

NO POLARISATION, MORE ACTIONS.

EBCD stresses that delivering on **SDG 14** requires **accelerated, coordinated, and inclusive action across all sectors and governance levels**. Achieving effective ocean governance depends on **strong policy coherence, scientific evidence, and the meaningful engagement of all stakeholders**. EBCD calls for a fundamental shift away from siloed thinking, advocating instead for **integrative approaches** where sea users are actively involved from the outset as co-creators of solutions. The **human and social dimensions** must be recognised as essential pillars of ocean policy, ensuring that sustainability efforts reflect the realities and needs of coastal communities while **supporting socio-economic wellbeing within planetary boundaries**. A **balanced approach that reconciles conservation objectives with the sustainable use of ocean resources** is essential to ensure legitimacy, long-term impact, and broad-based support. The inclusion of diverse actors – users of the sea, academia, civil society, and policymakers alike – is indispensable to foster mutual understanding and tackle shared challenges. Gaps in implementation often stem from insufficient inclusivity of the users of the sea; therefore, **working together** and avoiding polarisation is not only desirable but necessary for political commitments to become tangible actions. As the international community prepares for UNOC3, EBCD reaffirms its commitment to supporting an **inclusive, science-informed, and solutions-oriented dialogue for a sustainable ocean future**.

Comprehensive Fisheries Management: A Cornerstone for Thriving Oceans and Resilient Communities

When **science, policy, and industry** come together, **effective and comprehensive fisheries management regimes** emerge as powerful tools to sustain fish populations, restore marine ecosystems, support livelihoods, and contribute to sustainable food systems that work for both people and the planet. Integrated, ecosystem-based approaches – grounded in **scientific assessments, socio-economic considerations, innovation, and adaptive management** – are already being successfully implemented across regions including Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. These holistic regimes are key to delivering the full range of ecosystem services that healthy oceans provide. EBCD therefore **calls on UNOC 3 to recognise comprehensive fisheries management as an essential and effective means of achieving thriving oceans and resilient coastal communities**.

Fisheries-OECMs: Bridging Conservation and Sustainable Use for Global Biodiversity Goals

To meet **UN SDGs and global biodiversity targets while supporting the sustainable use of marine resources**, it is essential to recognise area-based management measures that deliver biodiversity conservation benefits - **Fisheries Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures, OECMs**. These measures, when aligned with the criteria set out in CBD Decision 14/8, can provide long-term in situ biodiversity outcomes while preserving vital ecosystem functions and services, and deliver socio-economic benefits and cultural values. Fisheries OECMs demonstrate that conservation and sustainable use are not exclusive, but can be mutually reinforcing when governance, conservation objectives, and effective monitoring are in place. **EBCD urges governments and competent authorities to accelerate the identification and reporting of Fisheries OECMs, ensuring they are fully integrated into national, regional, and global conservation frameworks**, including contributions to the 30x30 target under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the outcomes of the UN Ocean Conference.

Blue Foods at the Heart of Food Security: Elevating Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Global Sustainability Agenda

Fisheries and aquaculture are indispensable to global **food security and the transition toward sustainable food systems**. As climate change, biodiversity loss, and geopolitical instability continue to disrupt food production and supply chains, aquatic foods offer high-quality nutrition - including essential proteins, omega-3 fatty acids, and micronutrients - with a significantly lower environmental footprint than most terrestrial animal protein sources. Despite their potential, the sector faces persistent challenges such as overfishing, declining stocks, marine space competition, and regulatory and technological barriers. Recognising and addressing these issues through **science-based management, regulatory reform, targeted investment, and inclusive policymaking** is essential to unlocking the full potential of fisheries and aquaculture in ensuring food and nutrition security, climate resilience, and sustainable development. **EBCD calls on UNOC 3 to explicitly acknowledge the vital role of fisheries and aquaculture for food security and sustainable food systems** in the conference declaration. In this context, EBCD also reaffirms its commitment as an active member of both the **Aquatic Blue Food Coalition** and the **Global Action Network for Sustainable Seafood**, supporting global efforts to elevate aquatic foods in the international agenda.

Harnessing Blue Tech: A Pathway to Sustainable and Competitive Fisheries

The **UN Ocean Conference** offers a timely **platform to advance the deployment of competitive Blue Technologies** in support of sustainable fisheries and ocean stewardship. Blue Tech solutions - such as AI-driven stock assessments, precision fishing tools, and real-time digital monitoring - are already proving their potential to reduce environmental impact, improve selectivity, and contribute to decarbonisation. To fully realise this potential, concrete action is needed: regulatory frameworks must be updated and harmonised to reflect technological progress; strategic investment in research, innovation, and infrastructure must be increased; and funding mechanisms must be made more accessible to smaller operators and early adopters.

Strengthening partnerships between governments, industry, research institutions, and civil society will also be key to developing scalable, science-based solutions. Supporting skills development and building a workforce capable of operating these technologies is equally essential. **EBCD calls on UNOC 3 to recognise the critical role of Blue Technologies in enhancing ocean sustainability, and to commit to enabling their broader uptake through targeted, inclusive, and science-driven policies.**

Users of the Sea at the Centre: Shaping an Inclusive and Strategic European Ocean Pact

EBCD calls for the forthcoming European Ocean Pact - set to be launched at the third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC 3) - to be a strategic, inclusive, and **actionable framework that delivers real governance for ocean sustainability**. It must **bridge policy silos and promote coherence between environmental conservation, food security, industrial competitiveness, and social equity**. Cross-sectoral cooperation - particularly between fisheries, aquaculture, offshore energy, maritime transport, and conservation - is essential, supported by practical tools such as ecosystem-based maritime spatial planning and co-management. The Pact should take **inspiration from the Global Biodiversity Framework as a comprehensive framework that aims at reducing threats while meeting human needs**. To unlock sustainable ocean use, the EU must invest in clean technologies, de-risk private finance, simplify regulation, and prioritise workforce renewal, ocean literacy, and inclusive governance. Crucially, **fisheries, aquaculture, and coastal communities** must be recognised not as peripheral, but as **central pillars of the Pact** - essential to achieving Europe's food security, climate resilience, and socio-economic goals.