

## Annex IV

### Guidance for contributors Part I

#### A. Introduction

1. The present document sets out working arrangements and guidance for those contributing to the second cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (the “Regular Process”).

2. The outputs of the second cycle will be the product of cooperation among a large number of experts in many different fields in various different roles. The major challenge is to show how the state of the world ocean is changing, as compared with the state as described in the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment (first World Ocean Assessment), bringing together environmental, economic and social aspects.

3. The guidance is intended for:

(a) Members of the Group of Experts of the Regular Process, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution [65/37 A](#) and renewed under General Assembly resolution [70/235](#);<sup>1</sup>

(b) Members of the Pool of Experts appointed to assist the Group of Experts of the Regular Process, pursuant to paragraph 311 of General Assembly resolution [71/257](#);

(c) Peer reviewers who are invited to review material under arrangements approved by the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Group of the Whole.

4. Members of these groups are referred to collectively as contributors.

#### B. Status of contributors

5. When contributing to the Regular Process, contributors are expected to act in their personal capacity as independent experts, and not as representatives of any Government or any other authority or organization. They should neither seek nor accept instructions from outside the Regular Process regarding their work on the Regular Process, although they are free to consult widely with other experts and with government officials, in order to ensure that their contributions are credible, legitimate and relevant. Contributors are also expected to disclose to the secretariat of the Regular Process any conflicts of interest, or the possibility of any perception of a conflict of interest, both before they accept their appointment and after appointment, when any potential conflict may arise and to confirm this commitment in a response to the secretariat of the Regular Process.

6. The input of contributors is fundamental to the success of the Regular Process, and will be fully acknowledged in the text. Accordingly, the names of the members of the writing team for each chapter will be shown prominently at the head of each chapter. Each chapter will be capable of being cited separately. Appropriate acknowledgements will likewise be made for the work of commentators and peer reviewers.

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<sup>1</sup> General Assembly resolution [64/71](#), para. 177, endorsing [A/64/347](#), annex; Assembly resolution [65/37 A](#), paras. 200-203, and Assembly resolutions [70/235](#), para. 264 and [71/257](#), para. 285.

## C. Structure of the Regular Process

7. The Regular Process is an intergovernmental process, accountable to the General Assembly and guided by international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and other applicable international instruments.

8. The Regular Process is overseen and guided by an Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole of the General Assembly (the “Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole”), including representatives of all Member States of the United Nations, and chaired by two Co-Chairs (one from a developing country and one from a developed country) appointed by the President of the General Assembly. Between sessions of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, a Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole (“the Bureau”) ensures the implementation of the decisions of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole. The Bureau consists of the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole and 15 Member States — 3 appointed by each of the five regional groups in the General Assembly (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and Western Europe and Other).

9. The framework of the Regular Process was established by the General Assembly in its resolutions [64/71](#) and [65/37 A](#) and reaffirmed by the General Assembly in its resolutions [70/235](#) and [71/257](#). It consists of:

- (a) The overall objective;
- (b) A description of its scope;
- (c) A set of principles to guide its establishment and operation;
- (d) Best practices identified by the Group of Experts.

10. These can be found on the website of the Regular Process.<sup>2</sup> Capacity-building is essential for the implementation, and is an integral part, of the Regular Process at all stages of its implementation. Without detracting from the other principles which the General Assembly has endorsed, the allocation of tasks to members of the Pool of Experts must reflect the principle of adherence to equitable geographical representation in all activities of the Regular Process, and have due regard to a desirable balance between the genders.

11. A Group of Experts has been established with the general task of carrying out assessments under the Regular Process. It consists of up to 25 experts — up to 5 appointed by each of the five regional groups of the General Assembly.

12. A Pool of Experts to assist the Group of Experts is constituted under the Mechanism for the establishment of the Pool of Experts for the second cycle of the Regular Process, developed by the Bureau in accordance with paragraph 311 of resolution [71/257](#).

13. The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs, Secretariat of the United Nations, has been designated as the secretariat of the Regular Process. The United Nations Environment Programme, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Maritime Organization, and other competent specialized agencies of the United Nations, as appropriate, have been asked to provide scientific and technical support.

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<sup>2</sup> Part of the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. See [www.un.org/Depts/los/global\\_reporting](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/global_reporting).

