

Accelerating Progress on Healthy and Productive Oceans

A summary of expert perspectives from the SDG
Leadership Forum on Goal 14: Life Below Water
From Nomad Foods - MSC - GlobeScan

April 2019





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A summary of expert perspectives from the 2018 Nomad Foods-MSC-GlobeScan SDG Leadership Forum on Goal 14: Life Below Water

On 28 November 2018, [GlobeScan](#), [Nomad Foods](#), and [MSC](#) brought together businesses, civil society, academia, and other stakeholders in different parts of the world to explore how we can protect and restore ocean biodiversity in the SDG Leadership Forum for Goal 14: Life Below Water.

More than **225** attendees

from **31** countries

3 hours of online, text discussion

892 individual comments

This global online, real-time, text-based discussion took place over the course of two sessions held at different points during the day. **Guest contributors**, from a range of backgrounds, acted as panellists to help facilitate a global dialogue. We were able to delve deeper into exploring how to accelerate progress on healthy and productive oceans as part of achieving SDG 14.

This report summarises what we heard across the discussions, identifies key challenges and possible solutions, and sets out priorities for action.

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Introduction

At GlobeScan, we believe leadership should inform, inspire, and help catalyse action to address each one of the 17 [Global Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). Our SDG Leadership Series is a set of online discussions that connects some of the world's leading and influential thinkers together. Our 6th SDG Leadership Series Forum was co-hosted with Nomad Foods and MSC, addressing SDG 14: Life Below Water. Our aim was three-fold: (1) to encourage collaboration and stimulate thinking, (2) to explore strategies to combat issues causing harm to our marine environments, and (3) to share ideas on how to promote ocean sustainability.

Concerted efforts, multistakeholder dialogues, and collective action are necessary for change, and our forums provide a space for global stakeholders to learn, inspire fresh thinking, and share best-practice examples to turn ideas into action. The examples shared with us during this forum were inspiring and demonstrated why effective collaboration is needed at all levels. Nomad Foods and MSC ended this forum by committing to new initiatives to accelerate positive impact on SDG 14.

Through listening to, engaging with, and responding to a variety of stakeholders worldwide, progress can be made to bring us one step closer to a 2030 where we can all live more sustainably while maintaining social and economic dignity.



Caroline Holme
Director, GlobeScan

Message from Nomad Foods

Sustainable fish and shellfish sourcing has been in our DNA for decades. It started some 20 years ago as a need to address an immediate issue, built on a fundamental understanding that if we want to secure sufficient raw materials of the right quality for the future, we need to take responsibility and act sustainably today.

We are currently the largest buyer of eco-labelled seafood globally with more than 90% of our raw material coming from sustainably or responsibly certified sources.

It's a great achievement and something we are immensely proud about. But, it has taken us 20 years to get there and as the world now experiences intensified planetary issues, led by but not exclusively about climate change, we all need to step up our actions. And we need to do it fast.

We have set ourselves a challenging target to use 100% certified fish and seafood by 2025. And to get there we are working collaboratively, with partners and businesses across the value chain including supporting fisheries and farms to transform and adapt more sustainable practices to become externally certified.

As the world population grows, the demand for food increases and we need to transform the way we produce and consume food.

Increasing the consumption of protein from seafood is fundamental as it is a nutritious and sustainable choice provided it comes from well-managed and certified sources. In that context, accelerating the transformation becomes even more crucial.

The issues and actions spelled out in this report, brought to life by the participants of the webinar, have our full attention. Besides working on securing more certified fisheries and farms, we are addressing the awareness issue and encouraging consumers to change their behaviour. We are also mapping additional steps based on the findings from this report and will do our part to accelerate the change toward achieving SDG 14 and secure the future of our oceans. Please join us.



Annelie Selander
Group Sustainability Director
Nomad Foods



Nomad Foods

Message from MSC

Fisheries are vital for food security, livelihoods, and the sustainable development of billions of people worldwide, and they are also inextricably linked to the health of our oceans. In 2014, fishery exports from developing countries were valued at US\$80 billion, higher than all other food commodities (including meat, rice, and sugar) combined. However, the protection of this resource is an ongoing challenge for the global community. Since 2009, the percentage of overfished stocks worldwide has hovered around 30 per cent, and poorly managed fisheries have contributed to the degradation of marine ecosystems around the world.

The sheer scale of our oceans makes SDG 14 (Life Below Water) one of the most complex and challenging of the SDGs to tackle, and this is perhaps behind the observed lack of progress to date.

The MSC and other credible standard setters have a key role to play in helping companies and governments to achieve the SDGs. We can provide best practice guidance for “what good looks like” in a specific industry and create roadmaps for action and indicators of success.

Over the last 20 years, the MSC has shown that it can be a part of the solution. We have demonstrated a concept that works: catalysing change on the water by building a market for sustainable seafood, certified to a robust and credible standard. We want to see more fisheries moving toward sustainability – particularly in developing countries, where there are significant challenges but fisheries are vital to food security and livelihoods.

We are proud to be globally recognised for our multi-stakeholder approach that helps turn diverse opinions into positive collaboration and continue to pursue our ambition to be a convenor for change and a champion of our oceans.



Nicholas Guichouz
Chief Program Officer
Marine Stewardship Council



Executive Summary

Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14: Life Below Water) aims to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development. As part of a wider series of GlobeScan Leadership Forums exploring each of the SDGs, Nomad Foods and the Marine Stewardship Council convened two forums to explore the issues that are slowing down progress on SDG14. Forums attracted over 220 seafood industry professionals and thought leaders from 31 countries. The online discussion was led by expert panellists and moderated by GlobeScan.

The discussion started broad with participants highlighting the threats to the ocean of greatest concern to them. The amount of importance placed on climate change, overfishing and pollution differs if you are a professional or a consumer. Professionals are most concerned with climate change and overfishing, while consumers are most concerned about pollution. This was attributed to “Life Below Water” being detached from most people’s reality and recent media focus on plastics. Consensus was that climate change is inherently more challenging and complex.

Progress on SDG14 has been slow relative to other SDGs. Two-thirds of participants indicated that they could not fully explain SDG14 to others; SDG14 is by nature “out-of-sight, out-of-mind”. It is described as a “Tragedy of the Commons”. The scale of the oceans and the transboundary nature of governing them has led to a lack of ownership of the issues and an absence of collaboration at a global scale. NGOs, charities and advocacy groups were seen as contributing the most to ocean conservation, followed by certification organisations and large companies or brands. Only one in ten saw national governments as contributing the most, yet international multi-stakeholder collaboration was seen as vital to progress. This includes driving global agreements, data sharing and collaborative financing.

The UN’s latest State of Fisheries and Aquaculture Report highlighted the global reliance on the global south for seafood supply. 81% of respondents believed the developed world needs to ease pressure on the global south. Nearly 60% of participants believe that standard setters should raise the bar, but paradoxically participants believe that sustainability programs such as the MSC are out of reach for most developing world fisheries.

