



“Promoting Ocean Literacy for Sustainable Development in the Western Pacific”

Intersessional Task Force on Ocean Literacy

Sixteenth Intergovernmental Session of the
IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC-XVI)
Hangzhou, China, 10-12 November 2026

“Promoting Ocean Literacy for Sustainable Development in the Western Pacific”

WESTPAC Intersessional Task Force on Ocean Literacy



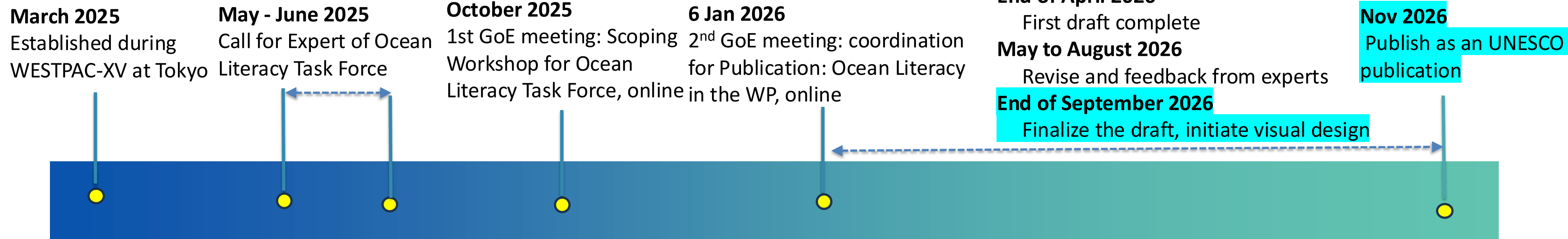
Established during WESTPAC-XV at Tokyo in 11-13 March 2025

Mandate

The Task Force will provide strategic and actional recommendations on the scoping, coordination, and implementation of the Ocean Literacy portfolio of activities in the region, as well as develop, promote and support ocean literacy initiatives tailored to the region's cultural, economic, and ecological contexts.



Progress



“Promoting Ocean Literacy for Sustainable Development in the Western Pacific”

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Group of Experts

Members

An open-ended Group of Experts (GoE) recommended and nominated by Member States, reflecting the multi-stakeholder nature of ocean literacy

15 Experts

11 Member States

9 Females

1 ECOP



Abigail Sisti
NOAA National Ocean Service, US



Anis Faisal Reza
Gugus Mitigasi Lebak Selatan, Indonesia



Anna Oposa
Save Philippine Seas, the Philippines



Danfeng Weng
Third Institute of Oceanography, China



Dao Viet Ha
Institute of Oceanography, Vietnam



Ferdiansyah Ferdika Faeyza
Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, Indonesia



Lalith Amaralal Kariyawasam
National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency, Sri Lanka



Mahadi Mohammad
Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia



Mohamed Redza Mohamed Zakaria
University Malaya, Malaysia



Polina Lobanova
Department of Oceanology, Institute of Earth Science, Saint-Petersburg State University, Russia



Qicheng Meng
Second Institute of Oceanography, China



Sachiko Oguma
Ocean Policy Research Institute, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan



Soyeona Park
Korea National Ocean Science Museum, Republic of Korea



Suchana Apple Chavanich
Department of Marine Science, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand



Syarifah Aini Dalimunthe
Research Center for Population, National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia

“Promoting Ocean Literacy for Sustainable Development in the Western Pacific”
WESTPAC Intersessional Task Force on Ocean Literacy
1st GoE Meeting:



Objectives

- Take stock of ocean literacy efforts in the Member States
- Identify challenges and opportunities
- Foster collaboration to advance ocean literacy in the Western Pacific.

