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# THE OCEAN IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

## The Ocean is probably the biggest business in the world

It is the world's seventh largest economy with a "GDP" equivalent to US\$2.5 trillion (about 5% of global GDP). Its key assets have an overall value of more than US\$24 trillion. The Ocean provides half the oxygen we breathe and has absorbed a quarter of our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and 90% of the additional heat from those emissions. It directly supports the livelihoods of more than 3 billion people and puts food on the table for more than 2.5 billion around the globe.

For business leaders, the transition to "blue" business practices – like the transition to a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions economy – is an historic and unprecedented opportunity. If managed responsibly, fairly and collaboratively, it could bring economic benefits to countries at all levels of income, including new jobs, a cleaner Ocean, better health, abundant biodiversity, lower poverty levels and greater global food security.

The global Ocean economy could more than double by 2030. Infrastructure investment of up to US\$90 trillion is anticipated to occur during the next 20 years worldwide, much of it along coastlines and in Ocean sectors such as aquaculture, tourism, marine energy and offshore installations. These opportunities for investment and economic growth do not have to be locked into a pathway that is detrimental to Ocean health.

To begin their 'blue voyage', businesses must commit to at least one or more of the following:

1. Net-Zero carbon emissions by 2050
2. Significantly reduce plastic waste
3. Support Ocean regeneration zones
4. Only consume sustainable seafood
5. Ocean Corporate Social Responsibility
6. Reduce marine water pollution
7. Support innovation and science and share best practices
8. Become active Ocean conservation advocates



## We encourage businesses to commit to one or more of the following initiatives



### 1. NET-ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS BY 2050

By making this commitment companies will be agreeing to make the transition to a thriving and fair net-zero greenhouse-gas emission economy by 2050.

#### Ideas for action

- **Reduce carbon emissions by making direct operations more energy and fuel efficient** – e.g. offices, factories, transportation fleets.
- **Reduce carbon emissions from your energy supply** by moving towards 100% renewable energy by 2050.
- **Reduce carbon emissions through indirect supply chain emissions** by choosing business partners based on their sustainability records, for example, using companies that are promoting green freight or are actively taking steps to ensure greener operations, as well as encouraging others to take action.
- **Support the profitable decarbonization of the maritime shipping sector** by encouraging those throughout the supply chain to increase the freight efficiency of shipping, encouraging the deployment of efficiency technologies such as flettner rotors, and accelerate the replacement of **heavy fuel oil (HFO)** with low-carbon alternatives such as sustainable biofuels, ammonia, or hydrogen.

#### Why?

Climate change is having the single most far-reaching and profound impact on the Ocean. The Ocean generates half of the Earth's oxygen and is the largest carbon sink on the planet – absorbing a quarter of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and more than 90% of the additional heat from those emissions. Acidification, deoxygenation and warming seas are killing coral reefs and impacting species at a rate too fast for them to adapt. It is estimated that even if we achieve the Paris Agreement target, we will still see a die-off of some 90% of the world's coral reefs by 2050. That is the best-case scenario. To reduce and avoid further damage to our

planet and the Ocean, businesses need to take urgent action to reduce carbon emissions to limit warming to a maximum of 1.5° C.

The maritime shipping industry emits more CO<sub>2</sub> than Germany and is the sixth largest producer of greenhouse gas emissions globally. Despite being the most efficient method of cargo transport, as more than 90% of the world's goods are transported by sea, the industry emits more than 1 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year. Maintaining a business-as-usual approach will result in an estimated 250% growth in emissions by 2050, leaving the industry responsible for 18% of global emissions.

#### Resources

- The B Team: [bteam.org/planb/#restore-nature](https://bteam.org/planb/#restore-nature)
- The Carbon War Room: [carbonwarroom.com](https://carbonwarroom.com)
- Greenpeace – The Energy [R]evolution Scenario: [greenpeace.org/international/en/campaigns/climate-change/energyrevolution](https://greenpeace.org/international/en/campaigns/climate-change/energyrevolution)



### 2. SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE PLASTIC WASTE

By making this commitment, companies will be looking to ensure that all plastic packaging is fully reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025 and to begin the transition to a circular economy business approach.

#### Ideas for action

- **Remove all single-use plastics** from offices, factories, warehouses and retail outlets, such as single-use plastic bags and water bottles. Offer alternatives, and encourage and incentivize your customers and employees to do the same.
- **Invest in innovation and design products for re-use**, making them multiple use, not single use.
- **Develop fully reusable, recyclable or compostable packaging** within business operations by 2025.
- **Ensure effective plastic waste management** by recycling and reusing plastics as much as possible to eliminate plastic waste by 2030.