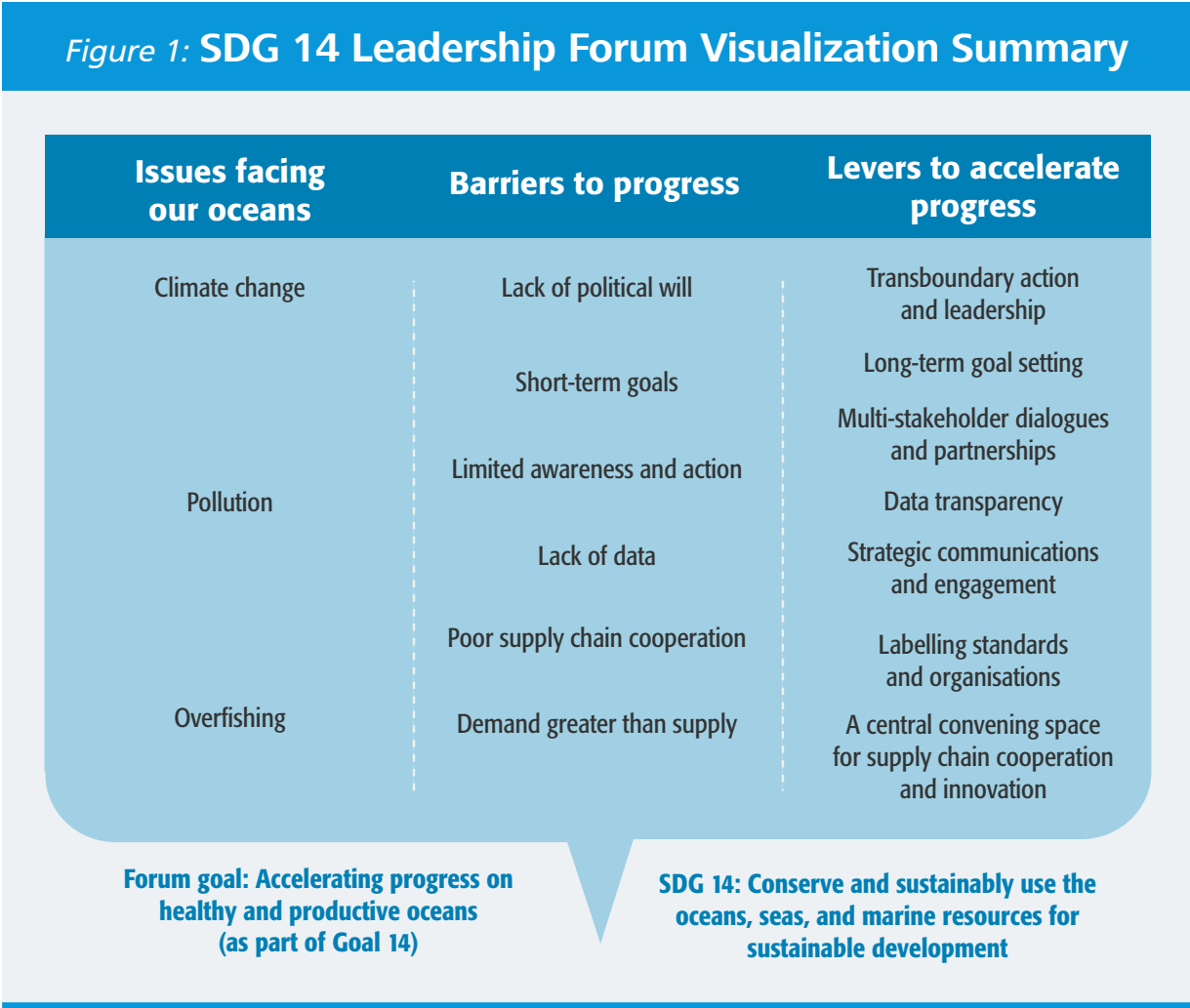
The way forward is clear—in order to change trajectory and accelerate action, we need nothing short of an “Ocean Awakening.” Cross-border dialogue and co-creation must be fostered, along with organisational transformation and international global governance of our oceans.



Effective partnerships and multi-stakeholder initiatives that bring industry, academia, government, and civil society together in meaningful dialogues that result in effective collective action is essential for solving our problems. Every one of the problems we need to solve to address SDG 14 could benefit from some honest conversations about existing partnerships and how they could be enhanced or re-imagined.

– **Steve Hall**, Avalerion Capital

The figure below summarises the outcomes from our SDG 14 Leadership Forum:



Part 1 – Issues Facing Our Oceans

i) An “Unholy Trinity”

The threats to the oceans that are of greatest concern to our experts and participants were climate change, pollution, and overfishing. Thinking specifically around why progress has been slow in achieving SDG 14’s aims, these core issues were discussed. Participants concluded that they are interconnected to such an extent that a more holistic approach to address them all is needed going forward.

“ *All these issues need to be addressed in parallel at the global, national, and local community level. [They are] all interrelated and demand a change in our economic model and way of life.*

– **Stevenson Tan**, WorkPlace Services Hub Leader, Dow Chemical, Shanghai, China

Climate Change, Pollution and Overfishing¹

Forum participants indicated that climate change is the most challenging issue facing our oceans today, but its effects are so multi-faceted and far-reaching that solutions should be addressed on a global scale.

“ *There are no easy threats to address—and climate change (as noted) is the hardest by far. However, ending overfishing and managing fish stocks/populations is entirely possible and achievable—and would have measurable and profound impacts in achievement of SDGs as well as the issues raised with respect to human impacts such as labour and trafficking.*

– **Amanda Nickson**, The Pew Charitable Trusts

Pollution and overfishing also threaten our marine ecosystems, undermining national and regional efforts to manage fisheries sustainably and disrupting endeavours to conserve marine life. However, forum participants believe the effects are more manageable and controllable, given the pre-existing tools that are in place (and which are proving to be successful) to curb the threats posed. They also suggest localised approaches to help tackle these issues.

¹These issues cover the concept of “Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.”

Interconnectedness

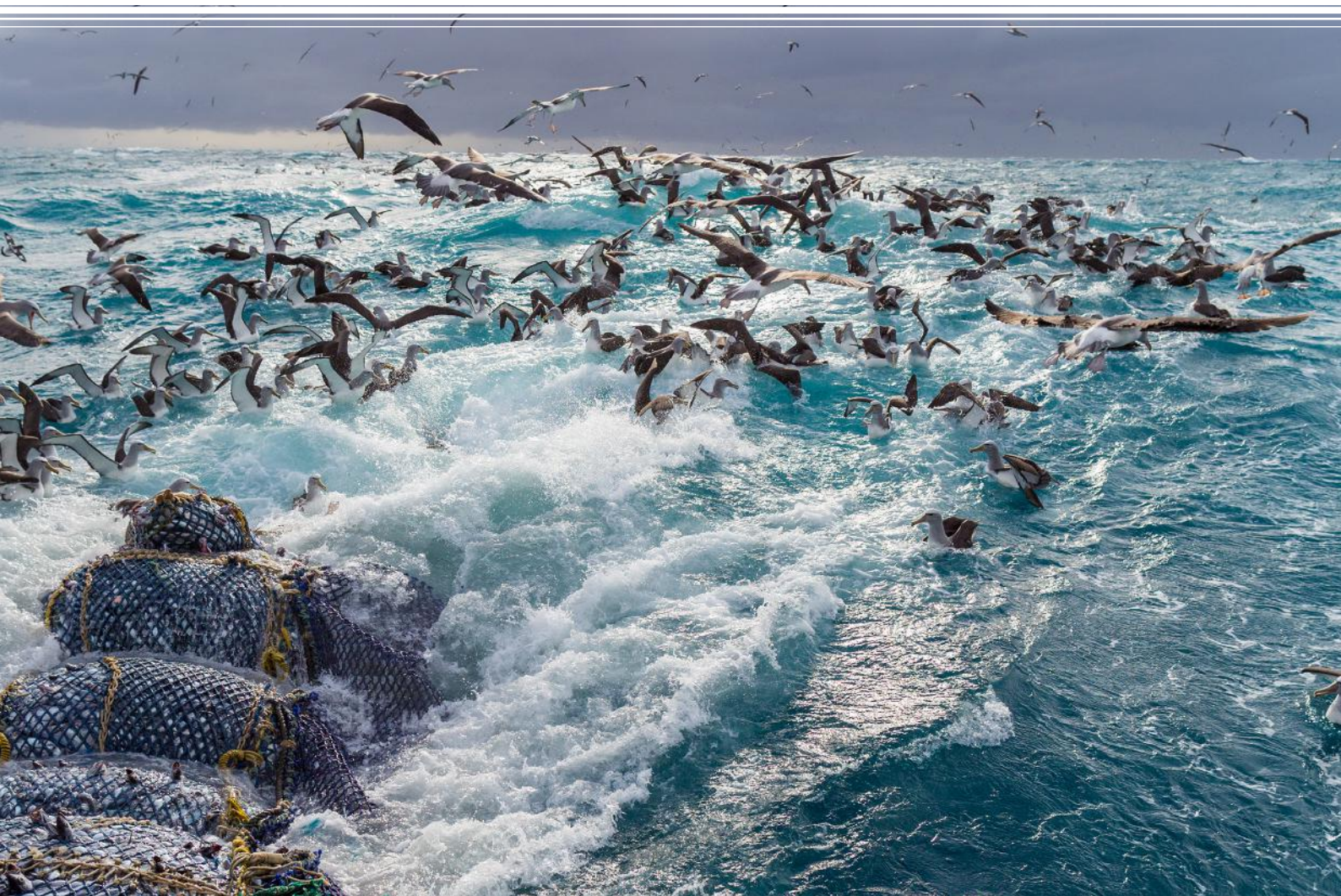
Forum participants say that because these issues are so tightly interconnected, forming an “**unholy trinity**,” they are best managed using a holistic approach that links the land to the sea in order to mitigate risks. For example, preventing overfishing will contribute to ocean health, biodiversity and resilience, and this will in turn reduce the impact of other stressors.

