

National Ocean Decade Committee for Belgium NDC-BE

Annual Report 2023



National Ocean Decade Committee for Belgium Annual Report 2023.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Organisation of the NDC-BE

The Ocean Decade National Committee for Belgium (NDC-BE) is established as an open group, focusing on an active contribution to the Ocean Decade (OD). The committee consists of a core group and an open meeting (figure 1). The core group and core group members formally represent organizations, administrations, and authorities at the federal, regional (sub-national) and local level that contribute with concrete actions to the OD challenges to achieve the OD objectives. Participation to the open meeting is voluntary and based on willingness to contribute with active communication and outreach, exchanges during the open meetings, and promotion and awareness raising on the Ocean Decade outside the meetings and in participants' networks.

Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ) is given mandate to provide secretariat support to the NDC-BE. VLIZ supports the secretariat with a 1FTE programme specialist (also covering the Ocean Decade secretariat for Flanders) and a part-time dedicated specialist in International Relations. The NDC-BE is supported by 18 active members, representing the diversity of ocean actors and stakeholders in Belgium.



Figure 1: Organization of the NDC-BE with core group and open meeting

Following the **operational guidelines**¹ of the IOC-UNESCO (2021) for the NDCs, the core activities of the NDC-BE are clustered in four core roles:

- Supporting national members in the co-design and co-delivery of Decade Actions (DA)
- Mobilizing resources and contributions
- Engaging with National Decade Committees operating in other countries
- Communications, outreach and raising awareness on the OD.

¹ UNESCO-IOC (2021). [National Decade Committees Operational Guidelines](#). UNESCO, Paris. (IOC Ocean Decade Series, 24).

Activities and Results of the NDC-BE in 2023

In 2023, 51 actions (status 10/01/2024) were initiated and/or completed in the framework of the Ocean Decade (OD) as contributions from Flanders and Belgium. In addition, during 2023, 18 more actions were scheduled and/or preparations for these actions started taking place in 2024. In summary, **the 2023 engagement in the Ocean Decade has resulted in 69 decade actions, with involvement of 11 Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs) as direct beneficiaries, strengthened partnerships with 6 countries in 3 different continents.** The individual actions and activities have reached between 25 and 1550 persons from engaged citizens to ocean professionals. Finally, the NDC-BE was able to take up an active and leading role in the global network of NDCs coordinated by the Decade Coordination Unit (DCU) and the NDC-BE engaged actively with four NDCs and two Decade Implementing Partners (DIP) (see below and figure 2).

The NDC for Belgium has successfully addressed the four core roles of NDCs (as established in the guidance for NDCs and as set forward in the NDC-BE strategic plan) in its 1st year of operation:

- a. The core-members and secretariat of the NDC-BE supported (inter)national members in the process of co-design and co-delivery of decade action (DA) proposals and actions ([see detailed list of 2023 Ocean DA in annex I](#))
- b. The core-members and secretariat of the NDC-BE have mobilised resources and facilitated and implemented contributions ([see detailed list of 2023 Ocean DA in annex I](#)).
- c. The NDC-BE secretariat has engaged with other NDCs:
 - Levend Oceaen Overleg - NDC Netherlands in development. (Maarten Heijnen, Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management), 23/11/2023
 - NDC Italy (Martina Gaglioti, EMSEA, IUCN CEC, SER LERS), 30/11/2023
 - NDC Germany (Ulrike Heine, GEOMAR), 1/12/2023
 - NDC Chile (Juan Fierro Contreras, Comisión Nacional del Oceano and SHOA Chile), 01/04/2022 and 10/11/2023
- d. The core-members and secretariat of the NDC-BE have developed and participated in communication, outreach, and awareness campaigns ([see detailed list of 2023 Ocean DA in annex I](#)).

Co-design of DA and setting up collaboration has been addressed through at least 15 bilateral and follow-up meetings with the NDC-BE core group members complementary to the core group meetings, and at least seven other meetings with Ocean Decade actors and stakeholders.

