



## **Ocean observation – sharing responsibility**

### **EuroGOOS feedback on the European Commission Public Consultation**

EuroGOOS welcomes the opportunity to react to the European Commission’s public consultation on the initiative titled ‘Ocean Observation – Sharing Responsibility’. In November 2020, we submitted to the Commission our feedback on the inception impact assessment of this initiative<sup>1</sup>. In this document, we outlined a EuroGOOS vision on the status and priorities for the European ocean observing coordination and shared a set of relevant studies and documents.

EuroGOOS, the European Global Ocean Observing System, is an association of 44 national oceanographic institutes, hydrographic agencies, met offices, and foundations from 18 European countries. EuroGOOS operates within the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) coordinated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO. A European component of GOOS, EuroGOOS was founded in 1994 as an association of core members with open regional and thematic collaboration mechanisms going well beyond the direct membership of the association. EuroGOOS Working Groups, networks of observing platforms (Task Teams), regional oceanographic systems (ROOS), and the EuroGOOS work within relevant European projects and initiatives, provide fora for cooperation and best practices, unlock quality marine data, advance modelling and forecasting capabilities, and deliver common strategies, priorities, and standards towards integrated, sustained, and fit-for-purpose European ocean observing. Between the EuroGOOS association members and the members of the EuroGOOS regional systems, the EuroGOOS direct community counts about 100 oceanographic organizations in Europe.

EuroGOOS supports a European Union initiative to bring together all Member States’ public bodies responsible for ocean observation to develop priorities and realise opportunities for sharing effort, as well as a stronger EU funding support towards observations of common benefit. We believe this will help addressing the current lack of long-term sustainability of ocean observing efforts and the unbalance between the Member States efforts, as well as improve synergy between the EU ocean observing support tools. Common European and global ocean observing needs should be served by centrally supported infrastructures, while the national capacities should be better coordinated across the agencies and authorities responsible for various parts of the ocean observing enterprise.

It is vital to recognise that European ocean observing must be able to respond to a wide range of societal needs, well identified in many documents by our community and partly listed in the Commission’s consultation survey. Ocean is an interconnected system which requires integrated

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<sup>1</sup> <https://eurogoos.eu/download/news/EG20.25-European-Commission-Ocean-Observation-Inception-EuroGOOS-feedback.pdf>

approaches to collecting and analysing its information and responding to the needs of the users. Priorities in funding and support should be identified very carefully to not put in jeopardy an integrated assessment of the ocean's pressures and our management actions.

Sustained and coordinated ocean observing is paramount for accurate forecasts of the ocean state and conditions critical for maritime economy, human health, and security.

Coordination between sectoral players (agencies for ocean health, fisheries, climate, operational services, etc.) at the sea basin level is crucial. Innovative regional observational technologies should be incorporated in the monitoring and observing programmes to provide data with the appropriate resolution in time and space to assess the ocean status and progress towards environmental targets and the Good Environmental Status.

Coordinated ocean observing will also boost European competitiveness in ocean technologies, including infrastructures, sensors, or e-infrastructures.

Enabling and improving multi-disciplinary training of personnel is key, as well as attracting and keeping personnel in oceanographic jobs, including a growing need in informatics and data curation specialists, as well as promoting training exchange among institutions.

Ocean observing must become a shared priority between the Member States and the Union with effective governance at national, regional sea, and European levels. The EU needs integrated, sustained, and fit-for-purpose ocean observing to deliver on the EU Green Deal and the Biodiversity Strategy, Europe's Agenda 2030 contributions, the blue economy goals, and to develop integrated tools to understand the evolution of the climate and the marine environment, like a Digital Twin of the Ocean. There is a lack of knowledge among nations about each other's activities leading to inefficiencies that result in slow progress in monitoring, modelling, blue technology evolution, and ocean knowledge and information availability with, at the end, user needs, and sustainability targets not being met. It is needed to break the existing inefficiencies and inertia and evolve into an observing system that is coordinated, user-focused, agile, and sustained. Nations should take responsibility to sustain ocean observations in their countries, and these activities should be coordinated at regional and pan-European levels. Stronger EU funding support should be directed towards observations of common benefit.

A combination of EU and Member States' support towards ocean observing sustainability will help achieve policy coherence, support dialogue towards common solutions and identification of synergies and trade-offs, shed light on potential or perceived barriers, and sustain ocean observing efforts over time beyond research, funding, or electoral cycles.

Ocean is the largest shared natural resource of the European Union and stronger collaboration between atmosphere, land, marine, and social research communities is critical to homogenize and enhance the quality of operational products at the interfaces of those domains. The European Commission's support towards better planning of the ocean observing activities will have positive influence on other environment monitoring areas as well as security.

Sharing ocean observing capacity and joint planning of activities will contribute to better equity in science, technology, and innovation, making ocean observations a public utility. The scientific advancements allowed through a better coordination of European ocean observing efforts will underpin the implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.