Participation & Presentations

20 experts from **11** countries participated the workshop
12 Presentations were delivered, covering:

- National development status of OL
(*Relevant policy or strategic frameworks, Ongoing or completed initiatives, existing tools and materials...*)
- Challenges & gaps
- Suggestions to the Task Force



Group photo of the online Scoping Workshop on 9th October 2025

“Promoting Ocean Literacy for Sustainable Development in the Western Pacific”

Scoping Workshop for the WESTPAC Intersessional Task Force on Ocean Literacy

Ocean Literacy builds stewardship, boosts readiness for ocean risks, supports sustainability, and nurtures next generations' care for marine resources.

Jointly, we will

- Share efforts on Ocean Literacy in Western Pacific
- Identify challenges and opportunities
- Inspire collective actions to advance Ocean Literacy in the region

9-10 OCT 2025

01:00 PM - 04:00 PM (GMT+7) | 09 OCT
09:00 AM - 12:00 AM (GMT+7) | 10 OCT

“Promoting Ocean Literacy for Sustainable Development in the Western Pacific”
WESTPAC Intersessional Task Force on Ocean Literacy

1st GoE Meeting:

Scoping Workshop on Ocean Literacy in the Western Pacific



Key Discussions:

- Ocean literacy is gaining **popularity**, but efforts remain **fragmented**, with limited coordination and weak outcome measurement.
- **Insufficient regional synthesis and cross-learning** limit scaling-up of good practices.
- Participants **called for stronger international collaboration**, including wider sharing of tools, materials, and best practices.
- **Ocean research** is essential to provide credible evidence for effective communication and the development of ocean literacy resources.
- **Strengthen institutional support** by leveraging existing national initiatives and institutions.

Action Points:

1. Develop a WP regional ocean literacy synthesis: take stock Member State efforts and document good practices to enable cross-learning.
2. Explore funding opportunities, including joint proposals, topics concerning local communities and traditional/Indigenous knowledge.
3. Contribute to UNESCO/JFIT “Ocean Literacy for Journalists” in four pilots (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand) to strengthen media engagement and ocean-literate communication.



← Summary of the Workshop is available online, please scan the QR

“Promoting Ocean Literacy for Sustainable Development in the Western Pacific”

WESTPAC Intersessional Task Force on Ocean Literacy



Output: Ocean Literacy Outlook in the Western Pacific

Ocean Literacy in the Western Pacific

From Knowledge to Action for a Healthy, Resilient and Sustainable Ocean

A Regional Stocktake

1 / 8

Why Ocean Literacy Matters in the Western Pacific

A region of ocean people
Diverse cultures, ecosystems and livelihoods closely connected to the ocean

Facing growing pressures
Climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and competing ocean uses

People as part of the solution
An ocean-literate society is essential for informed decisions, active participation and ocean stewardship

2 / 8 A healthier ocean depends on a more ocean-literate society.

Three Key Drivers

1 Respond to global ocean agendas and national strategic priorities
International commitments and national development priorities are creating strong momentum for Ocean Literacy.

2 Strengthen public understanding and translate knowledge into action
Ocean Literacy helps people make informed choices, participate in solutions and support behavior change.

3 Empower young people and cultivate future ocean leadership
Investing in youth today builds the scientists, professionals, innovators and community leaders of tomorrow.

3 / 8

Policy and Institutional Anchoring

Ocean Literacy is generally embedded in broader frameworks for education, ocean governance, sustainable development and climate resilience.

National strategies and legislation

Education and sectoral frameworks

Multi-stakeholder collaboration (government, academia, civil society, community, private sector)

Diverse approaches adapted to national circumstances

4 / 8

Multiple Pathways of Implementation

Countries are advancing Ocean Literacy through complementary and mutually reinforcing pathways.

Formal education
Integrating ocean-related content in schools and higher education

Informal learning
Museums, aquariums, science centres and public engagement programmes

Public awareness and media
Science communication, traditional and social media, creative approaches

Community and cultural engagement
Citizen science, community-based conservation, traditional and indigenous knowledge

5 / 8

Key Challenges and Gaps

1 Fragmented policy and implementation
Diverse mandates and actors can lead to duplication and limited coordination.

2 Uneven integration in formal education
Ocean-related content is often dispersed or optional, with varying access to trained teachers and quality materials.

