



Brussels, 12 February 2016

COST 018/16

## DECISION

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Subject: **Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the COST Action “Ocean Governance for Sustainability - challenges, options and the role of science” (OceanGov) CA15217**

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The COST Member Countries and/or the COST Cooperating State will find attached the Memorandum of Understanding for the COST Action Ocean Governance for Sustainability - challenges, options and the role of science approved by the Committee of Senior Officials through written procedure on 12 February 2016.



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## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

For the implementation of a COST Action designated as

**COST Action CA15217**  
**OCEAN GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY - CHALLENGES, OPTIONS AND THE ROLE OF**  
**SCIENCE (OceanGov)**

The COST Member Countries and/or the COST Cooperating State, accepting the present Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) wish to undertake joint activities of mutual interest and declare their common intention to participate in the COST Action (the Action), referred to above and described in the Technical Annex of this MoU.

The Action will be carried out in accordance with the set of COST Implementation Rules approved by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), or any new document amending or replacing them:

- a. "Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities" (COST 132/14);
- b. "COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval" (COST 133/14);
- c. "COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment" (COST 134/14);
- d. "COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisations Participation" (COST 135/14).

The main aim and objective of the Action is to OceanGov is a regional node, bringing together geographically diverse partners with transdisciplinary expertise on the rapidly transforming arena of integrated ocean and coastal governance. The network addresses the question of institutional fragmentation, by strengthening a regionally integrated perspective on sustainability challenges, previously interpreted through an explicitly local or global lens.. This will be achieved through the specific objectives detailed in the Technical Annex.

The economic dimension of the activities carried out under the Action has been estimated, on the basis of information available during the planning of the Action, at EUR 76 million in 2015.

The MoU will enter into force once at least five (5) COST Member Countries and/or COST Cooperating State have accepted it, and the corresponding Management Committee Members have been appointed, as described in the CSO Decision COST 134/14.

The COST Action will start from the date of the first Management Committee meeting and shall be implemented for a period of four (4) years, unless an extension is approved by the CSO following the procedure described in the CSO Decision COST 134/14.

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**OVERVIEW**

**Summary**

The governance of oceanic systems and coastlines is moving into the center of European strategic and sustainability interests. Yet, it suffers from a high degree of fragmentation and the lack of a cross-scalar approach to addressing prevailing policy shortcomings. The proposed COST Action on “Ocean Governance for Sustainability - Challenges, Options and the Role of Science” comprises a unique, transdisciplinary network of 58 proposers with regional and international outreach. The network aims to establish an integrative vision, and a series of approaches that informs research and future policy directions on crosscutting sustainability-driven issues related to the fragmented governance framework of oceans, seas and coastlines within regional waters, and the open ocean in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The network differs from thematic predecessors in two distinct ways: While attending to the multiple flows and connectivities between varied marine systems together with land- and sea-based interfaces that are biologically, culturally, politically and socio-economically entwined, it first renders equal importance to strengthening regional and interdisciplinary dialogue, producing scientific output, crosscutting the natural and social sciences. Synergistic issue-driven working groups will be created at a time when Europe is considering its role in global ocean governance, and will continue to evolve well after the COST Action ends. Second, the network creates a distinct multi-scalar and cross-sectoral platform for institutional partners across academia, policymaking and civil society, presenting inclusive spaces for transdisciplinary dialogue, capacity development and the advancement of practical toolkits that attend to science-policy gaps inherent within integrated ocean and coastal governance.

<p><b>Areas of Expertise Relevant for the Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social and economic geography: Social, cultural and economic geography, international trade</li> <li>• Earth and related Environmental sciences: Oceanography (other)</li> <li>• Economics and business: Sustainability</li> </ul>	<p><b>Keywords</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated ocean and coastal governance</li> <li>• Land-sea interactions</li> <li>• Ocean climate and acidification</li> <li>• Area-based management</li> <li>• Food security, seabed resources and fisheries</li> </ul>
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**Specific Objectives**

To achieve the main objective described in this MoU, the following specific objectives shall be accomplished:

Research Coordination

- Coordination and implementation is the responsibility of the Management Committee (6 Principal WG Leaders and 6 Deputy WG Leaders, 1 Chair, 1 Vice Chair); deliverable fulfillment takes place through teleconference and in person meetings, facilitating exchange between scientists, policymakers and civil society representatives across Europe and its Near Neighbour Countries.
- Scientific Events: one international kick-off OceanGov Conference and a ‘Science-meets-Policy Conference’ in Brussels; a mid-term Symposium assuring interdisciplinary, and continuous discussion on integrated governance issues crosscutting local, national, regional, global scales, and through the lens of social, economic, ecological sustainability challenges; three Transdisciplinary Workshops to assure cross-sectoral debate.



- Joint Peer-reviewed Publications: 14 scientific publications, and 7 EU Policy Briefs
- One Public Exhibition on the occasion of European Maritime Day or the European Commission's Green Week and, potentially, in the European Parliament, Brussels
- Science Dissemination: 16 quarterly digital newsletters; a dedicated network website and information portal containing research and policy outcomes to be made publicly available. The portal will also document activities to a wider stakeholder base comprising governmental and intergovernmental organisations, business entities, third sector and other civil society organisations.

#### Capacity Building

- Three Training Schools for early career researchers and policymakers from Europe in cooperation with OceanGov's wider network bases. The modules will be shared within the network and further developed to be used as regular university teaching material.
- A Gender- and Parenthood-aware Mentoring Programme, offering each early career investigator in the network one senior mentor for four years, three group-mentoring events (on work-life-balanced career planning) attached to the three Training Schools, together with regular Action-related meeting spaces for peer-mentoring and exchange.
- 11 Intra-network Staff Exchanges, with particular emphasis on early career investigators.
- Stakeholder Outreach Actions entailing a public exhibition in Brussels, together with regular dialogue exchanges between the Management Committee of OceanGov with key stakeholders, including those from the European Commission, Parliament and Member States as well as NGOs and the private sector to reflect priority challenges in ocean governance.



