ASIA-PACIFIC

YOUR REGIONAL NETWORK NEWSLETTER

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A NEW YEAR WITH BIG AMBITION

Holger Link, 2020

This is a big year for the Ocean and advancing action for achieving our blue ambitions. The term "20/20" is used to express the clarity or sharpness of vision. Coincidentally, four of the ten SDG 14 targets mature in the year 2020 and we will soon review if we are on track for success, and if not, how do we sharpen our focus to do something about it.

Big events such as the World Ocean Summit, the second UN Ocean Conference, Our Ocean, & COP26 will take place, and the start of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development will be just around the corner. Indeed, a super year for nature is upon us!

We look forward to continuing our support to our community by sharing your successes and lessons learned, but also by engaging you at targeted events of our own, such as the 22nd Annual LME Consultation Meeting (see page 11 for more details).

Wishing you a brilliant year ahead

Your Coordinator

Natalie

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

"ASIA-PACIFIC" is an annual newsletter, featuring previous and upcoming activities taking place within the Asia-Pacific Regional Network.

Our aim is to increase the communication flow and visibility of the different Network activities for exchange of knowledge and news.

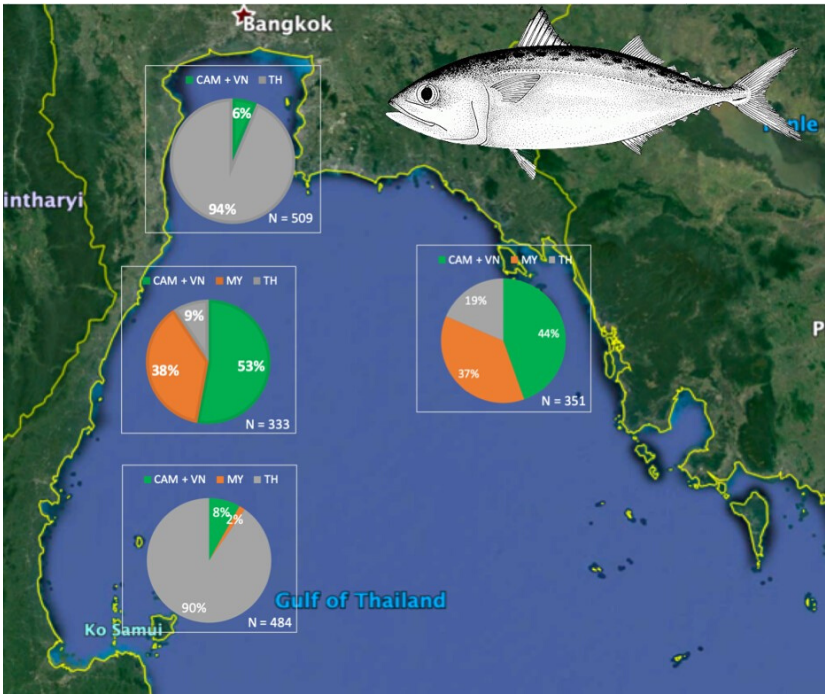
Information about Network Meetings, regional activities, calls for participation, trainings, conferences, webinars and calls for assistance can be found in the Newsletter.

ABOUT THE NETWORK

Established in 2017 by the GEF LME:LEARN project, we are a network of professionals and practitioners involved in marine and coastal initiatives across Asia-Pacific.

In our network you will find representatives of GEF-funded marine and coastal projects, projects funded by other donors, academia, national ministries, NGOs, Regional Bodies or Conventions, businesses and more.

REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR MANAGEMENT OF TRANSBOUNDARY SPECIES: INDO-PACIFIC MACKEREL IN THE GULF OF THAILAND LME



Mixed stock of Indo-pacific Mackerel in the GoTLME (CAM: Cambodia, MY: Malaysia, TH: Thailand, and VN: Viet Nam). Credit to SEAFDEC/Sweden Project, 2019

