



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development

# Marine Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries

Ten-point Plan of Action



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The world's oceans cover about 71 per cent of the surface area of our planet. They are a *key component of the global ecosystem* and without them life on Earth would not be possible in its present form. They regulate the climate and are, at the same time, the world's *most important producer of oxygen*. Their importance for human civilisation is evident, not least, from the fact that they *serve as sinks* for a considerable proportion of the carbon dioxide emissions generated by human activity.

Thanks to their huge biological diversity and productivity, the oceans make an *enormous contribution towards food security*: 2.9 billion people worldwide get more than 20 per cent of the animal protein they need in their diet from fish. Thanks to the good combination of fatty acids and of micronutrients in fish products, they can also help *prevent malnutrition*, which is of particular importance for women of child-bearing age and young children. Between *10 and 12 per cent of the global population depends on the fisheries sector to earn a living*, in particular artisanal fisheries. The majority of these people live in developing countries.

## MARINE ECOSYSTEMS ARE UNDER THREAT

Today, *90 per cent of global fish stocks* are considered to have been either over-fished or exploited up to the limits of sustainability. In addition, biodiverse habitats like mangrove forests, seagrass beds and coral reefs are under threat. These habitats are spawning grounds for many species of fish and are therefore essential for coastal fisheries.

*Mangroves* also provide protection against flooding and coastal erosion and therefore have an *important function in terms of adaptation to the impacts of climate change*. Despite their ecological importance, worldwide more than 35 per cent of mangrove forests have now disappeared. Destructive fishing practices, pollution and rising water temperatures threaten more than 60 per cent of the coral reefs that are so important for marine biodiversity.

Furthermore, *marine pollution from litter – in particular from plastic litter – is increasing dramatically worldwide* with adverse effects on marine and coastal ecosystems. Marine litter is also a threat to human health, causing toxins to build up in the food chain, and it *impacts negatively on fisheries and tourism*. The changes taking place as a result of rising water temperatures and ocean acidification pose a particular threat to humanity, the ramifications of which have yet to be investigated.

So far, *only 4.12 per cent of the global oceans have been placed under protection* – and often this protection exists only on paper. That is way too little if we are to achieve the target agreed by the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity that *10 per cent of coastal and marine areas worldwide are effectively conserved by 2020*.

### INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE OCEANS

In 2015, the issue of marine conservation moved up the international policy agenda, finding its way into international and regional agreements. For example, in *June 2015, at the G7 Summit* in Elmau under the German Presidency, a *G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter* was adopted.

In *September 2015*, at the *UN General Assembly in New York*, the “*2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*” was adopted. The 14th of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that comprise the Agenda is concerned with the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources.

In the *Paris Agreement*, which was adopted at the UN climate conference held at the *end of 2015*, *marine protection* is accorded a prominent role.



## GERMAN COMMITMENT TO THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE OCEANS

Over *two thirds of the partner countries* supported by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) are *island or coastal nations*. More than half of the world's population is already living in coastal regions; in 2020 that figure will probably have risen to nearly two thirds. In order to *preserve coastal habitats for future generations and enable their sustainable use*, the BMZ will step up German development cooperation measures in connection with managing coastal economic spaces and with marine conservation. In doing so, the German government is underlining the *high importance* of these topics for *sustainable economic development, food security, adaptation to climate change and the conservation of biodiversity*. In the context of the increased commitment to marine and coastal protection, a systematic gender approach is applied within German development cooperation, taking into account the diverse and specific roles and responsibilities, positions and conditions, gender needs and interests of men and women in coastal zones and marine environments.



### BLUE ACTION FUND: SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR MARINE PROTECTED AREA NETWORKS AND TRANSBOUNDARY CONSERVATION MEASURES

In order to save migratory marine species that travel thousands of kilometres from extinction, it is often necessary to protect areas that lie very far apart and that may also lie within the territory of very different countries. In order to establish such marine protected area networks and secure sustainable funding for their effective management and also implement other transboundary conservation measures, the BMZ intends to set up a new international financing instrument, the Blue Action Fund, before the end of 2016.