## TECHNICAL ANNEX

# OCEAN GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY - CHALLENGES, OPTIONS AND THE ROLE OF SCIENCE

## 1. S&T EXCELLENCE

### 1.1. Challenge

#### 1.1.1. Description of the Challenge (Main Aim)

Governing our oceanic systems, seas, coastlines and marine resources sustainably, and through a multi-scalar and cross-sectoral approach remains one of the key environmental and development challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The COST Action, entitled “Ocean Governance for Sustainability - Challenges, Options and the Role of Science” (OceanGov Network), was created to address the urgent need for an integrated and interactive approach to managing Europe’s marine and coastal spaces. In particular, it addresses the pressing question of how to redress institutional fragmentation by strengthening a regionally integrated perspective on sustainability challenges which was previously interpreted through an explicitly local or global lens.

Diverse coalitions of regional and global actors argue that the prevailing governance framework, including its instruments and mechanisms, is insufficient to ensure the sustainable use of marine resources, and to safeguard the global commons for human wellbeing and intergenerational equity (Mann Borgese, 1999; Ekstrom et al., 2009). To date, the international ocean governance system is based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). However, UNCLOS, as an overarching legal framework, is insufficient to regulate sustainability issues that have been less visible or pertinent 30 years ago, such as marine litter and ocean acidification.

Furthermore, approaches to integrated marine and coastal governance mark a relatively recent shift in policy discourse. Whilst substantially more knowledge and experience in the governance of land-based/terrestrial socio-environmental systems have been amassed over centuries, the regulation of marine and coastal systems - combined with related anthropogenic activity - remains a more recent phenomenon. To this end, there is much debate among scientific and policy circles on effective policy mixes and regulatory instruments that facilitate integrated forms of multi-scalar and cross-sectoral governance across ecologically diverse marine spaces.

Therefore, in order to safeguard and achieve the sustainable use of ocean spaces and coastlines, future ocean governance frameworks are faced with a two-directional challenge. The first is to integrate a range of crosscutting local, regional and global concerns, often associated with unsustainable production and consumption practices, an increasing world population in the face of planetary resource boundaries, the weakening resilience of natural ecosystems, combined with anthropogenic climate change and variability. The second challenge rests on how to address the complexity of an already overburdened and fragmented international ocean governance system, especially with emerging developments such as deep-sea mining, and more remote and environmentally sensitive areas such as the Arctic being accessed for new activities.

Concomitantly, there exists great potential to transform the “blue wealth” of seas, oceans and coastlines into a long-lasting asset bearing environmental, socio-cultural and economic benefit. Moreover, with the surge of political interest and international funding directed at the Green Economy, the possibilities of (re)vitalising the Blue Economy within this rubric are yet to be more comprehensively explored and integrated into the international governance architecture.

#### 1.1.2. Relevance and Timeliness



At a regional level, Europe is witnessing a shift towards a transformative policy approach in the way our oceans, seas and coastlines are managed. To enable the flourishing of a Blue Economy while protecting natural resources and safeguarding sustainable livelihoods, a more inclusive, nuanced and context-specific governance approach of oceans and coasts is necessary (Commission Implementation Decision 2014/1447; COM, 2012/494 final; COM, 2014/86 final; Gambert, 2015). Consequently, the European Commission has embarked on a consultative process to consider how best to strengthen policy coherence and comprehensiveness on improving its marine international governance framework (European Commission, 2015). Among these are the more recent shifts towards a new marine spatial planning approach (Council Directive 2014/89/EU) and the Marine Knowledge 2020 initiative (European Union Maritime Affairs, 2012).

With an ever-expanding knowledge base, comes an urgent need to inform policy-led initiatives and broader political processes through integrative governance research, by bringing together diverse forms of expertise on land, coastal and oceanic sustainability challenges that span the local, national, regional and global levels. At the same time, a multidimensional thematic approach, that integrates interdisciplinary informed multi-level governance insights and approaches is needed, in order to bridge the potentially widening science-policy gap – particularly in the context of a rapidly transforming post-2015 Development Agenda and other international policy shifts.

2015 marked a crucial year for both international development and the global negotiations on climate action. The universal set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), combined with the signing of the Paris Agreement during the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), have revitalised debates ranging from the primacy of Blue Carbon and the sustainable use of marine biodiversity in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) Programme, to the development of international exploitation rules for deep-sea minerals within the aegis of the International Seabed Authority (ISA).

A challenge to all these regional and global discussions is the necessity to balance global and trans-regional perspectives, as well as local-level governance capacities for their implementation. Despite the existence of excellent marine science in Europe, scientific organisation and expertise representation on oceanic and coastal governance remains low. This Action therefore brings together interdisciplinary teams of marine and coastal expertise from social, economic, legal and natural sciences. The network initiates participatory dialogue with policy-making and civil society actors, providing a transdisciplinary platform - beyond academia - improving the knowledge base and strengthening science-practice networks which shape ocean and coastal governance for sustainability in Europe and beyond.

## 1.2. Objectives

### 1.2.1. Research Coordination Objectives

The thematically broad challenges illustrated in 1.1.1 provide the impetus for creating the Action . The OceanGov Network acts as a regional node, bringing together related expertise to support the rapidly growing and transforming arena of integrated ocean and coastal governance. Such a network necessitates not only a geographically diverse network of researchers and stakeholders. It also warrants a network that is immensely inter- and transdisciplinary, addressing a range of pressing sustainability-related issues and their emergent socio-economic and political dynamics within Europe.

This unique configuration of European research and policy-driven partners come together in posing an overarching question that guides and integrates the work of the network: **What multi-scalar**

and cross-sectoral approaches, replete with unifying concepts and transdisciplinary perspectives, are needed to inform a cohesive governance architecture, equipped to address diverse sustainability challenges characteristic to Europe’s marine, coastal and land-based socio-ecological systems?

In its entirety, the COST Action : a) assesses priority issues that affect the governance of oceans and coastlines; b) maps and analyses the current institutional governance architecture in its fragmented and sustainability-challenged form; and c) develops governance options to support sustainability in ocean related decision-making.

