



United Nations
Environment
Programme



Group of Experts for the
Assessment of Assessments of
the Regular Process for Global
Reporting and Assessment of
the State of the Marine
Environment, Including
Socio-Economic Aspects



Intergovernmental
Oceanographic
Commission
of United Nations
Educational, Scientific
and Cultural
Organization

UNGA 60/30 Regular
Process/GOE/2/3

English only unedited

Regular process for the global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects
Group of Experts for the “Assessment of Assessments”
Second Meeting:

Paris, France 8-10 November 2007

Second Meeting of the Group of Experts for the start-up phase, Assessment of Assessments of the Regular process for the global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects

Report of the Secretariat

Summary

The present report provides an account of the second meeting of the Group of Experts for the “Assessment of Assessments (AoA)” of the Regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects, held from 8 to 10 November 2007 at the Headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Paris, France. The meeting was convened subsequent to the first meeting held on 28- 30 March 2007 as part of the five meetings scheduled for the GoE to conduct an Assessment of Assessments of the Marine Environment during the start up phase of the Regular process. The results will be used to produce a report to be presented to the General Assembly through the Ad Hoc Steering Group established through resolution 60/30 XI, to oversee the “Assessment of Assessments” and invited the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to jointly lead the process among others.

The meeting was attended by members of Group of Experts, one of the co chairs of the AHSG as well as observers. The Group of Experts discussed and reviewed progress made on part I of the “Assessment of Assessments”; the state of the assessment landscape for oceans and coasts in the 21 selected regions. They also discussed how to proceed with part II of the “Assessment of Assessments” outline; how to identify best practices from the existing assessments in the regions. The experts agreed to commission additional studies on global assessments and on supranational issues such as climate change, marine pollution and fisheries.

I Agenda Item 1 – Opening and Organization of the meeting

A. Welcome and opening

1. The meeting was opened at 10.00 a.m. on Thursday 8 November 2007, by Mr. Patricio Bernal, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and Assistant Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Mr. Bernal welcomed the members of the Group of Experts to its second meeting on behalf of the lead agencies, IOC of UNESCO and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and congratulated the GoE on progress to date. The representative of UNEP, Mr. Ivar Baste, Chief, Scientific Assessment Branch, Division of Early Warning and Assessment also welcomed the group of experts and observers/agency partners. The objectives of the meeting were to review the work of experts on part I; discuss the approach for part II (especially critical evaluations using the 5 criteria identified) and; define how other elements such as supra regional assessments will be integrated into the overall approach. The chair of the GoE thanked the experts for their work to date and encouraged further thought on how to evaluate the assessments.

B. Adoption of agenda

2. The Group of Experts adopted the agenda for the meeting on the basis of the draft agenda set out in document UNGA 60/30 Regular Process/GOE/2/-1 Rev.1. The agenda is presented in annex I of the present report.

C. Attendance

3. The meeting was attended by 16 experts; four (4) experts and one (1) observer were unable to attend the meeting. The co-chair of the AHSG, Ms. Elva Escobar attended the meeting as representatives of the AHSG. The GESAMP Officer and the GESAMP Vice-chair as well as representative of WMO were also in attendance as observers. The list of participants, including the observers present, is presented as annex II.

II. Agenda Item 2- Presentation of the report of the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group held on 22 June 2007 in New York

4. The secretariat presented a report of the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group held on 22 June 2007, New York. During that meeting, the AHSG-II approved a recommendation that:

- a. Called on governments to contribute urgently to the trust funds of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the funding of the “*assessment of assessments*”;
- b. Agreed that members of the AHSG shall collaborate closely with the lead agencies to pursue possible funding opportunities;
- c. Welcomed offer of GESAMP to provide its scientific advice to the “*assessment of assessments*” of the Regular Process.
- d. Invited relevant UN bodies, organisations and programmes and related international organizations to actively contribute scientifically to the activities of the “*assessment of assessments*” as well as to its completion by 2009;
- e. Requested lead agencies to ensure an opportunity for governments, in accordance with Paragraph 93(c) of UNGA resolution 60/30, to comment during 2008 on the development of the “*assessment of assessments*”, including considering the possibility of doing so within the framework of the ICP-9.