## **D. Tasks to be undertaken and who will carry them out**

### **1. General outline of work to produce the outputs of the second cycle of the Regular Process**

14. The framework for the tasks to deliver the outputs of the second cycle of the Regular Process is established by the terms of reference and methods of work for the Group of Experts endorsed by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on 18 April 2017 and subsequently taken note of by the General Assembly.<sup>3</sup> Within this framework, this guidance provides more detail on how the tasks will be achieved. Contributors to its production will have six main tasks:

- (a) Establishing the scope and structure of the assessment(s) to be produced in the second cycle of the Regular Process, together with a timetable and implementation plan;
- (b) Writing the draft chapters of the assessment(s);
- (c) Producing a complete draft of the assessment(s);
- (d) Carrying out a review, by independent peer reviewers, of the draft assessment(s);
- (e) Submitting the draft, revised in the light of the peer review, to the Member States of the United Nations for review and comment;
- (f) Finalizing the text of the assessment(s).

15. When the Group of Experts has finalized the text of an assessment, it will be submitted, with the approval of the Bureau, for consideration to the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole and for final approval by the General Assembly. A note showing the comments received from States and the way in which they have been treated will also be submitted to the Bureau.

### **2. Tasks of the Group of Experts**

16. The Group of Experts will be responsible collectively for:

- (a) Developing, in cooperation with the secretariat of the Regular Process, proposals for the scope and structure of the assessment(s) to be produced during the second cycle, together with a proposed timetable and implementation plan for each. These proposals will be submitted through the Bureau to the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole for its consideration and recommended by it to the General Assembly for its approval;
- (b) Selecting, subject to the approval of the Bureau, the lead member from within the Group of Experts, the convenor of the writing team and (in consultation with the convenor) the members of the writing team for each of the various chapters within the agreed scope and structure of the assessment(s). The convenors and members of the writing teams will be drawn from the Group of Experts and/or the Pool of Experts. Where appropriate for a chapter, the Group of Experts will also, subject to the approval of the Bureau, invite members of the Pool of Experts to act as panels of commentators to comment on initial draft chapters;
- (c) Ensuring that the writing teams and commentators have adequate qualifications and represent an equitable geographic and gender distribution. Additionally, the Group of Experts will ensure adequate representation of experts from relevant disciplines, especially socioeconomics;

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<sup>3</sup> General Assembly resolution [71/257](#), para. 299, endorsing [A/71/362](#).

- (d) Reviewing the draft chapters produced by the writing teams;
- (e) Agreeing the draft text of the assessment(s);
- (f) Proposing arrangements for peer review of each of the draft chapters to the Bureau and ensuring, in collaboration with the writing teams and in consultation with the secretariat, the revision of the text(s) in the light of the peer reviewers' comments;
- (g) Agreeing a complete text of each of the assessment(s) and submitting it, through the secretariat of the Regular Process, to States for comment;
- (h) In the light of comments from States, revising and finalizing the text of the assessment(s) and preparing a note for the Bureau of how the comments from States have been dealt with.

### 3. Tasks for lead members

17. In order to ensure that there is a person clearly identifiable as responsible for ensuring that the preparation of each chapter follows the present guidance and otherwise achieves the necessary high standards, the Group of Experts will designate one of its members as the lead member for each chapter in the assessment(s) undertaken in the second cycle of the Regular Process (except those summarizing parts of the assessment(s), where parallel arrangements are set forth in paragraph 24). Other members may also be designated as co-lead members. Members of the Group of Experts may also be designated to take the lead on groups of chapters, in order to ensure that they are properly coordinated. The designation of lead members will be subject to the approval of the Bureau. The lead member will have overall responsibility, with any co-lead members, under the supervision of the Group of Experts as a whole, for the progress of the chapter.

18. Where the lead member is not an expert in the field covered by the chapter, a separate convenor of the writing team will be designated. This may also be done where the Group of Experts considers that a member of the Pool of Experts is particularly well qualified to act as convenor of the writing team.