The OceanGov Network: Approaches and Dimensions:

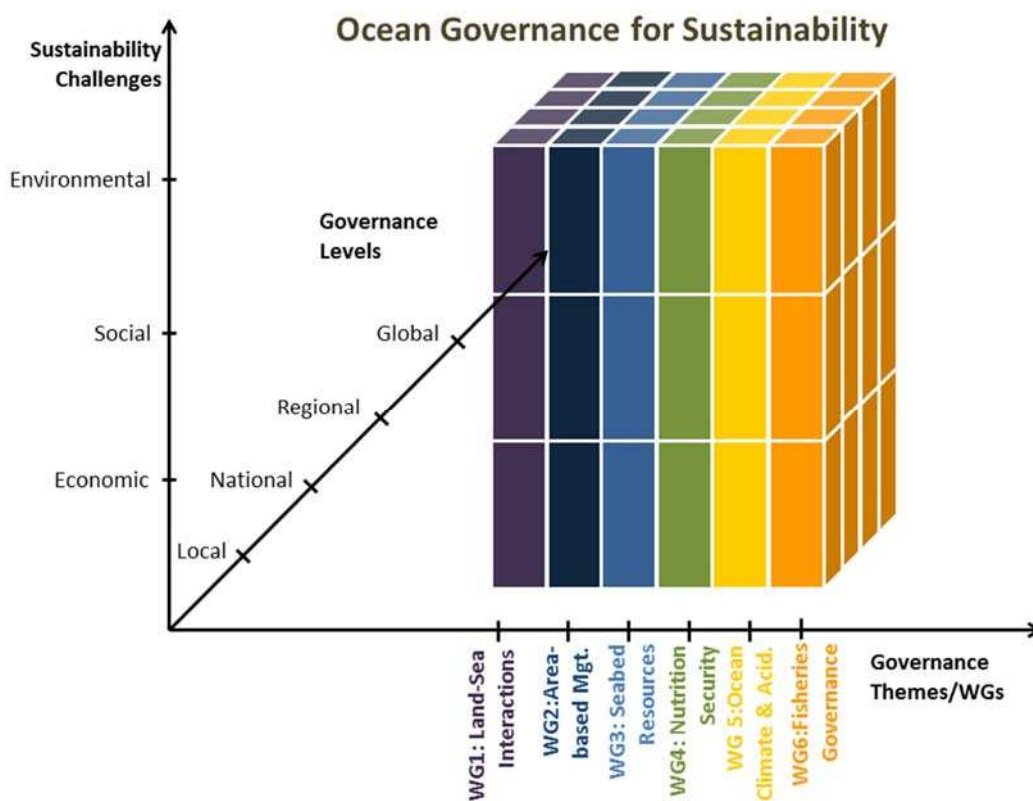


Figure 1: Analytical framework to assess key themes in ocean governance for sustainability

The OceanGov Network comprises 6 interdisciplinary and methodologically crosscutting Working Groups (WGs), with a network coordination office (CO).

CO 0: Network Coordination  
WG 1: Land-Sea Interactions  
WG 2: Area-based Management (ABM)  
WG 3: Seabed Resource Management (SRM)  
WG 4: Nutrition Security and Food Systems (NSFS)  
WG 5: Ocean Climate and Acidification (OCA)  
WG 6: Fisheries Governance

This COST Action adopts a two-pronged approach. First, in order to create policy congruence, the WGs set out to systematically collect, document and discuss the causes and consequences of current transformations in ocean governance across three dimensions of sustainability (social, economic, ecological), while combining a multi-scalar perspective crosscutting the local, national, regional and global.

The following steps are adopted to ensure the network's success in relation to fulfilling its mission for transdisciplinary dialogue, research and policy-driven outcomes.

The six WGs collectively:

- (i) Attend to each of the four scales: the local, national, regional and global. In addition, each participant within the WGs are assigned to a primary scalar level (i.e. local, national, regional or global) at which they will work in order to maintain creative interdependencies within and across WGs;
- (ii) Address all three sustainability challenges: environmental, social and economic;
- (iii) Identify scientific synergies and crosscutting thematic interests from the onset of the network initiative, ensuring that some WGs remain more challenge-oriented, while others retain a more approach-focused alignment.

Within the COST Action, the distribution of tasks within each of the 6 WGs are undertaken by established subject specialists who continue to collectively recruit a network of inter- and transdisciplinary participants, based on geographic diversity and inclusiveness with regard to gender, age and thematic interests. Close attention is paid to the mix of theoretical researchers, together with those who work on policy-oriented outcomes and strategies for implementation. This configuration not only triggers cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral dialogue but is also tailored to the advancement of new synergetic research frontiers within the broad scope of ocean and coastal governance – enrolling cross-cutting fields such as mobility, borderscapes and the politics of (im)migration, food security and public health, aquaculture, international shipping and trade, energy and mining, coastal and marine tourism.

The Action provides a series of collaboratively tailored and coordinated activities entailing:

- 1) **Inter- and transdisciplinary Scientific Events:** one international kick-off Ocean Governance Conference as opening event of the COST Action in creating a solid basis for science-based discussion followed by advice and knowledge sharing; one mid-term Symposium assuring the interdisciplinary and continuous discussion within the network on six areas of governance (WG foci), four scale-levels (local, national, regional, global) and through the lens of all three sustainability challenges (social, economic, ecological); three Transdisciplinary Workshops with policymakers and other stakeholders to assure cross-sectoral debate; one final 'Science-meets-Policy' Conference in Brussels;
- 2) **Joint Peer-reviewed Publications:** 14 scientific publications, and 7 EU Policy Briefs;
- 3) **One Public Exhibition** on the occasion of European Maritime Day or the European Commission's Green Week and, potentially, in the European Parliament, Brussels;



- 4) **Science Dissemination:** 16 quarterly digital newsletters; a dedicated network website and information portal containing research and policy outcomes to be made publicly available. The portal also documents activities to a wider stakeholder base comprising governmental and intergovernmental organisations, business entities, third sector and other civil society organisations.

