



ECOP
Early Career
Ocean Professionals

**Communications Report
April - December 2022**

**By Natalie Fox
IOC-UNESCO Consultant
for the ECOP Programme**



unesco

Intergovernmental
Oceanographic
Commission



**2021
2030** United Nations Decade
of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development

"Nothing in science has any value to society
if it is not communicated."
- Anne Roe

Contents	Page
Introduction	3
Overview	5
Website	6
Mailing list	7
Social media channels	8
Breakdown of completed work plan	9
SWOT analysis	15
Conclusion	17
Next steps	18

Introduction

The Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOP) Programme was endorsed as a UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (UN Ocean Decade) Programme in 2021. It is designed to empower ECOPs, who self-identify as being early in their career in any field related to the Ocean.

The vision of the ECOP Programme is to elevate and strengthen the diverse perspectives of new generations of ocean professionals through a collective voice, ensuring that knowledge is transferred between experienced professionals and ECOPs to promote ocean sustainability for “The Ocean We Want”.

The Medium Term Goals (3-5 years: January 2021 - October 2025) as laid out in the ECOP Programme strategic plan include:

- create a global governance structure and network of ECOPs that fosters a sense of community and coordinated action towards achieving the objectives of the Ocean Decade. This structure will include the creation of regional and thematic network nodes worldwide, in collaboration with existing bodies where appropriate.
- secure sources of funding for ECOP related activities throughout the Decade and beyond.
- promote a cultural shift in which institutions formally recognize the value of providing ECOPs with opportunities for professional development related to global ocean sustainability issues and strategic thinking.

Therefore, a communications consultant was to be recruited in March/April 2022 to help achieve the ECOP Programme mission and goals within the strategic plan. The role of communications within the ECOP Programme would be to champion meaningful networking and professional development opportunities, specifically:

- A. strengthen the connections between ECOPs and ECOP groups (Nodes/Task Teams) - establishing a network of networks.
- B. collate, filter and distribute information and posts related to ECOPs (such as jobs, trainings, funding, opportunities and events) through accessible channels and credible sources.
- C. empower and elevate the diverse voice of ECOPs around the World; engaging with and sharing the work of the ECOP Programme Nodes, Task teams and Endorsed projects, and ECOP members.
- D. produce digital and printed content/marketing materials of interest and relevance, to promote the ECOP Programme, whilst adhering to the ECOP Communications Key values.

Primary roles and responsibilities of ECOP Communications, as laid out in the strategic plan included:

- Develop, implement, and manage the ECOP Communications Plan and ECOP Social Media strategy, evolving as necessary based on Task Team activities
- Write and distribute content to promote ECOP Programme brand, activities, and projects including, but not limited to publications, newsletter, press releases, website content, annual reports, marketing material, and social media materials.

The communications consultant role would be updated, developed and designed to support the ECOP Programme’s current structure and operation as of March 2022, in line with the proposed workplace submitted by the chosen applicant.

The results of the 2021 Early Career Ocean Professionals global survey had over 1500 participants, yet at the beginning of 2022, the number of subscribers to the global ECOP database and newsletter was approximately 800. A key target of the consultancy was to reach at least 1000 ECOPs, and set up additional social media channels to target more individuals and groups, who self-identify as ECOPs. With Nodes already established in Africa, Asia and Canada, there were further opportunities to connect with ECOPs outside of these regions and develop correspondence with ECOPs who were also traveling for conferences.

The communications consultancy was facilitated by IOC-UNESCO. This report relates to the consultant “Natalie Fox” and the work that has been carried out from 1 April until mid December 2022.

As the first official communications consultant, this period enabled the baseline analytics and tools for measuring growth to be set up, as well as establish production of ECOP Programme content and provide support to global and regional coordinators. Prior to the consultancy starting April 2022 (part time, then moving to full time from June 2022), the consultant participated in the event “Monaco Ocean Week”; as part of a panel on “Innovation and Solutions to Achieve the Aims of the Ocean Decade”, which provided an opportunity represent and discuss the ECOP Programme during an in person setting.

Image 1. Monaco Ocean Week 2022:
The panel on “Innovation and Solutions to Achieve the Aims of the Ocean Decade”




Overview


This section will explain the set of values behind communications efforts and the different tools ECOP communications uses. Here we present the results of the analytics over time, showing the growth in audience that has occurred due to the consultancy work. The next section will go in depth into the monthly tasks and development that took place over the course of the consultancy. Finally, a SWOT analysis will provide an outline of key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, from a communications perspective.


The role of the consultant was to provide support, strategy and implementation of internal and external communications and key crosscutting tasks to support the global coordinator. In order for communications to be successful; several processes needed to be first understood and then systems developed to streamline workflow. Working relationships needed to be establishing between the global coordinator and other coordinators and task team leads. Monthly reports are available on key performance indicators from April until December 2022 (and are the basis for this report, [access to the folder of reports is available here](#)).

Three keys of ECOP comms:


 **EMPATHY:** As an International network with global reach, with regional hubs and localised groups, we need to know who our audience is and make sure we listen to our diverse stakeholder (our community) needs.*


**ECOP definition: "a person that self-identifies as being early in their career (10 years or less of professional experience) within any field related to the ocean (not only employed/paid positions)."*


 **EFFECTIVE:** This involves growing our reach and raising awareness of all the incredible work ECOPs are doing. Making sure ECOP members able to connect and submit their news easily and effectively, providing high value content through all of our channels.

 **ENGAGING: CONTENT!** It's our gold! We have the channels to share educational and compelling content about the work ECOPs are doing. Let's get it out there!

Three main communications tools:

 **Website:** This is the ECOP Programme online home and primary resource, housing the mission, vision, key messages, achievements and ongoing activities. As the ECOP Programme evolves so too will the website. Main sections include: About us (origin story and team), Our work, ECOP highlights, Opportunities (jobs, internships, funding, courses, events), the UN Ocean Decade, as well as the Privacy Policy and blog. It is updated on a daily/weekly basis.

 **Social media channels:** There are now x5 channels: Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook and Youtube with different formats (visual, written, video), trends and audiences.

