Draft

Programme of work for the period 2026–2030 for the fourth cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects

I. Introduction

A. Launch of the fourth cycle and its duration

1. In its resolution 79/144, the General Assembly decided to launch the fourth cycle of the Regular Process, to cover five years, from 2026 to 2030. In that same resolution, the Assembly requested the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, with the assistance of the Group of Experts and the secretariat, to develop a draft programme of work for the fourth cycle. The programme of work was to be developed on the basis of the possible outcomes and building blocks of the fourth cycle prepared by the Bureau and endorsed by the Ad Hoc Working Group at its twenty-first meeting and taking into account lessons learned from the third cycle, including, as appropriate, on the use of the Regular Process scientific outputs for informing decision and policy making at the national, regional and global levels. The Bureau was also requested to report to Member States in advance of the twenty-second meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

B. Scope

2. In its resolution 64/71, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendations adopted by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole at its first meeting, including that, in the first cycle, the scope of the Regular Process would focus on establishing a baseline and that, in subsequent cycles, the scope would extend to evaluating trends (A/64/347, para. 19). In its resolution 75/239, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendations adopted by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole at its thirteenth meeting, including that, for the second and third cycles of the Regular Process the scope would extend to evaluating trends and identifying gaps (A/75/362, annex, para. 2). Given these considerations and the lessons learned from the third cycle, the present draft programme of work assumes a similar scope for the fourth cycle.

C. Lessons learned from the third cycle

3. In its resolution 79/144, the General Assembly requested the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to consider the lessons learned from the third cycle of the Regular Process, including with regard to the duration of the cycle and its outputs and on the basis of input received from Member States and other participants in the Ad Hoc Working Group and the Group of Experts, as well as from the secretariat, and also requested the Bureau to inform the Ad Hoc Working Group of the views received and to circulate that information in advance of the twenty-second meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

4. In August 2025, an online survey was launched to collect feedback from stakeholders of the Regular Process. The survey invited Member States, Observers, and other participants in the Ad Hoc Working Group, among others, to provide written input on lessons learned from the third cycle of the Regular Process.

5. Member States, intergovernmental organizations, the Group of Experts and the secretariat provided written input on lessons learned from the third cycle. A compilation of such input prepared by the secretariat and the full texts of all written input are available on the website of the Regular Process.[1]

D. Draft programme of work

6. The draft programme of work for the fourth cycle of the Regular Process set out below was developed by the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole with the assistance of the Group of Experts and the secretariat, on the basis of the possible outcomes and building blocks of the fourth cycle and taking into account lessons learned from the third cycle, including, as appropriate, on the use of the Regular Process scientific outputs for informing decision and policy making at the national, regional and global levels. It forms the basis for the resource requirements for the fourth cycle. The draft programme of work was submitted to and considered by the Ad Hoc Working Group at its twenty-second meeting.

II. Outputs of the fourth cycle

7. The programme of work for the period 2026–2030 consists of four main outputs and related activities in support of making the fourth cycle operational, with the understanding that additional activities may be required.

Output I: assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects

8. Building on the third World Ocean Assessment, the scope of which extended to evaluating trends and identifying gaps, the Group of Experts will oversee the preparation of an assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects, with the goal of strengthening decision-making at all levels. The assessment to be carried out during the fourth cycle may focus on specific topics in evaluating trends, if the Group of Experts and the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole so decide. The process will begin with a scoping exercise starting in 2026 and end with the assessment being finalized by late 2030. The scoping exercise and the preparation of the assessment will be supported through, *inter alia*, regional workshops, coordinating author meetings, and writing team workshops, which will help, among others, to identify regional priorities and make progress in the writing of individual chapters to be included in the assessment.

Output II: outreach and engagement activities, including through the World Ocean Assessment digital platform

9. Outreach and engagement activities will be expanded under the fourth cycle, with a view to enhancing the delivery of the assessment and associated products, including through the advancement of digital avenues. These outreach and engagement activities will support enhancing awareness of the Regular Process and

[1] See https://www.un.org/regularprocess/sites/www.un.org.regularprocess/files/lessons_learned_3rd_cycle_to_22_ahwgw.pdf.

its outputs, helping to disseminate information from the World Ocean Assessment. It is expected that this expansion of outreach and engagement activities would further facilitate participation in various Regular Process activities, which include development of the next assessment, leading to an increased impact of the Regular Process and its pivotal role in supporting science-based policymaking. These activities will be undertaken under the overarching goal of ensuring that the Regular Process is effective in meeting its mandate of strengthening the ocean science-policy interface.

