

World Ocean Network (WON): our progress and new prospects towards the blue society

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World Ocean Network was mobilized during the International Year of the Ocean (1998) and launched after the 2nd International Meeting by 20 organisations in 2002.

It assembles 450 participating institutions: aquariums, educational and science centres, natural history museums, media, and NGOs worldwide. They educate the public on marine sciences to improve the awareness of the world's ocean's role in sustaining life on Earth and to empower stakeholders and civil society to adopt responsible attitudes through:

- promoting and helping to coordinate World Oceans Day (WOD) events to celebrate the world's oceans and human connection to them on June 8 every year.
- organising youth forums and parliaments for the ocean to empower young people as future decision makers and users of marine resources, to convey their message to decision-makers and UN bodies.
- fostering sustainable attitudes and consumption patterns through information and mobilization campaigns such as Mr. Goodfish, a sustainable seafood consumption programme.
- providing educators with resources and tools to raise awareness: the online Ocean Info Pack, the World Ocean Academy...
- developing a vision of Blue Society.

The Blue Society is a new vision of society in a spirit of sustainability, well-being and equity and in harmony with the World Ocean. It is an economic, social and technological approach based on the tremendous opportunities offered by the ocean for new resources, innovative solutions and positive experiences to get out of the global crisis that we currently experience. It involves all actors in defining and implementing new and innovative solutions to better use ocean resources for the well-being of all humanity.

Aquariums have an important role to play in developing the Blue Society. They have means to mobilize the civil society and they can reach millions of people every year. They have acquired credibility and trust of economic actors, policy makers and the public at large. They can bring together researchers, policy makers, economic stakeholders, local authorities and the general public in dialogue, mutual learning, and action in order to develop the Blue Society concept. To implement it, they will identify innovative research themes and governance modes and promote them to be duplicated elsewhere.

They will create the framework of the Blue Society by working with civil society, youth and other stakeholders in Europe thanks to the Sea for Society project. They will join efforts with the World Ocean Network, the Global Ocean Forum and the Alliance for the Seas and Oceans to feed, promote, and implement the concept of Blue Society worldwide. They will mainstream ocean education so as to have governments and international organisations endorse marine education implementation in the formal and informal learning and to integrate marine sciences in education curricula and school activities in support of the Rio+20 Ocean decisions and solutions to marine challenges.