 **Mailing list:** The mailing list is a monthly source of information that collates the jobs, events and opportunities that appear on the website, sent straight to subscribers inbox's.

Analytical insights

The analytics are available through each of the communications tools (website, mailing list and social media channels), to tracks and report digital traffic. Following these metrics over time means we are able to chart the audience growth, along with the growth rate and identify trends throughout the year. Analytics also allow us to further identify and understand our audience, so we can determine where there are gaps, and chart a plan of action to address and fill these gaps.

Website

The website numbers have grown steadily over the last 7 months. There was a particular spike in users in the month of June, as this was when the UN Ocean Conference took place and many of the sign up forms for networking events were advertised through the website. More detailed insights can be found in the monthly reports, but an overview is: 65% of visitors are on a desktop and 99% of visitors are new to our site. The main referrals come from: The Global Stakeholder Forum, Twitter and LinkedIn, and the top countries, where people are visiting from are: United States, Canada, UK, Portugal, France, India, China, Nigeria, Italy and Spain. The top pages that are visited are: the homepage, the funding section and the job/opportunities section. In August 2022 a translation button, through the application “Transy” was added, helping to automatically translate the whole site into the user’s own language.

Graph 1. Website analytics: April - Nov 2022

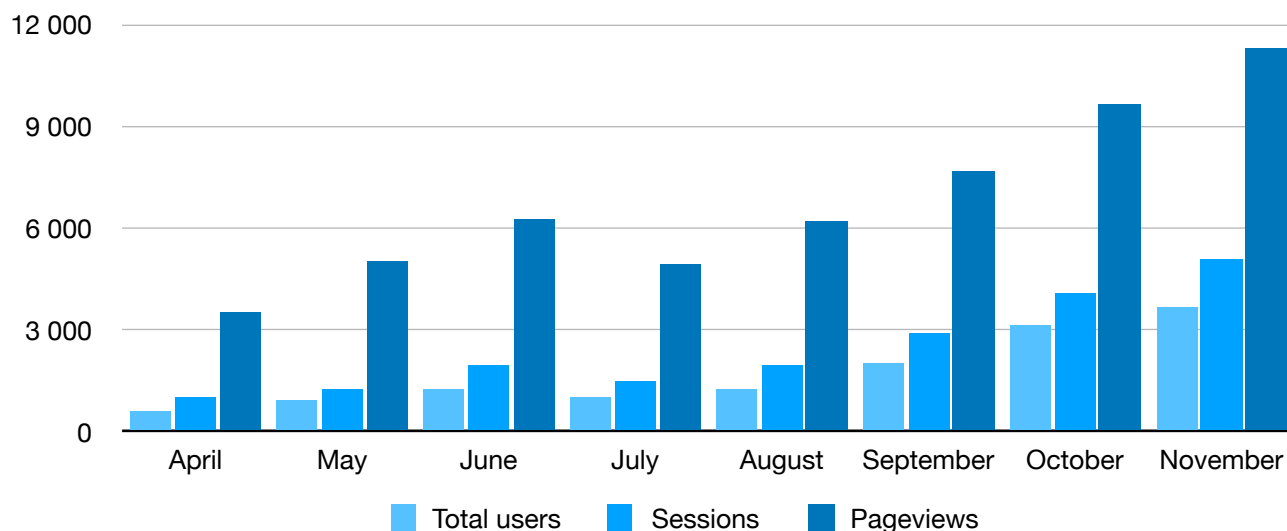


Table 1. Website analytics: April - November 2022

	Total users	Sessions	Pageviews
April	635	1 023	3 531
May	950	1 252	5 024
June	1 275	1 925	6 282
July	1 011	1 491	4 897
August	1 219	1 926	6 206
September	2 039	2 883	7 708
October	3 155	4 077	9 637
November	3 704	5 066	11 297
TOTAL	13 988	19 643	54 582
Growth % from April - Nov	483%	495%	319%

