serving as a global instrument to tackle global pollution. The event was co-organised by Mercator Ocean International in the framework of EU4OceanObs, which facilitates the GEO Blue Planet EU Coordination and welcomed 86 people from 23 countries across the globe. The team included: Jose Moutinho (Atlantic International Research Centre), Heidi Savelli & Marta Ottogalli (UNEP Global Partnership on Marine Litter), Artur Palacz (Global Ocean Observing System), Audrey Hasson (GEO Blue Planet / Mercator Ocean International), Delphine Lobelle (Utrecht University) and Lillian Diarra (Mercator Ocean International/ EU4OceanObs project). The format built on the UN Decade "Clean Ocean" Satellite activity One Integrated Marine Debris Observing System (IMDOS), that took place in November 2021. It focused on the need for monitoring marine litter to inform action and encourage the cooperation between scientists and stakeholders such as policy makers and mitigation actors.

# PART 3

## FEEDBACK

### MAIN BENEFITS FOR ECOPS ATTENDING THE UNOC

According to our survey results almost all of the attendees found the networking opportunities the most beneficial aspect of attending the conference.

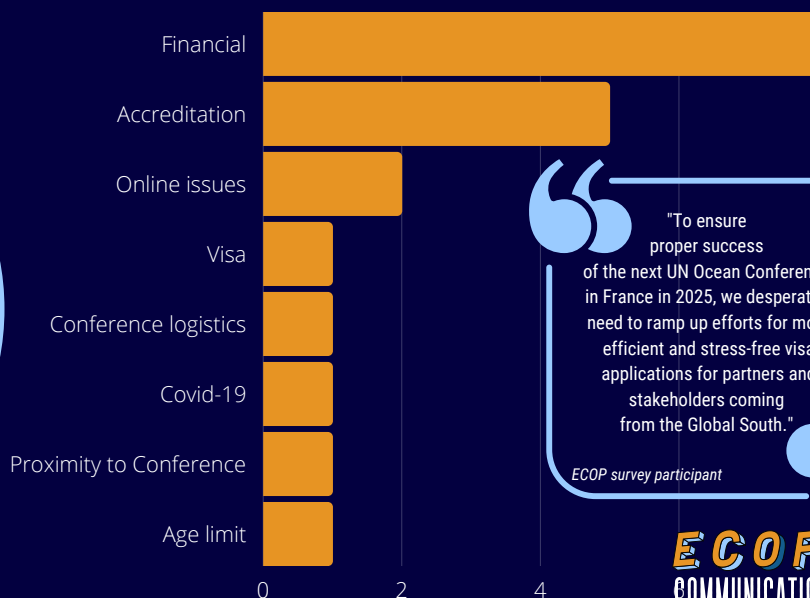


OUT OF 20 SURVEY RESPONSES...  
**100% OF ECOPS FOUND ATTENDING THE UNOC BENEFICIAL**  
**90% WOULD RECOMMEND TO OTHER ECOPS**

HOWEVER...

**65% SAID THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH INCLUSION FOR ECOPS**  
 20% SAID YES, THERE WAS ENOUGH,  
 10% SAID MORE COULD BE DONE, 5% DIDN'T KNOW  
**65% RECEIVED FUNDING TO ATTEND**  
 35% PARTIAL/NO FUNDING SUPPORT  
**55% DID NOT HAVE A SPEAKER ROLE**  
 35% WERE A SPEAKER ONCE OR MORE,  
 10% ORGANISED EVENTS BUT DIDN'T SPEAK

### MAIN CHALLENGES HIGHLIGHTED BY ECOPS



“To ensure proper success of the next UN Ocean Conference in France in 2025, we desperately need to ramp up efforts for more efficient and stress-free visa applications for partners and stakeholders coming from the Global South.”  
 ECOP survey participant

# PART 3

## ECOP PROGRAMME TEAM TESTIMONIALS

# FEEDBACK



Camille with Mission Blue' Dr. Sylvia Earle

### CAMILLE RIVERA, SPEAKER FOR "OUR OCEAN FUTURE", PHILIPPINES

"I participated in the side event "Our Ocean Future: Empowering the next generation of Ocean Leaders" and spoke as one of the panelists. I am still new as an ECOP and I had to reach out for funding to attend. Perhaps my email was timely but competing the Youth Forum for funding was already a challenge because of many applicants. Another challenge was the accredited badge, which fortunately I had to ask another colleague if they have extras. Yet, I found it very impactful to attend and contribute to these events because oftentimes, there is a huge disconnect with what is happening on the ground. I was able to share that knowledge and experience coming from the Global South and there is a need to fill up that gap, especially the engagement of more ECOPs like me!"



