



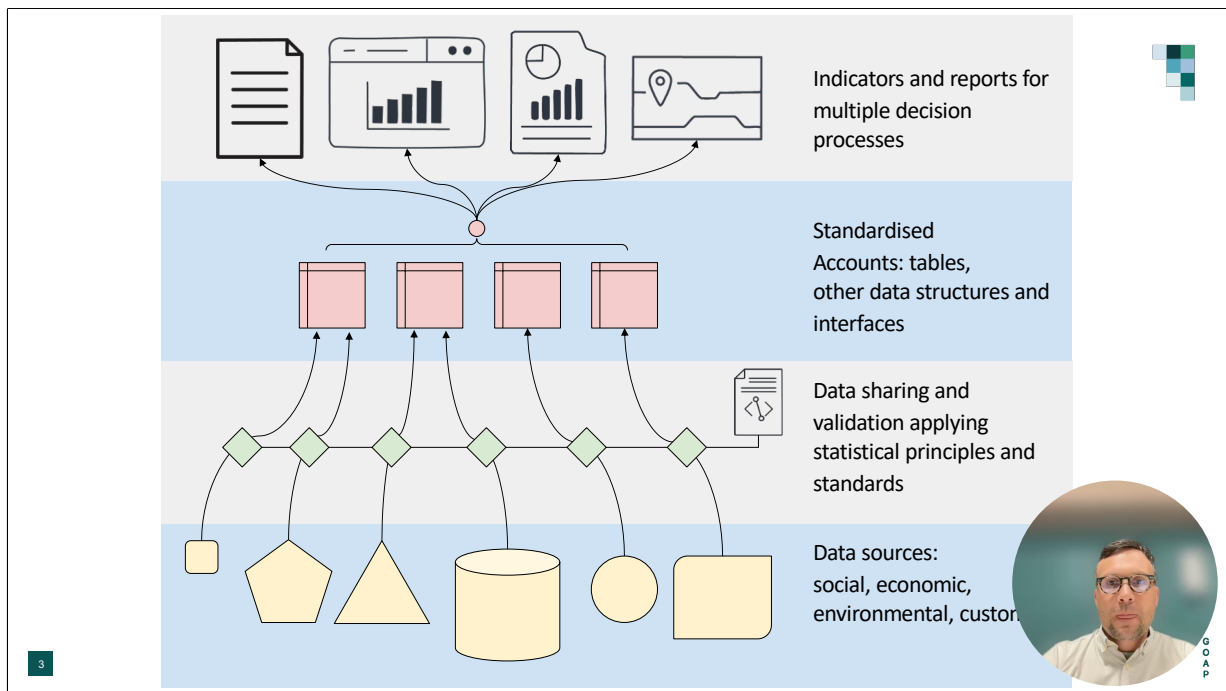
Distinguished guests, colleagues, and friends,

It is my privilege to speak to you today about the transformative potential of ocean accounts—a powerful framework that is reshaping how we understand, value, and manage our ocean resources – and to acknowledge your leadership in this space, including that of IOC-INDIO.



The ocean covers 70% of our planet and underpins the livelihoods of billions. It provides food security, climate stability, and economic opportunity across the globe. Yet the data need to manage it sustainably is often fragmented, incomplete, or missing altogether. Important values—particularly social and cultural dimensions—frequently remain invisible in decision-making.