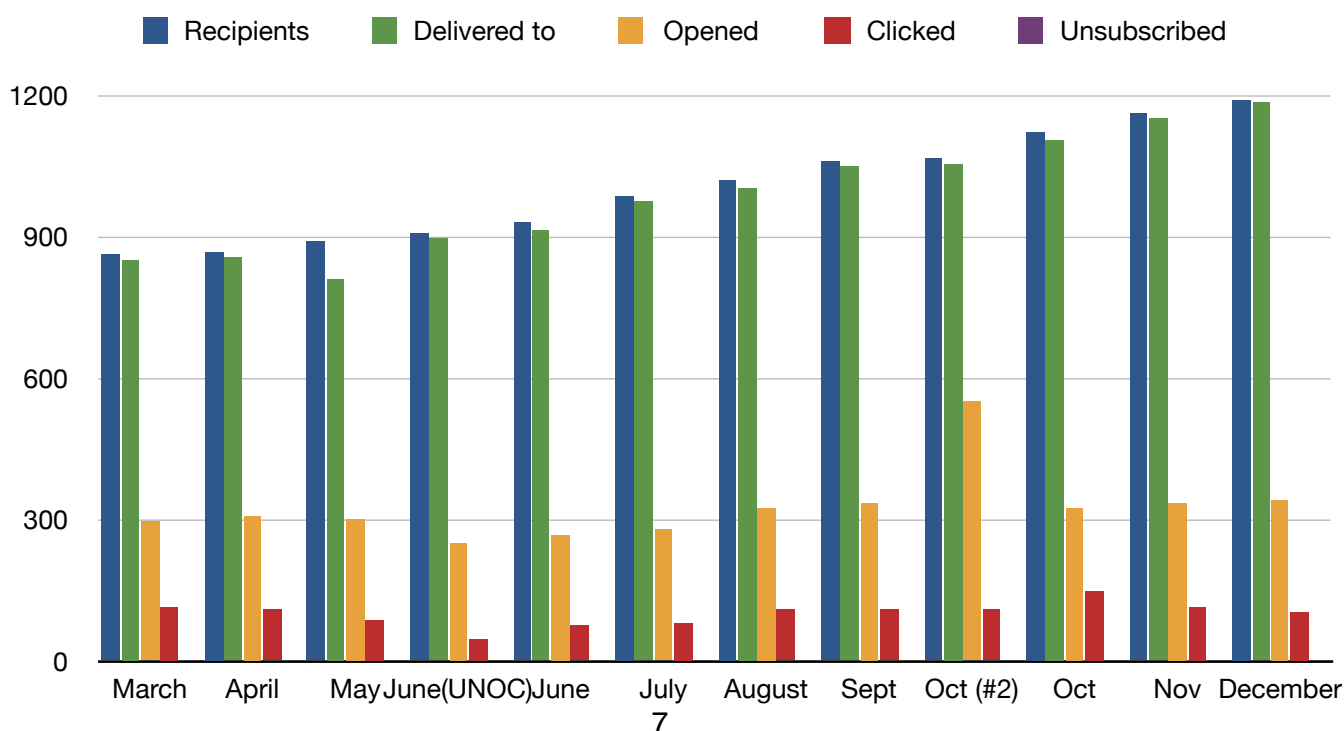
Mailing list

The mailing list currently stands at 1191 subscribers and is managed through the online programme: Mailchimp. It is also directly related to the global database, whereby the Asia consultant and interns monitor and check that both lists correspond. The content for the monthly newsletter is gathered throughout the month, and has recently changed to have less graphics so as not to overload peoples inboxes. The newsletter follows the format of: ECOP News, Other News, Events, Opportunities and Jobs; and you can access each month's newsletter by clicking on the linked dates in the table below. There is an average of 27 new subscribers per month.

Table 2. Mailing list

	Sent	Recipients	Delivered to	Opened	Clicked	Unsubscribed	+ New subscribers
March	12 April	863	847	295	115	1	6
April	28 April	869	857	306	108	1	19
May	12 May	888	808	301	84	0	21
June(UNOC)	17 June	909	895	248	48	1	18
June	5 July	927	912	266	77	5	57
July	29 July	984	975	277	83	0	34
August	26 August	1018	1003	326	110	1	42
Sept	27 September	1060	1047	334	110	2	4
Oct (#2)	4 October	1064	1052	550	108	1	56
Oct	4 November	1120	1106	322	151	0	39
Nov	1 December	1159	1151	334	115	1	32
December	16 December	1191	1186	343	102	1	Total: 328

Graph 2. Mailing list analytics: April - Nov 2022



Social media channels

When the consultancy began, the only social media channels that existed were Twitter and LinkedIn. Instagram, Facebook and YouTube were added, all with slightly different content formats and requirements (and audiences). Total reach across all channels is now 4359 followers/users. At the moment, the social channels have a different handles, for instance, Twitter: @OceanDecadeECOP, LinkedIn: @Early Career Ocean Professionals, YouTube: @ecopprogramme, Instagram: @ecopprogramme and Facebook: @ecop_programme. It would be beneficial to eventually align all the handles with the same handle. The main hashtags used are: #ecop #ecops #earlycareeroceanprofessionals #ecopdecade #unoceandecade #OceanDecadeECOP. The main increase in followers occurred in LinkedIn and Instagram.

Graph 3. Social media users: April - Nov 2022

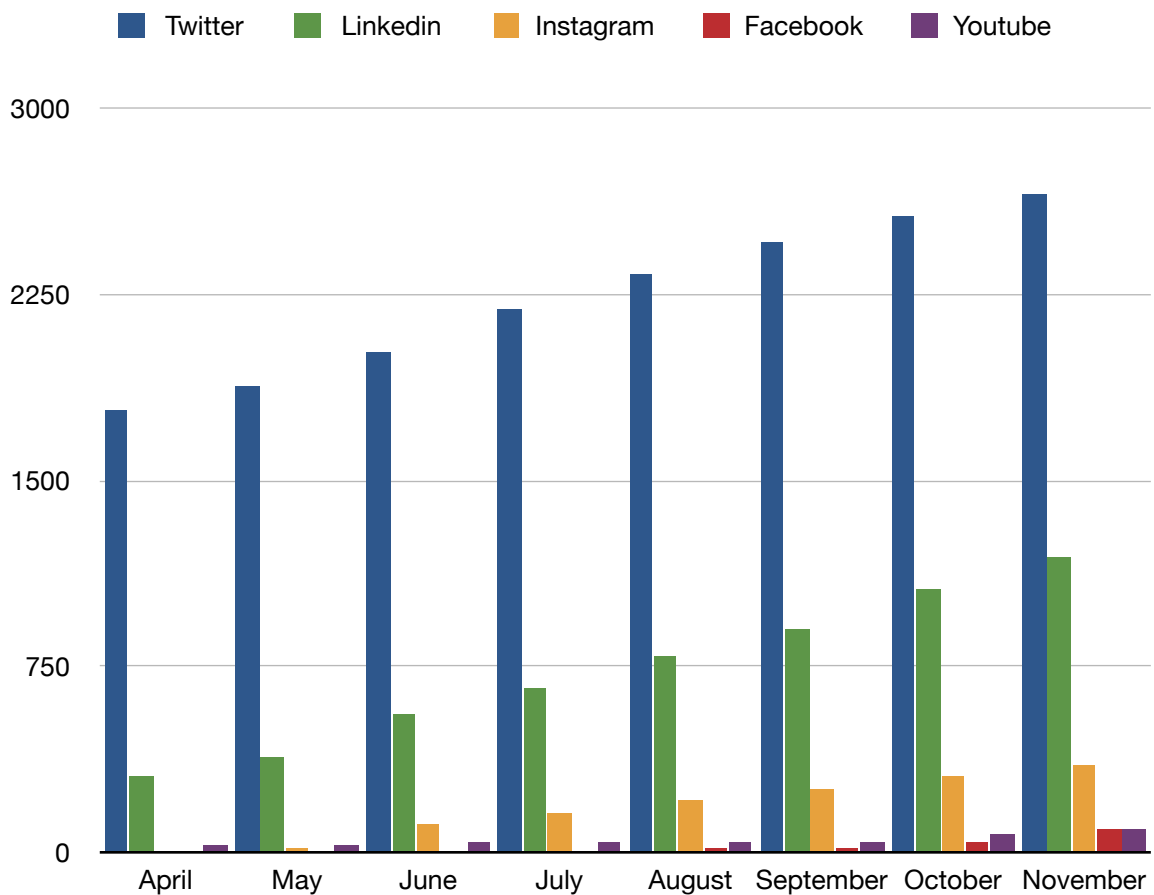


Table 3. Social media users

	Twitter	LinkedIn	Instagram	Facebook	Youtube
April	1775	308			21
May	1872	380		18	29
June	2015	550	115		33
July	2194	659	154	7	34
August	2333	795	206	15	36
September	2455	900	248	17	40
October	2564	1060	303	34	65
November	2652	1188	349	85	85

Breakdown of completed work plan

Months 0-3: April - June 2022

Streamline & strategy

Proposed work plan:

Establish communications with all the ECOP regional consultants and task team leads, build a timetable for receiving information and sending out/posting, using a planning tool such as hootsuite or Notion.