19. The lead member for each chapter, in particular, will:

- (a) Propose to the Group of Experts, for its agreement and submission to the Bureau, a writing team for each chapter. The membership of the proposed team will be worked out by the lead member and (where it is proposed that the lead member will not be the convenor) the proposed convenor of the writing team and the lead member. The designations of the writing teams will be subject to the approval of the Bureau;

- (b) Propose to the Group of Experts (in collaboration with the convenor of the writing team if the lead member is not also the convenor) whether there should be a panel of commentators for the chapter and the membership of such a panel;

- (c) Review the draft chapter produced by the writing team, the comments from any panel of commentators (where a panel of commentators has been designated (see paras. 25 to 30) and the way in which those comments are proposed to be reflected by the writing team, in order to ensure that the data and information used is the best available and that interpretations and conclusions are sound and well supported;

- (d) Present the draft chapter developed by the writing team to the Group of Experts for agreement for it to go forward to the next stage;

- (e) Present to the Group of Experts, with the help of the convenor of the writing team (if a separate convenor of the writing team is appointed), for its

agreement and submission to the Bureau, a list of experts to serve as peer reviewers for the assessment(s) in respect of their draft chapters for approval by the Bureau;

(f) Ensure that the writing team has addressed comments from peer reviewers on the chapter and has made appropriate adjustments to the text and that explanations are recorded of how each comment has been reflected in the final version;

(g) Liaise with the writing team on how comments from States are to be dealt with;

(h) Present the revised draft of the chapter to the Group of Experts and assist in finalizing the complete draft and editing the text of each of the assessment(s).

20. The purpose of the collaboration of the lead member, co-lead member(s) and the convenor of the writing team (where a separate convenor is appointed) is to ensure the integration, consistency and quality of the various chapters of the assessment(s), and to make sure that the present guidance is followed. It is not to “second-guess” the writing team.

21. In order to help deliver the collective responsibilities of the Group of Experts in cases where the lead member is also designated as convenor of the writing team for a chapter, the Group of Experts will designate another of its members to review the material for that chapter produced and to act jointly with the lead member in the tasks at 19 (e), (f) and (g).

#### **4. Tasks for writing teams and their convenors**

22. A separate convenor of the writing team will be designated for each chapter where no member of the Group of Experts has relevant expertise, or where a member of the Pool of Experts appears to be particularly well qualified for this work. Initially, proposed convenors of the writing team will be identified by the Group of Experts, applying the principles for the Regular Process approved by the General Assembly. When suitable members for the team have been identified, the Group of Experts will submit the names for approval by the Bureau.

23. The convenor of the writing team for a chapter (whether the convenor is also the lead member or not) will have general responsibility for writing the chapter. In particular, the convenor of the writing team will:

(a) Identify other candidate members of the writing team and (where appropriate) commentators for the chapter (in collaboration with the lead member (if separate));

(b) Agree on the division of work in preparing, and revising, the draft chapter with other members of the writing team for the chapter, and ensure that the team as a whole delivers them in accordance with the timetable and implementation plan;

(c) Ensure that the draft chapter reflects the scope and structure of the assessment and the guidance to contributors, that they are based on the best available data and information and that the conclusions in them are sound and well supported;

(d) Where a panel of commentators (see paras. 26-28 below) is designated, ensure that comments from the commentators are considered by the writing team, that appropriate adjustments are made to the drafts in the light of those comments and that explanations are recorded of the response made to each comment in the manner described in paragraph 36 below;

(e) Prepare, in collaboration with the lead member (if separate), the draft chapter for submission to the Group of Experts for agreement for it to go forward to the next stage;

(f) Help the lead member (if separate) to provide a list of experts to be proposed as peer reviewers for approval by the Bureau and to address the comments of peer reviewers and of the Member States, enlisting the help of other members of the writing team where appropriate and ensuring that explanations are recorded of how each comment has been reflected in the final version.

24. All members of the writing team for each chapter are expected to take an interest in the overall balance of the draft chapter and to ensure that, as far as they are able, the chapter is based on the best available data and information and that conclusions in them are sound and well supported. If one or more members of a writing team for a chapter do not agree with the version of that chapter finally approved by the Group of Experts as part of the finalized assessment, they are entitled to have a footnote inserted recording briefly their disagreement and the reasons for it.

25. For the chapters summarizing the various parts of the assessment(s), the Joint Coordinators of the Group of Experts will arrange, in collaboration with the lead members and the convenors of the writing teams for those chapters, for the production of the initial drafts, on the basis of the draft chapters as reviewed by the Group of Experts. Where appropriate, the Joint Coordinators will also take such initiatives as seem needed to enable other tasks to be completed effectively and in accordance with the timetable.

## **5. Commentators and reviewing tasks**

26. Where a panel of commentators is designated for any chapter, the draft chapter will be reviewed by that panel, and appropriate adjustments made by the writing team in the light of the panel's comments, before finalization of the draft of that chapter for review by the peer reviewers and Member States.

