

**REGULAR PROCESS FOR THE GLOBAL REPORTING AND ASSESSMENT OF THE
STATE OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES**

THE PROPOSED SCOPE OF THE THIRD WORLD OCEAN ASSESSMENT

The 18th meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole has been convened in accordance with the programme of work for the period 2021 to 2025 for the third cycle of the Regular Process. This programme of work was adopted by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process during its thirteenth meeting in October 2020 and endorsed by the General Assembly through its resolution 75/239 of 31 December 2020 on "Oceans and the law of the sea".

The 18th meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to be held from 27 to 28 March 2023 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York will consider the following documents:

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In setting out the scope of the assessment(s), the Group of Experts have identified key thematic areas that the assessment(s) will cover (where scope is equivalent to the thematic and temporal extent of assessment(s)).

The programme of work for the third cycle of the Regular Process identifies:

"In resolution 71/257, the General Assembly recalled that the scope of the first cycle of the Regular Process focused on establishing a baseline, and decided that the scope of the second cycle would extend to evaluating trends and identifying gaps. Based on these considerations and the lessons learned from the second cycle, this draft programme of work assumes a similar scope for the third cycle."

This identifies that the scope of the assessment(s) of the third cycle is required to include an evaluation of trends and identification of gaps.

Thematic areas identified in the lessons learned from the second cycle and via consultation with other relevant processes and organizations

The concept note for the third cycle, based on the lessons learned from the second cycle and consultation with other relevant processes and organizations, identifies the following thematic areas

- Scientific understanding of the ocean;
- The physical and chemical state of the ocean;
- The state of the main taxa of marine biota;
- The state of marine habitats;
- The state of human society in relation to the marine environment;
- Pressures on the marine environment;
- Management approaches to the marine environment;

A number of topics identified as emerging areas in WOA II are either undergoing rapid expansion or are being identified as growing issues. These were identified by the Group of Experts as needing

consistent and clear guidance to writing teams. Given that most drafts of chapter contained in WOA II had been drafted by mid 2019, very little further updating of content was done after this date. In light of this, it was identified that the period to be evaluated for any changes since WOA II could be 2018-2024. This time period ensures that any literature or content produced just prior to the finalisation of chapters in the WOA II could be captured and takes into account that the current timetable for the third cycle identifies that first drafts of chapters in the assessment(s) of the third cycle will be completed within the first half of 2024. It should be noted that this temporal period should not preclude literature released or published prior to this time period being included in chapters, particularly where it provides context to the evaluation of trends and gaps.

Where topics that were considered in WOA II, but identified as needing greater consideration due to rapid development/emerging issues, the same temporal scale for content would be applied. Again, it should be noted that this temporal period should not preclude literature released or published prior to this time period being included in chapters, particularly where it provides context to the evaluation of trends and gaps.