10. A key area of the technical support required for successfully operationalising outreach and engagement is the further enhancement of the World Ocean Assessment digital platform. Building upon the website improvements made during the third cycle, the fourth assessment will need to be supported through a further enhanced digital platform to be more user-friendly and accessible, incorporating modern web design principles that cater to a wide range of users, including policymakers, scientists, and the general public. This platform is also envisaged to incorporate a management feature of the Pool of Experts of the Regular Process, with a view to improving the overall data management efficiency required by the rapidly increasing number of experts nominated to the Pool of Experts.

Output III: Regular Process support for and interaction with other ocean-related intergovernmental processes

11. On the basis of the third World Ocean Assessment, key activities will be identified to support and enhance interaction with other ongoing ocean-related intergovernmental processes, as appropriate. Outputs will be specifically tailored to the requests and needs of the processes, including the following:

(a) The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(b) The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

(c) The Convention on Biological Diversity;

(d) The United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea;

(e) The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030);

(f) The United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030);

(g) The Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.

12. Relevant ocean-related intergovernmental processes will be consulted regarding the preparation of these outputs, which may include a series of thematic summaries for the benefit of policymakers, based on the fourth world ocean assessment, if so decided, or other products or services identified through consultations with Member States and relevant ocean-related intergovernmental processes. Particular focus will be given to ensuring dynamic and mutually reinforcing cooperation between the activities of the Regular Process and the activities carried out in the framework of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development during the second half of the Decade.

13. The fourth cycle of the Regular Process will also consider discussions held in other United Nations processes and relevant assessments prepared under other intergovernmental processes, including the following:

(a) The General Assembly;

(b) The high-level political forum on sustainable development;

(c) The United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;

(d) The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change;

(e) The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services;

(f) The Global Biodiversity Outlook;

(g) Marine assessments conducted under regional seas conventions;

(h) The United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme;

(i) The Global Environment Outlook.

Output IV: capacity-building

14. Capacity-building is one of the core objectives of the Regular Process. During the fourth cycle, a new coherent programme on capacity-building will be carried out. The aim of the programme will be to develop the capacities of States in strengthening the ocean science-policy interface at the national, regional and global levels. In particular, it might relate to the joint production of knowledge through multi-stakeholder partnerships, the translation of data into policy-relevant information and knowledge, the use of knowledge brokerage, the engagement of the scientific community and ocean users in policymaking processes, the links between the science-policy interface at all levels and society, the role of citizen science and the integration of traditional, indigenous and local knowledge and science. Attention will also be paid to institutional arrangements and legal frameworks that help ensure the integration of science and policy for ocean governance.

15. Through regional workshops, one international symposium and other activities that might be developed, the capacity-building programme will provide opportunities for building knowledge and skills associated with strengthening the ocean science-policy interface, including its role in ocean governance. This may include identifying gaps and needs in the science-policy interface and formulating measures to address the identified gaps and needs that are tailored to particular contexts, situations and regions, depending on those participating in the activities.

16. One of the aims of the capacity-building programme is to create a community of practice on the ocean science-policy interface at the national, regional and global levels to foster partnerships, cultivate ocean literacy, discuss and develop best practices and share lessons learned, with a view to enabling continuous and collective learning beyond the fourth cycle. Another aim is to promote the adoption of an integrated approach to supporting efforts for implementing Sustainable Development Goal 14, as well as other ocean-related Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is also in line with and supports the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

17. The capacity-building programme will be overseen by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs, in its capacity as the secretariat of the Regular Process, and implemented in cooperation with the UNESCO International Oceanographic Commission, other United Nations entities, members of UN-Oceans and other partners, as appropriate, including regional organizations or entities with competence in ocean science and in marine and coastal management, and other stakeholders.

III. Activities in support of making the fourth cycle operational

Activities relating to the achievement of output I: assessment

18. Building on the practice from previous cycles, the Pool of Experts for the fourth cycle will consist of experts from all regional groups with expertise across multiple ocean disciplines. Efforts will be made to ensure adequate coverage of expertise and diversity in expertise, geographic representation and gender considerations.