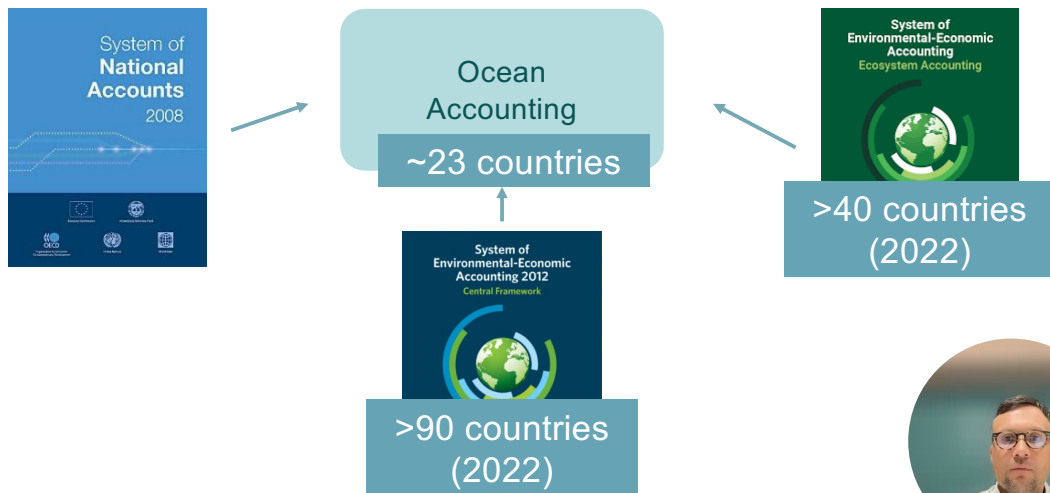
How can we effectively govern what we cannot measure? How do we ensure that the full value of marine ecosystems is recognized in our policies and development plans?



This is where ocean accounts come in.

Ocean accounts are structured datasets that integrate environmental, social, and economic information about marine and coastal systems. They provide a coherent picture of how ocean ecosystems are changing, how resources are being used, and how these contribute to livelihoods, economies, and human well-being.

What are Ocean Accounts?



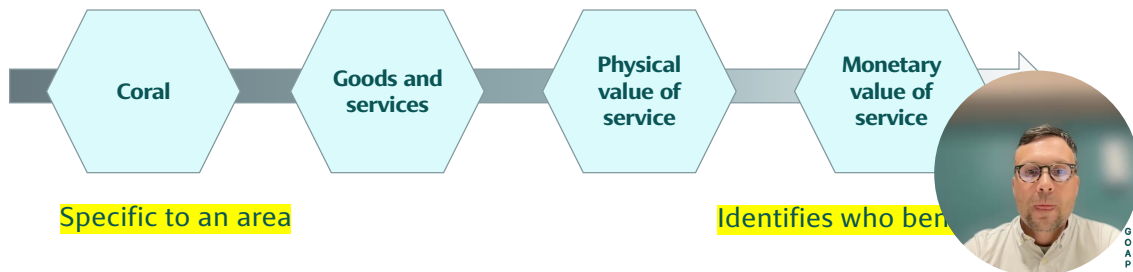
While the organisation of data into Ocean Accounts is relatively novel, their underpinnings are not. In fact ocean accounts work in harmony with the key statistical data frameworks, agreed at the UN, that our country governments increasingly use to track and monitor change. These include the System of National Accounts, the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting Central Framework, and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting Ecosystem Accounting guidance.