“ *Climate change is the most pressing of all, yet hardest to mitigate. Climate change can directly impact the fisheries including marine habitat destruction. It will also generate bio-pollutants such as algal blooms and weather-triggered pollutant release from land-based sources.*

– **Stevenson Tan**, WorkPlace Services Hub Leader, Dow Chemical, Shanghai, China

KEY TAKEAWAY

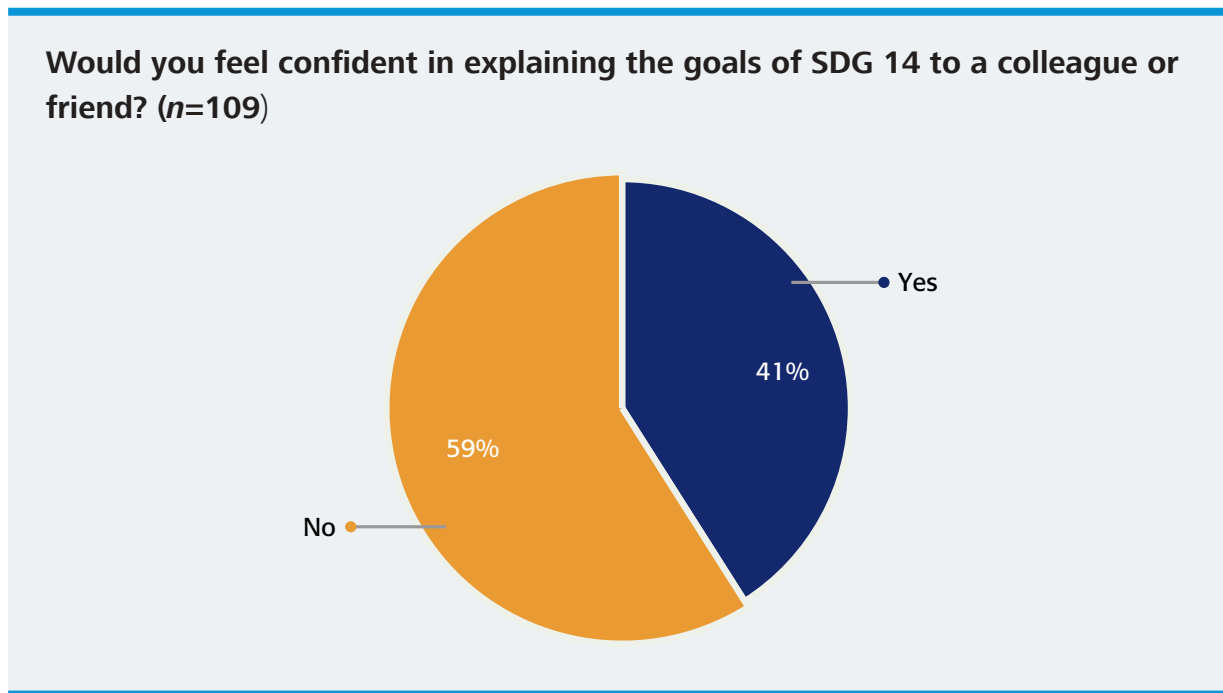
The amount of importance placed on these issues differs if you are a professional or a consumer. Professionals are most concerned with climate change and overfishing, while consumers are most concerned about pollution and its effects. The challenges and issues plaguing our oceans and life underwater are so interrelated that an approach at the global, national, and local levels is necessary.



ii) A Hidden Problem

How confident are you in explaining the goals of SDG 14 to a colleague or friend?

We asked our forum participants this question, and nearly two-thirds indicated they did not know enough about it to explain it confidently to others.



So why is this the case? Progress has been slow for a variety of reasons. Fundamentally, SDG 14 is an international problem that requires widescale cooperation, but is not treated as such because it is by nature **“out-of-sight, out-of-mind”**. Our experts suggest the following are important factors to make progress on this SDG:

- Greater economic and transboundary commitment;
- More exposure and education;
- Global cooperation.

Barrier 1: National vs. Global Priorities

Individual countries do not possess the **political will** to properly prioritise sustainability issues on a national level. This is believed to be a result of thinking only about short-term gains. Our forum experts recognise that governments should be prioritising long-term sustainable goals to effectively tackle ocean pollution. Greater media attention on these issues can further the call for change, and encourage better monitoring.

“ *Largely due to a lack of political will to make real changes at country level. Fishing is often governed by short-term thinking for political and economic reasons. Pollution at national and regional level often lacks attention in media.*

– **Gunnstein Bakke**, Senior Legal Adviser, Directorate of Fisheries

Forum experts also recognise that **national economic growth** contributes to the lack of attention on ocean issues. For instance, as countries become wealthier they develop in areas of health, nutrition, poverty, and education—however, ocean issues become less of a priority. Forum experts outlined the potential of transboundary action as a means to drive commitment, collaboration, and better regulation. Transboundary action will require a centralised system and market-based programmes, with each stakeholder playing their part to enforce and monitor behaviour.

“ *The open ocean has long been characterised as the **wild west**—remote, lawless...*

– **Sarah Bladen**, Communications and Outreach Director, Global Fishing Watch

Barrier 2: The Knowledge Gap

The vast size and many unknowns of our oceans make it harder for us to establish an emotional connection. Our assumption that ocean health is “a given” has to change, and we should instead be more conscious of the effort required to protect and manage the oceans². We need to establish a better “connection” between people and the sea. The threats to the oceans and business/public awareness³ are best supported with global media coverage (remember the UK’s Blue Planet?). This can help to empower businesses and consumers so they make more sustainable choices.

“ *I think healthy oceans are generally taken way too much for granted. Marine plastics and marine pollution has got a huge amount of media coverage globally in 2018, so it will be interesting to see what impact this has. I believe it is already helping to drive faster action by focusing businesses and governments on this and other ocean challenges.*

– **Keith Kenny**, Vice President, Sustainability, McDonald’s Corporation

²Tracy Cambridge of Thai Union summed this up well: “Our level of understanding of ‘what lies beneath’ is limited, we have all heard the analogy that we know more about the surface of the moon than we do the ocean.”

³Information shared by Alex Webb, Senior Marketing Manager, Marine Stewardship Council, United Kingdom.

It was also felt that the **complex nature of ocean science and a lack of supporting data** impede our understanding and decision-making on what actions are most beneficial.

“ *Lack of data is a key issue... Our data on ocean uses has historically been sparse and low quality, particularly data for fisheries. However, the next five years will bring an inflection point for fish data. It will revolutionise both our understanding and governance of our blue planet.*

– **Sarah Bladen**, Communications and Outreach Director, Global Fishing Watch

Participants from our forum suggested that complex, global issues can be broken down into smaller, more manageable problems. Actions can then be better targeted, measured, and monitored. Access to resources, sharing of data, and stronger cooperation from all stakeholders will enable greater efficiency.