19. Preparations for the assessment will begin with a scoping exercise starting in 2026 to determine the focus of the assessment, taking into account the trends evaluated and gaps identified in the third World Ocean Assessment, regional priorities identified through regional workshops to support the fourth cycle and input from other ocean-related intergovernmental processes. In parallel with the scoping exercise, the Group of Experts will develop a preliminary annotated outline for the assessment, which will include a list of the specific expertise needed for each topic to be addressed in the assessment, to facilitate the identification of potential members of writing teams and the nomination of additional experts to the Pool of Experts to fill the gaps in the needed expertise. The proposed scope of the assessment and an annotated outline will be finalized with input from the regional workshops and submitted for approval by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole in 2028. The list of writing teams will be submitted for approval by the Bureau. The Group of Experts will review and revise, as appropriate, the guidance for writing teams.[2]

20. It is envisaged that the drafting of the assessment will begin in the first half of 2028 and will be supported through coordinating author meetings, writing team workshops, and in-person and web-based meetings of the writing teams and a common online collaboration platform. Zero drafts of the assessment are expected to be completed and ready for review by mid-2029. To fully realize the potential of these workshops and meetings to be held during the fourth cycle in, inter alia, raising the awareness of stakeholders about the Regular Process, collecting data and information, supporting the scoping exercise and the drafting of the assessment and building capacity, steps will be taken to ensure the timely identification of hosts and participants.

21. The review of the assessment is essential for reinforcing the science-policy interface embodied in the Regular Process and will also help ensure the accuracy, legitimacy and policy-relevance of the assessment. The review process for the fourth cycle will adopt the same multi-stage approach used in the past and will consist of a peer review of the assessment, a review by competent intergovernmental organizations and a review by States. The Group of Experts will review and revise, as appropriate, the guidelines for the writing and review process[3] and the guidelines

[2] Available at https://www.un.org/regularprocess/sites/www.un.org.regularprocess/files/guidance_for_writing_teams_for_web.pdf.

[3] A/77/596, annex I.

for the nomination and appointment of experts to the Pool of Experts, writing teams and peer reviewers,[4] in accordance with the programme of work for the fourth cycle.

22. The assessment will be finalized and submitted for consideration by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole and then the General Assembly by late 2030. The finalized assessment will, after having been edited and translated, be made available in the six official languages of the United Nations. Copyright issues will also be addressed. The assessment will be disseminated mainly in electronic format.

23. The following activities will be undertaken during the fourth cycle:

(a) The enhancement of working methods, the communications, and necessary collaborative document management systems;

(b) The implementation of the mechanism for the establishment of the Pool of Experts;[5]

(c) The planning and organization of regional workshops, coordinating author meetings, and writing team workshops to support the scoping exercise, the preparation of a preliminary annotated outline, the collection of information, the recruitment of members of the writing teams, and the overall development of the assessment;

(d) The recruitment of external consultants requested by the Group of Experts, necessary for the Group to discharge the thematic coordination for the development of the assessment;

(e) The constitution of writing teams and revision of guidelines, as needed;

(f) The preparation of the assessment, which includes, among others, securing the copyright and ensuring conformity with United Nations standards, including in respect of determining the need for and/or responding to requests for disclaimers;

(g) The conduct of the review process of the assessment, which will be a multi-stage review process consisting of a peer review, a review by competent intergovernmental organizations and a review by States;

(h) A review of comments received by the Group of Experts and a final review by States and their approval;

(i) The finalization of the assessment for publication, including editing, translation and dissemination.

Activities related to the achievement of output II: outreach and engagement activities, including through the World Ocean Assessment digital platform

24. The need to improve communication and to enhance outreach and awareness-raising was among the lessons learned from the second and third cycle of the Regular Process. During the fourth cycle, the outreach and engagement strategy[6] will be reviewed and revised, as appropriate. This revision will aim to improve communication with stakeholders in the context of the Regular Process and to reach and engage policymakers, organizations, academic institutions, including schools, and the general public. Some activities related to the achievement of outputs III and IV, such as the preparation of thematic summaries outlining policy-relevant information from the fourth world ocean assessment, the facilitation of a continuous

[4] A/77/596, annex II

[5] A/76/391, annex I.