Natural Capital Accounting generally

Many studies "skip" straight to \$\$\$

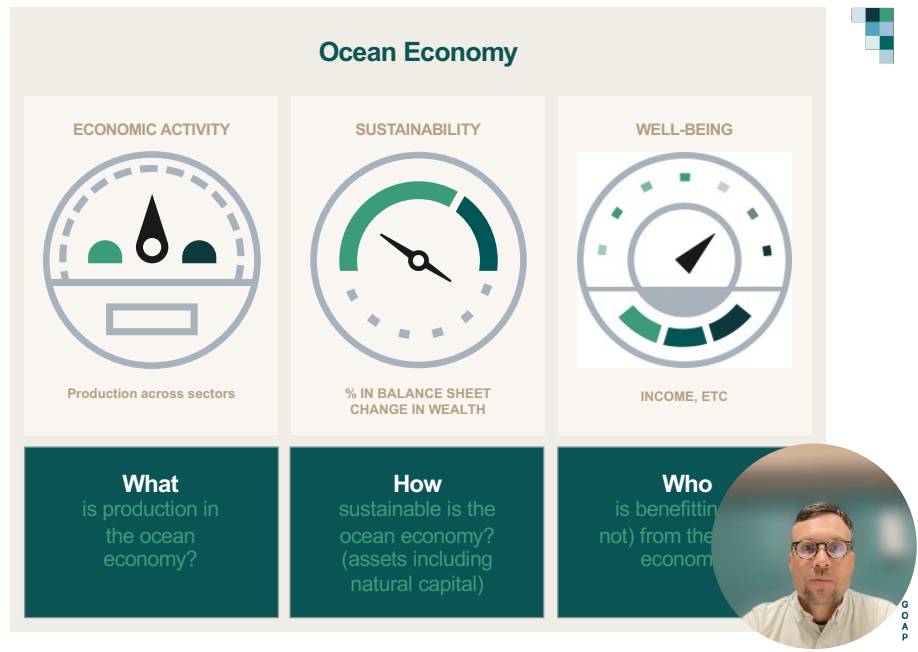


Ocean Accounts



Ocean Accounts are distinct from Natural Capital Accounting approaches because they provide a much more complete picture of the ways ocean ecosystems and resources are being used, who benefits and is dependent on ecosystem service provision, how our economic activity impacts our environments, and how this relationship is changes across spatial and temporal dimensions.

What are
ocean
accounts?



By bringing together data on ecosystems, industries, communities, and governance, ocean accounts help to assess trade-offs, track progress through time, and make more informed decisions.

They provide a foundation for moving beyond GDP—ensuring the full value of the ocean is recognized in planning and sustainable development.



Global Ocean Accounts Partnership



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- **Technical support and guidance**
- **Collaboration** with countries and GOAP members in developing **pilots, knowledge products**, and national systems
- Connecting with experts for **workshops, capacity building**, and generating new knowledge in ocean accounting
- **Global platform** to share experiences, best practices, and challenges in ocean accounting