Develop the ECOP brand identity (working with the existing logo, colours and fonts) and expand branding throughout website, newsletter and social media so that it is consistent across all channels. Make sure the tone and ECOP “voice” is consistent across all channels.

Write and release newsletter, scheduling its release on a monthly basis. Collect and refine the content from internal and external sources.

Clarify the key messages of the ECOP programme, and keep these messages at the core of all communications: elevating and strengthening the diverse perspectives of new generations of ocean professionals; incorporating new ways of thinking into global ocean sustainability and stewardship challenges; empowering ECOPs with meaningful networking and professional development opportunities.

Create a strategy to develop the communications of ECOP key messages and objectives: Networking, collaborative actions, opportunities, representation and funding for ECOPs. As well as additional goals from the task teams or regional hubs. Look into setting up/supporting comms for additional regional hubs.

Achievements:

This period commenced with many meetings to establish connection between the consultant and Global/Node coordinators or task team leads. Primary communications took place between Evgeniia Kostianaia (Global), Raphael Roman (Asia), Gabriel A. Juma (Africa) and Ashley Bowes (Canada) as well as extended ECOP team members such as Taylor Goelz (former communications lead for ECOP).

There was a global meeting which enabled everyone involved in the ECOP Programme to connect online, and to provide presentations about their current status - whether a Node coordinator or task team lead. This time required learning the digital systems, obtaining all passwords, email set up and updating and editing website structure, layout, copy and relevant changes. Website tasks in particular were: building the new Japan Node page, and updating: Funding, Opportunities, Training, Our News, ECOP stories and Events pages. At the end of June the UN Ocean Conference section was complete, which featured a UNOC schedule of events.

The storage and planning systems were implemented, using GDdrive (used for file sharing with other users) and Notion (for social media post planning, project/campaign management). The consultant wrote and released x4 newsletters (March, April, May and a special UN Ocean Conference edition mid June)

A Youtube channel was established and maintained, recording and uploading a new ECOP story. The Social media strategy included posting to Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook channels daily, as well as conceptualizing, programming and scheduling a press release and campaign for the ECOPs anniversary - 7 June 2022. The design and planning for the UNOC ECOPs social media campaign took place during this time, and was launched on 24 June. This featured short quotes from ECOPs (most attending the UNOC) on how they think we will achieve “The Science we need, for the Ocean we want”.

June included many tasks related to the upcoming UN Ocean Conference - organizing in person events, mixers, correspondence, compiling a registry of ECOPs in attendance plus the final design and publishing of conference materials.

A short video explaining the vision and mission of the ECOP Programme, including highlights and achievements since it started, was produced for the the Second Foundations Dialogue Meeting, held by The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO) and the Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection in Rabat, Morocco, chaired by Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Hasnaa, Patron of the Ocean Decade Alliance.

Examples of work:

Graphic 1. Twitter post for ECOP anniversary



Graphic 2. Instagram grid for the UN Ocean Conference campaign



Graphic 3. Printed brochure for the UN Ocean Conference



Months 4-6: July - September 2022

Content creation & growth

Proposed work plan:

Key event: Ocean Conference: Lisbon, Portugal | 27 June to 1 July 2022

With comms running smoothly, there is now opportunity to build more awareness of the ECOP Programme and create additional content through the video interview series. Reach out to Universities social media to connect with ECOPs using the ECOP platform and promotion of past events such as V.ECOP to drive more engagement. Explore other ideas such as asking ECOPs to write guest blog articles for the website: "My biggest lesson as an ECOP"/ Advice from ECOPs. The Ocean Conference will also provide more opportunities (and potential time challenges) to engage with ECOPs via the platform. If there is another V.ECOP event this will also be integrated into communications. Meet with tasks team and regional hub members regularly to develop and strategically plan ECOP content creation for the next 6 months. Using the video interviews platform introduce: Who are ECOPs? Where are they based? What research are they doing? Edit these into reels for instagram to make content more digestible, easy to share and engaging.

Achievements:

Producing consistent articles for the website blog helps to drive traffic there, as well as increase visibility through search engine optimization. The following articles were written and published during this timeframe:

[Five steps towards Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Ocean Science](#)

[A shining example of Youth Action for Oceans: Brigitta Maria Andrea Gunawan](#)

[European Maritime Day in my country: Georgia](#)

[Meet the co-organizers of the Young Professionals Breakfast event: "Gaining an Edge in the New Blue Economy"](#)

[Meet Fifi Adodo from Togo](#)

[Top tips for attending conferences as an ECOP](#)

The consultant compiled and sent out four newsletters: for June, July, August and September.

Despite not being able to attend the UNOC due to testing positive for Covid19, the consultant worked remotely to support the ECOP team. This included organizing x3 ECOP mixer events, social media posts, comms support for side events, plus printing and sending ECOP brochures. In July the ICES / PICES conference required adding the French translation to the ECOP Canada flyer. The consultant also edited Gabriel Juma's video for his ICES/PICES presentations and added subtitles.