“ *Our oceans are suffering from many issues, most created by mankind, making the solution very complex. We need to address them but we need to break it down into manageable and addressable problems to tackle.*

– **Florian Baumann**, Quality Manager, Nomad Foods

Barrier 3: Competition vs. Collaboration

On the commercial front, **competition among fisheries** encourages the pursuit of financial gains at the expense of progressing SDG 14. Our experts observed that the commercial reasons for sustainable initiatives are typically successful, but are not well communicated. Mutually beneficial outcomes should be communicated to fisheries, and partnering with relevant stakeholders will assist in getting the message across. However, there is a “**tragedy of the commons**”, where self-interest is impeding attempts to drive collective change. International, multi-stakeholder collaboration can effectively address this issue. By getting the right stakeholders “in the room” to tackle SDG 14 collaboratively, outcomes will be appropriate to accelerate action.

“ *There is not always a clear will to meet the goals of SDG 14, in part because we are trying to manage the tragedy of the commons. Many of the targets within SDG 14 require large-scale collaboration across governments, business, and civil society...*

– **Darian McBain**, Global Director of Sustainable Development, Thai Union

KEY TAKEAWAY

Life below water is a concept far detached from reality. A greater degree of collective action is required to drive change. Transboundary policies and monitoring can prevent high levels of illegal fishing and encourage producer responsibility. Multi-stakeholder dialogues, international cooperation, and data sharing play an important role for understanding the complex nature of ocean science, and supporting sustainable decision-making. Effective communication calls for issues to be broken down into “bite-sized” pieces to empower actors and drive calls for action.

iii) An Issue of Scale or Regulation?

“ *Feeding the world as the global population approaches 9 billion people is a global challenge, and one that will require both small- and large-scale fisheries (as well as **aquaculture**). The key will be to manage them all sustainably and as a continuum, rather than tackling them as disparate issues.*

– **Darian McBain**, Global Director of Sustainable Development, Thai Union

Sustainability is not correlated to the size of a fishery: small scale does not necessarily mean that a fishery will have a smaller environmental footprint. Both large- and small-scale fishing can be sustainable or unsustainable depending on many factors and the consensus from our forum experts was that all fisheries should be operating sustainably regardless of their size.

“ *Generally more is known about the larger-scale fisheries relative to their smaller counterparts. But the solutions for small-scale fisheries are more intractable; they typically involve larger numbers of individuals or vessels, are poorer and often more disadvantaged, may have complex livelihood strategies not entirely dependent on fisheries, and can be politically less influential. Neither are necessarily more sustainable. Sustainability is not a factor of scale, but of fishing effort being in excess of what stocks can sustain. Small-scale fishing can in aggregate be unsustainable.*

– **Chris Ninnes**, Aquaculture Stewardship Council

Our experts recognised that, when trying to increase the uptake of responsible practices in fisheries, scale of operation and context are important factors. Small-scale fisheries are more complex compared to their larger counterparts and there are often a large number of individuals and vessels dispersed across a wide area (leading to difficulties in monitoring). They also tend to be poorer financially and in terms of data, lack government support and they have less awareness of ocean sustainability. Large-scale fisheries, on the other hand, face enforcement issues due to the transboundary (offshore) nature of their operation, making it harder to regulate compliance across borders. To turn inertia into action, regulatory and contextual management solutions must reflect these differences.

“ *Small-scale fisheries can sometimes fall under the radar when it comes to regulation. We need to ensure they have the correct support in terms of education and investment to make changes to more sustainable practices.* ”

– **Emma Whittet**, Consultant, Ricardo EE, United Kingdom

KEY TAKEAWAY

The issue of sustainability and fisheries is one of political complexity and lack of contextualisation. A common language needs to be established for different sized fisheries to ensure impact at an international scale. Solutions must be contextualised to better reflect the scale of a fishery's operation: greater cooperation in the management of large-scale fisheries is needed and more investment to understand, inform and map small-scale fisheries is key.



Part 2 – A New International Architecture

“ *I remain an optimist despite the enormity of the challenges. There is no silver bullet—we need policy reform, radical in some places, we need proper enforcement, monitoring and control, we need awareness raising—critical role for the NGOs and without doubt, market-based programmes that connect producers and consumers through traceable supply chains for sustainable seafood choices.*

– **Rupert Howes**, Chief Executive, MSC

It's clear that to ensure progress on SDG 14 we need to move the current system to be more sustainable, with **strategically directed sustainability initiatives** that encourage **multi-stakeholder collaborations**. Our experts identified several of these (some of which have already taken place successfully⁴), but suggested there is a nervousness around committing to them because of the following problems:

- Political will (or the lack of);
- Absent conversations around cost sharing (or raising prices of final products);
- Lack of market rewards supporting sustainable practices;
- The transboundary nature of fishing operations; and
- An absence of honest conversations around existing partnerships and how they could be enhanced or re-imagined to drive real change.

i) Initiatives to Drive Action

“ *It is an incredibly exciting time, we have reached a tipping point and we should use this momentum as a driver for change.*

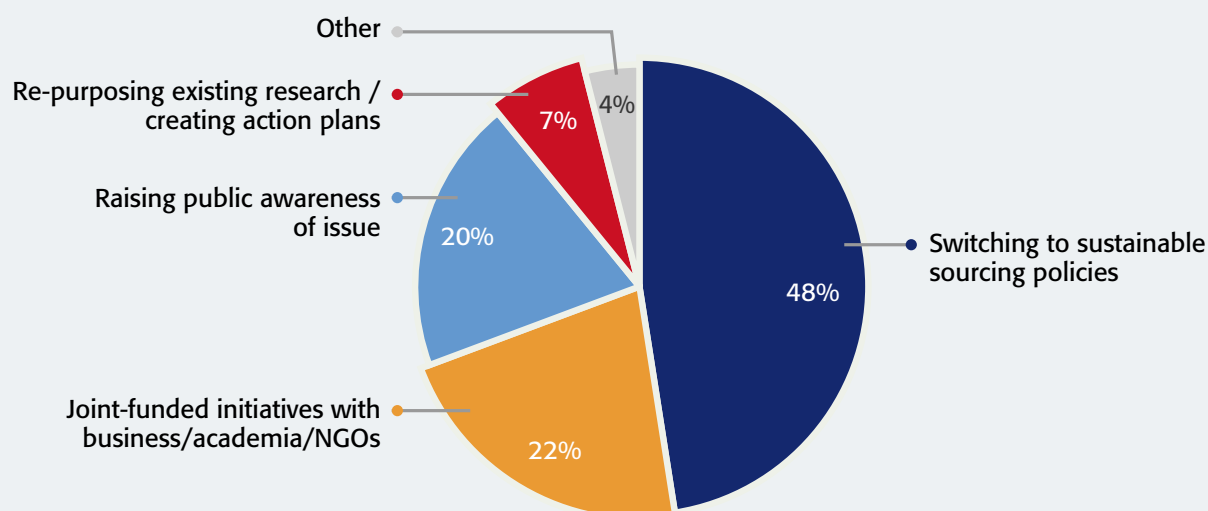
– **Joe Stead**, Spur Corporation

The focus of this part of the forum was on local/regional and upcoming solutions that may be at a small scale currently, but will play an important role in making the most impact in the long term.

Participants believe that businesses switching to sustainable sourcing policies will be most effective for progressing SDG 14. Collaborative investing along with improving public awareness are also seen as key contributors.

⁴ Information shared by Lucy Erickson, Science Communications Manager, Marine Stewardship Council United Kingdom.

Which of the following do you believe would be the most effective in helping progress SDG 14? (n=105)



Our forum participants suggested, however, that any of the (proposed) initiatives should occur together to have the greatest effect.

Sustainable Sourcing Policies

Experts agreed that global initiatives like the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and Port State Measures are paramount for progression, along with international intervention at a larger scale. When considering the complexity of the challenge at hand, they conclude that we need to see a greater number of multi-stakeholder transformation initiatives, like the small-scale fisheries guidelines Blue Growth and Fishery Improvement Projects.

Collaborative Investing

There is potential to attract substantial resources from the private sector⁵ but greater collaboration, in particular with the government, and advocacy are needed to drive the change required. Experts agreed that raising awareness on the issues and sharing data amongst stakeholders *can* improve management and efficiency. Cross-cutting the SDGs (such as SDG 17 on Partnerships for the Goals) is another useful collaborative exercise in the interest of progressing Life Below Water, along with better NGO alignment and market-based programmes.