3 Knowledge-awareness-action gap
Scientific knowledge is not always translated into accessible, culturally relevant and action-oriented communication.

4 Sustainable financing and limited evaluation
Many initiatives rely on short-term projects, and monitoring often focuses on activities rather than outcomes and behavior change.

6 / 8

Way Forward

From dispersed activities to a more connected Ocean Literacy ecosystem

Strengthen policy integration
Anchor Ocean Literacy in key national frameworks (e.g. blue economy, biodiversity, climate adaptation).

Build capacity and resources
Support educators, communicators and institutions with training, materials and infrastructure.

Enhance science-to-society communication
Use clear, credible and culturally resonant messages and media.

Strengthen evaluation
Develop indicators that measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, participation and behavior.

Promote regional cross-learning
Share good practices, co-develop knowledge products and implement joint initiatives.

7 / 8

WESTPAC's Regional Role

WESTPAC can serve as a key platform to strengthen Ocean Literacy across the Western Pacific.

Facilitate exchange of good practices and lessons learned

Connect national expertise and regional partners

Support development of regional knowledge products and tools

Catalyse collaborative initiatives and capacity building

“An ocean-literate Western Pacific for a healthier, more resilient and sustainable ocean.”

8 / 8

- *Establish a baseline understanding of OL efforts in the WP region;*
- *Facilitate cross-learning and the exchange of knowledge, experience, and good practices*
- *Provide strategic insights to support the scaling up of ocean stewardship across the region.*



Ocean Literacy for Journalists in Southeast Asia

(Nov 2025-Nov 2027)



An exploratory initiative supported by the Japanese Funds-in-Trusts for UNESCO

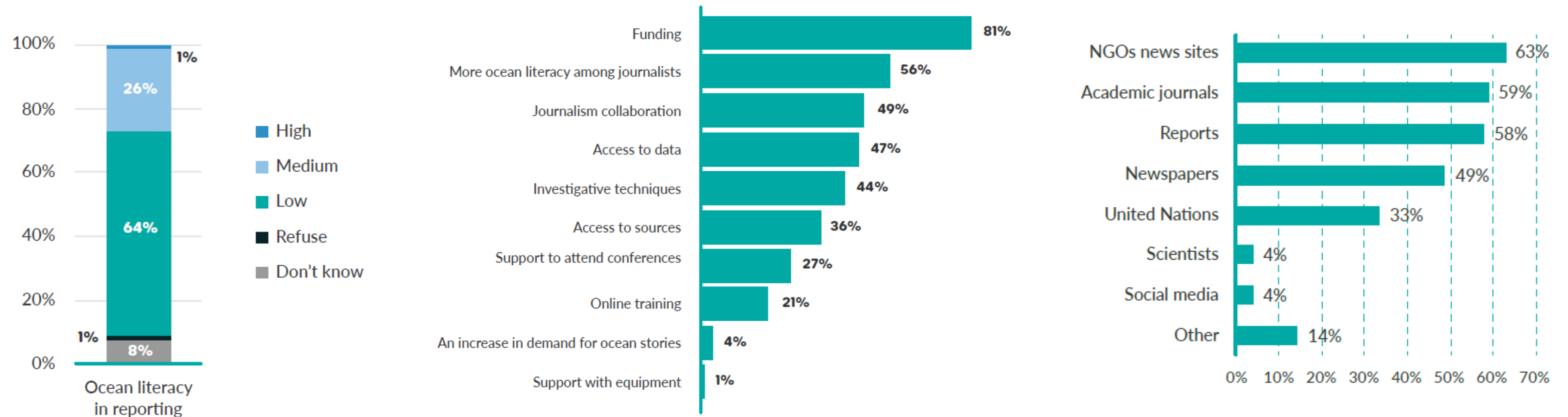
Why Ocean Literacy?

