



UN Global Compact COP28 Input Paper

Marine Spatial Planning

Dubai, UAE, 30 November–12 December 2023

What is COP and what's the role of non-state actors

The Conference of the Parties for Climate Change is convened under the multilateral process on climate change adopted in 1992, known as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In 2015, the historic adoption of the Paris Agreement set the ambition to limit global warming by 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels, review countries' commitments every five years and provide financing to developing countries to mitigate climate change, strengthen resilience and enhance abilities to adapt to climate impacts. While the UNFCCC COPs are designed for governments to take stock of the climate crisis and decide the best actions to tackle it, they have also become a critical space where non-state actors can showcase their decarbonization pathways, their commitments to net-zero operations, and call for government policies. This is a direct reflection of the widely accepted fact that not one sector or single group alone can tackle the climate crisis - but rather that all stakeholders must take action and seek multilateral, public-private sector cooperation.

This year's climate COP, the 28th, will be hosted by the government of the United Arab Emirates, marking the halfway point between the historic Paris Agreement and the 2030 mark. The UAE COP28 Presidency will focus on the following: Mitigation, Food Systems, Adaptation, Climate Finance and Loss and Damage. Marking the conclusion of the [first Global Stocktake](#), COP28 will be a pivotal moment for governments to negotiate their country's response to the stocktake findings, and agree on new pathways to meet the 1.5 degrees goal.

United Nations Global Compact's role as a special initiative of the United Nations

The United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) is the world's largest corporate sustainability and corporate social responsibility initiative. While voluntary action is critical, global standards, policies and regulations are required to get to the scale of action necessary to make meaningful progress towards net zero. UNGC's role at COP is to support and facilitate dialogue between governments and non-state actors, in partnership with UNFCCC.

UNGC Ocean work

The Ocean Stewardship Coalition convenes ocean-related industries, academic institutions, financial actors, governments and UN agencies, to deliver on the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development - establishing guidances, courses, and standards, informing regulatory institutions and developing finance frameworks.

This paper is part of a series of Input Papers on key ocean topics, and can be shared with all interested stakeholders. For further information about the UN Global Compact Ocean's work, please reach out to ocean@unglobalcompact.org.



Marine Spatial Planning and Climate Change

Industry state of play

Ocean plays a vital role in the global economy, acting as a safeguard of humanity's most basic needs - it provides oxygen, food, and energy, regulates the water cycles, transports goods in our globalized economy, and regulates the world's temperature and biodiversity. Protecting the ocean so that it can continue to provide economic resilience and access to these services, requires complex coordination efforts among various actors with different priorities. The health of the environment and the economy are intrinsically linked, requiring a constant balance between the quest for economic growth, livelihoods and well-being, and the ocean ecosystem's long-term stability.

Inclusive processes are at the heart of a successful marine spatial plan, ensuring that all actors with an interest in the ocean space can participate in a proactive dialogue on ocean protection and production.

Economic activities in one area will most likely have effects on international waters and other countries' national waters. This is why it is important to ensure the alignment of policies with international commitments, for the establishment of well-functioning Sustainable Ocean Plans (SOPs). It is of high importance to bring this tool to fora such as COP28, where governments are encouraged to step up their commitment and action on the ocean, which can help make key contributions to the decarbonization agenda. A successful SOP and dialogue with other countries can also help prevent and resolve conflicts, particularly as climate change exacerbates issues around access to resources.

Breakthroughs and Targets

The High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, calls for [100% managed ocean within national jurisdictions](#), which can only be achieved through the establishment of Sustainable Ocean Plans. The Panel's call to all coastal states is to establish effective ocean management plans by 2030, as the means to achieve a comprehensive approach to sustainably manage the ocean, and work towards safeguarding areas beyond national jurisdiction.

The UNGC Ocean Stewardship Coalition hosts an *Offshore Renewables and Sustainable Ocean Management* multi-stakeholder group that gathers key knowledge stakeholders to identify, communicate, and address the challenges associated with sustainable ocean management and offshore renewable energy development. The working group consists of ocean industry, UN specialized organizations, policy actors, public authorities, academics, and other knowledge brokers. It has delivered a roadmap to integrate clean offshore renewable energy into climate-smart marine spatial planning.

The aforementioned working group is launching two output documents at COP28. The first document offers a set of principles and recommendations that will guide a standard approach for ORE action on net positive biodiversity goals. The second document outlines a set of key takeaways and recommendations to help governments, companies, and data platforms enable greater sharing of ocean data, specifically data collected by the ORE industry.



Key Policy and Business Recommendations

Policy Recommendations

- ❖ **Create Sustainable Ocean Plans:** Create and update Marine Spatial Planning / Sustainable Ocean Plans as the integrated framework for ocean governance in national strategies and policies, by 2030.
- ❖ **Build cross-border capacity:** By engaging in intra and inter-regional dialogue on the sustainable use of marine resources.
- ❖ **Support investments** and capital deployment in countries that have strong MSP and SOPs in place, effectively utilizing MSP as an investment framework.

Business recommendations

- ❖ **Sharing data** with organizations that help harmonize and synthesize data, and communicate it across borders, to help make evidence-based decisions.
- ❖ **Support Sustainable Ocean Plans:** For businesses and other non-state actors, voice support to governments in establishing SOPs to ensure interests and needs are balanced and regulated.

Key Documents for Reference:

General Ocean-Climate Leadership Resources

[Global Stocktake / UNFCCC](#)

[UN HLCC Ocean Breakthroughs](#)

[UN Climate Change High-Level Champions](#)

[COP 28 UAE Website](#)

[IPCC report](#)

[UNGC Sustainable Ocean Principles](#)

[Ocean-Climate Tracker Report - WRI / HLCs](#)

Sector-Specific Resources for Marine Spatial Planning

[High level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy and Ocean Plans](#)

[Roadmap to Integrate Clean Offshore Renewable Energy into Climate-smart Marine Spatial Planning \(2021, report\)](#)