Mackerels (Family Scombridae) particularly the Indo-Pacific mackerel (*Rastrelliger brachysoma*), also known as short mackerel, are among the most economically important small pelagic fishes in the Southeast Asian region, contributing to approximately 38% of the region's total small pelagic fisheries production or 11% of total capture fisheries production in 2010. Comparing among several Mackerel species, in 2016 Indo-Pacific mackerel contributed to 78% of the total Mackerel production. Gulf of Thailand Large Marine Ecosystem (GoTLME) is one of the important ecosystems for Indo-Pacific mackerel, where the peak of highest catch using purse seine and falling net was reported in 1996 at 328,955 MT; while low catch was reported during 3 periods, in 1999, 2005 and 2010 at 289,285 MT, 283,984 MT and 259,354.56 MT, respectively, and the catch has never reached 300,000 MT as recorded in 1996 again (SEAFDEC, 2018).

Indo-Pacific mackerel is considerable inexpensive but contains high protein, making the species popular for consumption in the Southeast Asian countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, etc. In general, the species was caught by various types of fishing gears in the GoTLME; and the three major gears recorded in 2008 were purse seines (45%), driftnets (31%), and trawls (18%). However, with drastic increase in the production of canned mackerels to replace the decreasing sardines, the catch of Indo-Pacific mackerel has recently been declining as a result of overfishing and unregulated fishing operations in several countries. Such situation has become a great concern by countries in not only the GoT LME but Southeast Asian Region.

Taking into consideration the needs for management of transboundary species in the GoTLME, Fisheries Refugia project worked with the SEAFDEC-Sweden project in developing the Regional Action Plan (RAP) for Management of Indo-pacific mackerel in the GoTLME. Through a series of consultation and regional consultative meeting held on 12th – 13th September 2019 in Chonburi Province, Thailand participated by 6 fisheries refugia countries namely Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam and experts from regional and national research institutions, the RAP for Indo-pacific mackerel in GoTLME was drafted based on the knowledge gaps analysis. The RAP consists of objectives, goal and outcome under the four dimensions such as governance, social, economic, and ecosystem, and 1 cross-cutting issues on climate change. The overall goal of the RAP is "Sustainable Indo-pacific mackerel fisheries in the Gulf of Thailand sub-region through holistic management approach by 2030". Three outcomes are as follow: 1) Sustainability of short mackerel resources through the implementation of fishery management plan; 2) Accurate and comprehensive information for short mackerel make available and use for management responses; and 3) Well-being of people engaged in short mackerel fishery sustained.

The drafted RAP is later supported by the 2nd Meeting of the Project Steering Committee (PSC2) held in MIRI, Malaysia on 5th -6th November 2019, and suggested to expansion the action plan to other concerned countries in different LME such as the SCS LME. It is also agreed by 6 countries that the said regional action plan will be brought under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC mechanism for support and endorsement in 2020. In addition, the PSC2 recommended to apply the RAP for Indo-pacific mackerel to include other small pelagic species that are specified as transboundary species distributing in the GoT and SCS LMEs.

For more information please contact Mr. SOMBOON Siriraksophon (Ph.D), Project Director via email (ssiriraksophon63@gmail.com)

Website: www.fisheries-refugia.org

Technical Consultative Meeting on Drafting of the RAP Indo-pacific Mackerel. Credit to Fisheries Refugia Project, 2019

DATA AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP FOR LMES OF ASIA

Day 1 of the Asia Regional Workshop on Data and Information Management. Credit: PEMSEA, 2019

A 3-day Asian Regional Workshop on Data and Information Management (DIM) kicked off at the Regional Capacity Center for Clean Seas (RC3S) in Bali, Indonesia (3-5 December 2019). The workshop was jointly organized by Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) and the GEF Large Marine Ecosystem: LEARN project (funded by the Global Environment Facility, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme and managed by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO).

Twenty-one representatives from major LMEs in the region, international organizations, national entities and academia attended the regional 'echo-workshop', which aims to share the highlights from the LME:LEARN Data and Information Management: Working Group Meeting and Training that was held in Paris, France, from 2 to 4 July 2019.

The opening ceremony featured welcome remarks from Dida Mighar Ridha, Director of Marine and Coastal Pollution and Degradation Control of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Indonesia and a message from PEMSEA's Executive Director, Aimee Gonzales.