Ashley at the UN Ocean Conference Venue in Lisbon, Portugal

### ASHLEY BOWES, CANADA NODE COORDINATOR

"I attended the UN Ocean Conference as the National Coordinator in Canada for the Global ECOP Programme. My goal was to connect with ECOPs and ocean leaders that our network could collaborate with in Canada and internationally. I was able to access and attend the conference thanks to funding we received through ECOP Canada's partner organizations and through accommodation support from the Global ECOP Programme.

The events and opportunities to network and learn from other ocean leaders were abundant. I mainly focused on attending side events that were aimed at empowering early career ocean professionals. By interacting with and listening to the diverse perspectives of ECOPs and ocean leaders from around the globe, I was able to make strong connections and gain new insights that have been valuable to my mission to help achieve intergenerational equity by ensuring ECOPs are supported and empowered this Ocean Decade.

One improvement that I would like to see from the event and conference organizers is to include more ECOPs and voices from Indigenous communities. We cannot create the ocean we want without prioritizing the perspectives and actions of Indigenous voices and leaders and ensuring that they are amplified at these high-level conversations. It would also be great to ensure that events aimed at engaging ECOPs prioritize allowing ECOPs to ask questions at the end, rather than prioritizing the voices of more experienced ocean professionals to ask questions that may not be as vital to the goal of empowering ECOPs.

Overall, I felt the side events including the excursions and networking events organized by the Global ECOP Programme were key in bringing together ECOPs who were attending the conference and fostering strong connections and collaboration."



# PART 3 FEEDBACK

## ECOP PROGRAMME TEAM TESTIMONIALS

### RAPHAËL ROMAN - ASIA NODE COORDINATOR



Raphaël at the Honest Greens Mixer event for ECOPs

"Inspired, hopeful, ecstatic, overwhelmed, impatient... These are some of the feelings that went through my mind during my first UN Ocean Conference. The creativity, enthusiasm, and unmatched networking opportunities I have experienced were truly memorable. One of the biggest highlights for me was the chance to meet and mingle with friends and colleagues (old and new) in '3D' for the first time in close to 3 years. This bustling and stimulating environment made me feel like an octopus, with all my tentacles being pulled and stretched in all directions, especially as I attempted to squeeze as many thematic and regional side-events as possible in my daily schedule. The breadth and diversity of these side-events was astounding, in addition to the eight interactive dialogues, which offered a unique window into UN deliberations. The lack of representation from SIDS, LDC and LLDC was explicitly obvious and emphasized by many conference attendees and panelists. I was also deeply aware of the relative absence of ECOPs from Asia (especially from developing countries). Attending this high-level event was a privilege, thanks to the ECOP and Future Earth Programmes, without which I would have never been able to travel and receive official accreditation. It is important to think of a sustainable way to retain, nurture and grow that support network. This would allow an ever-increasing number and diversity of ECOPs to reap the benefits of in-person participation at international conferences and high-level policy dialogues, cementing it as standard practice throughout the Ocean Decade."

### ALFREDO GIRON NAVA - COFOUNDER AND ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER



Alfredo on the panel at the Ocean Decade Forum event

"During the 2022 UNOC in Lisbon, deliberate efforts to improve engagement of ECOPs as equal partners in the organizational, strategic planning and decision-making processes were very much welcomed (they fulfilled roles such as panel speakers, facilitators, workshop/side-event organizers, etc.), but more remains to be done for a truly diverse, inclusive and equitable participation at the next UN Ocean Conference. Doing so will require cross-sectoral concerted efforts and a willingness to accept new ways of thinking and divert from the status quo."

### ELLEN JOHANNESSEN - DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSIVITY TASK TEAM

"We need to intentionally ensure a diverse set of perspectives are around the table, and we need to start doing things differently if we hope to achieve transformational change in the Ocean Decade for 2030. We need to call out imbalances of power when we see them, and be willing to take a step-back if necessary, and in general find new ways of doing things to let those traditionally under-represented in marine science be heard. For example, let's do away with labelling panel discussions as "high-level", which seems to be a justification for excluding a diversity of voices (gender, geography, and/or career stage). Representation matters, so let's be more intentional, ask questions about who is represented, and take the time needed to make sure events in support of the Ocean Decade are truly inclusive and supporting the aims of transformational change."



Ellen speaking at the Empowering Women for the UN Decade of Ocean Science side event

# PART 3 FEEDBACK

## ECOP SUGGESTIONS TAKEN FROM SURVEY 3

### AT A GLANCE - ECOPS SUGGEST:

## AN OFFICIAL PLATFORM YOUTH LED EVENTS ASSISTANCE with VISAS, ACCREDITATION, and FUNDING



"Accept more official events completely led and organized by youth."