Projects supported through this fund will be carried out by accredited, experienced German and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Many of these NGOs not only have a proven track record in coastal and marine conservation, but also maintain close links to civil society in the countries concerned. This means that, besides being able to carry out projects professionally, they

are also able to contribute towards achieving a broad consensus within society regarding the need to conserve coastal and marine ecosystems. Active participation by the diverse user groups is critical for successful project implementation. For quality assurance of the projects, we want to work with leading think tanks in the field of nature conservation, such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).

Interconnected marine protected areas that are managed effectively will mean that important marine habitats, fish migration routes and breeding grounds can be protected or re-established. This will help to sustain important food chains, as fish stocks will be able to recover, and that in turn will boost the catch of fishermen in the area. The integration of concepts for the protection and use of marine areas will be a key aspect of the work supported by the Blue Action Fund.

## THE TEN KEY POINTS OF OUR ACTIVITIES ARE:

- 1 Create more, better managed marine protected areas
- 2 Encourage sustainable artisanal fishing and aquaculture
- 3 Encourage sustainable, socially responsible processing and marketing of fish
- 4 Support the efforts of partner countries to tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
- 5 Build strategic partnerships with the private sector
- 6 Support the efforts of partner countries to reduce marine pollution
- 7 Develop strategies for dealing with potentially irreversible damage to marine ecosystems
- 8 Support coastal regions in adapting to climate change
- 9 Expand early warning systems for the impacts of climate change
- 10 Support cooperation initiatives covering multiple countries and sectors

On the following pages you will find a brief explanation regarding each of the 10 points in our plan of action.

## 1 WE WILL CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS CREATING MORE MARINE PROTECTED AREAS THAT ARE MANAGED SUSTAINABLY.

Between now and 2020, we will increase the overall total of marine protected areas that we are helping to support. This will be done by *supporting the designation of new protected areas, strengthening the management of these areas, and by better safeguarding them using sustainable financing instruments* such as the Blue Action Fund (cf. box p. 5). In this connection it is important for us that trade-offs between conservation and different uses of marine resources are well considered and that the human rights and needs of women and girls, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable are respected and taken into account. In this way we will be making a contribution towards the achievement of the target agreed as part of the Convention on Biological Diversity that *10 per cent of coastal and marine areas worldwide will be effectively conserved by 2020* (which is also one of the targets under Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda).

## 2 WE WILL STRENGTHEN SUSTAINABLE ARTISANAL FISHING AND AQUACULTURE FARMING, THUS ENSURING THAT THE LIVELIHOODS OF PEOPLE LIVING IN COASTAL AREAS CAN BE PRESERVED IN THE LONG TERM.

There are about 58 million people worldwide who depend directly on fishing and fisheries for their livelihoods. Altogether, it is estimated that 10 to 12 per cent of the global population earn their living either directly or indirectly from the fisheries sector. *Sustainable small-scale fisheries and aquaculture protect marine resources, offer local incomes and safeguard supplies of high-value foodstuffs*, also for disadvantaged groups of the population. That is why we are committed to the *improved management of fish stocks* giving consideration to the needs and empowerment of marginalised people and groups and strengthening gender equality in our partner countries. This is in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, and other relevant international conventions.



3

### WE WILL ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE, SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE PROCESSING AND MARKETING OF FISH.

Global fish consumption has increased dramatically. As a result of this increase, many fish stocks are being fished to the limits of ecological sustainability and beyond. This situation constitutes a serious threat for the economic development of the regions in question. A further problem is that, in many cases, the working conditions in the fisheries sector contravene internationally recognised social standards. We will *support sustainable supply chains* in our partner countries. By supporting sustainable supply chains we will be able to *reduce the pressure on fish stocks, improve working conditions* for men and women and ensure that the *prerequisites for responsible consumption are in place*.



4

### WE WILL SUPPORT OUR PARTNER COUNTRIES IN TACKLING ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING.

The various forms of illegal fishing cause huge losses in revenue for the coastal countries affected by these activities. Estimates put these losses at up to 23 billion dollars a year. What is more, illegal fishing prevents sustainable resource management, deprives the population of an important source of food and slows local economic development. That is why we are supporting the efforts of our partners to *develop effective surveillance and monitoring systems*. In addition, we are *promoting the development of regional approaches to tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing*.