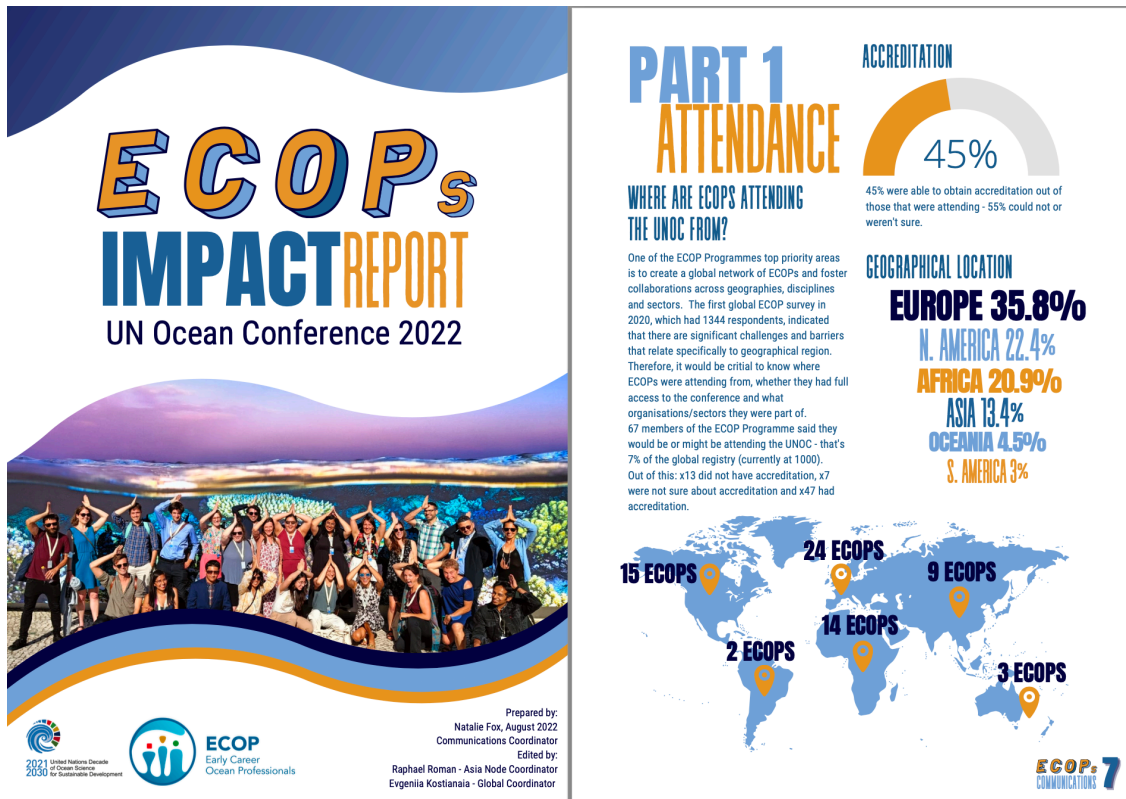
The consultant started conceptualizing and filming video interviews for new Youtube series "[ECOP Conversations](#)". This would be an opportunity to converse with ECOPs in a slightly longer format, so they can discuss their work in relation to the Decade of Ocean Science. To promote this, Instagram Reels trailers and digital promotional materials were made of first interviewee: National Geographic Explorer Alexis Bahl, to release beginning of October.

The consultant travelled to London, UK to participate in the UK-NDC workshop as a committee member and ECOP representative, delivering the presentation: "Ocean Literacy with and for all: from an ECOP Perspective" - 28-30 September.

A 20 page digitized Impact report of the ECOP Programme and ECOP community's attendance, engagement and feedback from the UN Ocean Conference, with specific reference to communications was produced (it was finalised in December 2022). [Please access the full report here.](#)

Examples of work:

Graphic 4. UN Ocean Conference Impact Report



Graphic 4. ECOP Canada leaflet for ICES/PICES

ECOP CANADA

OUR MISSION:
ECOP Canada aims to achieve intergenerational equity by strengthening the voices of Early Career Ocean Professionals

OUR STRATEGY:
Through our network of ocean partners and ECOPs, we aim to address the following needs outlined in Canada's Blue Economy Strategy:

- Adapt to generational values, interests, and interests.
- Rebuild early career professionals' connections to the coast.
- Develop and communicate clear career pathways.
- Support experiential learning opportunities.
- Foster and create sector strategies to reintroduce ECOPs to career opportunities.

Who is an ECOP in Canada?
An early career ocean professional (ECOP) is anyone who makes their living from or highly seeks:
As ECOP self-identifies as being early in their career (10 years or less of professional experience) within any occupation related to the ocean.
ECOPs will be the ones to inherit the decisions made about the ocean today, as well as leadership roles in the blue economy.

Why support ECOP Canada?
ECOP Canada partners with local and global organizations and leaders to foster meaningful learning and career opportunities for early career ocean professionals from coast to coast.
ECOP Canada will help achieve intergenerational leadership and a Blue Economy in Canada that is environmentally sustainable, socially equitable, and economically viable.

Why empower ECOPs now?
We are at a pivotal time in which emerging blue economies could help us deal with and solve environmental challenges while introducing new ocean sectors.
Now is the time to take action by supporting the next generation of ocean leaders and the goals of the UN Ocean Decade and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

CANADAEOPDECADE.ORG
@EOPCANADA

ECOPDECADE.ORG/CANADA

Graphic 5. ECOP stories promo graphic

ECOP STORIES:
DIEGO SANCHO GALLEGOS

Learn more about ECOPs in the field

SUBSCRIBE

WWW.ECOPDECADE.ORG/ECOPSTORIES

@OceanDecadeECOP @ECOP_Programme @EarlyCareerOceanProfessionals

ECOP Early Career Ocean Professionals

Months 7-9: October - December 2022

Monitor and report

Work plan:

Access to analytic tools will allow tracking of the increase in engagement through website, newsletter or social media platforms. A final report will be produced that comprises of metrics, as well as qualitative data. This will support the outcome of the consultancy and be compiled to address the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the ECOP communications programme, and assist targets for the future.

Achievements:

Updating and editing website structure, layout, copy and relevant changes, in particular: Endorsed activities, Opportunities, Nodes, Ocean Decade, UNOC, Funding/Training pages, Our News, ECOP stories. Flyers and promotion for ECOP training courses in Africa and Caribbean (November).