Why Journalists?



Ocean science → public awareness → societal action → policy transformation

Scientific communities ↔ policymakers ↔ coastal communities ↔ wider society



- **56%** of journalists identified a need for enhanced ocean literacy to improve coverage.
 - **49%** of journalists emphasized the importance of collaboration.
 - **47%** of journalists pointed to better access to data.
- (Pulitzer Center, 2024)

Objective, Outputs and Activities



Objective: to enhance ocean literacy of journalists or media professionals in the Western Pacific, by enhancing their understanding of ocean and ocean science, fostering collaborative networks between journalists/media groups and ocean experts/institutions, promoting regionally and locally relevant ocean narratives.

Output 1

A comprehensive assessment formulated for pilot countries

Activity 1.1: Conduct **situation analysis** in pilot countries, to identify partners, assess gaps and needs, make recommendations.

Activity 1.2: Co-design with pilot countries a list of **priority activities** to improve journalists' ocean literacy.

Output 2

Institutional partnerships established, and journalists' ocean literacy enhanced

Activity 2.1: Develop **tailored training tools/modules** and/or media toolkit on ocean literacy for journalists.

Activity 2.2: Conduct **national training workshops** for targeted groups of journalists.

Activity 2.3: **Provide institution-based internship** opportunities for young journalists.

Activity 2.4: Conduct **guided field trips** for journalists.