Members























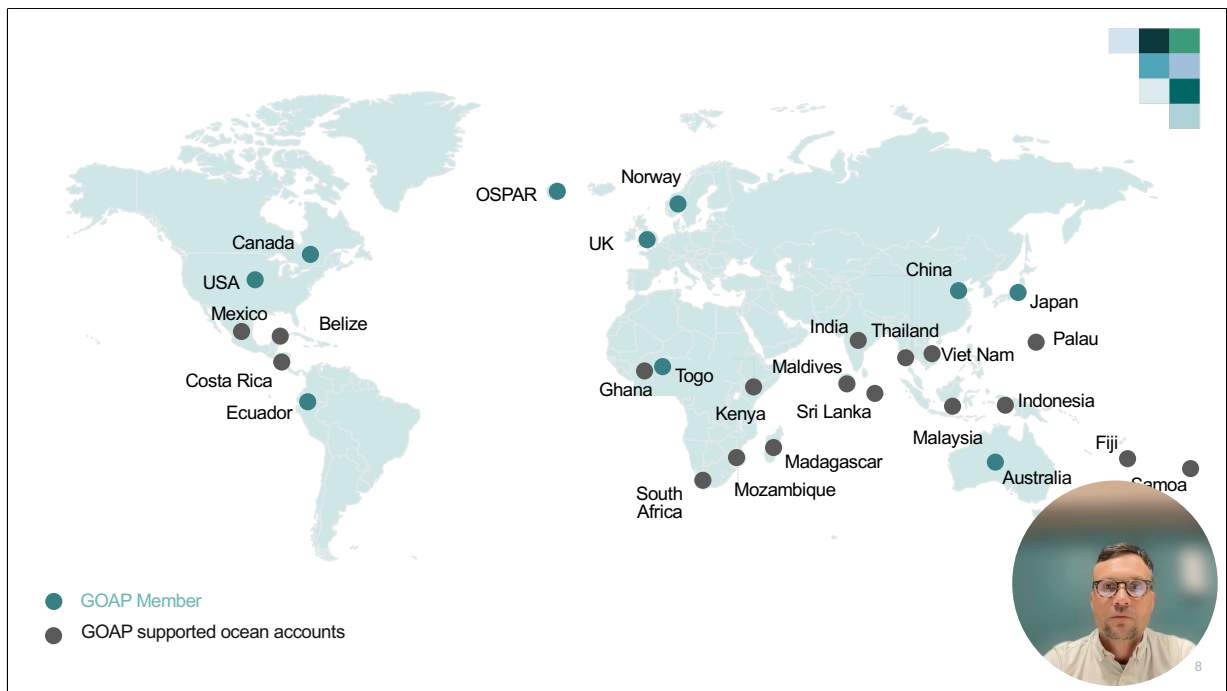




GOAP

The Global Ocean Accounts Partnership is a multi-institutional, inter-governmental partnership. It brings together 44 members from 21 countries spanning government agencies, research institutions, and international organizations.

The Partnership supports countries through technical guidance, training, piloting, and a network of practitioners who share experiences and innovations across regions.

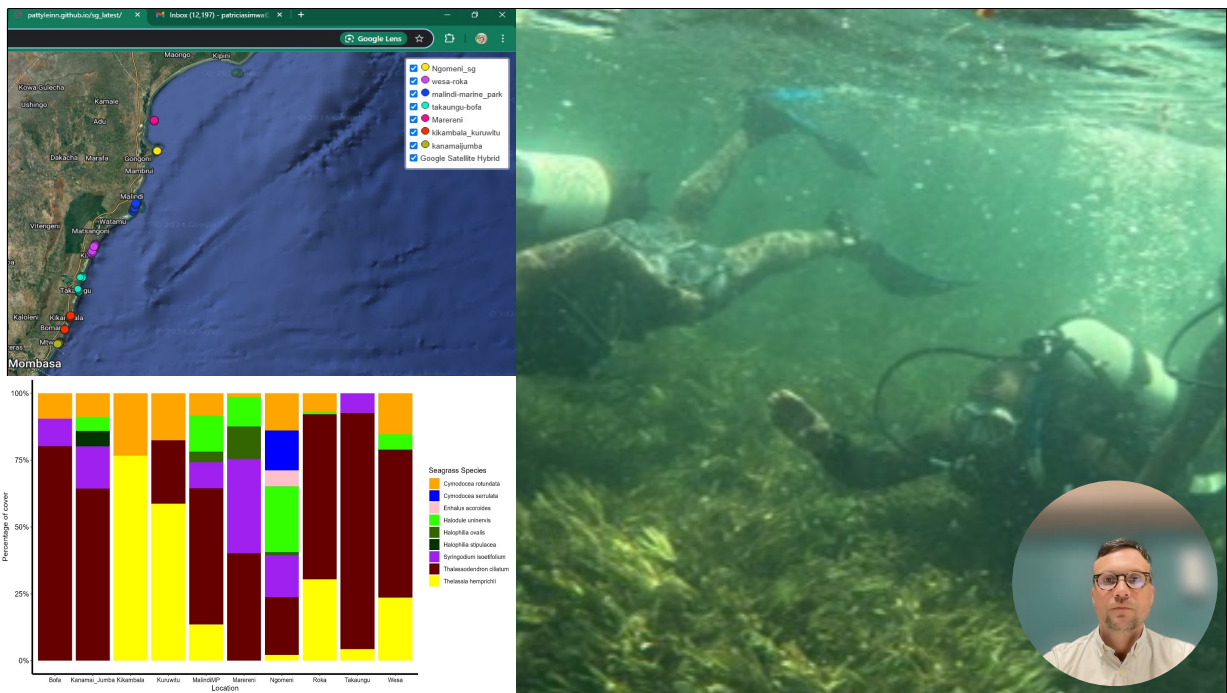


The Indian Ocean rim has emerged as a region of profound innovation in ocean accounting, particularly in developing approaches that centre on people, equity, and social inclusion. I'd like to highlight the work of a few countries in the region where the GOAP is actively supporting work.