Khristine Custodio Gudczinski, Content Manager at GEF IW:LEARN led the discussions on LME data and information management. Participants from the major LMEs in the region, including Indonesian Sea LME (ISLME), South China Sea LME and Gulf of Thailand Fisheries Refugia, the Arafura and Timor Seas, Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and the Yellow Sea LME also shared their experiences, successes and challenges in data and management reporting.

One of the key highlights of the day was a group working session, which discussed the current status of implementation of the DIM guideline's recommendations, gaps, needs, and future actions to ensure greater coordination.

The workshop was expected to contribute to facilitating a more harmonious data and information management system, with improved capacity to report progress and results across the many action programmes and achievements in the region related to the SDGs. Data and information function as crucial components of the development, assessment, and enforcement of management policies, strategies, and interventions. Knowledge sharing and learning exchanges serve as useful platforms for data and information management sharing for the use of practitioners, stakeholders, and the wider public.

The main objective of the workshop was to foster inter-agency collaboration in sharing data and information for use by new GEF 7 projects and other associated projects in the region. As these projects require landscape assessments or baseline data, they will be greatly supported by effective mechanisms for knowledge sharing and information exchange on data and tools.

GEF LME:LEARN has developed guidance to support this, which can be used to guide and support data and information sharing on Large Marine Ecosystems (LME) as well as associated integrated coastal management (ICM) projects.

During the workshop, the participants were familiarized with the GEF LME:LEARN guidance documents, and were given opportunities to comment and provide feedback on its usefulness and applicability within their context and spheres of work. This feedback will serve to improve future iterations of the guidance in future IW:LEARN projects.

At the end of the 3-day regional workshop, the participants were able to:

- Discuss common indicators for comparison of progress in implementation of SAPs between LMEs
- Exchange best practices on DIM especially in data collection, knowledge repositories, results and analysis methodologies, assessments and processes to influence policies
- Understand state of the art tools, KM platforms and database by various entities (GEF IW:LEARN, UN Environment, PEMSEA, CTI, etc.)

The GEF LME:LEARN Data and Information Guidance documents can be accessed via this link.

Additional information on the GEF LME:LEARN project can be found on the website (www.iwlearn/marine), or please contact the GEF IW:LEARN project manager, Mish Hamid (mish@iwlearn.org).

Participants enjoyed a lively and interactive workshop on data and information management. Credit: GEF IW:LEARN, 2019

PACIFIC R2R AND AMERICAN SAMOA EPA PIG WASTE MANAGEMENT TWINNING EXCHANGE

Pigs play an integral role in the culture and traditions of the majority of the Pacific Islands. Typically pigs are gifted and/or consumed during a variety of celebratory and traditional events, such as weddings, births, funerals, inaugurations, church and social events, making pig production a necessity and often a sign of prosperity or rank.

Pig operations are usually small, at the household or community scale and are spread across the landscape. Most of these are not commercial operations, have limited family income to maintain or expand, and are often bounded by the sea or streams. As island populations have grown, so too has pig production increased and disposing of the resulting animal waste has become problematic.

In many places waste is washed out of the pen to the receiving environment, and in some countries pigs are free to wander or tied to trees or posts defecating as and where they please. This large volume of untreated urine and feces contaminates drinking water supplies with pig-related diseases such as leptospirosis and has the potential to negatively impact near shore coral reefs and their ecosystems due to the high nutrient content of pig waste. Many countries now report elevated occurrences of algal blooms, fish die off, and declining coral health as a result.

Historically many pig pens are improvised, open sided structures with concrete slab or packed earth floors. The majority of these use either piped or buckets of water to wash down the pens, with wastewater going to “septic tanks” or directly into the receiving water system, whether that is a stream or coast. The septic tank systems generally have open bottoms, making them more cesspit than septic system, and although farmers have installed them to handle waste streams they are inadequate to treat the waste before it reaches the water table or surface waters.

The Pacific Community (SPC) is executing the Pacific Regional International Waters Ridge to Reef Project (IW R2R) sponsored by the Global Environment Facility and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme. The IW R2R Project has helped identify the Dry Litter Technology (DLT) system as an alternative means of managing pig waste at the source, a system that also produces a soil conditioning compost that in many of the low-lying atoll countries will additionally benefit food security.

