



An initiative of  
Economist Impact and The Nippon Foundation

# WORKSHOP 5: FINANCING AND IMPLEMENTATION

—summary notes

*This virtual workshop was held on September 26th, 2023*

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# Workshop 5:

**Back to Blue calls on a broad group of stakeholders to co-design a roadmap to close the marine pollution data gap. Please [visit our website](#) to learn more.**

This workshop, the fifth of five, sought:

- Identify how technology can support a federated digital architecture on marine pollution data
- Identify how technology can help fill knowledge gaps
- Map out existing ocean-related tech initiatives and identify opportunities for collaboration
- Provide concrete solutions and recommendations to feed into a roadmap

This summary report does not attempt to represent all the views shared during the workshop; rather, it is a brief synthesis. The purpose of this report is to inform the first draft of the roadmap. We welcome further comments on this summary and the roadmap.

**Attendees:**

- Guy Woodward, Professor of Ecology and Deputy head of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
- Karen Ibarra, Research scientist, IODE INVEMAR

- Kate Crosman, André Hoffman Fellow, Norwegian University of Science and Technology Department of Marine Technology, Fellow, World Economic Forum Ocean Action Agenda
- Johanna Diwa, Researcher, United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability
- Dennis Fritsch, associate nature lead, United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI)
- Terry McConnell, Decade Coordination Office Lead - Ocean Observing, UNESCO
- Dharisha Mirando, Finance Engagement & Water Risk Valuation Lead, China Water Risk
- Rosemary Rayfuse, Emerita Scientia Professor of International Law, University New South Wales, co-chair, UN Ocean Decade Working Group 1
- Torsten Thiele, Founder, Global Ocean Trust
- Vicky Maki Honda, manager, Oceans Affairs Division, The Nippon Foundation (observer).

**Moderators:**

- Charles Goddard, Executive director, Back to Blue

# Garnering support

## Making information actionable

- Identify who key users of data will be
- Allow users to help determine the focus of data collection efforts
- Involve social scientists early to assess how best to communicate risks and opportunities to various stakeholders
- Back to Blue can learn from the Ocean Decade; the initiative is primarily about data, but to really achieve something by 2030, that data must be used to incent action
- Data collection initiatives should always be clear on what their value proposition is
- Think about the entire lifecycle of interventions; ending marine chemical pollution is about stopping negative impacts but should also consider the potential of positive or proactive actions

### Recommendation 1:

Consider and address all the factors influencing policy, including the goals of key stakeholders. These include data users, policymakers and private interests.

# Communicating impact

## Translating science to policy

- Data becomes impactful to policymakers through compelling communication that emphasises impacts on key areas
- Data must be findable, accessible and interoperable to be useful for policymakers
- Digital twins can simplify and collate knowledge into a visual representation
- Concrete representations of ecological risks help garner support for policy action
- Leveraging existing political mechanisms like legal treaties, electoral cycles or public attention can help turn data into impact
- Data can help policymakers set clear targets and allocate funding accordingly; for example, data collection and modelling can determine which pollutants need to be paid attention to and what levels are problematic
- Back to Blue has an opportunity to seek out and provide invaluable information on how information is best translated between scientists and policymakers
- To ease implementation, Back to Blue's roadmap should present compelling motivations and simple, quantifiable and tractable steps

### Recommendation 2:

Data doesn't speak for itself. Translating scientific findings into policy change requires effective storytelling and clear communication of impacts on key stakeholders.

**Linking ocean pollution to climate change**

- Capitalise on growing attention to the climate crisis by demonstrating the role of oceans in speeding (or slowing) planetary warming
- Another way to communicate impact is to think more broadly about how the ecosystem services derived from the ocean respond to chemical pollutants
- Taking greater action in oceans could go a significant way in limiting warming to 2 degrees
- While Back to Blue is focused on a specific issue, presenting it as part of a broader climate cycle could increase attention and maximise impact
- Linking to climate offers opportunities to collaborate with a wider range of partners and increase the visibility of Back to Blue

**Recommendation 3:**

Make the link between oceans and climate change. The ocean covers 71% of the earth's surface but is often overlooked in climate discussions.

# Engaging the private sector

## Guiding corporations in the right direction

- There is some work being done in the finance and insurance sectors to evaluate marine risks, but it is not currently clear how data are being used
- Financial institutions and insurance companies may not know what they need in a relatively new area like marine chemical pollution
- Figuring out how companies will use the data is an important step in creating private sector buy-in
- Large sustainability data providers may be able to provide good insights and partnership opportunities for data collection, storage and distribution
- Shaping marine chemical data around frameworks like the EU's NFRD will help companies conceptualise how oceans fit into their environmental risk and opportunity assessments

### Recommendation 4:

Capitalise on the growing appetite for nature data but recognise marine data is fairly new. Companies may need to be told what they are looking for.

### Creating interest alignment

- Many private entities—and especially financial institutions—speak the language of risk
- There are already areas in which chemical pollution poses a risk to business operating in areas such as marine ecotourism and commercial fisheries
- For private entities to pay attention to ecological issues, risks are best framed in economic terms
- However, many pressing concerns about human health and biodiversity do not fit neatly into an economic framework
- Be mindful of areas where applying an economic lens may result in equity concerns or continued marginalisation of already vulnerable or excluded groups
- Bridge the gap between economic and ecological concerns with concepts like natural capital
- Keep the business case in mind when thinking about investment generation; the physical infrastructure needed to monitor marine chemical pollution has several other use cases that would be attractive opportunities for potential investors

### Recommendation 5:

The key to maximising private sector involvement is highlighting the risks of inaction in terms they understand. Start with areas where key stakeholders are speaking the same language.

# Next steps:

- Please share your comments with the Back to Blue team, either in this document or by email to [jessicabrown@economist.com](mailto:jessicabrown@economist.com)
- Please feel free to share this document with other colleagues who may be interested; we welcome their comments and feedback
- We will keep you updated with information about our upcoming publications workshops and other opportunities to contribute to the roadmap's development.

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## Additional resources

- Please visit our [stakeholder resource centre](#) for further information about Back to Blue's initiative to develop a roadmap to close the marine pollution data gap and about our series of virtual stakeholder workshops.
- [The Invisible Wave: Getting to zero chemical pollution in the ocean](#), Back to Blue (2022)
- [The Zero-pollution ocean: A call to close the evidence gap](#), Back to Blue (2023)





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