In Mozambique, Inhambane Bay work shows how ocean accounts support sustainable development through community led environmental-social mapping. The initiative explicitly links local ecosystems with community ocean dependence data across six coastal settlements. This approach connects ecosystem changes with local marine resource reliance, creating a more complete picture for coastal management.

The organisation of data in this way illuminates values typically overlooked in formal statistics.



The Kenyan project, operating in nearby Kilifi County, is led by Pwani University with government support. Partners have successfully mapped blue carbon ecosystems including seagrass meadows and mangrove forests, and are now studying ecosystem services provision. The work intends to provide scientific evidence to integrate blue carbon ecosystems into Kenya's Marine Spatial Planning and climate policy initiatives.



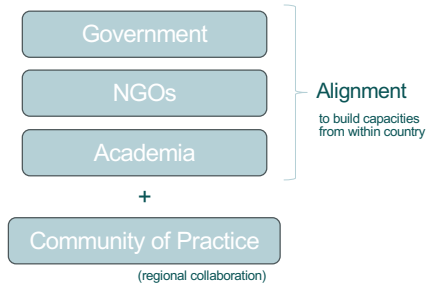
Maldives Pilot Ocean Account

Release date: 2023, ongoing



Laamu Atoll

"enhancing reef protection, resilience and ecosystem recovery by reducing development impacts"



- **Ecosystems:** Coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass
- **Human Activities:** Tourism, fisheries, agriculture, other.
- **Main challenges:** Climate change, coral bleaching, nutrient enrichment and pollution, coastal development

End goals:

- Test the framework
- Provide lessons
- Provide a template to **scale to other areas**



GOAP

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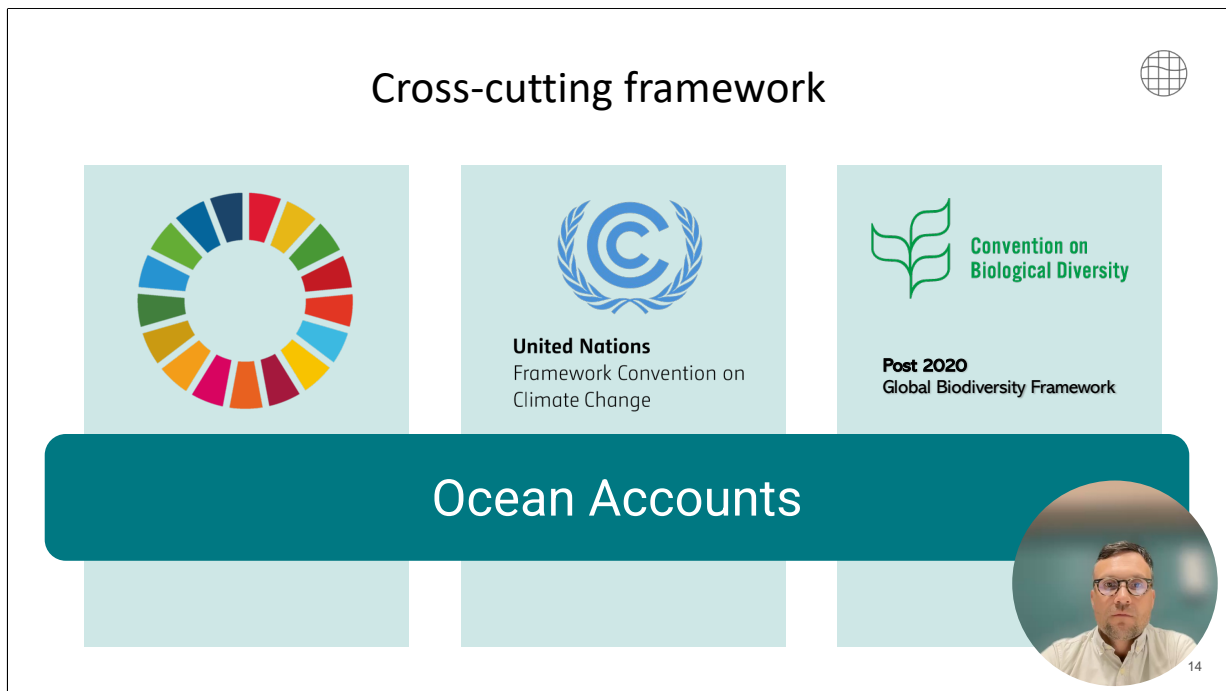
The Maldives has made significant progress implementing ocean accounts with GOAP Secretariat support, with the Minister designating it a national priority and developing a strategic roadmap to 2030. Pilot projects in Laamu and Fuvahmulah (foo-vah-mool-ah) atolls are establishing frameworks to value marine resources, which strengthen applications for international financing while balancing conservation with economic development.