Pacific IW R2R Knowledge Exchange Credit. GEF IW:LEARN and AS-EPA

Of the 14 countries participating in IW R2R Project, five countries (Tuvalu, Kiribati, Nauru, FSM and Cook Islands) have identified improved pig waste management as a necessary means to reduce pathogen and nutrient loads from entering natural water systems. These countries have previously identified that environmental problems associated with excess nutrient loads associated with improper disposal of animal waste are of significant national concern and are trialling the DLT system in response. Initiating a new form of animal husbandry is a behavioural change and regulatory control initiative that needs dedicated effort on multiple fronts. The American Samoa Environment Protection Agency (AS-EPA) has worked for over 13 years to develop, build and strengthen their Piggery Compliance Program (PCP), which began as a response to leptospirosis deaths, and has shown sustained benefits in the reduction of nutrient and pathogen loads to natural water systems.

The PCP is the compliance, enforcement and education mechanism for Environmental Health regulations that control animal farming and land use. It is a phased program and works alongside local farmers to develop Land Use Plans that identify type and site of piggeries. In addition to inspection and enforcement, technical assistance for design and construction of piggeries is offered with improved sustainable piggery designs that address the problems with nutrient management, and are affordable and manageable for the local farmers.

To date they have supported construction of over 150 DLT piggeries that are still in operation. All of this work is supported through federal funding mechanisms, an Interagency Piggery Management Group that meets monthly to discuss problem piggeries and general challenges and successes, and a comprehensive outreach program that educates farmers on use and benefits of the alternative piggery systems.

This Knowledge Exchange event has brought national representatives from Tuvalu, Kiribati, FSM and the Cook Islands to American Samoa for a one week program, from the 7th – 11th of October 2019. The program consisted of learning workshops, site visits and roundtable Q&A sessions. This workshop was the first time that SPC GEM Division has engaged with the American Samoa EPA and was an important step in a longer-term effort to explore and implement domestic pig waste management interventions in the Pacific Region. "**If we can leverage our experiences, success factors, and challenges on piggery management over the last decade in the Territory to help other islands build their own capacity, then we are imparting the true meaning of public service in the region**." - Fa'amao Asalele Jr, Director AS-EPA

Through the IW R2R Project, countries that are initiating the DLT system and behaviour change are provided ongoing technical and managerial advice to support the transition. The Project tracks and documents this progress through National IW Project reporting requirements and Lessons Learned documentation.

Participants were required to prepare a Lessons Learned document on the workshop and highlight how they best see what they had learned fitting in to or informing their national efforts to initiate pig waste management interventions.

Several short videos were made from the workshop experience itself and also through the Tuvalu IW R2R Project that highlights the construction process and community engagement approach. These videos are available for all practitioners to use for education and outreach.

Finally, a network of practitioners was established through the workshop amongst the participants and with the PCP staff at the AS-EPA that has opened up the opportunity for ongoing discussions as countries transition to stronger regulations and management options. The discussion, outputs and lessons learned from this workshop, as well as the experiences exchanged by the practitioners will be shared with other partners and global initiatives, like the GEF IW:LEARN platform and other GEF R2R project managers.

To access the full workshop report, including all lessons learned and more information, please click on the link.

The beautiful video developed to summarise the exchange is available on the Pacific R2R Youtube Channel.

For more information on the GEF UNDP SPC Pacific Ridge to Reef project, please contact the Project Manager, Peter Cusack (peterc@spc.int)

Follow the project on:

Facebook: @PacificR2RNetwork
Twitter: @PacificR2R
Website: www.pacific-r2r.org

TRAINING OF FISHERMEN TO REDUCE FISHING EFFORTS IN THE YELLOW SEA

On November 11, 2019, Yantai University of PR China launched a course on occupational training in marine ranching and recreational fishery for 60 fishermen from Shandong Province. The training was supported by UNDP/GEF YSLME Phrase II Project in a bid to reduce fishing pressure while ensuring social safeguards of displaced fishermen joining the fishing vessel buy-back scheme, a major initiative of China and RO Korea to recover the fish stocks in the Yellow Sea.