[6] Available at https://www.un.org/regularprocess/sites/www.un.org.regularprocess/files/high-level_overview_outreachengagement_strategy.pdf.

exchange of information and knowledge among the multiple stakeholders of the community of practice and of the Regular Process and the promotion of ocean literacy, would be part of the strategy.

25. As part of the strategy, outreach and awareness-raising efforts will continue to be pursued through a number of activities, including the holding of briefings and side events, the development and distribution of promotional materials, regular communication with national and intergovernmental Regular Process focal points and participation in other ocean-related intergovernmental processes to promote the activities and outputs of the Regular Process and to promote synergies and opportunities for cooperation and coordination. The strategy will also outline actions for improving the website of the Regular Process and using new, innovative and effective means of communication.

26. In implementing the fourth cycle, efforts will also be made to further integrate multilingualism. The major products from the achievement of output I of the fourth cycle will be made available in the six official languages of the United Nations.

27. The following priority activities will be undertaken during the fourth cycle:

(a) The further enhancement of the World Ocean Assessment digital platform;

(b) The revision of the outreach and engagement strategy with the aim of improving communication with stakeholders in the context of the Regular Process and to reach and engage policymakers, organizations, academic institutions, including schools, and the general public in the Regular Process;

(c) The review and approval of the outreach and engagement strategy;

(d) The implementation of the outreach and engagement strategy;

(e) The maintenance of the website of the Regular Process;

(f) The evaluation, enhancement and maintenance of the database of members of the Pool of Experts;

(g) The evaluation of the implementation of the outreach and engagement strategy.

Activities related to the achievement of output III: Regular Process support for and interaction with other ocean-related intergovernmental processes

28. A series of thematic summaries will be prepared by the Group of Experts outlining specific policy-relevant information from the fourth world ocean assessment as they may relate to and support other ocean-related intergovernmental processes. Relevant ocean-related intergovernmental processes will be consulted to ensure that the thematic summaries respond to the requests and meet the needs of these processes. Briefings and side events will be held in the margins of the meetings of these processes to present the thematic summaries so as to support and interact with these processes.

29. The Regular Process will continue to support ongoing ocean-related intergovernmental processes. Joint activities will be identified and implemented together with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, with a view to ensuring synergies between the fourth cycle of the Regular Process and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Coordination and cooperation with the secretariats of other ocean-related intergovernmental processes will be strengthened and maintained on a regular basis, including through UN-Oceans.

30. The following activities will be undertaken during the fourth cycle:

(a) The enhancement of working methods and the necessary communications and collaborative document management systems;

(b) The consideration and finalization of the thematic summaries;

(c) The translation and dissemination of the thematic summaries;

(d) The preparation and holding of briefings or presentations to be held in the margins of events of other ocean-related intergovernmental processes;

(e) The preparation of outreach and awareness-raising material on the Regular Process to be shared with stakeholders of other ocean-related intergovernmental processes;

(f) The participation by members of the Group of Experts, the Bureau or the secretariat of the Regular Process, in their capacity as members of the Group, the Bureau or the secretariat, in meetings and proceedings of other ocean-related intergovernmental processes;

(g) The establishment of mechanisms to strengthen and maintain on a regular basis coordination and cooperation with the secretariats of other ocean-related intergovernmental processes, including through UN-Oceans;

(h) The identification and implementation of activities to support and interact with other ocean-related intergovernmental processes.

Activities related to the achievement of output IV: capacity-building

31. In order to increase understanding of and to provide skills training on the science-policy interface, regional workshops will be held in 2026 and 2028 in the following areas: the North Pacific; the South Pacific; the Indian Ocean (including the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal), the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the area covered by the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Regional Commission for Fisheries;[7] the North Atlantic, the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea; and the South Atlantic (between the African and American coasts) and the wider Caribbean Sea.[8] These regional workshops will be held back-to-back with the regional workshops and writing team workshops in support of the preparation of WOA IV. Participants in the workshops will include representatives of the scientific community, the policy community (policymakers, managers, etc.) and stakeholders representing ocean users, at the national and regional levels.