The NDC-BE secretariat has engaged in multilateral meetings with the Decade Coordination Unit (DCU) and the group of focal points of NDCs at (a) EU and (b) global level. These meetings have allowed the secretariat to provide first-hand information to our NDC-BE core members and partners and allowed the secretariat to support the NDC-BE members efficiently. The secretariat has also actively engaged and provided substantial input to relevant documents and processes for the OD implementation at national level (e.g. see NDC-BE Handbook, NDC factsheets, NDC subgroups discussions...).

First interactions with four NDCs (see above) have served mutual learning and exchanges about best practices and discuss common priority areas. The NDC-BE anticipates joint actions in 2024 to keep the engagement, promote the role, contribution and support of NDCs with national constituencies and strengthen international cooperation, including the DIPs, where relevant and impactful/actionable.

Engagement and actionable support were provided to Ocean Decade coordination offices and initiatives in 2023:

- Ocean Decade Capacity Development Facility (CDF), coordinated by Mrs. Mary Frances Davidson. The CDF is a platform supporting the Ocean Decade by assessing opportunities for matchmaking (offer-demand; gaps) with the Capacity Development needs from the decade actions (mf.davidson@unesco.org (Funded by government of Flanders through Flanders UNESCO Trust Fund FUST)
- Decade Coordination Office (DCO) for Ocean Data Sharing under the auspices of the IODE Project Office, coordinated by Mr. Jan-Bart Calewaert.
- Ocean Decade Data Coordination group: with active membership of the VLIZ Marine Data Centre, Mr. Lennert Tyberghien, director of the VLIZ Marine Data Centre and member of the core group NDC-BE.

Five new Ocean Decade projects by NDC-BE members were endorsed in Belgium in 2023: (status 10 January 2024)

- Acoustics to Assess the Health Status of Reefs (ULiège)
- Downscaling Climate and Ocean Change to Services (ULiège)
- Marine Regions in the Ocean Decade (VLIZ Marine Data Centre - VMDC)

- Sea Level Station Monitoring Facility in the Ocean Decade (VLIZ - VMDC)
- ARTPORT - We are Ocean Global Program (Mundus Maris)

These add to the existing and previously endorsed actions (see annexes).

Two project proposals were submitted for endorsement as Ocean DA in the recent call (5th call) under the Ocean Decade:

- INSPIRE (Innovative Solutions for Plastic Free European Rivers, a Horizon Europe project under the Mission Ocean and Waters programme (DGRTD) by VLIZ-DIP (VLIZ Research department).
- A probabilistic model for plastic clean-up technologies by VLIZ-DIP (PhD project, promoted by the VLIZ research department).

NDC-BE and cooperation with Ocean Decade entities in Belgium.

In 2022, Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ) was formally endorsed as a Decade Implementing Partner (DIP). Aiming for efficiency and impact, the NDC-BE and the Decade Implementing Partner (DIP) VLIZ have aligned their strategy and workplans in as much as possible to complement and strengthen each other mutually. (see NDC-BE handbook, NDC-BE work plan, VLIZ-DIP Ocean Decade strategy). This is also reflected in the number, diversity, and scope of the endorsements of Ocean Decade actions (DA) achieved by NDC-BE (see below). VLIZ is secretariat to the NDC-BE and VLIZ- DIP is also participating as an active member to the NDC-BE.

In conclusion, the Ocean Decade has offered an opportunity for local stakeholders and actors to strengthen and broaden their networks, showcase and exchange best practices, exchange knowledge with international networks/actors/experts, increase the visibility of current actions and open-up opportunities for new collaborations.



2021 United Nations Decade
2030 of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development

National Decade Committee for Belgium

VLIZ
Decade Implementing Partner

1 Year



69 actions

have supported the ocean
decade vision and mission*



11 ECOPs as direct beneficiaries

6 women – 5 men



Activities reaching **25 – 1550 people**



Engage with **8**
decentralised
decade bodies



Involvement of citizens, educators,
local actors and ocean professionals



Actions strengthen partnerships
with **6 countries** in 3
continents



Action's themes: data management,
ocean literacy, ocean observation and
prediction, and capacity
development.

*18 will be implemented in 2024

Figure 2: overview of actions and collaboration of the NDC-BE, 2023.