5. The AHSG-II report was presented to UNICPOLOS-8, following which, there was significant interest from Member States and UN Agencies on the details and resources needs for the A of A process.

6. It was reported that the UNGA is currently discussing a new resolution on the Regular Process. Further information on the text of the resolution will be circulated to the GoE once the resolution has been finalized.

III Agenda Item 3- Progress made on Part I of the “Assessment of Assessment”: the state of the assessment landscape for oceans and coasts in the 21 selected regions.

7. Alan Simcock presented the first results for Part I using the North East Atlantic region as an example; this was followed by the results from the Mediterranean region by Ljubomir Jeftic. There were also presentations of the results of the existing regional assessments with incorporation of analysis of the socio-economic aspects by Jill Jaeger. Other members of the GoE were invited to briefly present their initial findings and challenges to be overcome. The GoE were thanked for the progress made to date. The Secretariat will identify additional support to assist regions where this has been requested.

8. The presentations were followed by discussions on the need for harmonization, structured assessments based on the 21 regions with directions on how to build upon existing data collection and assessment activities for the “A of A”. A number of questions were raised e.g. how far the experts need to go into the information; in the case of the NE Atlantic considering that OSPAR had already synthesized many assessments; the extent to which individual templates in the Mediterranean need to be aggregated based on their coverage, quality and number. It was concluded in general on the difficulty to give a regional/global view to the socio-economic assessments that are mostly at national level. A working group to look at scaling was suggested looking if scaling could provide regional information of best practice. Attention was drawn to UNEP GPA “State of the Marine Environment” regional assessments and the GoE requested that the Secretariat provides the members with copies of this report. The Chairs agreed to review the existing global assessments that should be incorporated in Part I and to circulate this information to the GoE.

9. Julian Barbière of IOC of UNESCO led the discussion on reviewing of the arrangements for the “A of A” Virtual Office. Experts expressed their satisfaction in the utility and functioning of the virtual office. The Secretariat requested that participants make every effort to file uploaded documents appropriately to facilitate ease of use as the work progresses. Experts who require access to the VO for staff supporting their work should send a request with the name and contact details of the person to Julian Barbière.

10. Emily Corcoran of UNEP-WCMC made a presentation on the on-going review of the “A of A” database (database redesign/ new and updated entries). The database structure and functionalities were revised based on the development and agreement of the individual assessment template and the needs of the GoE as expressed at the 1st GoE meeting. The database provides the framework to enter assessment data directly into an online, queryable database which is accessible to all experts. Login details were provided to all GoE members and an introduction to the features provided. The database is online at www.unep-wcmc.org/gramed. Experts requested that the date of last update and the name of person editing/uploading each entry are visible on the record for transparency. It was also requested that a thematic search filter was added to be able to search by the categories of Annex A and B. UNEP-WCMC was requested to provide the Secretariat with resource needs to continue provision of support to the database updating and development.

11. The GoE agreed to continue using the Virtual Office for posting and reviewing individual and regional assessment templates. Once these will be finalised (prior GoE-3 meeting), all templates will be migrated to the AoA Database hosted by UNEP-WCMC. Resources will need to be identified for this exercise.

12. A list of actions and decisions taken by the GoE for Part I is presented in Annex III of this report.

IV Agenda Item 4 – How to move forward with Part II of the “A of A” outline: Evaluation of the existing assessments in the selected 21 regions, bearing in mind that drafts of part I and part

II need to be delivered by April 2008. Discussions on guidance for development of Part II.

13. The Secretariat provided guidance on the discussion on how to move forward with Part II of the “A of A” outline considering the need that it had a global scope: Evaluation of the existing assessments in the selected 21 regions, bearing in mind the first draft report, to be delivered by April 2008. A summary of actions required in preparation of the first draft of the report are presented at annex III.

14. It was agreed that an analysis of sub sample of templates is needed to draw out the best practices for each region. Issues on this topic were listed in a working document presented by Lee Kimball and Jill Jäger focused on best practices and presented as annex IV.