32. The specific objectives and desired outcomes of the regional workshops will reflect regional needs and be developed in consultation with relevant organizations. The agendas will generally include presentations by partners on: theory and practice related to the ocean science-policy interface; the relationship between ocean governance and the ocean science-policy interface; the application of an integrated approach to the science-policy interface; the links between the science-policy interface and society, including ocean users; the role of citizen science and traditional, indigenous and local knowledge; methodologies for evaluating the effectiveness of

[7] The States members of the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment are Bahrain, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The members of the Regional Commission for Fisheries are Bahrain, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

[8] Separate workshops will not be held for the Arctic Ocean or the Southern Ocean. Instead, the relevant international bodies and forums for those areas (in particular, the Antarctic Treaty System and the Arctic Council) will be invited to contribute their views on the issues addressed in the workshops.

the science-policy interface and identifying gaps and needs; and best practices and lessons learned in strengthening the ocean science-policy interface. In addition, interactive discussions will be held on challenges, opportunities, best practices and lessons learned for strengthening the ocean science-policy interface and on the application of an integrated approach. Particular attention will be paid to empowering the ocean data value chain from marine scientific research to integrated ocean governance, drawing upon relevant initiatives under the framework of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. A summary of the discussions held at each regional workshop will be prepared. These summaries, along with electronic versions of the presentations and other resource materials, will be made available on the Regular Process website and through other measures identified in the outreach and engagement strategy.

33. One international symposium will be held in 2027. This event will be a focused, interactive and knowledge-sharing event drawing upon the outcomes of the regional workshops and identifying future needs and directions for further building capacity on the science-policy interface. Participants will include representatives of scientific and policy communities at all levels, including States and intergovernmental organizations with competence in the ocean science-policy interface, as well as relevant non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. This event will provide an opportunity to share lessons learned on the strengthening of the science-policy interface for ocean governance at the global level, on the empowerment of the ocean data value chain, the links between the science-policy interface and society, including ocean users, the role of citizen science and traditional, indigenous and local knowledge, as well as to identify common approaches, priorities and potential avenues for collaboration. In this regard, the symposium will provide a unique opportunity for sharing information between scientific platforms operating at all levels, thereby fostering a common understanding of approaches and priorities, reducing the duplication of efforts and reinforcing collaboration. A summary, including highlights of the discussions, will be produced at the end of the symposium. The proceedings of the symposium and the papers submitted by panellists on their presentations will be made available to the public through the website of the Regular Process.

34. As part of the capacity-building programme, activities will also be carried out to raise awareness about the importance of the science-policy interface for integrated ocean governance and of the capacity imperatives of the science-policy interface. Using platforms such as the website of the Regular Process, presentations by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and relevant partners and public communication tools, efforts will be made to facilitate the continuous exchange of information and knowledge among the multiple stakeholders of the community of practice. Particular attention will be paid to sharing information on capacity-building needs and opportunities for strengthening the ocean science-policy interface, including best practices and lessons learned. These initiatives will reflect the information collected through the regional workshops and other activities undertaken under the Regular Process, as well as those provided by States and stakeholders. The general public will be kept informed of the progress made and of the outputs of the capacity-building programme, and of how these can be used to reinforce the science-policy interface.

35. The following activities will be undertaken during the fourth cycle:

(a) The planning and organization of regional workshops on capacity-building and the preparation of summaries of discussions;

(b) The dissemination of information collected through the regional workshops, including the summaries of discussions, presentations and other resource materials;

(c) The planning and organization of an international symposium and the preparation of a summary, including highlights of the discussions;

(d) The dissemination of information collected through the international symposium;

(e) The establishment of working methods and an online collaboration platform to facilitate continuous exchange of information and knowledge among the multiple stakeholders of the community of practice and of the Regular Process, as well as to promote ocean literacy;

(f) The planning and implementation of public engagement activities on capacity-building;

(g) The implementation of other ongoing capacity-building activities to support the Regular Process, including fundraising for the Regular Process special scholarship fund and the implementation of the special scholarship;

(h) The continuous evaluation of the implementation of the capacity-building programme and other capacity-building activities.

Activities related to the overall implementation of the fourth cycle

36. The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole will oversee the implementation of the fourth cycle of the Regular Process and provide the necessary guidance. The Ad Hoc Working Group will have up to nine meetings during the fourth cycle.

37. The Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, in putting into practice the decisions and guidance of the Ad Hoc Working Group during the intersessional period, will hold regular meetings throughout the year in order to oversee progress.