⁵ Information shared by Niels Haakman, Director, Pan Ocean Aquaculture, Netherlands.

Improved Public Awareness

“ *From a consumer’s point of view, labelling (like MSC) is really helpful. The supply chain is too complex and the factors influencing species choice are too varied to assess whether fish are sustainable or not when in the supermarket. A trusted label like MSC is a “shortcut” that helps me make sustainable choices.*

– **Clare Baker**, Director, True Leadership United Kingdom

Initiatives like [The Ocean Cleanup](#) and [Blue Planet](#) are useful as they create a sense of **urgency** among consumers, which is required to drive behaviour change. Our experts also felt that sharing best practice by **organisations** is an important enabler to raise consumer awareness of the issues.

They thought that **we need to simplify the actions consumers have to take**, however, so that they can understand what products are sustainably sourced and responsibly farmed. This is important for building brand awareness and trust between consumers and businesses, and will help drive demand for sustainable products. Clearer guidance should be provided with clearer labelling on products and consistent messaging from all stakeholders.

“ *It’s all about making people feeling affected. Pure “theoretical” environmental education reaches the mind, but not the heart, and hence is limited. People change their behaviours when they feel they can make a change and that they will benefit on a personal level. We learned that making people participate (e.g., beach clean-ups) does make people think more deeply about their personal role...*

– **Fabian Ritter**, Whale and Dolphin Conservation

KEY TAKEAWAY

Impactful initiatives range from global agreements to local action, but clarity in communication is key. Initiatives creating awareness and a sense of urgency are highly relevant, and our discussion suggests there is a call for stronger engagement and commitment from governments and the private sector, given that international collaboration is key for long-term success.

Figure 2: Key Initiatives for Long-Term Success



ii) Effective Collaboration

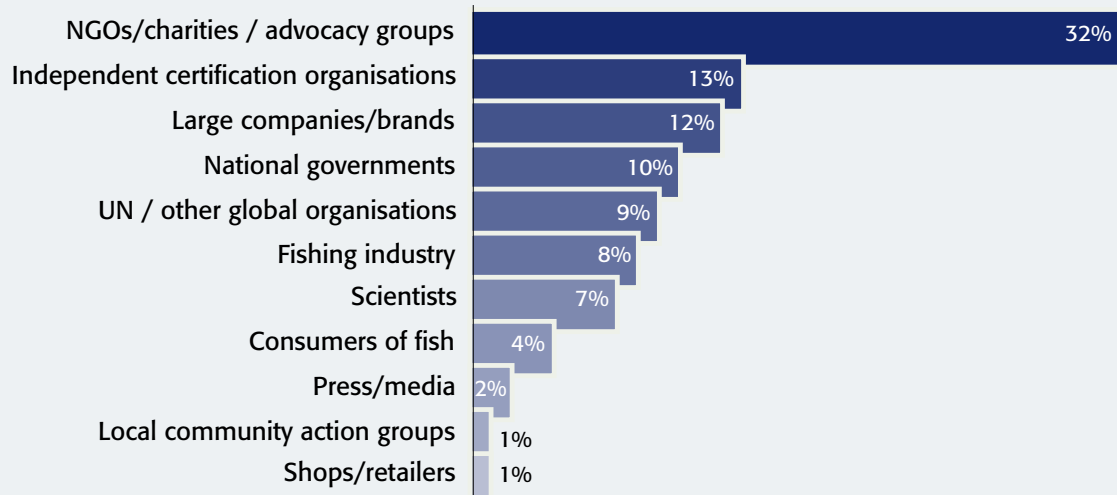
“ *Having an open discussion among stakeholders will always be a good start, we might not initially agree on a solution, but the discussion will eventually help identify solutions. It is called Network Intelligence.*

– **Alex Olsen**, Head of Sustainability, Espersen

Changing interrelated systems seems an impossible task for individuals, so collaboration is required to achieve progress. Many of the targets set for SDG 14 require large-scale collaboration across governments, business, and civil society, but who is currently doing the most?

We posed this question to participants during our forum, and the poll results showed that NGOs/charities and advocacy groups are perceived as contributing most to protecting the ocean environment. Certification organisations and large companies and brands were also seen to play a role, but to a lesser extent.

Which one of the following institutions is contributing most to protecting the ocean environment? (n=89)



Going forward, our forum experts and participants suggested three types of collaboration are required for ocean sustainability: transboundary policy; consumer engagement; supporting the Developing World. In each a different composition of actors (the architects of change) have different roles to play. Forum participants then discussed how individual roles could be improved to accelerate action.

Transboundary Collaboration

The important role of **NGOs** was strongly noted in the discussion; they have the ability to *raise awareness* amongst relevant stakeholder groups to move global dialogues forward. They also have the power to join forces with others in areas of consensus, and they are effective at *supporting* fisheries and getting businesses to take action.

“ *I think there are perhaps two lenses at work here—national governments have the scale to contribute, but NGOs are perhaps more effective in pushing the issues, and pushing them up the public and business agendas.*

– **Richard Stobart**, Head of Marketing, Marine Stewardship Council, UK

Labelling and standards organisations are key for *connecting* producers with end consumers, and can harness market forces to promote sustainable production and consumption. Our forum participants said this has not always been the case—competing organisations previously used different terminology that caused confusion among consumers. They realised that consumers need to be provided with clear and consistent claims and terminology to help them identify sustainable options. As a result, coalitions were formed, like the Sustainable Seafood Coalition, to agree on what should be used.

“ *UK industry stakeholders agreed they weren’t providing clear choices to consumers through their labelling—especially where voluntary environmental claims were concerned. That’s why they collaborated to form the Sustainable Seafood Coalition, a group under which they agree to use claims of “sustainability” and “responsibility” in a clear, consistent manner across competitors, backed up by meaningful sourcing commitments.*

– **Oliver Tanqueray**, Sustainable Seafood Coalition Coordinator, ClientEarth, UK

To continue to support and enable those working toward the goal of certification, our experts propose labelling and standards organisations have a role to play to enhance “on-the-ground progress,” i.e., their outreach to smaller-scale fisheries and collaborations with governments to reduce certification costs whilst supporting collaborative auditing and data sharing.

According to our discussion, **businesses** should take on a leadership role to ensure full supply chain traceability, when choosing who to work with (e.g., collaborating only with sustainable partners) and committing to sustainable sourcing. This will require greater communication across the value chain to review, for example, outputs or waste and how to add value and quality. Participants agreed that retailers and manufacturers have a greater role to play to endorse sustainable seafood products to prevent a “race-to-the-bottom” approach where companies source from wherever is cheapest, rather than where is most sustainable, transparent and regulated. Collaboration will be needed to share the costs.

“ *For any responsible business, full traceability in the supply chain plays an important role. For seafood, this is not only important for the environment but also hygiene and working conditions.*

– **Tracy Cambridge**, Thai Union

Partnerships with technology firms are also necessary, as they can help businesses commit to more sustainable management practices.

“ *Blockchain-type initiatives making supply chains fully transparent. Consumers are already becoming more demanding in knowing the “story” behind the food on their plate.*

– **Niels Haakman**, Director, Pan Ocean Aquaculture, Netherlands

Finally, **governments** are critical actors for all partnerships. Without their buy-in making effective progress on Goal 14 will be impossible. However, our experts noted that first they have to engage more on broader conversations around ocean issues. Inter-country collaboration is also necessary to support countries struggling with high levels of illegal fishing and ineffective fisheries monitoring. An understanding of localised issues and working in partnerships with NGOs and fishery management councils can fundamentally change the way fishing takes place.

Consumer Education

It was felt that consumers should continue to review their needs and demands on resources, but **labelling and standards organisations** are important to help educate consumers and simplify actions for them to take—they provide clear guidance to help identify more sustainable options, as well as understanding what “sustainable labels” stand for. Standards and labelling organisations have used the “emotion + evidence + reassurance” formula to engage with consumers. Our experts find that this method is most effective when there are trust deficiencies and transparency gaps with brands.

