

The UNOPS input for the background note on SDG 14

1. The present note has been developed by UNOPS as input to the Secretary-General's background note for the high-level 2020 United Nations Conference to support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development in Lisbon, 2-6 June 2020. "Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions."

Introduction

2. UNOPS is a United Nations resource for services and solutions across peace and security, humanitarian, and development efforts. Its mission is to help people build better lives and countries achieve peace and sustainable development. While UNOPS can expand capacity towards achievement of all the sustainable development goals, the focus is based on partners' demand and the needs of people and countries. Importantly, the organization has an implementation mandate to support the planning and implementation of infrastructure.

3. The UNOPS implementation mandate and technical expertise can also be brought to the fore in support of SDG 14 – life below water. Conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources presents a host of challenges and opportunities many of which are related to infrastructure.

4. Through its implementation activities, UNOPS has over the years gained experience and demonstrated its technical expertise in support of small island developing States and other coastal countries.

5. UNOPS can help countries scale up ocean actions based on science and innovation. It can support countries' application of scientific, evidence-based approaches to planning of quality infrastructure, as well as the innovation needed to find new solutions.

6. UNOPS is engaged in a number of important partnerships in the United Nations and beyond, and has demonstrated its ability to bring in alternative financing in support of the sustainable development goals.

Challenges and opportunities relating to SDG 14

7. Oceans are vital to life. They provide half of the oxygen in the world and are a source of food for billions. They regulate the climate – absorbing heat and more than a quarter of man-made CO₂ – and act as a backbone of the global economy. Today, oceans face tremendous challenges, including marine pollution, heating, and acidification. Infrastructure plays a significant part in these challenges – both as a threat and as a potential preserver of the ocean.

8. Waste management infrastructure, i.e. the lack of it, is a leading contributor to marine pollution. Eighty per cent of debris in the ocean comes from the land, for which poor waste

18. A significant portion of UNOPS support to coastal countries and SIDS pertains to water and sanitation infrastructure, as well as grants management in the areas of environmental protection and energy generation:

a) Through the **India-UN Development Partnerships Fund** (“India-UN Fund”), UNOPS supports for example the Marshall Islands (in solar power) and Nauru (in waste management). During [her speech commemorating the second anniversary of the Fund in June 2019](#), UNOPS Executive Director highlighted the role of partnerships such as this one for transferring technology and expertise.

b)

[2018](#). Strengthening national capacity, this methodology empowers government partners to plan, deliver and manage their infrastructure systems with a clear focus on sustainability and resilience, including effects on oceans, seas and marine ecosystems.

Innovation in support of SDG 14

22. Innovation is key to addressing the challenges of our time, and to achieving the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. Through its growing network of **global innovation centres (GICs)**, UNOPS aims to facilitate innovation contributing to a sustainable society and answering real-