## 5 WE WILL DEVELOP STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH ECONOMIC SECTORS THAT HAVE A SPECIAL INTEREST IN PRESERVING INTACT MARINE AND COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS.

Together with partners from the private sector and civil society, we will champion sustainable maritime tourism and the preservation of intact marine and coastal ecosystems. To this end we will raise awareness about marine conservation in the tourism industry and among the German public. *Ecological and socially sustainable tourism* enhances the *acceptance and attractiveness of protected areas*, helps to secure their long-term existence and funding, and creates equal employment opportunities for women and men.

## 6 WE WILL SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF OUR PARTNER COUNTRIES TO REDUCE MARINE POLLUTION FROM LITTER.

One focus of our efforts in this regard is placed on *removing the causes of marine pollution*. In order to do this we will *further expand our environmental cooperation with selected partner countries* and will work with them to *develop model approaches for integrated waste management*. The aim is to reduce the quantity of litter and improve waste processing. We will foster exchanges of knowledge between developing and emerging countries, and will promote the spread of successful practices. And we will support partnerships with the private sector (tourism industry, fishing industry, port management, plastics industry), in order to stop litter entering the oceans.





## 7 WE WILL DEVELOP STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH POTENTIALLY IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGE TO MARINE ECOSYSTEMS.

The increase in the acidity and the rising temperature of the oceans as well as overfishing in coastal waters can cause abrupt and irreversible changes in marine ecosystems. We will *support research projects* aimed at improving the level of knowledge about these linkages and at *defining options for action with a view to averting the threat of exceeding ecological tipping points*. In regions where the population could lose their livelihoods because of damage to the oceans and coasts, and thus be forced by economic necessity to leave their homes, we will *promote alternative employment opportunities*. Special focus will be placed on ensuring that women have equal rights and opportunities in terms of economic participation, voice and agency. And we are supporting innovative, market-tailored initiatives to help poor people cope if disaster strikes. The InsuResilience climate risk insurance initiative is a current example of this kind of measure, whereby people in need can receive additional support through insurance schemes.

## 8 WE WILL SUPPORT MEASURES FOR ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN URBAN COASTAL REGIONS.

In just a few years, two thirds of the world's population will be living in coastal regions, mostly in cities. A *rise in sea levels and the increasing threat from extreme weather events* such as hurricanes will pose an acute danger for these cities' infrastructure and economies. We are *assisting cities in adapting to climate change and in implementing disaster risk reduction measures* and in integrating these aspects into *forward-looking, sustainable urban development and planning*.

## 9 WE WILL EXPAND LOCAL EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS FOR THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

*Climate change is causing storms, floods, soil salinisation and a rise in sea levels.* More than 600 million people live in low-lying coastal zones and are directly affected by these phenomena. Early warning systems are an effective way of *reducing the harm to the population and to infrastructure as a result of climate change.* With the support of the scientific community, we will help with the *further development of early warning systems in combination with coastal protection and urban development programmes*, spearheading efforts to integrate flood control and disaster risk reduction into development planning.



## 10 WE WILL SUPPORT INNOVATIVE COOPERATIVE APPROACHES THAT DO NOT END AT NATIONAL BORDERS AND ARE NOT LIMITED TO A SINGLE SECTOR.

*Effective marine protection demands cross-border measures;* these measures must take the diverse interests of fisheries, the transport sector, nature conservation, infrastructure development and tourism all into account. We are supporting the *Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance*. As part of this international cooperation, innovative *models for regional and cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms are being developed* and *interregional dialogue and learning processes* at the interface between science and policy are being facilitated. The Blue Action Fund (cf. box p. 5) will also facilitate action across national borders so that conservation measures and concepts that enhance sustainable use can be effectively implemented.

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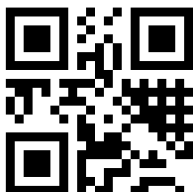
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Detailed information about our activities in connection with marine protection and sustainable fisheries (also in English)  
[www.bmz.de/biodiv](http://www.bmz.de/biodiv)

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