V Agenda Item 5 – Commissioning of additional studies on global assessments on supranational issues

15. The secretariat led the discussion on the commissioning of additional studies for part I of the outline for global assessments on supra regional issues partners discussed included, GESAMP on Marine Pollution, FAO on Fisheries, WMO and the EEA’s offer and other partners identified by the GoE .

16. Michael Huber in his capacity of GESAMP Chair presented the GESAMP proposed contribution to the A of A. Following the request sent in September 2007 by the A of A lead agencies, specifically calling on GESAMP to conduct a specific review of existing global and regional marine assessments related to marine pollution, including ship-based pollution and atmospheric inputs to the ocean, GESAMP has responded positively to this request and established a dedicated Task Team (to be led by Dr. Rick Boelens) to conduct this work. M. Huber presented the Terms of reference of the Task Team presented as annex V, highlighting that the Task Team will follow the same overall working approach as the GoE and focus its review on existing global and regional assessments of marine pollution, including ship-based pollution and atmospheric inputs to the ocean, and mainly in an open ocean context. The GoE welcomed this approach and stressed the need to establish a close liaison with the Task Team so as to eliminate overlaps and avoid gaps. The Co-Chair invited the GESAMP Task Team to take note of the revised timeline agreed by this meeting and start the work on Part II, the critical assessments highlighting best practices, as soon as possible so that they can be considered together with the other Part II inputs of the GoE. GoE Members were also invited to communicate to the GESAMP Task Team relevant assessments that they may encounter during the Part I exercise.

17. It was agreed to create a dedicated space on the A of A Virtual Office for the GESAMP Task Team and provide VO access to all its members.

18. Mr. Edgar Cabrera, representing WMO, highlighted the potential contribution of his organization through the Joint IOC-WMO Technical Commission on Oceanography and Marine Meteorology (JCOMM), to address the issue of how integrated global observing Systems could support the Regular Process. He recalled that in view of the Ministerial GEO and GEOSS meetings to be held in Cape Town at the end of November 2007, assessments of capacity and needs for ocean observations systems have been conducted and could be useful to the GoE. He invited the Lead Agencies to approach WMO and GOOS through an exchange of letters in order to identify which of these assessments are of relevance to the A of A.

19. The GoE highlighted the importance of fisheries assessment in the A of A and need to define a mechanism for considering fisheries assessments conducted by FAO and RFMOs. UNEP and IOC were requested to formally approach FAO again with regards to their potential contribution to the A of A.

20. The GoE also took note of the offer of the London Convention Protocol Secretariat to contribute to the A of A. Further discussions will be held in view of defining the modalities of LCP contribution.

VI Agenda Item 6 – Report of Meeting

21. The Group of Experts agreed on how to prepare the report of their meeting. A draft report will be circulated to the GoE by the 15th November 2007.

VII Agenda Item 7 – Next Meeting

22. The GoE agreed that venue of the third meeting of the GoE will tentatively take place on 15-16 April 2008 at the EEA headquarters in Copenhagen.

VIII Closure of the meeting

23. The meeting was closed at 16:30 hrs on Friday 09 November 2007 by Mr. Patricio Bernal Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and Assistant Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Mr. Ivar Baste, Chief, Scientific Assessment Branch, Division of Early Warning and Assessment, UNEP.

Annex I

Second Meeting of the Group of Experts for the start-up phase, Assessment of Assessments of the Regular process for the global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects

Agenda

Agenda Item 1 Opening and Organization of the meeting

Agenda Item 2 Second meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group held on 22 June 2007 in New York.

Agenda Item 3 Progress made on Part I of the “Assessment of Assessment”: the state of the assessment landscape for oceans and coasts in the 21 selected regions.

Agenda Item 4 How to move forward with Part II of the “A of A” outline: Evaluation of the existing assessments in the selected 21 regions, bearing in mind that drafts of part I and part II need to be delivered by April 2008. Discussions on guidance for development of Part II.