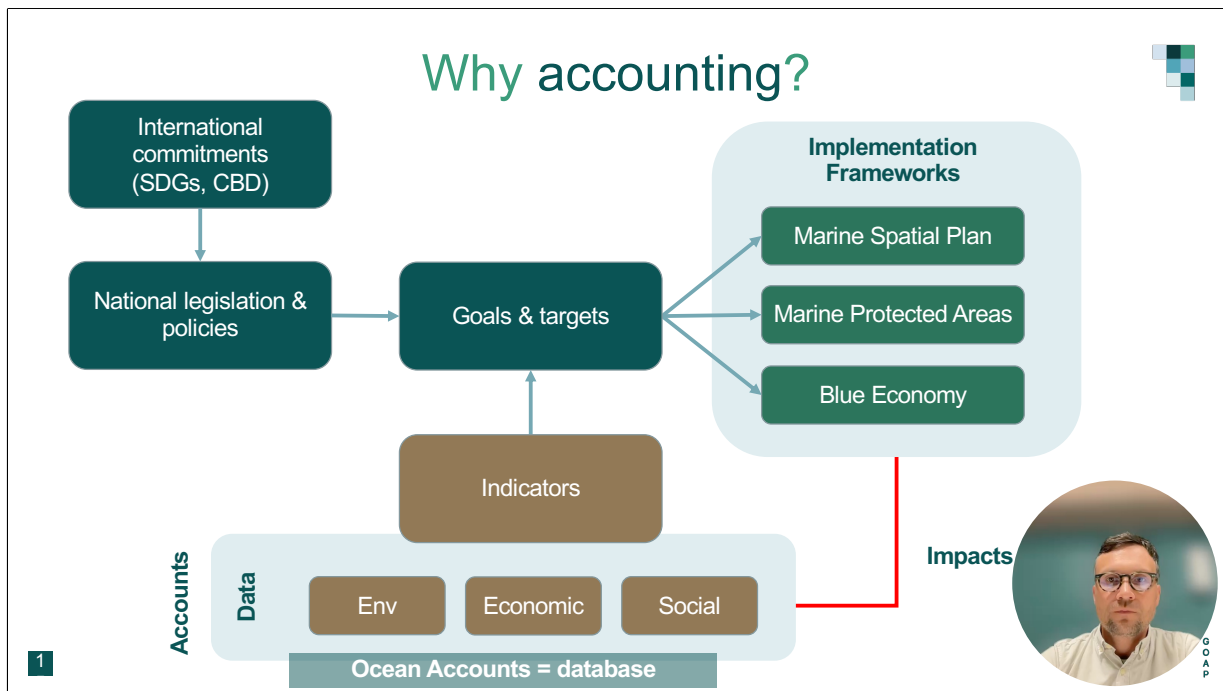
The inclusion of ocean accounts in the Nairobi Convention's Regional Ocean Governance Strategy supports ocean management across jurisdictions. The approach provides a common language for evidence-based decision making across the region, while facilitating international reporting through standardized metrics for ocean health, economic output, and social benefits from ocean resources.