### 1.2.2. Capacity-building Objectives

- 1) **Three Training Schools** for Early Career Investigators (ECI) and policymakers from Europe in cooperation with the COST Action participants and their wider network bases. The training modules are shared within the network and are consciously developed further by Working Group members into regular university teaching material – thus assuring further dissemination after the Action’s funded existence;
- 2) **Gender- and Parenthood-aware Mentoring Programme:** a three-pillared mentoring programme is organised by the Action coordination office, offering each Early Career Investigator in the network one senior mentor for four years, three group-mentoring events (on work-life-balanced career planning) attached to the three Training Schools, as well as regular meeting spaces (attached to other Action events) for peer-mentoring and exchange;
- 3) **11 Intra-network Staff Exchanges**, with particular emphasis on Early Career Investigators;
- 4) **Stakeholder Outreach Actions:** (a) Regular dialogue exchanges between the Management Committee of the COST Action with key actors within the European ocean governance landscape, including those from the European Commission, Parliament and Member States as well as NGOs and the private sector, to reflect priority challenges in ocean governance; (b) a public exhibition in Brussels, together with a dialogue session at the European Parliament.

## 1.3. Progress Beyond the State-of-the-Art and Innovation Potential

### 1.3.1. Description of the State-of-the-Art

Theories of environmental governance often deal with broader questions of institutional change as well as the emergence of new mechanisms and institutions that transcend traditional forms of state and treaty-based regimes, while accounting for the sheer diversity of non-state actors in the arena of global, regional, national and local environmental politics. Furthermore, established governance frameworks tend to focus on macro questions of institutional fit, interplay and scale witnessed across diverse cross-sectoral and multi-scalar systems, while engaging with questions of systemic segmentation and fragmentation of the overall governance system (Biermann and Pattberg, 2008, Vatn and Vedeld, 2012).

Within the context of social science-based marine governance, two interrelated thematic currents are often raised. The first concerns the question of scale and intersectionality, particularly in terms of how regional approaches could be conceptualised and empirically studied. The second relates to the sheer diversity of sustainability-driven challenges and “wicked problems” crosscutting a range of ecological processes and anthropogenic activities, from resource extraction and over-exploitation, to pollution, climate change and ocean acidification. While scholarship that engages with regional fracturedness and the diversity of ocean and coastal governance systems is fast emerging (cf. Gambert, 2015), there exists a lacuna with regard to how theoretical and evidence-based knowledge from inter- and transdisciplinary approaches can effectively inform multi-scalar and cross-sectoral policy implementation.

### 1.3.2. Progress Beyond the State-of-the-Art



A vast corpus of theoretical work within socio-environmental governance literature(s) has focused on more foundational questions on how to understand institutional and broader trajectories of societal change, uncertainty, risk and resilience. The turn towards seeing change through an ever-evolving adaptive lens – or put simply, governance as adaptation and as an adaptive process – has gained widespread appeal in the past, amongst others in Social-Ecological System thinking (cf. Folke et al., 2005; Olsson et al., 2006). Having been in part embedded in institutional theory, governance-as-adaptation thinking has made inroads to advancing governance frameworks through its systematic integration of formal and informal institutions within broader governance processes and politics. While such conceptual dualisms (i.e. formal/informal) have often been ardently contested among social scientists in particular, within the context of adaptive governance, broader questions of social change, political transformation, and the interplay of polycentric power relations are increasingly regarded as decisive in the everyday (and multi-scalar) governance of resources.

While considering the strengths and limitations of diverse approaches to governance – particularly in the way of their scalar gaps and boundaries – the Action works at developing a multi-scalar marine and coastal governance concept. In doing so, it draws inspiration from the emerging field of Evolutionary Governance Theory (EGT) (Beunen et al., 2015), a so far purely terrestrial debate, as well as from the Interactive Governance Approach (Kooiman et al., 2008) developed in the fisheries and coastal management sector. EGT draws on diverse conceptual currents, linking Luhmannian Systems thinking and Post-Structuralism, with New Institutionalism and social constructivist-inspired Development Studies, with the aim to feed insights from these discussions into governance approaches and mechanisms in practice. Conscious space for the everyday contestations and adaptations of governance is given, taking into account transformational change processes (Avelino and Wittmayer, 2014). The Interactive Governance Approach here gives emphasis to the interplay of diverse actors and governance structures as communicative, and as such, socially constitutive processes. Both discussions have understood the importance of linking multi-scalar and cross-sectoral governance debates to processes of multiple actor-driven contestation and broader political dynamics, including symbolic, communicative and discursive spheres of Action. Yet, while EGT is a so far terrestrial and strongly conceptual debate, Interactive Governance – with its respective conceptual basis – has been applied mainly to fisheries. The OceanGov Network therefore draws on the strengths of both approaches with the clear aim to take the next step – across the terrestrial-marine divide and into the sphere of conceptually sound praxis-oriented ocean governance-for-sustainability debates.

### 1.3.3. Innovation in Tackling the Challenge

The Action's innovation potential lies in three concrete areas situated within its key objectives:

- a) The forging of a **new pan-European ocean governance network that will sustain beyond the duration of the project and its funding cycle**: apart from the geographically, theoretically and methodologically fractured nature of the study of ocean governance, broader policy debates on how to more meaningfully integrate geopolitics into this frame remains an open question. In part, the challenge lies in the spatial disconnectedness with regard to the ways in which marine spaces, territories, boundaries and borders have been researched, with little promise for integrated policy outcomes. Thus, the primary innovation capability - apart from its scientific impetus - can be found in how the network itself has been assembled, combining researchers and wider stakeholders that work on significant cross-scalar marine zones encompassing the Mediterranean, the Baltic coastline, the North Sea, and the Black Sea, among other marine spaces both in and beyond Europe.