Agenda Item 5 Commissioning of additional studies on global assessments on supranational issues

Agenda Item 6 Report of Meeting

Agenda Item 7 Next Meeting

Second Meeting of the Group of Experts for the start-up phase, Assessment of Assessments of the Regular process for the global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects

List of Participants

The list of participants provides details of the experts, members of the Secretariat and observers present at the meeting, as well as Apologies received.

| I Experts | | | | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|------------|----------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Name | Sex | Country | Primary Expertise | Address |
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| III. Observers | | | | | |
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Apologies:

1. Franklin McDonald, GoE, Jamaica.
2. Rodrigo H. Bustamante, GoE, Chile.
3. Haiqing Li, GoE, China
4. Rolph Payet, GoE, Seychelles.
5. FAO representation.
6. Rick Boelens, GESAMP.

Second Meeting of the Group of Experts for the start-up phase, Assessment of Assessments of the Regular process for the global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects

Inter-sessional Action plan: Roles, responsibilities and deadlines in the process of preparing the 1st draft to be signed off by GoE3 15 – 16 April 2008, in Copenhagen

PART 0. INTRODUCTION (5 pages)

Chairs together with IOC and UNEP will revise the introduction. It will present the overarching challenges related to a regular process for a global assessment and reporting of the marine environment. It will highlight interactions – what countries and regions can learn from and contribute to global, regional and in some cases, national processes - and relationships across scales. It will identify existing global and regional processes and elaborate on needs for strengthened assessments and support to monitoring, networking and capacity building. **To be completed by 15 December 2007**

PART I. THE STATE OF THE ASSESSMENT LANDSCAPE FOR OCEANS AND COASTS (60-80 pages)

Action 1: Templates for individual assessments (to be made available electronically)

Alan Simcock will do a light revision of individual templates based on recommendations from GoE2 (including additional box on strength and weaknesses). **By 17 November 2007.**

GoE members to provide Alan Simcock with comments on the justification for regional groups **by 30 November**, so that the document can be circulated to the AHSG.

GoE members to complete and revise (as needed) individual templates (consider presenting an aggregation of several assessments) **and notify the GoE, through the virtual office on potential best practices.** More information about existing assessments can be obtained by interacting with the assessment community in question. **All templates to be posted on the virtual office for review by 15 December 2007, and to be placed onto the UNEP-WCMC database after GoE3 (15-16 April 2008).**

Action 2 :- Regional templates (to be made available electronically) **and summaries (to be annexed to the draft report)**

The regional summary template will be revised by Alan in the light of the discussion to enable overall summaries to be produced and posted on the virtual office by the 17 November.

Members of expert group will complete regional templates. **All templates to be posted on the virtual office for review by 15 December, and to be placed onto the database after GoE3.**

Members of expert group will, on the basis of the regional templates prepare 2-4 pages text summary analysis of how well the region is assessed (keeping in mind cumulative impacts and different sectoral and socioeconomic aspects). The summary will include regional characteristics (i.e. knowledge base, existing assessments, institutional aspects (including stakeholder participation/ transparency), capacity to conduct assessments),. **To be completed by end of 15 January 2008 and to be circulated to GoE3 in April 2008 for sign off to first round of peer review.**

Action 3: The GESAMP “A of A” task team will post analyses of best assessment practices for open ocean activities related to marine pollution on the virtual office.

Action 4: GoE co-chair (J. McGlade) to post the list of global assessments collated on the virtual office by the **17 November 2007**

Action 5: Preparation of Part I Introduction

Part I will have a 4-5 pages introduction based on the following aspects:

a) Analysis of coverage and characteristics of the current assessment landscape

Alan Simcock will work with members of the steering group to develop, - first a structure for review of the GoE, and - then an analysis which will be comparing and contrasting the regional findings on the basis of the regional templates and summaries. The structure will focus on current coverage with respect to sectors, oceans and coast. It will examine the characteristics of the assessments and the data and monitoring underpinning the assessments. ***To be completed by end of February 2008 and to be circulated to GoE3 in April 2008 for sign off to first round of peer review.***

b) Socioeconomic aspects and integration

Lawrence Mea and Andy Rosenberg to assess how integration and socioeconomic aspects have been covered in existing assessments (including GEF LME and other relevant projects). Jake Rice will provide an analysis of lessons learned from integrated assessments of the North Sea and Canadian waters. The assessment will consider how marine ecosystem services (see GEO-4 conceptual approach and Chapter 7 and 8) support human wellbeing, what is the role of the sectors and who are vulnerable (see GEO-4 chapter 7). ***To be completed by end of February 2008 and to be circulated to GoE3 in April 2008 for sign off to first round of peer review.***