The work happening here in your region reflects and contributes to a global movement to better account for ocean values. From Indonesia's national ocean accounting dashboard covering 9.9 million hectares of marine ecosystems, to Fiji's mangrove accounts revealing annual ecosystem benefits worth USD 20-30 million, to Costa Rica's leadership on the pledge for advancing ocean accounts toward the UN Ocean Conference (which is endorsed by two African nations). Countries globally are applying these approaches to their unique contexts and priorities.



Ocean accounts are increasingly relevant to global frameworks and commitments. They support reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals, contribute to climate action under the Paris Agreement, inform biodiversity conservation through the Global Biodiversity Framework, and strengthen resilience strategies aligned with the Sendai Framework, among other things.



Such International commitments influence national legislation and policies, which **are subsequently translated into specific country goals and objectives.**

There are various practical approaches or **implementation frameworks** that can be used to reach these goals and objectives, such as:

- **Marine Spatial Planning**
- **Marine Protected Areas**
- **Blue Economy frameworks**

To assess the impact of implemented policies and understand the effects of these measures on the environment, the economy and society, we need **data, organised and standardised as reliable** indicators, to reveal change and tracks progress.

Ocean accounts, therefore, play a crucial role and can be very helpful in building this national information base, and tracking progress against national priorities and international commitments.

Compromisos internacionales (como los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible - ODS, y el Convenio sobre la Diversidad Biológica - CDB) **influyen** en la **legislación y políticas nacionales**. Estos compromisos son acuerdos globales que los países adoptan y luego implementan a nivel nacional a través de leyes y políticas.

La **legislación y las políticas nacionales** **se traducen** en **metas y objetivos** específicos que los países quieren alcanzar.

Existen **diferentes enfoques prácticos o marcos de implementación** que se pueden utilizar **para alcanzar las metas y objetivos** como : Planificación Espacial Marina (Marine Spatial Plan), Áreas Marinas Protegidas (Marine Protected Areas), y Economía Azul (Blue Economy).

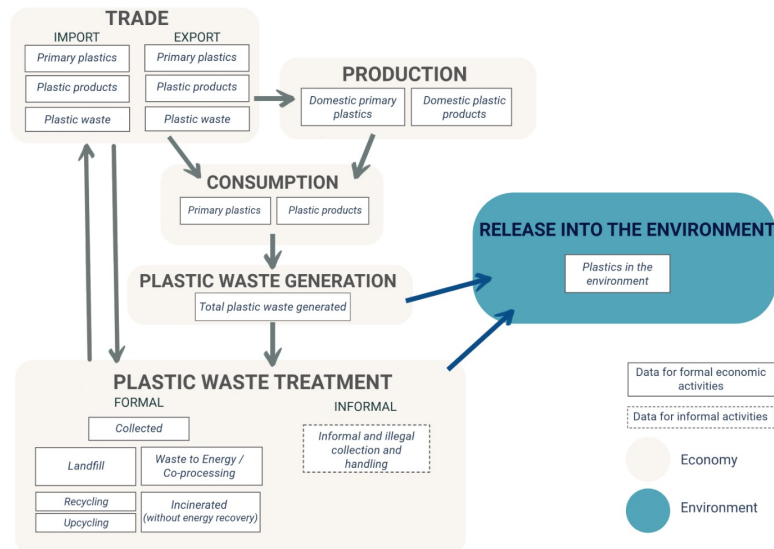
Para poder **evaluar los impactos de las políticas implementadas** y ver el impacto que estas medidas tienen necesitamos datos que nos informen del cambio o avance al implementar dichas medidas.

Igualmente el progreso o avances en los objetivos marcados se miden mediante indicadores

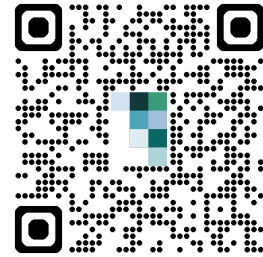
. Estos indicadores se generaran basados en los datos y la información env-eco-soc que dispongamos.