Technology can provide businesses and consumers with data that is accurate, transparent, and in real time. Our forum experts believe **governments** should invest in technologies that can better evaluate the bigger picture around ocean issues.

The forum participants raised the idea that **consumers** also need to be better at educating themselves around SDG 14. Connecting with organisations like MSC and NGOs will assist with this. Being educated will empower them to be more active in terms of demanding what they need to help them make more sustainable choices at supermarkets.

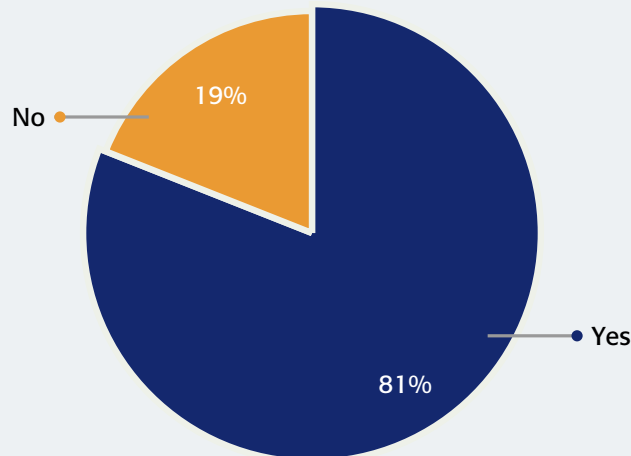
“ *Consumers, all of us, demand sustainable seafood choices. The market—make commitments on sourcing, join MSC’s 2020 leaders for a living ocean.*

– **Rupert Howes**, Chief Executive, MSC

Support for the Developing World

A collective effort that contributes to government policy is important, but our experts agreed that **national governments** have to become more engaged in broader conversations—in particular, those concerning small-scale fisheries in the developing world and ways to incorporate fisheries in the context of rural development. According to our poll, the vast majority of participants felt that the developed world has to do more to reduce the demand it puts on the developing world's seafood supplies. They suggest that government intervention is key, and more conversations between both developed and developing countries are needed to establish how we can all move towards becoming more sustainable.

Should the developed world do more to reduce the demand it puts on the developing world's seafood supplies? (n=72)



Experts feel that **fishers** should be more involved in the decision-making process. If they are, they can make sure their interests are considered in policy making. Regional fisheries management organisations need to support government and introduce harvest control rules. Our experts also suggest they collaborate with standards organisations to prevent illegal fishing.

“ *As for the future, we are committed to working with suppliers and the fishing sector to move all wild caught fish we use to certified, and are actively co-leading improvement programmes with the aim of transforming fisheries over the years. It involves working collectively with fisheries, standard owners, retailers, and consumers to secure we transform the market toward a position where sustainable practices are standard, and not the exception.*

– **Andrew Papachrysou**, Procurement Director, Nomad Foods

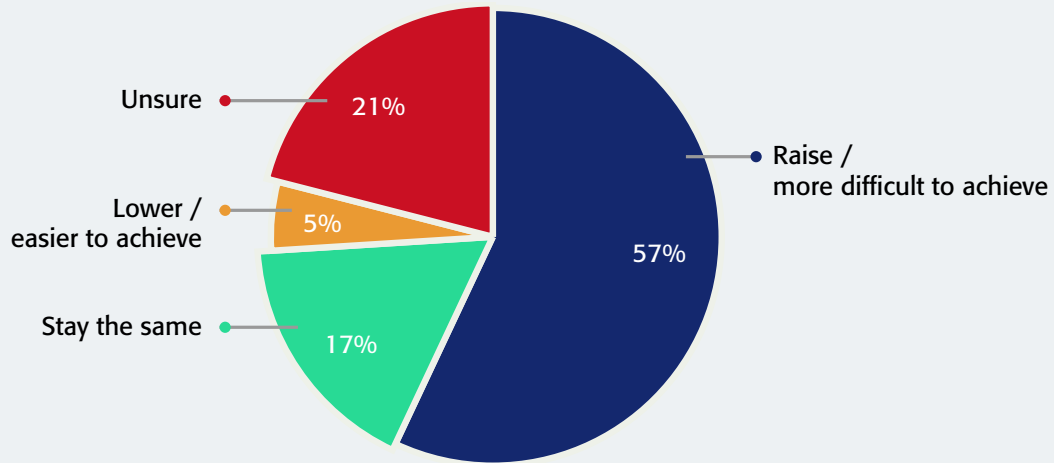
Standards are applicable around the world. **Labelling and standards organisations** have assisted governments with compliance suggestions and they set clear targets and give third-party recognition to fisheries. They can also place more pressure on governments to formulate and enforce policies that focus on fisheries that may otherwise be overlooked. They should be expanding their reach to those players who are data deficient or who operate in unregulated areas.

“ *MSC standard requires more than most developed fisheries management regimes at government level can deliver. The problem of overfishing at global level will not be dealt with by standards, but they play an important role in putting pressure on improvements.*

– **Gunnstein Bakke**, Senior Legal Adviser, Directorate of Fisheries, Norway

Our experts were concerned with the amount of time spent discussing the intricate details of a certification standard. Instead, they felt that more effort should be focused on how to assist in the progression of the SDG 14 going forward. Nearly 60 percent of our poll participants felt that labelling and standards organisations need to raise the bar in order to achieve SDG 14.

Should labelling and standards organisations raise or lower their bar in order to help achieve the SDG 14 goals? (n=42)



Finally, our forum experts would like to see standards organisations collaborate with governments and fishery member organisations to design a more credible pathway, with transition points, to ensure steady progress amongst fisheries and more actors to achieve higher standards.

“ *Government needs to be invited as reproductive system to replicate the successful model in mass upscaling. This way, greater impact can be visible.*

– **Susan Raj**, Amarasha Ent. Pvt. Ltd.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Collaboration is key for accelerating progress on SDG 14. Long-term success requires three forms of collaboration, each with a different composition of stakeholders:

- (1) **Transboundary collaboration** to operationalise outcomes from global dialogues and move toward action, whilst tracking and reporting on outcomes;
- (2) **Consumer education** to encourage sustainable choices and empower individuals and organisations; and
- (3) **Support for the Developing World** from governments in developed countries, to act on illegal fishing and ineffective fisheries monitoring.

Figure 3: Levers to Accelerate Progress

Transboundary collaboration

NGOs, standards organisations, business, governments

Accelerating progress on healthy and productive oceans (as part of Goal 14)

Consumer education

Standards organisations, governments, consumers

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development

Support for the Developing World

Governments, standards organisations, fisheries



Part 3 – Recommendations for Progress



The key is to see this as a partnership. We all want the same thing—sustainable and healthy oceans...

– **Michael Kaiser**, Chief Science & Standards Officer, Marine Stewardship Council

The key learnings from this forum shape the recommendations for what actions we should take to accelerate progress on SDG 14. They cover four areas: multi-country action, continued dialogue, data sharing, and leadership and partnerships.

Multi-country action⁶

- An international movement and political will at a national level are both needed to gain traction.
- Governments must be held accountable and demand progress on delivery.
- Building multi-stakeholder partnerships with governments must be mandatory going forward; we need (1) industry to support the development of appropriate regulatory action and governance, and (2) public-private relationships to scale innovative financing, providing opportunities to turn innovation into action.
- Incentives for all stakeholders along the value chain need to be clear. Personal, social, corporate, and international benefits should be communicated and leveraged.

Continued dialogue

- Strategic communication and engagement remain critical; stakeholders must remain engaged and aware of issues affecting our oceans if they are to take action.
- Providing simple understandable messages to motivate sustainable choices will empower stakeholders to take responsibility for their actions.
- Continued education of consumers remains a key point of action; connecting the ocean to their hearts will help drive the right behaviour.
- A central convening space is necessary to enable a greater range of stakeholders to connect, share, and develop initiatives collaboratively and in a transboundary way.

⁶ SDG 14 Indicator 14.c.1 “Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting, and implementing through legal, policy, and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources.”