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Ocean Decade: context

The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 (the 'Ocean Decade') aims to generate transformative ocean research at all levels to achieve a well-functioning ocean in support of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), connecting people and our ocean. The Ocean Decade is guided by an Implementation Plan (IP) to achieve the vision 'the science we need for the ocean we want' through Decade Actions (DA). There are four types of DA: programmes, projects, activities, and contributions. Activities that meet the specific criteria as identified in the IP can be endorsed as part of the collaborative effort to meet the Ocean Decade's vision and mission.

The Decade Coordination Unit (DCU) acts as a primary office for the implementation of Ocean DA. It collaborates with National Decade Committees (NDC) and Decentralized Coordination Structures: i) Decade Coordination Offices (DCO), ii) Decade Collaborative Centres (DCC) and Decade Implementing Partners (DIP) and iii) existing international and regional organizations and networks. The governance and coordination for the Ocean Decade is described in the implementation plan. The UN Ocean Decade is for everyone to participate in and aims to 'Leave no one behind'. (See References for further information on the Ocean Decade implementation).

NDC-BE in the Ocean Decade: vision & mission

The NDC-BE adheres to the Ocean Decade mission, seeking to co-design and co-develop transformative ocean science solutions for sustainable development, connecting people and our ocean.

To this purpose the NDC-BE subscribes to the broadly identified OD Outcomes to be achieved:

- **A clean ocean** where sources of pollution are identified and reduced or removed.
- **A healthy and resilient ocean** where marine ecosystems are understood, protected, restored, and managed.
- **A productive ocean** supporting sustainable food supply and a sustainable ocean economy.
- **A predicted ocean** where society understands and can respond to changing ocean conditions.
- **A safe ocean** where life and livelihoods are protected from ocean-related hazards.
- **An accessible ocean** with open and equitable access to data, information and technology and innovation.
- **An inspiring and engaging ocean** where society understands and values the ocean in relation to human wellbeing and sustainable development.

NDC-BE: structure, organisation and role

The Ocean Decade National Committee for Belgium (NDC-BE) is established as an open group, focusing on an active contribution to the Ocean Decade (OD). The committee consists of a core group and an open meeting. The core group and core group members formally represent organizations, administrations, and authorities at the federal, regional (sub-national) and local level that contribute with concrete actions to the OD challenges to achieve the OD objectives. Participation to the open meeting is voluntary and based on willingness to contribute with active communication and outreach, exchanges during the meetings, and promotion and awareness raising on the Ocean Decade outside the meetings and in participants' networks. Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ) is mandated to provide secretariat support to the NDC-BE. VLIZ supports the secretariat with a 1FTE programme specialist (also covering the Ocean Decade secretariat for Flanders) and a dedicated specialist in International Relations.

Following the **operational guidelines**² of the IOC-UNESCO (2021) for the NDCs, the core activities of the NDC-BE are clustered in four core roles:

- Supporting national members in the co-design and co-delivery of Decade Actions (DA)
- Mobilizing resources and contributions
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- Communications, outreach and raising awareness.

² UNESCO-IOC (2021). [National Decade Committees Operational Guidelines](#). UNESCO, Paris. (IOC Ocean Decade Series, 24).

The membership of the core group is defined and agreed on by approved terms of reference. The core group consists of the NDC-BE secretariat and representatives from the following entities:

- Belgium National Focal Points for IOC UNESCO
- Federal and Regional authorities and administrations with competences and active contributions related to marine research, nature conservation, public works and maritime economy (POM, Province of West-Flanders, BELSPO, FPS Public Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, RBINS..)
- VLIZ Core Scientific Committee (university associations and research performing organisations (Ghent University, University of Antwerp University, VUB, UHasselt, INBO, ILVO, WatLab, AoE..)
- University from the French-speaking regions (University of Liege)
- Private sector (Flanders Blue Cluster..)
- Early career scientists who are leading an Ocean Decade Action

Membership of the core group is renewed on an annual basis, and/or defined by the duration of specific OD actions and contributions. A description of procedures is included in the Terms of References (link in [References](#)).