- **Transition to a circular economy business model** that creates effective after-use pathways for plastics, drastically reducing leakage of plastics into natural systems, in particular the Ocean, and decoupling plastics from fossil feed stocks.
- **Remove microbeads from all products as soon as possible.**

### Why?

About 8 million tonnes of plastic enters the Ocean every year. If we maintain this rate, it is estimated that there will be more plastic in the Ocean than fish by 2050.

The proliferation of cheap and single-use plastic, and the resulting, mismanaged plastic waste, is impacting Ocean wildlife such as marine birds and animals through entanglement or poisoning. It is even entering the food chain through the fish we eat, with potential human health impacts that we are only now beginning to understand. Beneath the Ocean's surface, even in the remotest and deepest parts of the Ocean, are high concentrations of microbeads, plastic microfibrils and broken-down plastic particles that are impossible to remove completely from the Ocean and are easily ingested by sea creatures. The majority of marine plastic comes from land-based sources, from uncollected waste or leaky waste-management systems. Urgently needed solutions call for a combination of enhanced awareness, reduced plastic use, massively improved waste management, particularly in developing countries, and the transition to a circular economy.

### Resources

- United Nations Environment Programme #CleanSeas Campaign: [cleanseas.org/take-action?action=173#action\\_173](https://cleanseas.org/take-action?action=173#action_173)
- Ellen McArthur Foundation's The New Plastics Economy initiative: [newplasticseconomy.org/about](https://newplasticseconomy.org/about)
- Plastic Pollution Coalition: [plasticpollutioncoalition.org](https://plasticpollutioncoalition.org)
- Break Free from Plastic Movement: [breakfreefromplastic.org](https://breakfreefromplastic.org)
- Beat the Microbead: [beatthemicrobead.org](https://beatthemicrobead.org)
- #OneLess pledge (UK-based): [zsl.org/conservation/habitats/marine-and-freshwater/one-less](https://zsl.org/conservation/habitats/marine-and-freshwater/one-less)



### 3. SUPPORT OCEAN REGENERATION ZONES

By making this commitment, your business is helping achieve a healthy and productive Ocean. Businesses need to get active in promoting and supporting the creation of “national parks at sea” – marine reserves – that strengthen Ocean resilience and help restore and revitalize Ocean life.

### Ideas for action

- **Encourage and support marine reserve designations** for the protection of at least 10% of the Ocean by 2020 and with 30% strongly protected by 2030. This is a smart investment with high returns in terms of jobs, fish and improved Ocean system services.

### Why?

The Ocean has an incredible ability to regenerate itself, so if we act now we can make a difference. We need to harness the Ocean's carbon-absorbing power and increase its resilience by protecting ecosystems and helping to rebuild marine species abundance. We need to act on all fronts to climate-proof our ecosystems as much as possible, including by strongly protecting at least 30% of our Ocean as marine reserves by 2030, which means that 70% of the Ocean would still be open for business. Highly protected marine reserves, where no destructive or extractive activities take place, are a key part of the solution for the Ocean crisis. The science on the benefits of marine reserves is robust and clear. They can help reduce and buffer the impacts of climate change on the Ocean, and to rebuild species abundance and diversity, restoring ecosystems and restocking marine life. They also provide a scientific reference in terms of assessing the impacts of climate change on ecosystems, and bring economic benefits. They are the best tool we have to help the Ocean regenerate and we need to expand their application – and to do so without delay.



## Resources

- The High Seas Alliance: [highseasalliance.org](http://highseasalliance.org)
- Antarctic Ocean Alliance: [antarcticocean.org](http://antarcticocean.org)
- Global map showing marine protected area campaigns: [mpatlas.org/campaign](http://mpatlas.org/campaign)
- The Pew Charitable Trusts Ocean Legacy: [pewtrusts.org/en/projects/pew-bertarelli-ocean-legacy](http://pewtrusts.org/en/projects/pew-bertarelli-ocean-legacy)
- National Geographic Pristine Seas: [ocean.nationalgeographic.com/ocean/explore/pristine-seas/creating-marine-reserves](http://ocean.nationalgeographic.com/ocean/explore/pristine-seas/creating-marine-reserves)
- Wildlife Conservation Society Marine Protected Area Fund: [waittfoundation.org/mpas/wcs-marine-protected-area-fund](http://waittfoundation.org/mpas/wcs-marine-protected-area-fund)
- World Wildlife Fund: [wwf.panda.org/what\\_we\\_do/how\\_we\\_work/our\\_global\\_goals/oceans/solutions/protection/protected\\_areas](http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/how_we_work/our_global_goals/oceans/solutions/protection/protected_areas)



## 4. ONLY CONSUME SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

By committing to only sourcing, selling and using seafood that is sustainably certified and uses fair labor, your business is helping to restore species abundance, restock the Ocean, and ensure food for the future.