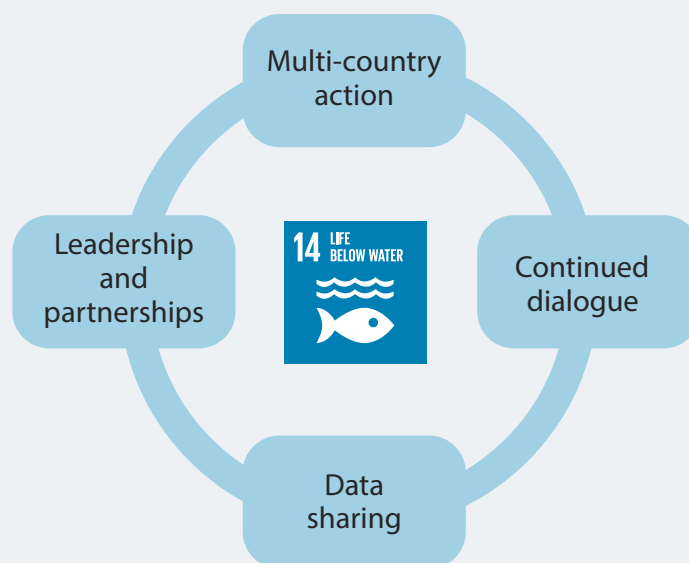
Data sharing⁷

- Sharing of data is an important building block to curb illegal fishing and inform certification standards in a meaningful way.
- Building trust and advocacy among relevant stakeholders through better data transparency is needed.
- Technology will play a key role in transboundary collaboration, and for improving governance, monitoring and cooperation between stakeholders.

Leadership and partnerships⁸

- Business must assume a leadership role, setting goals and building partnerships related to SDG 14 in a pre-competitive fashion.
- Communication around best practise should be increased to make commitments achievable for all.

Figure 4: Recommendations for Progress on SDG 14

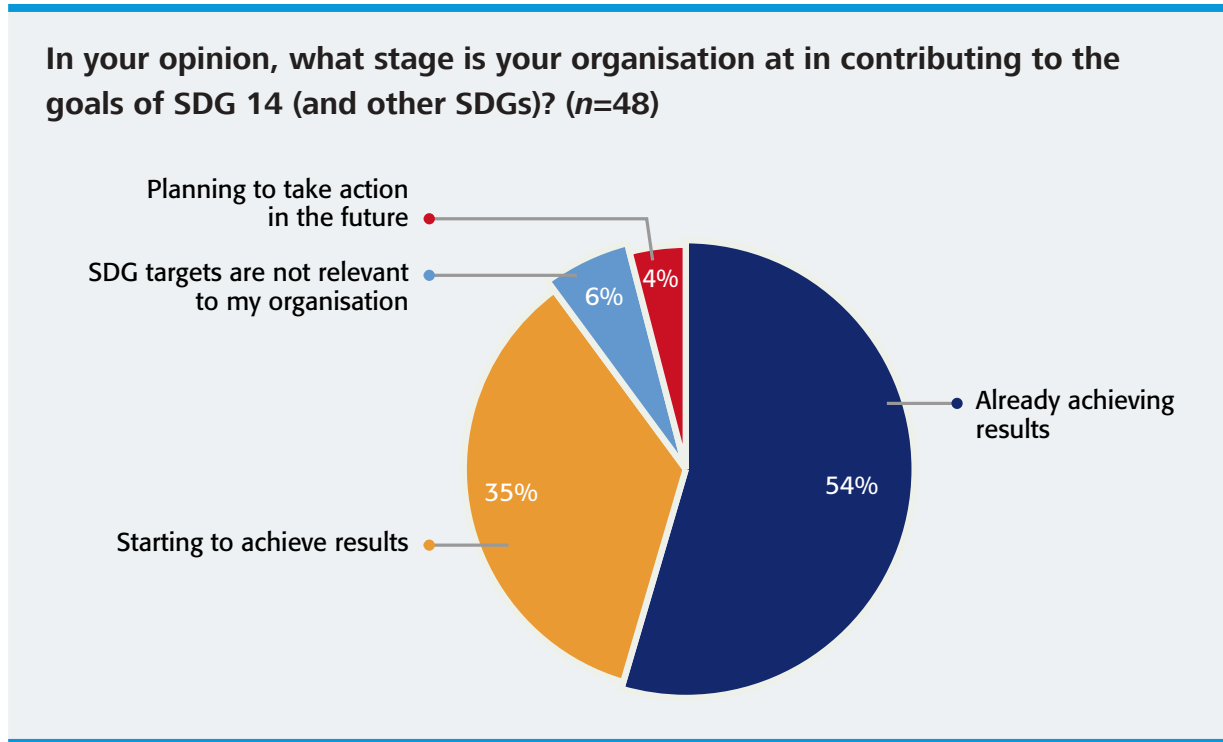


⁷ SDG 14 Target 14.a “Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity, and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least-developed countries.”

⁸ SDG 17 Target 17.16 “Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.”

In Conclusion

It is encouraging to see that among our participants, progress on SDG 14 is already underway—nearly 90 percent of their respective organisations are either already achieving results or are at least starting to achieve results.



Moving forward, MSC and Nomad Foods have made commitments to take action to progress SDG 14 by:

- Engaging in multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnerships to drive transformation projects, i.e., to ensure supply chain transparency and to help create sustainable sourcing practices and responsible management processes;
- Lobbying for and supporting the development of credible benchmarking tools in collaboration with governments and labelling organisations;
- Providing consumers with clear guidance in order to empower them to make their own sustainable decisions.

Stakeholders (NGOs, businesses, governments, consumers) with a strong grasp of how the variables discussed during this report could intersect will have a richer understanding of what will be required to create what we might call a “wholly sustainable ocean ecosystem,” one in which they can shape both internal and external conditions in a productive and mutually supporting way.

List of Expert Guest Contributors

Thank you to our ten expert guest contributors from around the globe who joined us and shared their invaluable ideas and experiences:

- Alex Olsen, Head of Sustainability, Espersen
- Andrew Papachrysou, Procurement Director, Nomad Foods
- Amanda Nickson, Director International Fisheries, The Pew Charitable Trusts
- Chris Ninnes, Chief Executive, Aquaculture Stewardship Council
- Darian McBain, Global Director of Sustainable Development, Thai Union
- Florian Baumann, Quality Manager, Nomad Foods
- Gunnstein Bakke, Senior Legal Adviser, Directorate of Fisheries
- Keith Kenny, Vice President, Sustainability, McDonald's Corporation
- Michel Kaiser, Chief Science & Standards Officer, Marine Stewardship Council
- Rupert Howes, Chief Executive, Marine Stewardship Council
- Ryan Bigelow, Senior Program Manager, Seafood Watch
- Sarah Bladen, Communications and Outreach Director, Global Fishing Watch
- Steve Hall, Consultant, Avalerion Capital
- Tracy Cambridge, Responsible Sourcing Manager, Thai Union



Useful Links

Shared by Participants at the SDG Leadership Forum on Goal 14: Life Below Water

Shared by Alex Olsen, Head of Sustainability, Espersen

https://www.seafish.org/media/publications/NetPositiveReport_2508_v2.pdf

Relevance: Example of partnership, collaboration, and potential for innovation (workshop to identify new ways of fishing).

Shared by Alex Webb, Senior Marketing Manager, Marine Stewardship Council, UK

http://docs.aiddata.org/ad4/pdfs/Listening_To_Leaders_2018_Executive_Summary.pdf

<https://globescan.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/GlobeScan-SustainAbility-Survey-Evaluating-Progress-Towards-the-Sustainable-Development-Goals-March2017.pdf>

<https://www.msc.org/seafood-futures-forum>

Relevance: Research on relative progress of the SDGs, focus on the common goals that affect all, shares GlobeScan SustainAbility data on SDG 14 perceived as falling behind.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TmD8Fp_PIZs&feature=youtu.be

Relevance: Great case study and success story: "The West Coast groundfish fishery is an American success story almost two decades in the making. In the 1990s, the previously abundant fishery collapsed, and was declared a federal disaster. Fishermen voluntarily pulled boats out of the water and worked in partnership with environmental nonprofits and fishery management councils to fundamentally change the way they fished. Fourteen years later, after more than a decade of hard work, 13 species became MSC certified as sustainable. Now more abundant than ever, this fishery is thriving off of the California, Oregon, and Washington coast."