- b) The advancement of **inter- and transdisciplinary concepts and methodologies** for research, with particular attention paid to steering policy-relevant governance pathways: ocean and coastal governance research in the past has suffered from a lack of conceptual integration with geopolitical and sustainability related considerations, particularly in the context of power and how institutions and regulatory mechanisms intersect within pressing regional issues such as transnational migration and human security, the management of regional seas and coastal zones, and international cooperation among other contemporary challenges.
- c) **Training module development:** didactical methods on the study of governance have gained increased interest over the years, for example the International Ocean Institute's training programmes. Arguably however, contemporary teaching and training curricula face the challenge of harmonising regional ocean policies with the international governance framework. Tailor-made modules are developed for (and during) the three Training Schools, with a view to integrating critical perspectives, core concepts and methods in studying ocean management and governance from a distinctly European angle.

## 1.4. Added Value of Networking

### 1.4.1. In Relation to the Challenge

The formation of the first European-wide network on integrated ocean and coastal governance attends to the challenge of research and policy fracturedness by combining a multi-scalar perspective with a transdisciplinary lens. The Action the most conducive for the forging of a collaborative approach, as it provides a broad range of network features and activities that not only facilitate scientific meetings and written output, but also creates the space for dialogue with practitioners and stakeholders in ocean management, while driving the co-development of new insights into relevant issues in ocean sustainability.

Furthermore, it raises public awareness and supports interaction and broader civil society engagement through public exhibitions and outreach initiatives. A networking platform such as this offers an inclusive space that not only connects the OceanGov Network and its activities with policy nodes crosscutting local, national, regional and global scales, and across a variety of thematic areas. The Action also ensures how empirically-driven and policy-relevant findings can be communicated to significant state, private sector and civil society stakeholders in a timely and efficient manner through its networking tools.

Additionally, it pools together diverse sub-disciplines and core forms of expertise crosscutting the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainability challenges. These interdisciplinary mixes include oceanography, international law, institutional economics and sociology, political sciences, legal geography and anthropology among other areas for developing training content. Ultimately, a configuration such as this sets the trajectory for the continuation of an interdisciplinary dialogue and a common research agenda among marine and sustainability scholars and policy-makers, through the mapping of synergetic topic areas and foci that only a network of this scale can establish.

### 1.4.2. In Relation to Existing Efforts at European and/or International Level

The establishment of a transdisciplinary network on ocean and coastal governance is the first of its kind at the European level. A similar scientific network that complements the vision and work of the

COST Action is the Earth System Governance's (ESG) Taskforce on Ocean Governance. As a decade-long initiative starting from 2009, conceptually it remains comparable to the orientation of the OceanGov Network with regard to its empirical focus on the interconnectedness between waters, oceans, coastlines and atmospheric systems. While the Taskforce combines a distinctively long-term historic perspective of ocean governance that predates the UNCLOS, the uniqueness of the Action lies in its strategically regional European focus through which the sustainability challenges outlined previously will be studied. Moreover, the Action complements the work of the ESG Taskforce through its institutional capacity development and a dedicated undertaking to address the science-policy-implementation divide through dialogues and participatory events over the coming years.

Moreover, the Action advances and feeds in multi-scalar and cross-sectoral approaches and conceptual tools while offering a regional perspective to the efforts of international institutions, regional consortiums, business coalitions and research initiatives such the: International Seabed Authority, Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), the African Centre for Capacity-Building in Ocean Governance (AfriCOG), International Business Alliance for Corporate Ocean Responsibility/the World Ocean Council among others. Moreover, apart from the value derived from networking, the Action's tailored module development feeds into existing capacity development and training initiatives on land-sea based challenges that are starting to gain increased attention, for example the collaborative UNEP-Open University of the Netherlands' Massive Open Online Course on the governance of marine litter. It is through the development and diffusion of these teaching modules, that the multi-scalar and cross-sectoral ocean governance debate for sustainability of the OceanGov Network will live on -shaping the minds of future decision-makers and scholars- well after the Action has ended. .

## 2.1. Expected Impact

### 2.1.1. Short-term and Long-term Scientific, Technological, and/or Socioeconomic Impacts

The dissemination and uptake of research findings and other deliverables/outcomes from the networking initiatives are integral to the success of the Action. Key research and policy-oriented outputs are communicated directly to relevant stakeholders and made available on the OceanGov Network website. To ensure this, a collaboratively appointed Stakeholder Relations Coordinator (and member of the Management Committee) will, based on the input of the Working Groups, develop and oversee implementation of a common outreach and dissemination plan.

#### SHORT-TERM IMPACT

##### (a) Science and Technology

- Advancement of multi-scalar scientific approaches to ocean and coastal governance with regard to social, economic and ecological sustainability;
- Deriving integrative concepts and tools for policy analysis;
- The creation of inter- and transdisciplinary research-policy clusters to nurture local and regional research acumen within participants.

##### (b) Socio-economic Impact

- Advancement of an inter- and transdisciplinary knowledge base and evidence-led approaches to the implementation of regional governance frameworks;
- Developing capacities on inclusive trans multi-scalar governance practices for Early Career Investigators and policymakers;
- Strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation between state and non-state actors with regard to strategies that revitalise the Blue Economy.

## LONG-TERM IMPACT

### (a) Science and Technology

- Establishing an internationally recognised network for research, publishing and policy advice on ocean and coastal governance;
- Sustaining a generation of Early Career Investigators and young policy-makers familiar with approaches to integrated and multi-scalar ocean and coastal governance.

### (b) Socio-economic impact

- Strengthening a repository of robust policies and transformative pathways that promote cross border and multi-scalar cooperation on sustainability and integrated ocean and coastal governance themes.