### Ideas for action

- **Develop sustainable seafood procurement policies** that ensure all seafood used is sustainably certified and not listed on any seafood “red lists”, and takes account of labor standards, ensuring fair labor.
- **Support the establishment of a global fully traceable system** for seafood and seek out companies who can supply fully traceable seafood.
- **Only source seafood from fisheries that have followed scientific advice** when setting fishing quotas.
- **Use tools to train your staff and suppliers** and become a Seafood Watch Partner, or equivalent, in your region.

- **Support local small-scale fishers** that are using sustainable fishing practices by searching out and securing fish directly from them.
- **Contribute to improved seafood sustainability** by working with other stakeholders such as governments, the fishing industry, environmental and conservation groups, and the scientific community.
- **Tell your government to get rid of perverse fishing subsidies** and to support the decision to reform harmful fisheries subsidies at the World Trade Organization, together with those governments that have launched an initiative to get them eliminated once and for all.

### Why?

Over the course of a few decades, fishing activities have led to 90% of fish stocks being either fully fished, overfished or depleted. Overfishing and destructive and illicit fishing activities are costing the global economy trillions of dollars, compromising jobs and taking food from the future. About 20% of fish caught are the product of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing – a global problem that not only undermines a productive economy and healthy environment but also impoverishes coastal communities and has links to slavery, drugs, human trafficking and terrorism. To stem the demand for illegal fish, it is essential to consume seafood that is from reliable, sustainable sources. Perverse subsidies for fuel and helping build bigger and more powerful vessels have also tilted the playing field unfairly so that there are now too many boats (with bigger engines) catching too few fish.

## Resources

- WWF Sustainable Seafood guides (global): [wwf.panda.org/how\\_you\\_can\\_help/live\\_green/out\\_shopping/seafood\\_guides](http://wwf.panda.org/how_you_can_help/live_green/out_shopping/seafood_guides)
- Marine Stewardship Council: [msc.org](http://msc.org)
- Seafood Watch Partner (US-based): [seafoodwatch.org/businesses-and-organizations/become-a-partner](http://seafoodwatch.org/businesses-and-organizations/become-a-partner)
- International Pole and Line Foundation: [fishchoice.com/seafood-program/international-pole-line-foundation-ipnlf](http://fishchoice.com/seafood-program/international-pole-line-foundation-ipnlf)
- Global Fishing Watch: [globalfishingwatch.org](http://globalfishingwatch.org)
- Satellite Applications Catapult – Ocean Sustainability Business Unit: [sa.catapult.org.uk/sitemap/commercial/ocean-sustainability/our-solutions/services](http://sa.catapult.org.uk/sitemap/commercial/ocean-sustainability/our-solutions/services)
- Fisheries Transparency Initiative: [fisheriestransparency.orgnationalgeographic.com/ocean/explore/pristine-seas/creating-marine-reserves](http://fisheriestransparency.orgnationalgeographic.com/ocean/explore/pristine-seas/creating-marine-reserves)

greenhouse gas emissions, reducing their environmental impact and ensuring human rights due diligence.

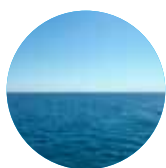
- **Assess what economic contribution a healthy Ocean makes to your business model.**

## Why?

Ensuring your own business activities are sustainable and that your supply chain partners' are too, you are not supporting environmental destruction or social exploitation indirectly or inadvertently. It also makes good business sense. Greater sustainability efforts help meet customers' expectations, avoids the risks of negative public relations, attracts investors, and creates a healthy work environment for employees.

