

# Driving Ocean Sustainability: Harnessing Collective Action for Effective Ocean Literacy<sup>1</sup>



## Key Recommendation:

- 1.** Establish Comprehensive Ocean Literacy Frameworks: Develop and implement a comprehensive EU-wide ocean literacy strategy that integrates ocean knowledge at all levels of the journey from primary to lifelong learning; This strategy should promote interdisciplinary programs that connect ocean sciences with social sciences, economics, and policy studies to foster a holistic understanding of ocean sustainability issues among students and professionals
- 2.** Foster Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration: Encourage forming partnerships bringing together academic institutions, NGOs, private sector companies, local authorities, and government agencies to enhance ocean literacy that will deliver sustainable ocean projects. Create dedicated funding streams within the Horizon Europe framework and beyond to support such partnerships and collaborative ocean literacy initiatives.
- 3.** Strengthen the Integration of Citizen Science and Ocean Literacy: Widen the scope of citizen science initiatives to bring ocean-related societal debates to participants' minds, delivering ocean literacy.
- 4.** Deliver inclusive Ocean Literacy: Encourage the involvement of diverse community groups, including underrepresented and vulnerable populations, as contributors to and target groups of ocean literacy activities. This ensures that ocean sustainability efforts are inclusive and benefit from a wide range of perspectives and experiences.

## BRIDGING THE GAP: CONNECTING SCIENCE AND SOCIETY THROUGH OCEAN LITERACY

Integrating scientific knowledge into societal frameworks is crucial for ocean sustainability. Bridging the gap between academics and civil society involves creating exchange platforms, developing appropriate content, and raising Awareness of ocean challenges.

However, current ocean literacy efforts often lack targeted objectives and specific audience focus, diminishing the impact of scientific and political efforts.

Key principles for effective science-society interfaces promoting ocean sustainability include:

- Transdisciplinarity

- Intergenerational Approach
- Multi-level Participation
- Multi-stakeholder Collaboration

Engaging a wide variety of organisations from different disciplines, governance levels, generations, and professional fields under one umbrella broadens community connection and awareness-raising.

This inclusive approach addresses often-excluded groups from ocean literacy discourse, such as SMEs, social actors or media companies. An intergenerational approach involving children, young people, and older adults is also essential for capacity-building initiatives.

## POWER IN UNITY: COLLECTIVE ACTION AS THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE KNOWLEDGE DELIVERY

Enhancing ocean literacy requires collective action across different communities as it prevents fragmentation and amplifies societal impact. Effective collective action involves diverse actors and disciplines, from education and research to public institutions, NGOs, and citizens. Collective action can start locally delivering tangible impact, then expand to national, regional, and EU levels.

The EU4Ocean Coalition's experience shows that collective action is a powerful tool for impactful ocean literacy across Europe. The Coalition facilitates partnerships, connects existing actions, and promotes new initiatives through its Challenge of the Year.

1 The Ocean Literacy Brief builds on the contribution of Laura Bastide (ACTeon), Lavinia Giulia Pomarico (JPI Oceans), Anna Maria Marino (Youth Environment Europe), Mikaela Martirosyan (REVOLVE) for the Challenge 10 speech in the framework of the UN Ocean Decade, April 2024.



## ENGAGING SOCIETY: EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

Effective outreach requires adapting strategies to engage society actively in ocean literacy initiatives. These include:

- **Scientist Communication Training:** Developing courses to help scientists communicate research with accessible vocabulary, images, and graphics. Collaboration between scientists and communication specialists is vital.
- **Citizen Science:** Engaging society in participatory science projects, covering diverse topics such as microplastics, marine species counting, perceptions or practices of marine professionals that will bring ocean-related societal debates to participants' minds, delivering ocean literacy.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Partnering with the private sector through CSR programs to raise awareness and train employees,

## WAY FORWARD: CO- CONSTRUCTING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE THROUGH COLLECTIVE ACTION

Collective effort is essential for co-constructing large-scale initiatives with diverse stakeholders. An exemplary case is the Save The Baltic Sea hiking expedition 2, which successfully raised awareness and engaged scientists, policymakers, NGOs, businesses, and youth across eight countries on Baltic Sea pollution. This model underscores the power of collective action in addressing ocean sustainability challenges.

By fostering collective action, we can ensure the effective delivery of knowledge to society, paving the way for a sustainable future for our oceans. Reaching a broader audience not typically linked to ocean issues.