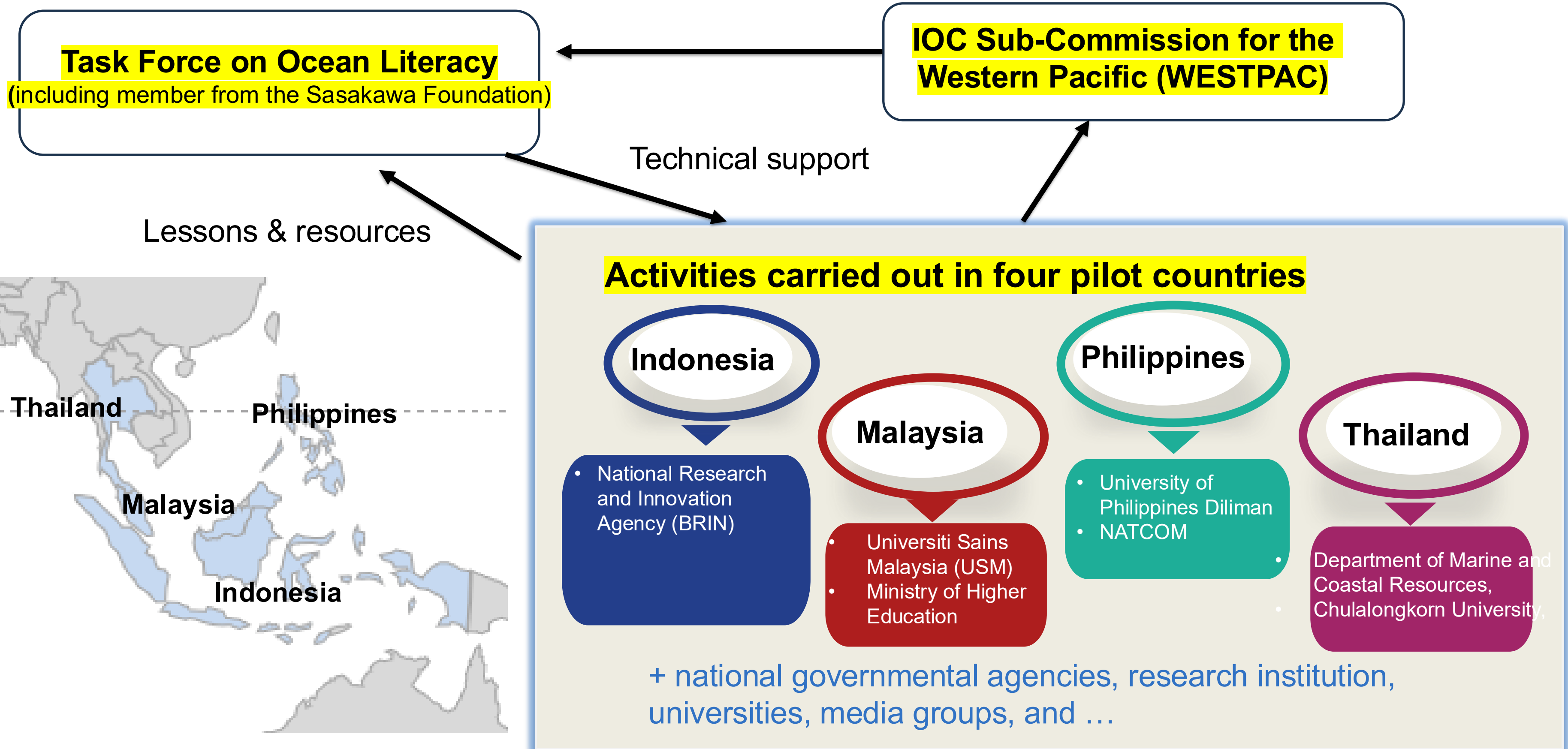
Output 3

Best practices analyzed and consolidated for broader impact and scale-up

Activity 3.1: Develop a **project website** and other promotional materials to enhance visibility.

Activity 3.2: Organize **engagement activities** to analyze and consolidate activities outputs and impacts, identify good practices, and enlarge engagement for **replication and scaling-up**.

Implementation Strategy



Situation analysis in four pilot countries



15-25 Feb 2026

Launch an open call to Consultancy for Scoping Exercise (Output 1)

38 applications received

4-6 March 2026

Interviewed with qualified candidates from 4 pilot countries

25 March 2026

Conducted 2 rounds of consultation with 4 selected candidates for a quality and feasible technical proposals that tailored for national content and culture background

6 May 2026

Organized Kick-off meeting for Scoping Exercise with 4 consultants

2 Jun 2026

Organized 2nd Monthly Progress Reporting meeting with consultants

To Identify media groups and potential partners, assess capacity development needs and gaps, analyze existing ocean literacy resources, and make recommendations on potential tools and activities.



Experts for the Scoping Exercise

Indonesia



Yogi Setya Permana
Climate and Environmental Governance
National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN)

Malaysia



Siou Woon Ong
Public Policy Architect and Executive Strategist
Penang Institute, Malaysia

Philippines



Frances Camille RIVERA
Co-founder,
Oceanus Conservation,
Philippines

Thailand



Pipope Panitchpakdi
Deputy Director General,
ThaiPBS,
Thailand

Key findings and planned activity in 2027



Key findings

- The Western Pacific has a strong and diverse foundation for Ocean Literacy, but its full potential has yet to be realized.
- Ocean Literacy is evolving beyond education and awareness towards societal engagement, responsible behaviour, and ocean stewardship.
- Diversity is a regional strength. The priority should be to strengthen existing approaches and institutional coordination rather than promote a uniform model.
- Strengthening the connection between ocean science and society is a critical priority.
- Investment in Ocean Literacy among young people is a long-term investment in ocean science capacity, responsible citizenship, and future ocean leadership.
- The Western Pacific's diversity creates valuable opportunities for Member States to learn from one another and adapt successful approaches to their national circumstances.