. Por ello las cuentas juegan un papel tan importante y pueden ser de gran ayuda para generar esa base de información nacional que ahora mismo se centra solo en aspectos económicos y de producción

Data-driven solutions: the Plastics Data Checklist



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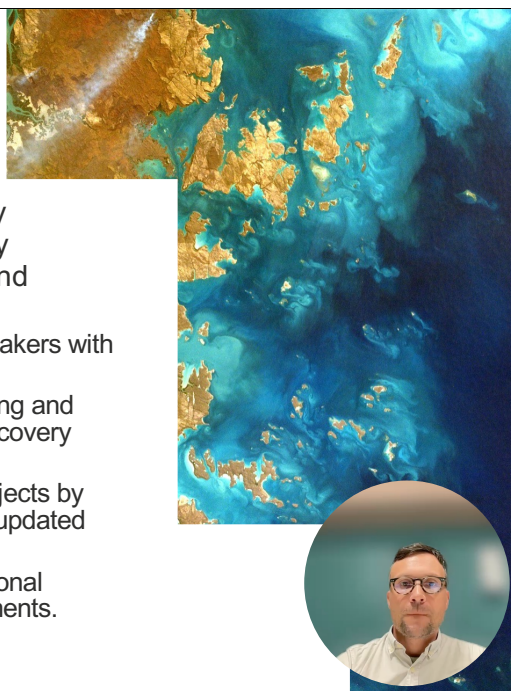


GOAP

One specific ocean accounts tool that may be of particular interest to this region is The Plastics Data Checklist, developed at the GOAP Secretariat to help countries assess their national plastics data availability across the full lifecycle. With the global plastic treaty negotiations nearing completion, this three-step framework enables countries to evaluate data readiness, identify gaps, and develop evidence-based strategies to address plastic pollution. By implementing this checklist, governments can develop targeted national strategies, monitor progress against targets, assess treaty readiness, and contribute to global efforts to combat plastic pollution through transparent, data-driven approaches.

Why do we need them?

- Ocean accounts take ocean data that is highly fragmented, unstandardised, and only partially represented in national accounting systems and packages it so that we can:
 - Inform policy development by providing decision-makers with information they can easily understand.
 - Supply data to underpin the development, monitoring and evaluation of ocean governance tools and Blue Recovery Plans.
 - Activate private sector financing in blue carbon projects by providing investors with comparable and regularly updated project data.
 - Derive comparable headline indicators for international reporting on the SDGs and other relevant commitments.



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A focus on practical application means that ocean accounts are not just technical exercises, but tools for real-world impact. As we face increasing pressures on our ocean—from climate change to pollution to competing uses—the need for integrated, evidence-based approaches has never been greater. Ocean accounts offer a pathway to see the ocean more clearly, to value it more comprehensively, and to manage it more sustainably.

The practice of ocean accounting continues to evolve. Through your leadership and that of countries across the world, through regional communities of practice, and through global collaboration, we are collectively building the knowledge and capabilities need to transform how we understand and govern our ocean.

If you have not already, I invite you to explore how ocean accounts might support your own work and priorities—whether in policy, planning, conservation, or sustainable development. Together, we can build a future where the full value of the ocean is recognized and reflected in the decisions that shape our world.

A focus on practical application means that ocean accounts are not just technical exercises, but tools for real-world impact:

- They bring visibility to social and cultural values often missed in conventional economic metrics.
- They reveal connections between ecosystem health and human well-being.
- They support integrated planning across traditionally siloed sectors.
- They provide the foundation for sustainable blue economy development that balances conservation and economic opportunities.
- They strengthen the evidence base for transparent, inclusive governance.
- And they support the mobilisation of finance through standardisation and consistency.



Global Ocean
Accounts
Partnership

Michael Burnside | 20 May 2025



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GOAP

I provide my email below, or invite you all to scan this QR code. Please feel most welcome to me and my team to discuss anything I have raised today.

Thank you once again to IOC-INDIO for your leadership, and thank you all for your time today.