27. Commentators are expected to help the writing team by:

(a) Where appropriate, contributing additional information and/or data;

(b) Reviewing the draft chapter from the point of view of overall balance;

(c) Considering both whether the best available data and information has been used, and whether the conclusions are sound and well supported.

28. Commentators are expected to record their comments in the manner described in paragraph 41 below and to submit them in good time in accordance with the timetable set by the Group of Experts and approved by the General Assembly. Writing teams are expected to address each comment and indicate in a document for publication on the website of the Regular Process how they have responded to each comment from the commentators.

29. Peer reviewers, acting in a totally independent capacity as experts, are likewise expected to review the relevant chapter from the point of view of overall balance and to consider both whether the best available data and information has been used, and whether the conclusions are sound and well supported. They also are expected to record their comments in the manner described in paragraph 41 below and to submit them in good time in accordance with the timetable.

30. Writing teams are expected to address each comment from the peer reviewers and amend the draft chapter accordingly. They should prepare documents showing

their responses to the comments of peer reviewers which will be considered by the Group of Experts in finalizing the draft assessment.

31. After the review of the draft assessment by States, the Group of Experts will likewise address each comment made by Member States and revise and finalize the assessment. They will also prepare documents showing their responses to those comments, to be submitted to the Bureau.

## **E. Ethics in authoring and evaluating material for the Regular Process**

32. It is expected that contributors will follow established protocols for ethics in scientific reporting. In particular, contributors are responsible for:

- (a) Correctly citing the published work of others and clearly stating the source of information;
- (b) Accurately representing the conclusions of cited work;
- (c) Disclosing any conflict of interest;
- (d) Reflecting diverse research outcomes, if any.

33. By its very nature, the Regular Process requires contributors to review and synthesize numerous large bodies of work, and to distil out the salient points of numerous studies into consolidated statements. Throughout this process, it is important that the synthesis produced does not lose or misrepresent the essential conclusions, meaning and intent of the original works. Contributors are responsible for ensuring that such misrepresentation does not occur.

34. The nature of the Regular Process demands that contributors pay special attention to issues of independence and bias to maintain the integrity of, and public confidence in, the results.

## **F. Style and modalities**

35. The assessment(s) produced in the second cycle of the Regular Process are intended to be read by policymakers and the general public and must be written in a manner that will enable broad understanding. This requirement implies that technical terms not in common use in general writing should be explained on their first appearance and that abbreviations and acronyms should likewise first appear with the full form. Attention must also be paid to the requirement that the assessment(s) are to be policy relevant and not policy prescriptive.

36. Since English is the working language of the Group of Experts, those invited to contribute text to draft chapters will be asked to do so in a form capable of use by the Group of Experts.

37. The United Nations Secretariat works in MSWord 2013 for documents. Documents should, therefore, be submitted in this file format as far as possible.

38. Since much material will be read on screen, references should be given in brief in the text, rather than in footnotes. In-text references should be in brackets and consist of the author's name (or first author's followed by "et al.") and the year of publication. A complete list of works referred to should be included at the end of the text of each chapter. If there is more than one publication by that author in the same year, the different publications should be differentiated by A, B, C, etc., after the year number. The list of references should be in the alphabetical order of the in-text references and give full details of the material to which reference is made. The style

of such lists should follow that of the reference lists in the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment (World Ocean Assessment I).

39. It will assist the production of the assessment(s) if the following writing approaches are followed (which are aligned with those of the United Nations Secretariat):

(a) Paragraphs should be numbered in Arabic numerals in a single sequence from the start of a text to the end;

(b) Paragraphs should not contain more than two levels of indentations. The higher level of indentation should be identified by small roman letters in brackets ((a), (b), (c) etc.). The lower level should be identified by small roman numerals in brackets ((i), (ii), (iii), (iv), etc.);

(c) Headings of sections and subsections should be aligned with the left margin;

(d) Subparagraphs should commence with a capital (majuscule) letter.

40. For more detailed guidance, the United Nations on-line Editorial Manual can be consulted at <http://dd.dgacm.org/editorialmanual/>.

41. Commentators and peer reviewers should record their comments in a spreadsheet which will be supplied by the secretariat of the Regular Process which will enable the response of the writing team or the Group of Experts to be shown alongside the comments made.

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