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12th WESTPAC International Marine Science Conference & 3rd UN Ocean Decade Regional Conference

From Knowledge to Action: Connecting Science, Policy, and Society for a Resilient Western Pacific

Manila, Philippines 20-23 April 2027

E7 OCEAN LITERACY FOR COASTAL RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABLE BLUE FUTURES IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC SUB-THHEME

Mahadi Mohammad, Suchana Apple Chavanich, Anna Oposa, Syarifah Aini Dalimunthe, Mohamed Redza Bin Mohamed Zakaria, Danfeng Weng

HIDE DETAILS

CONVENERS

Mahadi Mohammad
Centre for Marine and Coastal Studies (CEMACS)
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Suchana Apple Chavanich
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Anna Oposa
Save Philippine Seas, Philippines

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Research Center for Population, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia

SESSION DESCRIPTION

Ocean literacy is increasingly recognised as a critical enabler of sustainable ocean governance, resilient coastal communities, and inclusive blue economy development in the Western Pacific. This session will provide a regional platform to share innovative approaches, partnerships, and practical solutions that strengthen public understanding, stakeholder engagement, youth empowerment, and science-policy-society integration for ocean sustainability. Contributions are invited on marine education, citizen science, integration of indigenous and local knowledge, science communication, digital outreach, youth leadership, community-based conservation, and ocean literacy capacity development. The session particularly welcomes interdisciplinary and transboundary approaches that connect marine science with policymakers, educators, industry, NGOs, the media, and coastal communities. Discussions will focus on practical pathways to transform ocean knowledge into behavioural change, societal action, and long-term ocean stewardship aligned with the UN Ocean Decade and the Sustainable Development Goals.



Strategic Recommendations and Way Forward



ANNEX IV

Terms of Reference

Intersessional Task Force on Ocean Literacy

1. Objective

Ocean Literacy has gained increasing attention worldwide over the past decade. Ocean Literacy is defined as “the understanding of human influence on the ocean and the ocean influence on humans”. It not only provides a fundamental means to enhance ocean knowledge and raise public awareness, but also provides tools and a comprehensive approach to empower citizens and stakeholders to act in a more responsible manner for our ocean and its resources.

The Ocean Literacy Task Force is initiated to drive the development of ocean literacy in the Western Pacific and adjacent areas.

2. Terms of Reference

The Task Force will be open-ended. It will be composed of experts recommended by Member States and relevant communities, coming from diverse and relevant disciplines and interested parties reflecting the multi-stakeholders nature of ocean literacy, including government agencies, educational and research institutions, private sectors and foundations.

Experts will be selected based on their expertise, working experience in ocean literacy and a willingness to promote ocean literacy collectively, taking into account geographical and gender balance. The Task Force will elect its Chair and Vice-Chair.

The Task Force will provide strategic and actional recommendations on the scoping, coordination, and implementation of the Ocean Literacy portfolio of activities in the region, as well as develop, promote and support ocean literacy initiatives tailored to the region's cultural, economic, and ecological contexts. Specifically, it will

- Provide strategic recommendations or directions for advancing Ocean Literacy in the region;
- Identify, develop, coordinate and implement Ocean Literacy initiatives in the region, ensuring they are tailored to the needs of Member States in the region and aligned with the UN Ocean Decade goals;
- Engage with stakeholders at both international and national levels to identify opportunities for co-developing and mobilizing financial and in-kind support for Ocean Literacy initiative(s);
- Identification of synergies with relevant organizations and institutions interested in promoting Ocean Literacy, including among UNESCO Sectors, international organizations, educational/academic institutions, NGOs and private sector associations;
- Actively participate in the Task Force regular meetings, and interact with other Ocean Literacy communities;

The open-ended Task Force will be formed and become operational for the duration of the UN Ocean Decade, subject to regular review and extension as needed.

- *Strengthen the Task Force's effectiveness and continuity through periodic membership renewal and the engagement of new experts.*
- *Facilitate regional cross-learning and knowledge exchange to promote the sharing, adaptation, and scaling up of good practices in Ocean Literacy.*
- *Keep developing and/or promoting new initiatives to enhance capacity for effective science communication and public engagement.*