Writing and publishing articles:

[Alexis Bahl: An ECOP exploring Salps in the Southern Ocean](#)

[“Meet Carlotta Santolini: The Octopus Soulmate”](#)

[María Maestro: Advice no one gave me about doing a PhD](#)

[ECOP Programme intern Debarati and her experiences of a sinking Indian Island](#)

[Ocean-climate solutionist Bodhi Patil on the latest Ocean outcomes from COP27 and 5 actions for Intergenerational Collaboration \[Part 1\]](#)

[DEI task team member Ellen Johannesen joins Arctic research mission with Sea Women Expeditions](#)

[ECOP Africa attends the Geo Blue Planet Symposium in Accra, Ghana](#)

[Ocean-climate solutionist Bodhi Patil on reflections from COP27 and 8 biggest bright spots of 2022 for youth-led ocean-climate action \[Part 2\]](#)

[Spotlight on China: meet our ECOP Intern Chunhua Jiang](#)

(written by ECOP Canada) [How do Early-Career Ocean Professionals \(ECOPs\) view the 7 Ocean Decade Outcomes?](#)

On 28 September the ECOP Programme started its first webinar series, and the consultant was responsible for the promotion, co-production and distribution of materials. The format followed 1.5 hrs, with approx. 3 gets speakers and a chance for questions and discussion Details of the five webinars conducted can be found here: <https://www.ecopdecade.org/webinars/>, the episodes were as follows:

Episode 1: How to start an NGO

Episode 2: The Blue Economy

Episode 3: Understanding the UN Ocean Decade - What's in it for African ECOPs

Episode 4: Was 2022 truly the Ocean Super Year we hoped for?

Episode 5: Using ArcGIS software for Oceans-related work: An Overview with Keith Van Graafeiland, from ESRI

The consultant wrote and recorded four more [ECOP Conversations](#) - and released them on the YouTube channel, as well as created the promotional material to advertise this content.

Started designing and compiling the last campaign of 2022: “Ocean Decade ECOPs” - showcasing how ECOPs are working towards the challenges and outcomes of the UN Ocean Decade, as well as compiling an impact infographic and newsletter wrapping up all the ECOP Programme achievements of 2022.

Examples of work:

Graphic 6. Webinar (episode 3)

ECOP Programme webinars: Episode 3: Understanding the UN Ocean Decade - What's in it for African ECOPs?

Join the ECOP Programme team and special guests for an insightful 60-min webinar on how and why to engage in the UN Decade of Ocean Science as an Early Career Ocean Professional in Africa, followed by a 30 minute meeting for members of the ECOP-Africa Node.

Thursday 10 November
6.30PM West Africa Time (WET/CEI)

Registration link: <https://tinyurl.com/2nw5pn2s>
More information: www.ecopdecade.org/webinars

Introduced and moderated by:
Jonathan Ikeolumba & Chinomso Onwubiko

Featuring:

- Anthony Akpan:** "Understanding the African Roadmap in the UN Ocean Decade: A Key Necessity for ECOPs in Africa"
Founder/President, Pan African Vision for the Environment (PAVE) Member of Nigeria National Ocean Decade Committee
- Gabriel Akoko Juma:** "ECOP Africa: Where we came from and where we are!"
PhD Student in Coastal Ecology at Alfred Wegener Institute, Member of Early Career Ocean Professionals, African Regional Node (ECOP Africa)
- Anthony Ndah:** "General Meeting ECOP Africa: Where we are heading!"
Post-doctoral researcher Shelf Sea System Ecology at Alfred Wegener Institute, Germany and ECOP Programme Africa Node coordinator

www.ecopdecade.org

Join the ECOP Programme global database and mailing list on our website
Join the ECOP group on the UN Ocean Decade Global Stakeholder Forum & www.oceandecade.org

Norad, unesco

ECOP conversations with Khadija Stewart

ECOP CONVERSATIONS WITH KHADIJA STEWART

"THE SCIENCE WE NEED FOR THE OCEAN WE WANT"

WATCH THE FULL CONVERSATION ON THE ECOP PROGRAMME YOUTUBE CHANNEL

SUBSCRIBE

United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030

Graphic 8. #OceanDecadeECOPs campaign: challenge 10

OCEAN DECADE ECOPs

RENIS SAYS:
"I have experienced the struggles early career professionals go through - lack of job opportunities, support structures, financial support, diversity and inclusion. I feel these need to be urgently addressed to be able to achieve a sustainable Ocean economy and find long-term and innovative solutions to reverse declining Ocean health."

RENIS AUMA OJWALA IS FROM KENYA AND A PHD STUDENT AT THE WORLD MARITIME UNIVERSITY IN SWEDEN. HER RESEARCH IS FOCUSING ON THE "PEOPLE WE NEED FOR THE OCEAN WE WANT".

SHE IS WORKING TOWARDS

OCEAN DECADE CHALLENGE 10:
Change humanity's relationship with the Ocean

HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE "THE SCIENCE WE NEED" BY 2030?

RENIS SAYS:
"Having a diverse group of experts in Ocean science both locally, nationally and internationally will foster the achievement of the Ocean Decade goals. It is critical to give equal opportunities to all, and ensure diverse and inclusive management of the Ocean in terms of gender, generational, and geographical diversity; as well as providing specific support structures such as grants and fundings."

United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030

Graphic 7. Digital infographic for end of 2022

2022 IMPACT

2022 has been a busy and productive year, full of expansion, engagement and achievements for the Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOP) Programme, welcoming to our global network:

1574 ECOPs from 107 countries

- X9 REGIONAL AND NATIONAL NODES
- X4 TASK TEAMS
- X4 ENDORSED PROJECTS

9 Nodes Established or about to be established early 2023

ASIA EST. 2021, AFRICA EST. 2021, CANADA EST. 2021, JAPAN EST. 2022, MEXICO EST. 2023, U.S. EST. 2023, CARIBBEAN EST. 2023, SOUTH AMERICA EST. 2023, BRAZIL EST. 2023

The ECOP Programme is Empowering the Next Generation of Ocean Leaders to achieve "The Ocean We Want"

Early Career Ocean Professionals self-identify as being in the first 10 years of any field or career related to the Ocean.