In 2022, Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ) was formally endorsed as a Decade Implementing Partner (DIP). Aiming for efficiency and impact, the NDC-BE and the Decade Implementing Partner (DIP) VLIZ have aligned their strategy and workplans in as much as possible to complement and strengthen each other mutually (see NDC-BE handbook, NDC-BE work plan, VLIZ-DIP Ocean Decade strategy). This is also reflected in the number, diversity, and scope of the endorsements of Ocean Decade actions (DA) achieved by NDC-BE (see below). VLIZ is secretariat to the NDC-BE and VLIZ- DIP is also participating as an active member to the NDC-BE.

Ocean Decade engagement in numbers

In 2023, 51 actions (status 10/01/2024) were initiated and/or completed in the framework of the Ocean Decade as contributions from Flanders and Belgium. In addition, during 2023, 18 more actions were scheduled and/or preparations started taking place in 2024. In summary, the first one-year operation (2023) of the **NDC-BE has resulted in 69 actions, with the involvement of 11 Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs) as direct beneficiaries, strengthened the partnerships with 6 countries in 3 different continents.** The Individual OD actions and activities have reached between 25 to 1000 people from engaged citizens to ocean professionals. The NDC-BE was able to take up an active and leading role in the global network of NDCs coordinated by the Decade Coordination Unit (DCU), and engaged with four other NDCs (Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Chile) and two Decade Implementing Partners (DIP) (JPI-Oceans, European Marine Board). Actions focused on the 4 core roles of an NDCs and strengthening Ocean Decade priority areas such as ocean observation and prediction, ocean data management and data sharing, ocean literacy and citizen engagement, capacity development and knowledge transfer/exchange, outreach, and raising awareness on the Ocean Decade Mission and Vision.

Five new Ocean Decade projects by NDC-BE members and their partnerships were endorsed in Belgium in 2023:

- Acoustics to Assess the Health Status of Reefs (ULiege)
- Downscaling Climate and Ocean Change to Services (ULiege)
- Marine Regions in the Ocean Decade (VLIZ Marine Data Centre VMDC)
- Sea Level Station Monitoring Facility in the Ocean Decade (VLIZ VMDC)
- ARTPORT - We are Ocean Global Program (Mundus Maris)

Engagement and actionable support were provided to recent groups and coordination offices in 2023:

- Capacity Development Facility, coordinated by Mrs. Mary Frances Davidson, assessing opportunities for matchmaking (offer-demand; gaps) with the needs from the DA. (mf.davidson@unesco.org (Funded by government of Flanders through Flanders UNESCO Trust Fund FUST)
- Decade Coordination Office (DCO) for Ocean Data Sharing under IODE Project Office, coordinated by mr. Jan-Bart Calewaert.
- Ocean Decade Data Coordination group: with active membership of the VLIZ Marine Data Center, dr. Lennert Tyberghein, director of the VLIZ Marine Data Centre and member for the core group NDC-BE.

Two projects were submitted as proposals for endorsement as Ocean DA in the last call (5th call) under the Ocean Decade:

- INSPIRE (Innovative Solutions for Plastic Free European Rivers, a Horizon Europe project under the Mission Ocean and Waters programme of DGRTD) by VLIZ
- A probabilistic model for plastic clean-up technologies by VLIZ (PhD project, promoted by VLIZ research department).

Contribution to the SDGs: most actions contributed to SDG14 in combination with other SDGs. The SDG17 (Partnerships) was the most frequently addressed with 32 actions, followed by SDG14 with 31 actions, SDG10 (Reduced inequalities) and SDG4 (Quality education) with 25 and 21 actions respectively. In total, all the actions combined contributed to 10 SDGs (figure 3). This illustrates that the NDC-BE ocean actions are taking an integrated approach. Co-design, cooperation and co-delivery are key issues when preparing and implementing the actions.

In relation to the Ocean Decade challenges, the NDC-BE DA tackled the 10-decade challenges. Challenge 9 (Skills, knowledge, and technology for all) is most addressed with 27 actions, followed by Challenge 10 (Change humanity's relationship with the ocean) with 14 actions (figure 4). This demonstrates the interests of participants to collaborate and embed their actions in partnerships, apply the 'leave no one behind' principle and contribute to raising awareness of humans' relationship with the ocean.