Part II. Evaluations of assessments (50 pages)

Introduction

Action 6

a) Best practices

Jill Jaeger and Lee Kimball to work with other experts in a cross-cutting analysis of selected existing assessments (including global), - related to scientific credibility, policy relevance, communication, legitimacy and usefulness, to identify best practices. (Analysis to be based on Jill's analysis and Lee's best practices). ***To be concluded by end of February 2008 and to be circulated to GoE3 in April 2008 for sign off to first round of peer review.***

Action 7

b) Governance and institutions

Jill Jaeger and Lee Kimball to work with other experts to develop a summary of institutional options for organizing assessments. ***To be concluded by end of February 2008 and to be circulated to GoE3 in April 2008 for sign off to first round of peer review.***

Part III. Framework and options for a regular process for the global reporting and assessment of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects (40 pages)

Introduction

Action 8

a) Global and regional scaling

Andy Rosenberg, Jake Rice, Mike Huber, Alan Simcock, and Jackie McGlade to assess the global assessment needs and how the existing assessment (part I) and observing systems (GOOS, GEOSS), at multiple scales can support global, regional and sub-regional assessment needs. It will also analyse the role of current and future modeling capacities for marine assessments at global and regional level. ***To be completed by end of February 2008 and to be circulated to GoE3 in April 2008 for sign off to first round of peer review.***

Action 9

b) Existing structures which can support a regular process

Chairs with IOC and UNEP to liaise with FAO, IHO, IMO, ISA, UN DOALOS, WHO and WMO, possibly through UN Oceans, to assess existing institutions, activities, programmes and resources which could potentially support a regular process in terms of assessments, monitoring, networking and capacity building. ***To be completed by end of February 2008 and to be circulated to GoE3 in April***

2008 for sign off to first round of peer review.

Action 10

c) *Options for and characteristics of a possible future regular process*

Chairs with IOC and UNEP to initiate the development of the final section. It will outline the possible characteristics of an incremental, phased and iterative development of a regionally based regular global process. *To be considered by the GoE3 for possible inclusion in the peer review.*

Action 11

Information brochure to be developed by IOC and UNEP in consultation with the chairs and GoE members for circulation to governments and partners (through the focal points UN DOALOS, IOC, UNEP, FAO, IMO, WMO) for raising awareness of the process and sensitizing partners to the upcoming peer review of the 1st draft in May 2008. The brochure will reflect the background for the A of A process, the challenges, the table of contents, the justification for regions and potential value added by the regular process. *17 January 2008.*

Summary Work plan (November 2007 – April 2008)