ECOP engagement

- 13,000+ website users, 19,000+ sessions, 54,500+ pageviews
- 1220+ subscribers, 12 newsletters sent to 12,000+ recipients
- 2700+ followers, 300+ tweets, 68K+ profile visits, 202k+ impressions
- 1320+ followers, 1200+ unique visitors, 4000+ page views
- 400+ followers, 3900+ reach, 1400+ profile visits
- 98 subscribers, 1690+ total views, 15.7k impressions, 57 hours of watch time
- 5 webinars, 13 guest speakers, 200+ attendees
- 1 UNOC Impact Report

ECOP resources

- 150+ Jobs & opportunities advertised
- 60+ Events shared
- 5 surveys distributed (Asia, Africa, Canada, China, India) with 300+ participants
- 5 ECOP Conversations
- 10 ECOP Stories
- 14 ECOP Articles
- 3 Campaigns
- 8 trainings funded in Caribbean & Africa regions, total attendees: 246 ECOPs from 62 countries
- 2 ECOPs from Mozambique & Nigeria, funded for capacity development courses/events

Thanks go to all our partners for all their support in 2022, and especially our funding partners: Norad, unesco

www.ecopdecade.org

SWOT analysis

To conclude, we identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to ECOP communications, in order to develop our concluding comments and plan for the next steps.

Strengths

- One of the biggest strengths of the ECOP Programme, in terms of communications, is its global community and the dedication, determination, expertise and passion demonstrated by Early Career Ocean Professionals. Their engagement is paramount in sharing, maintaining and producing relevant and compelling content and information; and there has been an incredible amount of support and input from the core ECOP team, as well as the wider community. Our community has grown considerably, and as well as reach new members, our work with existing members has strengthened.
- Whilst the criteria for being an ECOP is quite broad: “self-identifying as early career in any profession in relation to the Ocean”, this inclusivity allows us to connect with a diversity of people. We reach ECOPs who are any age - they could be young or older due to a change in career, from all corners of the Earth, thanks to our growing number of regional and national Node coordinators, and working with them is part of the communications role. Focal points and thematic areas help us to target a smaller audience within our community, so whilst we are wide ranging in who and where we reach, these allow us to zoom into specific areas, and develop content around these topics - ie. the Blue Economy, from an ECOP Perspective.
- A huge bonus for members of the ECOP community is that it is free for users. We share jobs, opportunities and events, which lead to the development of ECOP careers, and provide a vital service in connecting ECOPs with information, contacts, a global network and capacity development (whether it's by sharing trainings or delivering our own through our partners). One of the key struggles for ECOPs (as identified in the 2021 survey) is lack of financial support, so keeping our service free of charge, is no doubt one of the reasons so many ECOPs subscribe.

Weaknesses

- Whilst the success and growth of the ECOP Programme so far proves the need for continued efforts, growth means the need to update systems of communication. For instance, our Mailchimp account allows us to reach 2000 on a basic (free) account, but when this is exceeded, we need to upgrade and pay. Having the foresight to prepare for growth, and update accordingly - whether it is human resources or the management of operations - is a good idea, and not doing so, not knowing how to or not having the means/capacity to respond to such growth is a weakness. Many of our systems are manual - an example is that the global ECOP database and the Mailchimp account are manually updated so that they correspond (although they both have different data formats), this takes time, and with the interchangeable contracts and internships that take place, tasks like this could get missed.
- More channels means more content needs to be produced, which means more work. We would love to create short videos and had this in the strategy to do so, but the time it takes to do this does not measure up to how many people actually see the posts. The fact that there is no marketing budget impacts our reach and engagement on social media, and with a small budget, posts that are put out on the different channels could be boosted to reach a larger audience.
- There are still some weaknesses in reaching our audience through our channels. In researching this report, we found out that whilst monthly newsletters are received by an average of 986 people, only 325 (on average) open them. This means our open rate is 33% and our click rate is even lower: just 10%. Why are these numbers so low and how can we improve them? It is something we would like to investigate, and can only really find out by asking our community and mailing list subscribers.

Opportunities

- It clear there is opportunity for the ECOP Programme to grow even more. As the blue economy develops, courses in interdisciplinary marine science reach more places in the world, capacity and collaboration with developing countries, small island states and indigenous groups are prioritized and the next generation move through their studies to their professional career, with more interest and dedication to Sustainable Development Goal:14 - there is plenty of scope to evolve as our community does. The expansion we have experienced (growing from 800 ECOPs on the global registry to over 1500) is down to organic growth, and there are many opportunities to explore how we can attract more ECOPs to join us, through our partners, institutions, events - online and in person, courses; whilst maintaining a service to our current community and members. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is one way to use digital marketing tools to increase our website's visibility in search engine result pages; as well as following social channels trends (Instagram reels, YouTube videos) to make sure we are up to speed on what is current and popular.
- This year, the 2022 UN Ocean Conference took place in Lisbon, Portugal. After the postponed 2021 event, it was the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic that inter-governmental organisations, governments, NGO's, the Academic community and the public all got together to discuss critical issues relating to our Ocean. The ECOP Programme's UN Ocean Conference communications report goes into the ECOP attendance, engagement and feedback ([download or read here](#)) but to summarize our findings in that report:
 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.

From our findings, we devised four key targets. Right now, there is time to plan for the next UN Ocean Conference, so we are motivated to use this time wisely and to work towards these targets for the next UN Ocean Conference in France 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.
- The ECOP Programme is one of the 25 endorsed Decade Programmes within the UN Decade of Ocean Science. This framework has undergone much growth and development since its conception, and the public launch in January 2021. It is through collaboration that we are able to work towards the vision of the Ocean Decade and "achieve the Science we need, for the Ocean we want by 2023". The Global Stakeholder Forum (GSF) is undergoing a transition to become the Ocean Decade Network, but in its current status we have 311 ECOPs in our GSF group. We believe the synergies within Action, Activities, other Programmes are huge opportunities to explore, as well as the digital resources that the Ocean Decade online hub provides.