Mr. Zhengguang Zhu, the Environment Officer of UNDP/GEF YSLME Phrase II Project， Mr. Bingjun Li, Dean of Ocean College of Yantai University, Mr. Baoqing Yang from Shandong Aquatic Biological Resources Conservation and Management Center, Mr. Libo Wang from Yantai Marine and Fishery Supervision Detachment, and Mr. Zhanwen Sun of Yantai Marine Technical School addressed at the opening ceremony.

The trainings will benefit 150 displaced fishermen from Shandong Province. The second phase of the training focus on fishing guide training, and the third phase targets improvement in marine ranching technical management skills. "**The training courses are in support of the zero-growth strategy of fishery production implemented by the Chinese Government to protect offshore resources through reduction of fishing vessels, application of total allowable catches (TAC) system**",said Mr. Qiu Shengyao, President of Pelagic Fishery and International Cooperation Branch of Shandong Fisheries Society and Professor of Yantai University.

UNDP/GEF YSLME Phrase II Project is one of the 22 large marine ecosystem projects under support by the Global Environment Facility (the GEF) to support the efforts of littoral states for improved ocean governance, recovery of fisheries resources, reduction of nutrient loadings in coastal areas, and checking the loss of coastal wetlands from reclamation and conversions projects.

Between 2015 and 2020, the provinces along the Yellow Sea in China will decommission 4,633 large and medium sized vessels, representing a 23 per cent reduction in numbers in accordance to the review of the national implementation progress of the YSLME Strategic Action Programme adopted by China and RO Korea in 2009. In terms of power, this is a reduction of 741,031 kw.

Efforts to enhance fish stocks include marine ranching, an initiative that will provide employment opportunity for fishermen laid off from capture fisheries.

For more information, contact the Project Manager Yinfeng Guo (yinfengG@unops.org) or visit the project website.

This article was originally published by the YSLME project on 13 November 2019(Link).

GEF LME:LEARN ONLINE TRAINING COURSES

The online course contents and materials developed by the GEF LME:LEARN project are now open to all interested participants, with no time limit to complete the modules. Each course is rich with compulsory readings, supplementary material, links to useful websites and quizzes.

Ocean Governance

In collaboration with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the International Council for Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and UNDP Cap-Net, the GEF LME:LEARN offers a course to familiarize marine and coastal practitioners with key components of good ocean governance. This course aims to provide project leads, partners, and others with practical approaches, lessons on governance and illustrative case studies. It also serves to promote an integrated, collaborative approach to ocean and coastal management.

Since opening the course, 176 participants from around the world have benefited from the material.

The course is available at:

www.campus.cap-net.org/en/course/ogiwl33-gef-lmelearn-ocean-governance-2019

The course is available in:

English:
www:campus.cap-net.org/en/course/msp29-gef-lmelearn-transboundary-marine-spatial-planning

French:
www.campus.cap-net.org/en/course/psm30-planification-spatiale-maritime-transfrontaliere

Spanish:
www.campus.cap-net.org/es/curso/msp31-planificacion-espacial-marina-pem-y-economia-azul

Marine Spatial Planning and Blue Economy

In collaboration with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO) and UNDP Cap-Net, the GEF LME:LEARN offers a course to familiarize participants with an understanding of what marine spatial planning is about, what benefits it can have, and what results you can expect. Furthermore, the course is designed to present the basic steps of MSP process, actors and responsibilities, legislation and finances needed, the MSP tools and techniques, and finally transboundary and cross-border contexts for MSP with a special emphasis on Large Marine Ecosystems. This course aims to provide project leads, partners, and others with practical approaches, lessons on MSP and illustrative case studies. It also serves to promote an integrated, collaborative approach to ocean and coastal management with a special emphasis on LMEs.

Since opening the courses, 253 participants from around the world have benefited from the materials.

LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH: GETTING READY FOR AN UPGRADE

Marine and coastal practitioners representing GEF and non-GEF funded projects, international and national organizations, and institutions met in Cartagena, Colombia on 18-20 September 2019 for the 21st Annual Large Marine Ecosystem Consultation (LME21).