## Resources

- UN Global Compact: [unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles](http://unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles)
- Guide to traceability: [unglobalcompact.org/library/791](http://unglobalcompact.org/library/791)
- The B Team Governance and Transparency: [bteam.org/planb/#drive-full-transparency](http://bteam.org/planb/#drive-full-transparency)
- Global Fishing Watch: [globalfishingwatch.org](http://globalfishingwatch.org)
- Satellite Applications Catapult – Ocean Sustainability Business Unit: [sa.catapult.org.uk/sitemap/commercial/ocean-sustainability/our-solutions/services](http://sa.catapult.org.uk/sitemap/commercial/ocean-sustainability/our-solutions/services)



## 5. OCEAN CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

By making this commitment, your business is seeking to ensure that any of its activities that interact with the Ocean are considered within your corporate social governance framework.

## Ideas for action

- **Do an Ocean impact audit** of your business activities and supply chain to see where the highest risks are within your business activities, with regards to negative impacts on the Ocean.
- **Ensure full traceability of all products**, particularly those from high-risk sectors, such as seafood.
- **Collaborate with other like-minded companies to call for a level playing field** so that businesses are better off without having to compete with companies lagging far behind on reducing



## 6. REDUCE MARINE WATER POLLUTION

By making the commitment to reduce marine water pollution from land-based sources and to use only Ocean freight and cargo shippers that take steps to enforce effective onboard waste management and reduce their use of bunker fuels, your company is preventing harmful chemicals and waste from entering the Ocean, either directly or through rivers and water systems.

### Ideas for action

- **Ensure effective waste management** and choose safer, greener alternatives.
- **Commit to source protein from farms and ranches that are committed to sustainable agriculture**, do not use toxic and hazardous chemical pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, and are reducing and eliminating agricultural run-off.
- **Eliminate pollution from ship ballast water, oil, sewage and garbage.** Ensure effective waste management, waste reduction and recycling onboard and in ports by ensuring proper stowage, segregation and handling. Ensure zero Ocean dumping policies.
- **Phase out heavy fuel oil use globally** (see above) also in recognition of its severely polluting impacts, with public support for a ban on heavy fuel oil use in the Arctic as soon as possible.

### Why?

Over 80% of Ocean pollution comes from land-based activities, either from deliberate dumping (plastics and other waste) or run-off from rivers and drains, including sewage. Industrial and corporate activities and agriculture are a major cause of this pollution. Farms and ranches in coastal regions as well as along water catchment basins commonly use nitrogen-based fertilizers to boost production. These compounds leach into the Ocean, resulting in the build-up of harmful chemicals, removing oxygen from the water and resulting in dead-zones and algal blooms. The toxins also bio-accumulate in fish and

seafood and poison and damage marine habitats and ecosystems. In addition, we need to reduce the release of oil, chemicals, sewage and garbage from ships, either through accidental spills or through operational discharges. Increased shipping is increasing the level of pollution and threatening natural habitats, especially around ports and near shipping routes. We need to stop treating our Ocean as a dumping ground and clean up our waste responsibly.

### Resources

- Clean Shipping Coalition: [cleanshipping.org](http://cleanshipping.org)
- Clean Arctic Alliance: [hfofreearctic.org/en/front-page](http://hfofreearctic.org/en/front-page)
- The Carbon War Room: [carbonwarroom.com/sectors/transport/shipping/operation-shippingefficiency](http://carbonwarroom.com/sectors/transport/shipping/operation-shippingefficiency)
- United Nations Development Programme: [undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2017/3/7/The-way-forward-for-reducing-marine-pollution.html](http://undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2017/3/7/The-way-forward-for-reducing-marine-pollution.html)



## 7. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND SCIENCE AND SHARE BEST PRACTICES

By committing to increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology to developing countries and Small Island Developing States (which are in fact large Ocean States), your business can enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to sustainable development.

### Ideas for action

- **Support research initiatives** that improve businesses operations and also benefit the environment and the Ocean, as part of your business model to promote new technological solutions.
- **Translate Ocean science** so that it becomes relevant to your business, and accessible to your staff and customers.
- **Work with countries to build capacity**, sharing ideas and technology for sustainably managing their fisheries and tourism industries.

## Why?

Technology and innovation are key to ensuring we live more sustainably. They are driving advances in fuel efficiency, renewables, reduction of waste and much more. Companies are often at the cutting edge of innovation, and through investment and support can provide workable solutions with improvements for people and the planet.