Threats

- Covid-19 unfortunately put a stop to the communications consultant attending the UN Ocean Conference in June 2022. Several ECOP mixer events were organised, but the other consultants in attendance were able to take over, and the consultant provided remote organisation and assistance. Is Covid-19 still a threat? Perhaps not - but we have seen how illness, lockdowns and disruption to travel makes for a very difficult live event schedule, creating additional stress for ECOPs and those part of the ECOP core team. We are not able to predict if these barriers will continue, worsen or if it is the end of Covid-19, but we can do our best to mitigate and minimize disruption by learning from the past 2 years, and adapting and responding to potential problems. As well as the impacts of human viruses, the biggest environmental crisis we are facing right now, is the climate crisis. Many of our ECOP members are on the front line of this crisis, and with more extreme weather events occurring and the devastation it is causing to Ocean ecosystems and communities, it is a threat that cannot be ignored. As an organization, we need to minimize our emissions, whilst maintaining and increasing our own impact to address the 10 Ocean Decade challenge and achieve the 7 Ocean Decade outcomes by 2023.
- With this time sensitive agenda in mind, the uncertainty and instability of the future of ECOP operations and in particular the communications - which relies on external funding (currently courtesy of IOC-UNESCO and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation), means a sustainable source of funding is paramount to achieve the goals and targets for the ECOP Programme. In order to support and empower the next generation of Ocean leaders, the ECOP Programme needs to have a sustainable and reliable funding source (or multiple sources), to contribute to the survival of the ECOP Programme until 2030, and beyond. Without this financial stability, the daily, weekly and monthly communication operations of the ECOP Programme is at risk.

Conclusion:

The final piece of work for the year was the preparation for our #OceanDecadeECOPs campaign and a tribute to ECOP members who are working towards UN Ocean Decade Challenges 1-10. Compiling this campaign required members of our community to apply by filling out a google form with information such as:

1. How would you explain what you "do" to a ten year old?
2. Why are you motivated to participate in the UN Ocean Decade (through the ECOP Programme) and if you are involved in Decade Projects/Activities/Actions please tell us about them)
3. How would you like to see more people getting involved in the Ocean Decade challenges and helping "achieve the science we need for the Ocean we need by 2030"?
4. What do you think we have learnt in the first 2 years of the UN Ocean Decade, or on a more personal level what have YOU learnt?
5. Where do you think it is important/critical for efforts to be applied in the next few years of the Decade?

This information was collated and put into several graphics on Canva, and then released over the first 3 weeks in January 2023. This is the first campaign to feature our ECOPs in this way, and we hope develop this concept for the following years, using different mediums (short films/ interviews).

Next steps

The consultant is currently working on specific targets and a strategy for 2023 and beyond, which has already been partially laid out in the ECOP Programme's 2023 concept note:

1. Create realistic targets from 2022 to project a growth plan for 2023+, based on the stats from 2022. Incorporate advertising, media partners, weekly focus on each channel and sharing of grey and white literature. Develop meaningful content and additional channels, such as WeChat, for example, to increase our audience in China. Work towards mainstream media exposure on a national and global scale. The table below displays the proposed targets for the end of 2023 and in the beginning of 2023, the plan is to identify targets for each year up until 2030 and the concluding year of the UN Decade of Ocean Science.

	November 2022	Monthly Key Performance Indicators	Dec 2023 target
Website	3704	Users	6000 (monthly average)
Mailing list	1151	Subscribers	3000
Twitter	2656	Followers	4000
LinkedIn	1188	Followers	2000
Instagram	349	Followers	1000
Facebook	85	Followers	1000
YouTube	85	Subscribers	1000

2. Continue to manage, maintain and grow content outputs through daily posts and weekly articles, "ECOP stories" and "ECOP Conversations", as well as monthly newsletters. Start presenting and highlighting our partnerships with various organisations (as these develop) through different content and campaigns.

Ideas include:

Showcase ECOPs who run Ocean Decade Activities, Actions or (are part of) Programmes, or in National Decade Committees, to build on further synergies within the UN Ocean Decade framework. Run campaigns throughout the year, in conjunction with key events.

Design and run the next #OceanDecadeECOPs campaign again in November 2023, using video footage of participants to reach a wider audience across social channels.

Develop a communications survey for our members in order to:

- learn more about our community, and find out the styles, technology and methods they use
- use the results to be able to update our tools and systems, ready for more growth and best serve our community
- diversify our communications to be able to reach ECOPs in new and different regions, by working directly with regional and national coordinations

3. Make sure that the ECOP Programme has a virtual or actual presence at the key events in 2023 and beyond, and highlight participation of its core team members. Provide a platform (WhatsApp group chat) for ECOPs attending a conference to coordinate and meet each other – as it was done for the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon in June 2022, COP27 in Egypt and COP15 in Canada.

4. Create a global, interactive mapping system on our website that functions to show information relating to our members and organizations, so that people can connect directly through our network, freely available online. In view of the increasing and predicted user traffic on the ECOP website (4,000 in 2023), having this map directly on our website, as opposed to integrating it on the Global Stakeholder Forum, would allow much better interaction with it. As we expect people to mainly scroll through the main page of the website when they first visit, having the global interactive map there would maximize its visibility and people might linger longer as they explore the map and potentially get intrigued further and thus start navigating through other sections of the website.

5. Finally, as we move through the UN Ocean Decade, the ECOP communications team will remain committed to developing and evolving the brand identity of the ECOP Programme, which will help to clarify and communicate the key messages of the ECOP Programme, keeping these messages at the core of all communications:

- Elevating and strengthening the diverse perspectives of new generations of ocean professionals
- Incorporating new ways of thinking into global ocean sustainability and stewardship challenges
- Empowering ECOPs with meaningful networking and professional development opportunities.

And, in doing so, ensure that knowledge is transferred between experienced and early career ocean professionals, to promote ocean sustainability for “The Ocean We Want”.

Thank you for reading this report, for any questions or feedback, please contact:
natalie@ecopdecade.org



ECOP
Early Career
Ocean Professionals

**Communications Report
April - December 2022**

**By Natalie Fox
IOC-UNESCO Consultant
for the ECOP Programme**



unesco

Intergovernmental
Oceanographic
Commission



**2021
2030** United Nations Decade
of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development