## 2.2. Measures to Maximise Impact

### 2.2.1. Plan for Involving the Most Relevant Stakeholders

The relevant stakeholders have been categorised into 5 key groups, with examples that are provided:

**Group 1: Regional, national and local authorities** with a European regional focus, particularly EU policymakers and EU science bodies including the European Commissions Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries;

**Group 2: Key transnational scientific organisations, coalitions and international research platforms**, for example the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the International Council for Science (ICSU), and the Earth Systems Governance (ESG) network;

**Group 3: International Organisations** including secretariats of Conventions such as Regional Seas Conventions, together with related UN bodies;

**Group 4: Civil society organisations including business and professional groups** both regional and transcontinental, for example the World Ocean Council and Ocean Energy Europe;

**Group 5: International science media** networks with regional and international reach.

The OceanGov Network kick-off meeting maps a broad range of relevant institutional stakeholders in ways that crosscut the thematic areas of all 6 WGs. The local, national, regional and international landscape of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders are charted in an inventory made available to the Action participants, in order to put together a concerted Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement Strategy (see 2.2.2). Stakeholders interested in the activities of the OceanGov Network are regularly updated through its quarterly digital newsletter, website and policy briefs. Stakeholders may also choose to attend the two international Action Conferences, the mid-term Symposium, working-level Transdisciplinary Workshops and the Public Exhibition and Policy Dialogue in Brussels.

### 2.2.2. Dissemination and/or Exploitation Plan

The OceanGov Network's public Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement Strategy goes beyond the Action's immediate scientific and networking activities and core deliverables. These include:

- a) Cross-sector and multi-stakeholder dialogue through **inter- and transdisciplinary workshops**;
- b) **EU Policy Briefs**: the content synthesises research outcomes with the aim of repurposing the material for concrete actionable policy outcomes that have the potential to also contribute to the European Commission's informational channels such as CORDIS News and CORDIS Wire;

- c) **Quarterly OceanGov Newsletters (in digital format)** that are specifically targeted at identified policy nodes and clusters both regionally as well as internationally;
- d) **The OceanGov Website** that acts as the main public relations organ (integrating google & google scholar friendly programming) for all OceanGov events, outreach activities, policy briefs, publications and ‘science-meets-policy’ interviews as ‘soundbites’ and photo material from the public photo exhibition as ‘visual bites’;
- e) **Public Representation** made by Action participants within broader conferences and policy forums when possible, such as the World Ocean Council’s Sustainable Ocean Summit:

## 2.3. Potential for Innovation versus Risk Level

### 2.3.1. Potential for Scientific, Technological and/or Socioeconomic Innovation Break-throughs

The OceanGov Network’s innovation outcomes primarily comprise scientific findings and policy insights. Therefore, no empirical experimental work is foreseen. The risks however, that are associated with network innovation, largely comprise relational aspects between the Action participants. . The countervailing measures built into the network structure are two-fold. First, the COST Action is guided by clear coordinated leaders through the Management Committee (MC), the Action Chair and Vice-Chair. Second, the OceanGov initiative itself is a grown network and its interaction and output derives from participants bringing their own ownership into the Action. Given the decentralised and inclusive mode of production within and between WGs, the network strives to reduce the risks of two organisational risks: hierarchies on the one hand, leading to shortcomings such as participant disengagement, and the lack of groundedness and diffuse responsibility on the other.

## 3.1. Description of the Work Plan

### 3.1.1. Description of Working Groups

WORKING GROUPS	DELIVERABLES	MILESTONES
O: Network Coordination		
Scientific network coordination, including full implementation oversight.	D1. Kick-off International Ocean Governance Conference (IC1) D2. 8 Management Committee Meetings (alternating in person / by teleconferencing) D3. 16 quarterly newsletters D4. EU Policy Brief D5. Contribution to Mid-term Symposium (MS) D6. 2 Joint peer-reviewed publications D7. Public photo exhibition & Contribution to ‘Science-meets-Policy’ Conference in Brussels (IC2)	M1. Inter- & transdisciplinary team formation (incl. expert database development) & Management Committee Organisation M2. Overseeing WG implementation & scientific debate M3. Ongoing event organisation (administration) M4. Organisation of a Gender- & Parenthood-aware Early Career Mentoring Programme M5. Dissemination & Publication strategy development M6. Network public relations & Contact point (incl.

		OceanGov-Website & Layout & Publishing of 7 EU Policy Briefs) M7. EU Policy Dialogue & Stakeholder Engagement
WG 1: Land-Sea Interactions		
<p>Exploration of inter-dependencies of land and sea as a precondition for socially, economically and ecologically sustainable pathways.</p> <p>Scale level: Local &amp; National</p>	<p>D1. Contribution to kick-off Ocean Governance Conference (IC1)</p> <p>D2. Transdisciplinary workshop with policymakers (with <b>WG3</b>) – on Evolutionary Governance</p> <p>D3. Panel at Mid-term Symposium (MS)</p> <p>D4. EU Policy Brief</p> <p>D5. Training School for Early Career Investigators (with <b>WG6</b>)</p> <p>D6. 2 Joint peer-reviewed publications</p> <p>D7. Contribution to public photo exhibition in Brussels</p> <p>D8. Contribution to ‘Science-meets-Policy’ Conference in Brussels (IC2)</p>	<p>M1. WG 1 Team formation &amp; agenda-setting</p> <p>M2. Continuous scientific Exchange &amp; Synergy Creation (4yrs.)</p> <p>M3. Early Career Mentoring</p> <p>M4. Agenda-setting for international Ocean Governance Conference (IC1)</p> <p>M5. Training module development for Training School</p> <p>M6. 2 Inter-network Staff Exchanges</p> <p>M7. Panel organisation for mid-term Symposium (MS)</p> <p>M8. Contribution to ongoing EU Policy Dialogue &amp; Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>M9. WG-presentation for final ‘Science-meets-Policy’ conference (IC2)</p>
WG 2: Area-based Management		
<p>Analysis of governance architecture, and exploration of options for better integration and cross-sectoral harmonisation; systematic analysis of emerging patterns of ocean uses with impacts.</p> <p>Scale level: Regional &amp; Global</p>	<p>D1. Contribution to kick-off Ocean Governance Conference (IC1)</p> <p>D2. Transdisciplinary workshop with policymakers (with <b>WG4</b>)</p> <p>D3. Panel at mid-term Symposium (MS)</p> <p>D4. EU Policy Brief</p> <p>D5. Training School for Early Career Investigators (with <b>WG5</b>)</p> <p>D6. 2 Joint peer-reviewed publications</p> <p>D7. Contribution to public photo exhibition in Brussels</p> <p>D8. Organisation of ‘Science-meets-Policy’ Conference in Brussels (IC2)</p>	<p>M1. WG 2 team formation &amp; agenda-setting</p> <p>M2. Continuous scientific Exchange &amp; Synergy Creation (4yrs.)</p> <p>M3. Early Career Mentoring</p> <p>M4. Agenda-setting for WG2 activity during kick-off conference (IC1)</p> <p>M5. Training module development for Training School</p> <p>M6. 2 Inter-network Staff Exchanges</p> <p>M7. Panel organisation for mid-term Symposium (MS)</p> <p>M8. Contribution to ongoing EU Policy Dialogue &amp; Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>M9. Organisation of final ‘Science meets Policy’ conference (IC2)</p>