| Actions | Responsibility | Timing |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Part 0 | | |
| Redraft of Introduction | Co Chairs (+ Secretariat) | 15 Dec 07 |
| Part I | | |
| Modification of the Individual Assessment Templates | A. Simcock | 17 Nov 07 |
| Regional justification document to be reviewed | GoE | 30 Nov 07 |
| Regional Templates to be revised (addition of Annex A/B) and posted on VO | A. Simcock | 17 Nov 07 |
| Create Workspace on the VO for GESAMP Task Force/ Provide access to GESAMP Members GESAMP Task Team posts Best Assessment Practices | Secretariat | 17 Nov 07 |
| Experts fill in/review Individual Templates and post them on Virtual Office | GoE | 15 Dec 07 |
| Insert Best Practice Tags in Individual Templates for Jill Jaeger/Lee Kimball Part II work(through VO) | Secretariat | 15 Dec 07 |
| Regional Templates to be completed and posted on VO | GoE | 15 Dec 07 |
| Individual Templates for Global Assessments posted on the VO | Co-chairs | 15 Dec 07 |
| Regional Summary Analysis (2-4 pages of text) completed and posted on VO | GoE | 15 Jan 08 |
| Preparation of the introduction for Part I | | |
| a) analysis of coverage and characteristics of the current assessment landscape | Simcock.+ Secretariat and Chairs | Feb 08 |
| b) integration and socio-economic coverage in assessments analyses of integrated assessment of the North sea and Canadian Waters | Mee and Rosenberg Rice | Feb 08 |
| Transfer Individual and Regional Templates onto GRAME Database | Secretariat | Apr 08 |
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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Part II Evaluation of Assessments | | |
| a) best practices analysis document | Jill/Lee + GoE | Feb 08 |
| b) review of governance and institutions | Jill/Lee+ GoE | Feb 08 |
| <i>Part II documents to be circulated to GoE</i> | Secretariat | April 08 |
| | | |
| Part III Framework and Options | | |
| a) Global and regional scaling | Rosenberg+Rice+Huber +Simcock+McGlade | End Feb 08 |
| b) Existing structures which can support a regular process | Chairs+ IOC+UNEP | End Feb 08 |
| <i>a) and b) to be circulate to GoE</i> | | Apr 08 |
| c) Options for future regular process to be consider by the GoE3 | Chairs+ IOC+UNEP | Apr 08 |
| Management/Coordination/Administrative issues | | |
| Review Experts regional assignment/appoint additional experts | Secretariat | Nov 07 |
| Establish a Website for Member States review of A of A (also possibly for Peer Reviewers) | Secretariat | Nov- Dec 07 |
| Development of Brochure | Secretariat | Jan 08 |
| Develop exchange of letters with WMO, FAO and London Convention | Secretariat | Nov-Dec 07 |

Second Meeting of the Group of Experts for the start-up phase, Assessment of Assessments of the Regular process for the global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects

Best Practices (scientific credibility, legitimacy, communications, policy relevance, usefulness): Features to look for in an assessment/process

I. Principles and Procedures for an assessment process (whether one-off or regular)

A. Principles

Participation – in establishment and conduct of assessments

Transparency – in all aspects, including establishment, scope/content, organization, conduct, and data and findings

Science/Policy Interface – policy relevant/policy neutral/not policy prescriptive

- including role of governments in reviewing assessment products

B. Procedures for:

Nomination and selection of experts (i) to carry out the assessment and (ii) for peer review, e.g.:

- criteria and qualifications
- serve in independent capacity
- interdisciplinary
- widespread and balanced participation (countries - developed/developing, all regions) and affiliations (governments, IGOs, NGOs, research institutions, private sector/users, holders of traditional knowledge,

Sourcing of materials

Quality assurance (data, traditional knowledge, expert groups, grey literature,...)

Treatment of uncertainty

Treatment of dissent

Review process

- expert peer review
- intergovernmental review
- timing

Acceptance/adoption/approval of products

C. Arrangements for capacity-building and networking (to plan and carry out assessments)

II. For any individual assessment, Best Practices in the pre-assessment stage, during the assessment, and in the post-assessment stage

(If an assessment is not part of an established assessment process, who initiates is another important question.)

A. Pre-assessment stage, agree on:

1. Context/Framing

- a. Objectives, Scope/Conceptual Framework¹ (geographic scale and thematic coverage) and Outline
 - b. Target Audience(s), including relevant policy-making levels and intergovernmental body(ies)
2. Organization
 - a. Governance mechanism (composition, terms of reference)
 - b. b. Methods and tools, including use of scenarios/projections
 - c. c. Realizing linkages with other contemporary assessment processes
 - d. Organization, work plan/schedule and budget for drafting, review process, and production of reports, bearing in mind timeliness vis-à-vis the policy cycle
 - e. timing and nature of government involvement, including in the review process
 - f. timing and modalities for participation by non-official stakeholders
 3. Arrangements to catalogue/preserve/maintain data and information (reports, papers, graphics material) for use in future assessments