<https://www.msc.org/media-centre/news-opinion/news/2018/10/31/managing-the-impacts-of-abandoned-lost-or-discarded-fishing-gear>

Relevance: Multi-stakeholder collaboration and solutions examples.

Shared by Antony Antoni, World Animal Protection Global Head of Brand Marketing, World Animal Protection, UK

https://www.greenerpackage.com/bioplastics/london_supermarket_introduces_plastic_free_zones

Relevance: The momentum toward plastic-free packaging is gaining strength. An example of private sector taking action: supermarkets cutting out plastic.

Shared by Caroline Holme, Director, GlobeScan, United Kingdom

<http://www.fao.org/3/i9540en/I9540EN.pdf>

Relevance: The 2018 UN SOFIA Report suggests that the developed world is simply passing on the problem of overfishing by sourcing more from developing countries. Helpful source to understand developed vs developing countries debate and also to find new technological approaches to the challenges that offer very effective solutions.

<https://globescan.com/ikea-climate-action-consumer-study/>

Relevance: Relates to challenges engaging consumers and bringing them to action.

<https://globescan.com/partnerships-progress-unilever-globescan-sdg-leadership-forum/>

Relevance: Highlights importance of partnerships with regard to SDG financing.

Shared by Her Heri, FIP Consultant, Independent Consultant, Indonesia

<https://www.isealliance.org/credible-sustainability-standards/iseal-credibility-principles>

Relevance: Frames the credibility challenge certifications schemes face.

Shared by Isadora Moniz, FIP coordinator, OPAGAC, Spain

https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2018/05/31/614493772/the-u-n-goal-that-doesnt-get-a-lot-of-respect?utm_campaign=storyshare&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR2MErVzqmmmpFuspcAWZkBZB2ddV5MDy28OPlu7Y6jXAVI-W55uCEDvR-Pqo

Relevance: Shares support of studies showing SDG 14 is making less progress than other goals and seen as less of a priority to address.

**Shared by Lucy Erickson,
Science Communications Manager, Marine Stewardship Council, UK**

<https://panorama.solutions/en/portal/marine-and-coastal>

Relevance: A searchable database of what has worked on the ground, around the world. Good source to explore solutions/initiatives.

Shared by Mary Smith, Director of Sustainability, Inland Seafood AK USA

<http://www.seapact.org/>

Relevance: Example of collaboration/partnerships for global seafood sustainability.

Shared by Niels Haakman, Director, Pan Ocean Aquaculture, Netherlands

Link: <https://sustainablefoodtrust.org/articles/exploded-dutch-chickens-plofkip/>

Relevance: Good example of private sector taking action (sustainable chicken).

https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/could-californias-ocean-ranches-solve-a-global-food-shortage-and-fix-the-seafood-trade-deficit/2018/11/26/0866dcca-e42a-11e8-b759-3d88a5ce9e19_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.68e3240a4519&wpisrc=nl_rainbow&wpmm=1

Relevance: Example of aquaculture potential to contribute against global food shortage.

Shared by Perrine Bouhana, Associate Director, GlobeScan

<https://globescan.com/new-poll-of-experts-finds-slow-start-towards-sustainable-development-goals/>

<http://www.sdgindex.org/assets/files/2018/01%20SDGS%20GLOBAL%20EDITION%20WEB%20V8%20060718.pdf>

Relevance: Reaffirms SDG 14 lack of relative progress.

Shared by Richard Stobart, Head of Marketing, Marine Stewardship Council, UK

<https://youtu.be/LzhR-BhkRaw>

Relevance: Useful discussion and observations on the challenge of evolving certifications.

Shared by Rupert Howes, Chief Executive, MSC, United Kingdom

<https://www.msc.org/media-centre/news-opinion/news/2018/11/12/how-to-end-overfishing-in-the-global-south>

Relevance: Provides an overview of MSC action on overfishing in the global south. Also refers to useful data. Shares the £1 million MSC Ocean Stewardship Fund initiative.

Shared by Sophie Hankinson, Student, Utrecht University, Netherlands

<https://www.milieucentraal.nl/nieuws/2016/onthoud-deze-11-topkeurmerken/>

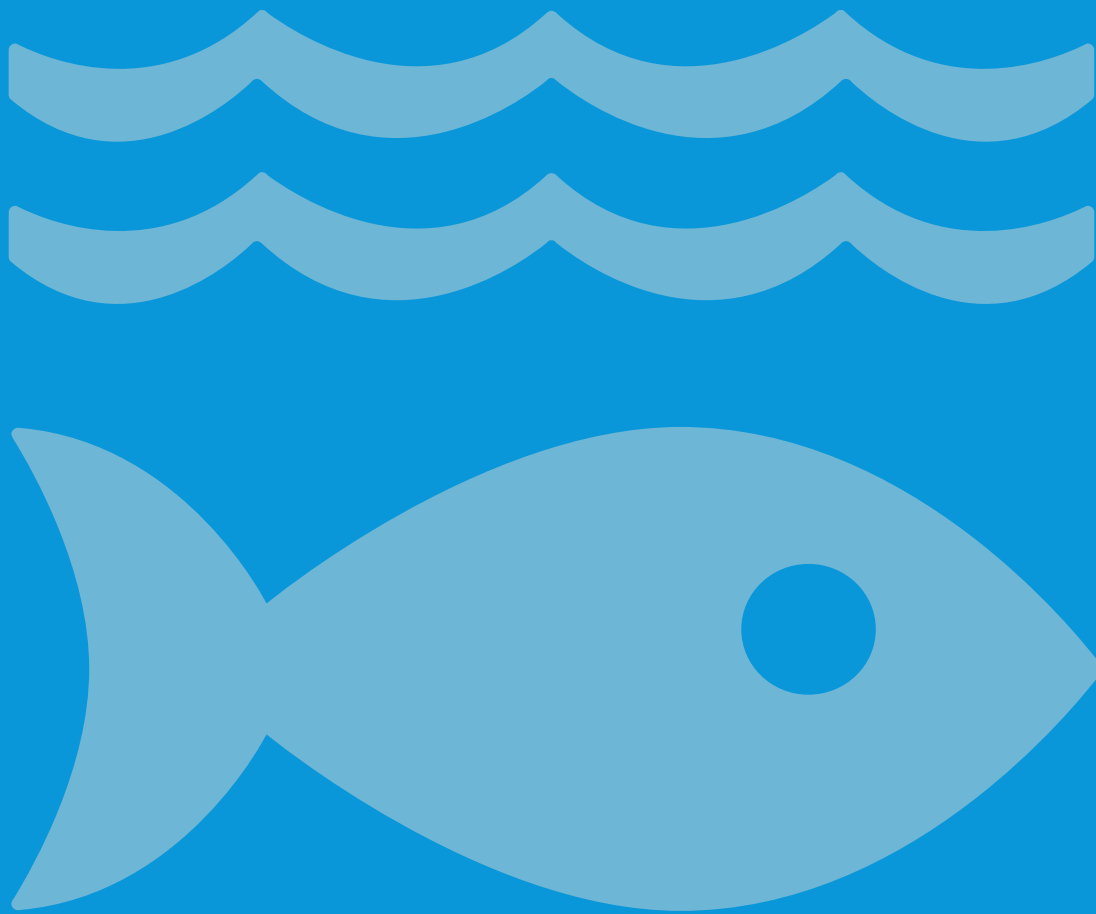
Relevance: Helpful example of how to overcome standards and labels credibility/trust issues for consumers.

Shared by Tania Woodcock, Project Manager, Sustainable Fisheries Partnership, UK

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X18300393?via%3Dihub>

Relevance: Example of communicating progress in an effort to create more collaboration and better communication between organisations.





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