A number of existing and potential future partners in LME partnerships were brought together and informed of the benefits of their cooperation and collaboration and exchanged good practices and lessons learnt for establishing and maintaining partnerships. Under the banner “The Large Marine Ecosystems are everyone’s business”, several interactive sessions were organised where participants had the opportunity to exchange views, experiences, lessons learned and ideas for future collaboration.

With generous sponsorship and support from SUEZ and its local subsidiary, Aguas de Cartagenas, a provider of water supply and sanitation, participants undertook technical site visits to the Cartagena wastewater treatment plant and La Boquilla mangrove restoration area.

The next LME Annual Consultation Meeting (LME22) will be held in Paris, France from 6-9 July 2020. The agenda and more information will be circulated soon.

For more information on the LME21 please visit the meeting’s website.Additional information on the GEF LME:LEARN project can be found on the website, or please contact the GEF IW:LEARN project manager, Mish Hamid (mish@iwlearn.org).

Approximately 80 participants from around the world attended the 21th Annual LME Consultative Meeting. Credit: GEF LME:LEARN

GLOBAL OCEAN SUMMIT: LINKING LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS TO LOCAL SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The United Nation's Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development will commence in 2021. Its critical preparatory phase is well underway and the ocean community needs to be ready to shepherd the entire world into seeing the sea as an essential resource for food, revenue and recreation. Additionally, people from all regions must comprehend the vulnerability of the oceans along with the coastal communities around them, particularly with population and climate pressures.

The best chance for success is to build on existing international frameworks, in particular Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs), which for 35 years have encouraged ecosystem and socioeconomic science, wise management and intergovernmental cooperation. Also, it is important to learn from successful local initiatives, such as those by the Coastal Resources Center and its partners. With the dawn of the Decade imminent, the time is now to catalyze a new conversation on the ocean, and move aggressively to enabling solutions. The University of Rhode Island, the flagship university in the Ocean State, helped grow the LME concept and continues to lead in coastal and ocean science and management locally and around the world. This will be a great opportunity to have a rich conversation on ocean issues and pursue opportunities for sustainability.

The Global Ocean (GO) Summit will be a multi-day event that brings together leaders and motivated individuals in science, management and business to discuss challenges and opportunities provided by the sea and its resources to link Coastal Zone Management (CZM), Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), science and management communities to scale science-based actions within the spatial domain of the world's 66 LMEs. As the climate changes, critical food and environmental resources are at risk while coastal populations, development and investments are on the rise. In addition to keynote presentations, panel discussions and break-out groups, a networking event and celebration banquet will encourage dialog and information exchange to stimulate new collaborations for the Decade. Media engagement opportunities and a post-Summit inspirational summary will share highlights and specific recommendations for action.

Date: 1-4 April 2020
Location: University of Rhode Island Narragansett Bay Campus, Narragansett, RI 02882, USA
Website: www.web.uri.edu/globaloceansummit/
Registration Deadline: 1 February 2020

2020 EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

- RAMPAO General Assembly: 25-26 February 2020 - www.rampao.org
- World Ocean Summit: 9-10 March 2020 - www.woi.economist.com/world-ocean-summit
- PRCM Forum: 25-28 March 2020 - www.prcmarine.org
- Global Ocean Summit-University of Rhode Island: 1-4 April 2020 - www.web.uri.edu/globaloceansummit
- Abidjan Convention COP 13: 27 April – 1 May 2020 - www.abidjanconvention.org
- UN Ocean Conference: 2-6 June 2020 - www.oceanconference.un.org
- IUCN World Congress: 11-19 June 2020 - www.iucncongress2020.org
- 22nd Large Marine Ecosystem Annual Consultation Meeting: 6-9 July 2020
- Our Ocean: 17-18 August 2020 - www.ourocean2020.pw
- World Seagrass Congress: 9-14 August 2020 - www.isbw14.org
- CBD COP: October 2020 - www.cbd.int/meetings
- 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the UNFCCC: 9-19 November 2020

The GEF LME:LEARN project seeks to improve global ecosystem-based governance of Large Marine Ecosystems and their coasts by generating knowledge, building capacity, harnessing public and private partners and supporting south-to-south learning and north-to-south learning. This project is funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and executed by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC).

For more information on the project, consult our website: iwlearn.net/marine

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission