

Giving a Voice to Stakeholders and Citizens

Stakeholders, whose livelihoods rely directly or indirectly on the Ocean, and Citizens, whose livelihoods were not linked to the Ocean, were invited to take part in a series of themed interactive sessions. Sessions with each group were held in nine EU countries between November 2013 and March 2014, and addressed communities on Atlantic, Baltic and Mediterranean coasts. Six themes relating to the uses of the Ocean were considered: leisure and tourism, food, transport, human health, energy and "a place to live".

Three key issues were identified; addressing any one of these has a positive effect on the others:



1. Unfounded negative attitudes relating to the Ocean, a lack of awareness of marine issues and a lack of positive initiatives, together had the greatest perceived influence on the ability to move towards a Blue Society.
2. The absence of a responsible or effective institutional framework for marine governance and inadequate strategies and policies to protect the marine environment, were offered as the second barrier to overcome in order to create a Blue Society.
3. Poor general public knowledge and insufficient scientific and technical knowledge about the processes and functions of the marine ecosystems constituted the third perceived major barrier to a Blue Society.

For full information on the consultation process visit:
<http://seaforsociety.eu>

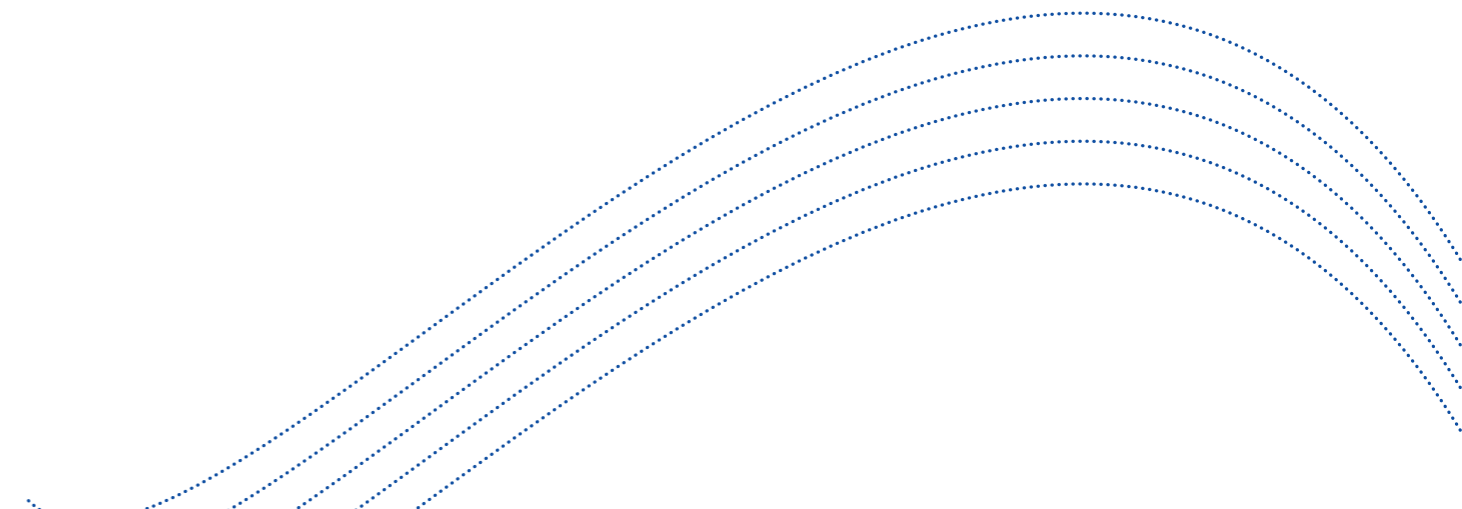
Outputs

776
Ideas
 to improve
 the human-Ocean dynamic

778
Benefits
 of a healthy Ocean

774
Barriers
 to sustainability

653
Solutions
 to perceived barriers



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Project Coordinator
 Nausicaá, France.

Email: seaforsociety@nausicaa.fr

Phone: +33 (0)3 21 30 99 93



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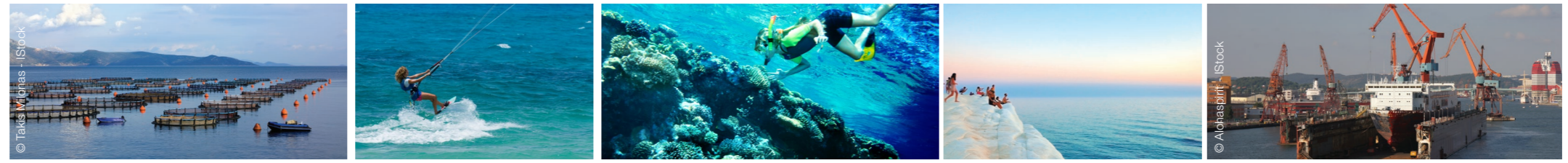
"Your Ocean, Your Future"

What is A Blue Society?

A Blue Society is one in which the marine environment is sustainably managed, giving future generations the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from the many services and resources provided by a healthy ocean, while also preserving ecosystem integrity and functioning. The Blue Society Expert Group analysed the outcomes of the consultation and mobilization phases of the SFS project (below) to develop and enrich the Blue Society concept, and formulate recommendations for improved ocean governance and research.

What is Sea for Society?

Sea for Society (SFS) is a three-year mobilization and mutual learning plan tackling societal challenges. Under the European Seventh Framework Programme, it brings together 28 research, education and communication organizations from 12 countries in a process of dialogue and joint actions. Its objectives are to uncover citizen and stakeholder views of the Ocean, identify cross-cutting issues across different Ocean themes, and propose challenge-driven solutions to promote the sustainable management of the marine environment. The Blue Society vision is the result of activities undertaken during the SFS programme.



The Essential Ocean

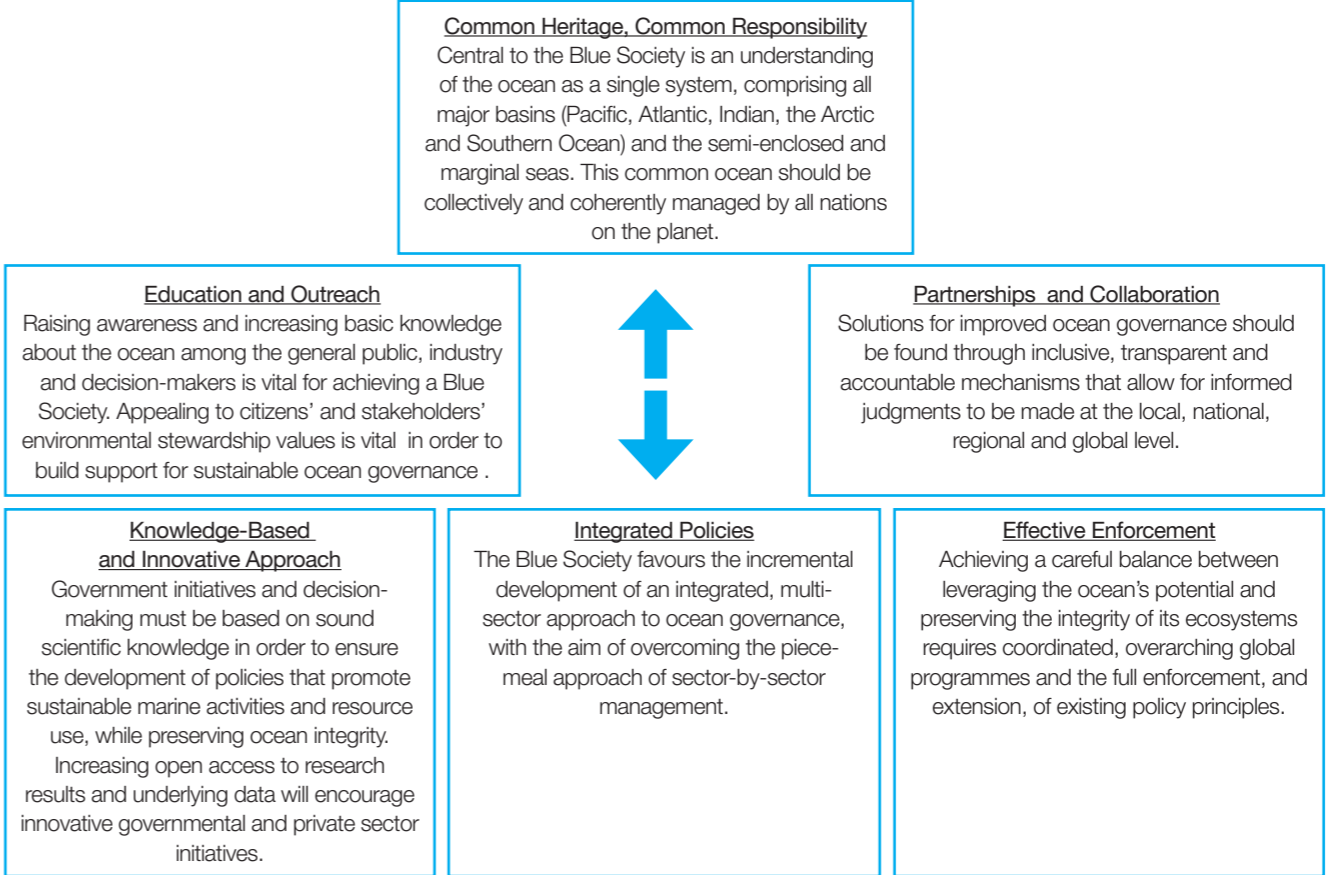
- The Ocean regulates the planet's ecological balance:**
- Lowest estimates suggest that marine phytoplankton produce 50% of the oxygen we breathe,
 - It is the main source of water entering the water cycle,
 - It limits global warming by absorbing one third of the CO₂ produced by human beings.
- The Ocean delivers essential goods and services:**
- It provides protein-rich food, medicines and beauty products,
 - It is a source of energy, both renewable and non-renewable,
 - It is an origin of rare metals and minerals,
 - It is a source of recreation, well-being and health.
- The Ocean supports our economy and societal needs:**
- It supports jobs and economic growth in maritime transport and tourism,
 - It offers new opportunities for aquaculture and sustainable fisheries.

An Ocean of Opportunities

Many aspects of the Ocean offer enormous potential that can be exploited sustainably: clean technologies such as "green" ships, renewable energies (tidal, thermic and wind), biofuels, edible algae, new medicines, sustainable jobs, knowledge about our world, etc. Being part of the Blue Society is to recognize that the Ocean has huge scope for development, but it also requires an ability to use only the interest generated by the natural capital, leaving the capital itself intact for future generations.

Blue Society Components

The following components are interconnected, each playing a crucial role in facilitating the transition towards a Blue Society:



In 2014, the European Blue Economy represented ~5.4 million jobs and a gross value of almost €500billion.