"Ensure that ECOPs and Youth are given a speaking time in all the sessions."

"Have ECOPs participating in all UNOC processes, including in the national delegations."

"Facilitate the accreditation process for ECOPs (encourage organizations to have an accreditation specifically for ECOPs, for example)."

"More interactive sessions where ECOPs' voices are heard through facilitated discussions and dialogues."

"More avenues for accreditation for ECOPs are needed. The only reason I was able to get accreditation (and that I was invited as a speaker at side events) was through a youth organization. Most other organizations that are not youth focused, the people they choose for accreditation are the most "well-established"- those aren't going to be ECOPs. This means that it's crucial to actually facilitate this process and provide avenues that make it possible for more ECOPs to attend (because the ratio was shocking, also on most speaker panels unless the event was specifically focused on ECOPs and youth)."

"Make it mandatory to grant at least one accreditation slot to an ECOP from each organization allotted. Make it a habit to have organizations such as the International Science Council and Future Earth offer extra accreditation opportunities to ECOPs, notably ECOPs who do not belong to an accredited organization. Recognize ECOPs as an official stakeholder group (there is Youth but not ECOPs). Support the visa application process of ECOPs from the Global South and prioritize funding for them, as their voices matter and we can't have a conference on the Oceans without proper representation from them."

"The ECOP Programme needs accreditation to provide a platform for members who couldn't attend in other capacities. Financial travel support for ECOP delegates. More structured social events at the beginning of the conference to facilitate networking and support early on."

"Work with private stakeholders to ensure inclusion of youth in their side events. It should not have to be two completely separate events."

"Provide funding or more speaking slots/other official roles for ECOPs (often needed to get institutional funding)."

# PART 4

## OUTCOMES



In the final part of this document we have brought together the evidence and findings on attendance, engagement and feedback and identified four key outcomes, which summaries the ECOP Programme's participation and impact at the UNOC.

**1** The existing ECOP Programme network has been **strengthened** by in person meetings, mixers, event engagement and exposure (both online and in person).

**2** The ECOP Programme, its membership and its reach has **grown** - from 933 to over 1000 in just 2 months over the UNOC period.

**3** The voice of the ECOP community has been **elevated**, through inclusion in discussions, events and policy statements, thanks to new and existing partnerships & collaborations.\*

**4** We are **empowering** ECOPs to speak up about their views, their needs and the challenges when it comes to engaging in "high level" discussions/dialogues, and we are actively working to change the systemic and unseen barriers for ECOPs to participate at such events.

\*A joint written statement with the International Ocean Institute (IOI) was produced during the UNOC week:

*"The current asymmetric seascape between countries and stakeholders is a challenge to be overcome to ensure equitable learning and engagement opportunities, to leverage the voices of the underrepresented, and to encourage ownership of the Decade within the next generation of Ocean leaders."*

The full statement can be found on the [ECOP Programme website](#), the [IOI website](#) and the [UNOC Portal page](#).



# PART 4 OUTCOMES

Finally, to conclude this report we have brought together the outcomes and feedback points from the ECOP community, in order to suggest four key targets to work towards, in the lead up to the next UN Ocean Conference in 2025.



- 1** Increase **accreditation** quotas going towards ECOPs: ie. one mandatory ECOP slot per accredited organization.
- 2** Support **easier access** for the diverse community of global ECOPs to participate - especially with speaker roles and events led by ECOPs (this includes improving visa help, conference layout, institutional support).
- 3** Invest more effort towards proper **inclusion** of **Indigenous voices** and **Global South ECOPs**.
- 4** Ensure sustainable and equitable **funding** opportunities.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our supporting partners: IOC-UNESCO and NORAD; as well as the organisations whose support made the attendance of ECOPs at the UNOC possible. Special thanks go to Antonella and Cosmin at International Ocean Institute for collaboration on the joint statement. We also extend our gratitude to everyone who is part of the global ECOP community and in particular those who contributed their data, photos and input, which was vital to compose this impact report. If, having read this report, you would like to discuss any of the content or explore opportunities with the ECOP Programme, please email: [natalie@ecopdecade.org](mailto:natalie@ecopdecade.org).



# ECOPs

## IMPACTREPORT

### UN Ocean Conference 2022

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Visit [www.ecopdecade.org](http://www.ecopdecade.org)  
to learn more



2021 United Nations Decade  
2030 of Ocean Science  
for Sustainable Development



**ECOP**  
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Ocean Professionals

Prepared by:  
Natalie Fox, December 2022  
Communications Coordinator

Edited by:  
Raphaël Roman - Asia Node Coordinator  
Evgeniia Kostianaia - Global Coordinator