38. National focal points designated by States will continue to play an important role in facilitating the implementation of the programme of work. States that have not yet designated a national focal point will be invited to do so as soon as possible. The terms of reference for national focal points[9] will be reviewed and revised, as appropriate. Focal points of relevant United Nations specialized agencies, programmes, funds and bodies and of the secretariats of related organizations and conventions will also continue to play an important role in facilitating the implementation of the programme of work. The terms of reference for focal points for intergovernmental entities[10] will be revised, as appropriate.

39. In its resolution 79/144, the General Assembly recognised the need for early preparation for the fourth cycle, and requested the Secretary-General to invite the Chairs of the regional groups to begin work aimed at the early constitution of the Group of Experts for the fourth cycle, ensuring adequate expertise, gender balance and geographical distribution, comprising a maximum of 25 experts, with no more than five experts per regional group, taking into account the desirability of some degree of continuity. Should a regional group nominate fewer than five experts, other regional groups may be invited by the Bureau to nominate additional experts in consultation with that regional group. The Group of Experts will revise its terms of reference and working methods,[11] as appropriate. It is projected that up to seven in-person meetings of the Group of Experts will be held during the fourth cycle, in addition to frequent web-based meetings.

[9] A/76/391, annex III.
[10] A/76/391, annex IV.
[11] A/76/391, annex II.

40. A preliminary timetable and implementation plan for the fourth cycle will be developed in 2026. The plan will include important milestones for all outputs planned during the fourth cycle.

41. The following priority activities will be undertaken throughout the fourth cycle:

(a) The enhancement of the communications protocols and necessary collaborative systems;

(b) The holding of the meetings of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, including one meeting each year, and additional meetings as necessary;

(c) The holding of regular meetings of the Bureau;

(d) The holding of web-based meetings of the focal points, as necessary;

(e) The early constitution of the Group of Experts, and the review and revision of its terms of reference and working methods,[12] as appropriate;

(f) The evaluation, enhancement and maintenance of the database of members of the Group of Experts;

(g) The holding of in-person and web-based meetings of the Group of Experts;

(h) Regular communication with the Bureau, the focal points and the Group of Experts;

(i) The development of a preliminary timetable and implementation plan for the fourth cycle;

(j) The management of the Regular Process voluntary trust fund.

Activities related to evaluation and planning

42. A dedicated lessons learned exercise will be carried out to review the fourth cycle of the Regular Process and its outcomes with a view to informing, inter alia, the structure, funding and programme of work of the fifth cycle. Bearing in mind that the preference of the General Assembly was for there to be no gap between the third and fourth cycles, and that the preparations for the fourth cycle therefore had to take place during the third cycle, it is assumed that the preparations for the fifth cycle will take place during the fourth cycle. Participants in the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, the focal points, the Group of Experts, the Pool of Experts and the secretariat will be invited to provide input for this exercise.

IV. Secretariat activities relating to the Regular Process

43. As the secretariat of the Regular Process, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs supports the activities undertaken within the Regular Process and the implementation of its outputs. During the fourth cycle, and also in accordance with the lessons learned from the third cycle, the secretariat will be required to perform the following functions, among others:

(a) The discharge of secretariat functions for the overall implementation of the fourth cycle, including:

(i) Providing assistance, including administrative services, to delegations, the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, the Bureau, the members of the Group of Experts, the members of the Pool of Experts and the focal points,

[12] Ibid.

and technical support for all virtual meetings, the use of the online collaborative platforms and the use of relevant databases;

(ii) Supporting the planning and organisation of the fourth cycle, including the development of a preliminary timetable and implementation plan for the fourth cycle, building upon the terms of reference and working methods for the Group of Experts and the focal points;

(iii) Planning, organising and servicing the meetings, whether in-person or web-based, of the Ad Hoc Working of the Whole, the Bureau and the Group of Experts, including departmental coordination, the preparation of agendas, documents and background materials, note-taking and drafting of summaries and meeting reports;

(iv) Coordinating the work of the various bodies of the Regular Process and supporting regular communication and the sharing of information, including through the preparation of correspondence and information materials, the maintenance of relevant contact lists, databases and the website of the Regular Process;

(v) Holding inter-agency cooperation and coordination meetings, whether in-person or web-based;