WG 3: Seabed Resource Management		
<p>Analysis of regulatory institutions in seabed resource management.; charting sustainable pathways for seabed resource use; Documentation of best practices of seabed mining and bio-prospecting regulations.</p> <p>Scale level: National &amp; Global</p>	<p>D1. Contribution to kick-off Ocean Governance Conference (IC1)            D2. Transdisciplinary workshop with policymakers (with <b>WG1</b>)            D3. Panel at mid-term Symposium (MS)            D4. EU Policy Brief            D5. Training School for Early Career Investigators (with <b>WG4</b>)            D6. 2 Joint peer-reviewed publications            D7. Contribution to public photo exhibition in Brussels            D8. Contribution to 'Science-meets-Policy' Conference in Brussels (IC2)</p>	<p>M1. WG3 team formation &amp; agenda-setting            M2. Continuous scientific Exchange &amp; Synergy Creation (4yrs.)            M3. Early Career Mentoring            M4. Agenda-setting for WG3 activity during kick-off conference (IC1)            M5. Training module development for Training School            M6. 2 Inter-network Staff Exchanges            M7. Panel organisation for mid-term Symposium (MS)            M8. Contribution to ongoing EU Policy Dialogue &amp; Stakeholder Engagement            M9. WG-presentation during final 'Science meets Policy' conference (IC2)</p>
WG 4: Nutrition Security and Food Systems		
<p>Evaluation of current and predicted food needs from marine systems; Estimation of institutional obstacles to increasing food security and safety, and multi-scalar opportunities for improving availability, quality and affordability of safe seafood.</p> <p>Scale level: National &amp; Regional</p>	<p>D1. Contribution to kick-off Ocean Governance Conference (IC1)            D2. Transdisciplinary workshop with policymakers (with <b>WG2</b>) – on Interactive Governance            D3. Organisation of mid-term Symposium (MS) – in conjunction with MARE conference            D4. EU Policy Brief            D5. Training School for Early Career Investigators (with <b>WG3</b>)            D6. 2 Joint peer-reviewed publications            D7. Contribution to public photo exhibition in Brussels            D8. Contribution to 'Science-meets-Policy' Conference in Brussels (IC2)</p>	<p>M1. WG4 Team formation &amp; agenda-setting            M2. Continuous scientific Exchange &amp; Synergy Creation (4yrs.)            M3. Early Career Mentoring            M4. Agenda-setting for WG4 activity during kick-off conference (IC1)            M5. Training module development for Training School            M6. 2 Inter-network Staff Exchanges            M7. Organisation of mid-term Symposium (MS)            M8. Contribution to ongoing EU Policy Dialogue &amp; Stakeholder Engagement            M9. WG-presentation during final 'Science-meets-Policy' conference (IC2)</p>
WG 5: Ocean Climate and Acidification		
<p>Longue duree impact assessment of ocean</p>	<p>D1. Contribution to kick-off Ocean Governance Conference (IC1)</p>	<p>M1. WG5 team formation &amp; agenda-setting</p>



<p>climate and acidification through a comparative regional lens; Identifying range of governance pathways with regard to both mitigation and adaptation to ocean climate variability.</p> <p>Scale level: Regional &amp; Global</p>	<p>D2. Transdisciplinary workshop with policymakers (with <b>WG6</b>)</p> <p>D3. Panel at mid-term Symposium (MS)</p> <p>D4. EU Policy Brief</p> <p>D5. Training School for Early Career Investigators (with <b>WG2</b>)</p> <p>D6. 2 Joint peer-reviewed publications</p> <p>D7. Contribution to public photo exhibition in Brussels</p> <p>D8. Contribution to 'Science-meets-Policy' Conference in Brussels (IC2)</p>	<p>M2. Continuous scientific Exchange &amp; Synergy Creation (4yrs.)</p> <p>M3. Early Career Mentoring</p> <p>M4. Agenda-setting for WG5 activity during kick-off conference (IC1)</p> <p>M5. Training module development for Training School</p> <p>M6. 1 Inter-network Staff Exchange</p> <p>M7. Panel organisation for mid-term Symposium</p> <p>M8. Contribution to ongoing EU Policy Dialogue &amp; Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>M9. WG-presentation during final 'Science-meets-Policy' conference (IC2)</p>
<p><b>WG 6: Fisheries Governance</b></p>		
<p>Exploration of knowledge gaps in European fisheries governance and EU Common Fisheries Policy; Advancement of conceptual approaches to the study of access rights systems, fisheries' organisational structures, together with value chain and marketing challenges</p> <p>Scale level: Local &amp; National</p>	<p>D1. Contribution to kick-off Ocean Governance Conference (IC1)</p> <p>D2. Transdisciplinary workshop with policymakers (with <b>WG5</b>)</p> <p>D3. Panel at mid-term Symposium (MS)</p> <p>D4. EU Policy Brief</p> <p>D5. Training School for Early Career Investigators (with <b>WG1</b>)</p> <p>D6. 2 joint peer-reviewed publications</p> <p>D7. Contribution to public photo exhibition in Brussels</p> <p>D8. Contribution to 'Science-meets-Policy' Conference in Brussels (IC2)</p>	<p>M1. WG6 team formation &amp; agenda-setting</p> <p>M2. Continuous scientific Exchange &amp; Synergy Creation (4yrs.)</p> <p>M3. Early Career Mentoring</p> <p>M4. Agenda-setting for WG6 activity during kick-off conference (IC1)</p> <p>M5. Training module development for Training School</p> <p>M6. 2 Inter-network Staff Exchanges</p> <p>M7. Panel organisation for mid-term Symposium (MS)</p> <p>M8. Contribution to ongoing EU Policy Dialogue &amp; Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>M9. WG-presentation during final 'Science-meets-Policy' conference (IC2)</p>