B. During the assessment

1. Ongoing communications/interactions with policymakers and other stakeholders, including determining a communications strategy and appropriate outputs (form) for each target audience well in advance of report release
2. Capacity building and networking

C. Post-assessment stage

1. Communicating findings to policymakers
2. Communicating findings to other target audiences and stakeholders
3. Ensuring public availability of data, reports, etc.
4. Cataloguing/Maintaining data and information for use in future assessments
5. Review/Evaluation of the effectiveness of the assessment

¹ Assessments can be designed to be narrow or broad in thematic coverage and can be undertaken at different geographic scales. There is no 'right' scope rather; the scope depends on purpose, target audience(s), and other factors. Assessments usually cover the impacts of one or more human activities on the marine environment/ecosystems, but they may also cover (i) technical aspects, like evaluation of alternative response measures that could be applied to particular problems and their potential outcomes; (ii) the effects of environmental change on human wellbeing; (iii) the effectiveness of policies adopted including possible transfer of problems from one part of the ocean to another.

Second Meeting of the Group of Experts for the start-up phase, Assessment of Assessments of the Regular process for the global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects

Terms of Reference for the GESAMP Task Team

Introduction and background

1 In November 2005, UNGA Resolution A/60/30 launched the start-up phase, or the Assessment of Assessments (AofA), of the UN Regular Process for the global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects. Later, in December 2006, the 61st session of the UN General Assembly urged the Ad Hoc Steering Group to complete the AofA within two years. UNEP and IOC of UNESCO were appointed to jointly lead the Assessment of Assessments.

2 In March 2007, the Group of Experts (GoE) for the AofA was convened for its first meeting, having been selected and approved by the Ad Hoc Steering Group. During this meeting, an overall working approach for the AofA was discussed and developed (see Box 1). The GoE also developed an annotated outline of the AofA, a work plan and timetable, as well as templates that will be used in the analysis of the individual marine assessments.

3 The AofA constitutes a thorough review of the assessment landscape for oceans and coasts, evaluating the current assessments on the regional and global level, in an attempt to distil best practices and suggest a framework for the UN Regular Process. For this purpose, the world has been divided into 21 regions that are individually addressed by the GoE. In addition, a number of supra-regional issues have been identified (fisheries, shipping, etc.).

4 In September 2007, GESAMP received a request from the lead agencies to contribute to the AofA, by conducting *a specific review of existing global and regional marine assessments related to marine pollution, including ship-based pollution and atmospheric inputs to the ocean*. GESAMP has responded positively to this request, and has set up a Task Team to address this issue.

5 GESAMP's contribution has been discussed by the Group, the lead agencies and the Group of Experts of the AofA, as well as the GESAMP Task Team. This has led to the formulation of the following terms of reference:

Terms of reference

6 On behalf of GESAMP, the Task Team will provide input to Phase 1 and 2 of the AofA process as requested by the lead agencies, as follows:

.1 Focus on marine pollution, including ship-based pollution and atmospheric inputs, in the open ocean (see below);

.2 Include an analysis of current assessments, reviews, syntheses and studies, as available. The analysis will address, in particular, coverage and gaps (geographically and thematically) and overall relevance to a Regular Process.

.3 Adhere to the extent possible the methodological guidelines and time-line establish by the GoE;

.4 In completing its analysis of the assessment landscape, the Team will attempt to summarize its findings on an ocean basin basis (see below), taking into account the criteria listed in Annex II and III of the Report of the First Meeting of the Group of Experts.

Definition of ‘Open Ocean’

7 The Team’s definition of ‘Open Ocean’ includes ocean areas where the water depth exceeds 200m around the boundaries of the major continental land masses. This definition excludes the marginal enclosed and semi-enclosed seas, but includes all ocean regions bordering lesser island systems regardless of water depth. Because atmospheric inputs are largely dependent on the nature of sources in the adjoining land masses, and because there will be little atmospheric exchange across the equator unless the atmospheric lifetime of a contaminant is greater than approximately one year, the Team has sub-divided the global ocean into the major ocean basins (Pacific, Atlantic, Indian) and further into the northern and southern hemispheric portions of those basins (see annex).