(vi) The administration of the Regular Process voluntary trust fund, including fundraising, donor engagement, the management of contributions, the disbursement of funds and travel management and reporting;

(vii) Supporting the conduct of the lessons learned exercise to review the fourth cycle and its outcomes;

(b) The provision of secretariat support for activities related to output I, including:

(i) Providing assistance to the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, the Bureau and the Group of Experts related to the constitution of the Pool of Experts, including the review and revision, as appropriate, of the mechanism, the list of expertise, communications and guidance to States, intergovernmental organisations and potential members, and the evaluation, enhancement and maintenance of the database of the Pool of Experts;

(ii) Providing support to the Group of Experts related to the scoping exercise for output I, including by providing support for the use of the online collaboration platform and by planning and providing assistance in organising and holding regional workshops;

(iii) Providing support to the Group of Experts for the constitution of the writing teams and the coordination of their work, including the development of an annotated outline and the drafting process;

(iv) Providing support for the regional workshops, including their scheduling, planning and organisation, preparing relevant documents and negotiating necessary agreements with the organizers and hosts, providing travel support and substantive servicing, preparing reports and conducting any necessary follow-up;

(v) Providing support for the review of the assessments, including the development of modalities for the review processes and their implementation, as well as providing substantive reviews of the assessment;

(vi) Providing support for the finalisation and dissemination of the assessment, including editing, formatting, translation and publication support;

(c) The provision of secretariat support for activities related to output II, including:

(i) Conducting extensive activities related to outreach and engagement, including the review and revision, as appropriate, of the outreach and engagement strategy[13] and support for the evaluation of its implementation;

(ii) Further enhancing the World Ocean Assessment digital platform aimed at providing better interactive data visualisations and multimedia content that make ocean science data and analysis more engaging and easier to understand;

(iii) Co-hosting with strategic partners (e.g. IOC-UNESCO) events, workshops, and campaigns that raise awareness about the Regular Process and its outputs;

(iv) Implementing outreach efforts to facilitate participation in Regular Process activities by various stakeholders, with a view to increasing the impact of the Regular Process;

(v) Aligning efforts and sharing best practices with global, regional frameworks, bodies, and scientific networks to strengthen the integration of the findings of the World Ocean Assessments into other global and regional ocean assessments.

(d) The provision of secretariat support for activities related to output III, including:

(i) Providing support to the Group of Experts for the drafting of the thematic summaries, including by substantively reviewing the documents, supporting the editing and review process and managing the formatting, translation, publication and dissemination of the documents;

(ii) Planning, organising and substantively servicing briefings, presentations and side events to be held in the margins of or during the meetings of other ocean-related intergovernmental processes;

(iii) Preparing information materials on the Regular Process to be shared with stakeholders of other ocean-related intergovernmental processes;

(iv) Facilitating the participation in ocean-related intergovernmental processes by members of the Group of Experts or the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on behalf of the Regular Process, including the preparation of presentations, background notes and speeches, upon request;

(v) Planning, organising and holding meetings with the secretariats of other ocean-related intergovernmental processes in order to strengthen coordination and cooperation, including through the UN-Oceans, and coordinating activities resulting from such meetings;

(e) The provision of secretariat support for activities related to output IV, including:

(i) Developing and implementing the capacity-building programme, in collaboration with Member States, intergovernmental organisations and other stakeholders, including with regard to planning, coordination, further development of activities and evaluation of the programme;

(ii) Planning, organising and substantively servicing the capacity-building workshops, including by preparing relevant documents and negotiating

[13] Available at https://www.un.org/regularprocess/sites/www.un.org.regularprocess/files/high-level_overview_outreachengagement_strategy.pdf.

agreements, providing travel support, preparing reports, conducting the necessary follow-up and disseminating the information collected;

(iii) Planning, organising and substantively servicing the international symposium, including by providing travel support for participants and speakers, preparing reports and disseminating the information collected;

(iv) Providing support for the establishment of the community of practice, including with regard to its working methods, collaboration platforms and the development of systems for the continuous exchange of knowledge and information;

(v) Implementing other ongoing capacity-building activities to support the Regular Process, including activities to promote public engagement, fundraising for the Regular Process special scholarship fund, and the development and implementation of the special scholarship programme.