### 3.1.2. GANTT Diagram

	2016				2017				2018				2019			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Network Coordination	MC	PP	MC		MC	PB	MC		MC	MC	MC	PP	MC	MC		
	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL
	IC1						MS								EXB	IC2
WG 1: Land-Sea Interactions						PP				PB					PP	
	IC1		TW				MS				TS					IC2
															EXB	
WG 2: Area-based Management					PP					PB		PP				
	IC1					TS	MS				TW					IC2
															EXB	
WG 3: Seabed Resource Management										PB	PP	PP				
	IC1		TW				MS						TS			IC2
															EXB	
WG 4: Nutrition Security and Food Systems					PP		PB					PP				
	IC1						MS				TW		TS			IC2
															EXB	
WG 5: Ocean Climate and Acidification						PP					PB		PP			
	IC1			TW		TS	MS									IC2
															EXB	
WG 6: Fisheries Governance						PP				PB			PP			
	IC1			TW			MS				TS					IC2
															EXB	

LEGEND:	Milestones	Deliverables
	Network building, Team formation (expert database) & Early Career Mentoring	IC1 International Ocean Governance Conference
	Public Relations (Website, regular Newsfeeds)	MC Management Committee Meeting (in person/by teleconferencing)
	Scientific Exchange, Synergy Creation, Concept & Governance Framework Development	TS Ocean Governance Training School & Module Development
	Event Organisation	MS Mid-term Symposium
	EU Policy Dialogue & Stakeholder Engagement	TW Transdisciplinary Workshop
	Inter-network staff exchange	PB EU Policy Brief
	Ocean Governance Dissemination & Publication Strategy (long-term & institutionalized)	PP Joint Peer-reviewed Publication
		NL Network Newsletter
		EXB Public photo exhibition & EU dialogue
		IC2 International 'Science meets Policy' Conference

### 3.1.3. Risk and Contingency Plans

In the event of unforeseen changes in WG leadership, Deputy WG Leaders take on the role and additional Deputy WG Leaders are collaboratively appointed. Network participants who are in charge of organising specific events, compiling specific publications or fulfilling any other pre-defined deliverables have to name at least two appointed back-up members in the event of being unable to fulfil the required tasks. Any difficulties or requirements to postpone events, publications and other deliverables have to be communicated 3 months prior to the deadline to the respective

WG Leaders, who in turn discuss the raised points with the Action Chairs and the overall Management Committee members. Jointly, solutions, alternative ways forward and responsible people are identified and implementation assured. Finally, in order to reduce the error margin of written output, document drafts are shared across WGs. Inter-WG peer-review efforts and consequent discussions are actively promoted at each significant stage of content development and further encouraged during the jointly organised Transdisciplinary Workshops, Training Schools and the Mid-term Symposium.

### 3.2. Management Structures and Procedures

The OceanGov Network's key Action objective entails the formation of a science and praxis-oriented community, jointly advancing the emerging field of integrated ocean and coastal governance. Overall coordination of the Action and its implementation will be the responsibility of the Management Committee, comprising 6 Principal WG Leaders and 6 Deputy WG Leaders, 1 Chair and 1 Vice Chair. All Management Committee members are collaboratively appointed for four years, with attention paid to maintaining the gender and age balance. Furthermore, roles within the Management Committee may overlap to support internal thematic coherence and coordinated action. Apart from coordinating the Action and assuring deliverable fulfilment through regular teleconference and in-person meetings (attached to Action events), the Management Committee will concertededly work at pulling in diverse pools of expertise and facilitate exchange between scientists, policymakers and civil society representatives across COST Countries and Near Neighbour Countries (NNCs). One of the core standard operating procedures entails a Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement Strategy, developed within the first three months of the Action, with the appointment of a Stakeholder Relations Coordinator (SRC) to drive knowledge dissemination forward. To further strengthen partnership and create unique synergies, a rolling database of external stakeholders and affiliated experts continue to be shared across the OceanGov Network.

### 3.3. Network as a Whole

The COST Action entails 58 proposers, across 19 COST Countries, one Central/Federal Government partner, one EU Agency, one NNC, and four COST International Partner Country (IPC) to cover the global governance scale level. Over 87.1% of the proposers comprise Higher Educations and Associated Organisations - mostly publicly owned - with a representation of almost 8% from the non-profit/third sector, and 2.7% from Governmental Organisations. The core expertise of the Action comprises of 17.2% participation from Political Science, 13.8% from Biological Sciences, together with 13.8% from Social and Economic Geography, 10.3% from Law, and a residual 36.2% from interdisciplinary fields. 43.1% of the Action comprises female scientists and policymakers, of whom one is the Main Proposer. 20 of the 58 proposers are Early Career Investigators. Once the Action commences, three network-related aspects will be prioritised. First, the Action will increase its female participation rate by an additional 10%. Gender-sensitive practices will focus on flexible parenthood-based participation while assuring fair distribution of co-authorships, third-party funds, and other networking rewards with those momentarily on parental leave. Second, to increase the present COST Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs- currently at 31.6%), institutions particularly from the Balkans, Baltic States and the Euro-Mediterranean Research Area continue to be identified as key nodes for participation. Third, to increase the participation of Early Career Investigators, the three Training Schools serve as strategic entry-points in recruiting younger talent into the WGs, assuring that the Action's content will live on after funding has ceased. Additional steps for gender-balanced early career talent include a three-pillared mentoring programme (mentor, peer, group – with particular emphasis on parenthood-work balances) and the engagement of Early Career Investigators through platforms such as Earth System Governance, FutureEarth, and others.