### Resources

- Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission: [unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/ioc-oceans/sections-and-programmes/ocean-sciences](https://unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/ioc-oceans/sections-and-programmes/ocean-sciences)
- Food and Agriculture Organization Port State Measures Agreement: [fao.org/fishery/psm/agreement/en](https://fao.org/fishery/psm/agreement/en)
- Global Fishing Watch: [globalfishingwatch.org](https://globalfishingwatch.org)
- Satellite Applications Catapult – Ocean Sustainability Business Unit: [sa.catapult.org.uk/sitemap/commercial/ocean-sustainability/our-solutions/services](https://sa.catapult.org.uk/sitemap/commercial/ocean-sustainability/our-solutions/services)

to make the case for regulations that put Ocean protection measures in place, require higher standards, and create a level playing field for more progressive players who are not exploiting the Ocean or the environment at the cost of others.

- **Raise awareness among consumers and staff** about the state of the Ocean, and highlight actions that they can take both to protect it and improve understanding.

## Why?

The only way that we are going to solve the Ocean crisis is by working together, with businesses as part of the solution. Our goal in launching the “The Ocean is Everybody’s Business” initiative is to raise awareness within the corporate sector of the impact businesses have been having on the Ocean and to encourage as many companies as possible to get involved in Ocean conservation and sustainability – to enable us to reverse the trajectory of decline to one of recovery. Go back to the beginning of this document and see how to work with your team to help positive Ocean action across your corporate footprint. It is important to begin now.



## 8. BECOME ACTIVE OCEAN CONSERVATION ADVOCATES

By using your a strong and compelling business voice, you can influence governments, other business leaders, employees and consumers to act now so that we put the Ocean on a pathway to recovery – because “The Ocean is Everybody’s Business”.

### Ideas for action

- **Support carbon offset programs** to protect carbon-rich coastal habitats, such as mangroves and seagrass beds.
- **Support Ocean conservation efforts by environmental organizations** and other initiatives that provide ocean stewardship to protect important habitats such as coral reefs.
- **Collaborate with other like-minded companies**

### Resources

- Offset your carbon footprint and protect critical Ocean habitat: [oceanfdn.org/calculator](https://oceanfdn.org/calculator)
- Announce your initiative to help achieve Sustainable Development Goal 14 for the United Nations’ The Ocean Conference: [oceanconference.un.org/commitments](https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments)
- Watch the Top 10 documentary films on the Ocean: [conservation-careers.com/conservation-jobs-careers-advice/top-10-documentary-films-every-conservationist-watch](https://conservation-careers.com/conservation-jobs-careers-advice/top-10-documentary-films-every-conservationist-watch)
- Stay updated on Ocean issues by signing up to Ocean Unite’s newsletter, The Navigator: [oceanunite.org/navigator](https://oceanunite.org/navigator)



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## Companies can play a huge role in driving positive change for the Ocean

**Committing to a business model that is both environmentally and socially responsible will have multiple positive effects for the planet, its people and the economy. The private sector has a strong and compelling voice and major reach in terms of its consumers, staff and business partners.**

Whether your company's business activities are directly linked to the Ocean or not, there are many actions you can take that will have a direct impact on promoting a healthier, cleaner, safer and more productive Ocean for people and the planet.

The Ocean can regenerate and replenish itself, if we help it:

- Reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions can slow the impact of Ocean acidification. Acidification could have devastating consequences for the global seafood industry, which is worth US\$190 billion and depends on a healthy Ocean.
- Stopping the 8 million tonnes of plastic entering the Ocean each year means that we will avoid reaching levels of 1 kg of plastic per 3 kg of fish by 2025.
- Studies have shown that creating marine protected areas increases the biomass (weight) of fish by

446%, while fish abundance increases by 166%, species size increases by 26% and there are 21% more types of fish.

- Illegal fishing is costing us US\$23 billion per year in lost income. Ending this practice and ensuring a fully traceable and sustainable seafood supply chain has great investment potential. Consider that the demand for fully sustainable seafood has grown ten times faster than the market for conventional seafood in the last decade, and in 2015 alone the global sustainable seafood market hit US\$11.5 billion in retail sales.

The only way we will solve the Ocean crisis is by working together, with businesses involved as part of the solution.

To assist companies on their voyage to a healthier Ocean, there are a number of key activities that will help achieve the Ocean Sustainable Development Goal targets (SDG 14: Life Below Water) and go further towards adopting the measures needed to secure a sustainable and fair "blue" future.

We believe that many companies are eager to meet these challenges and to take bold actions to "blue" their businesses. They need to hold themselves accountable, by being open and transparent about their activities.

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