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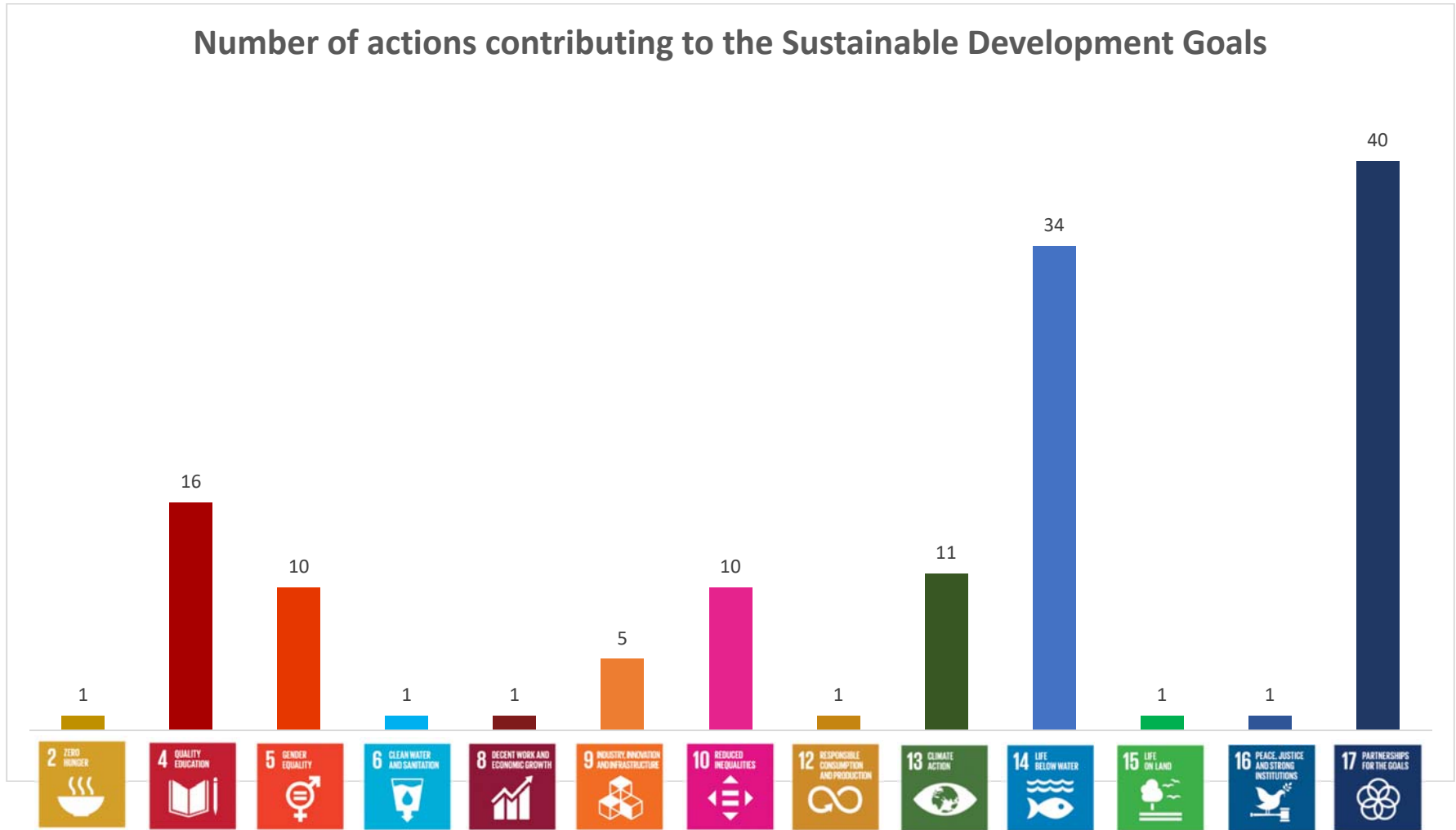


Figure 3. Number of actions that contribute to respective Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (*not including bi and multilateral meetings)

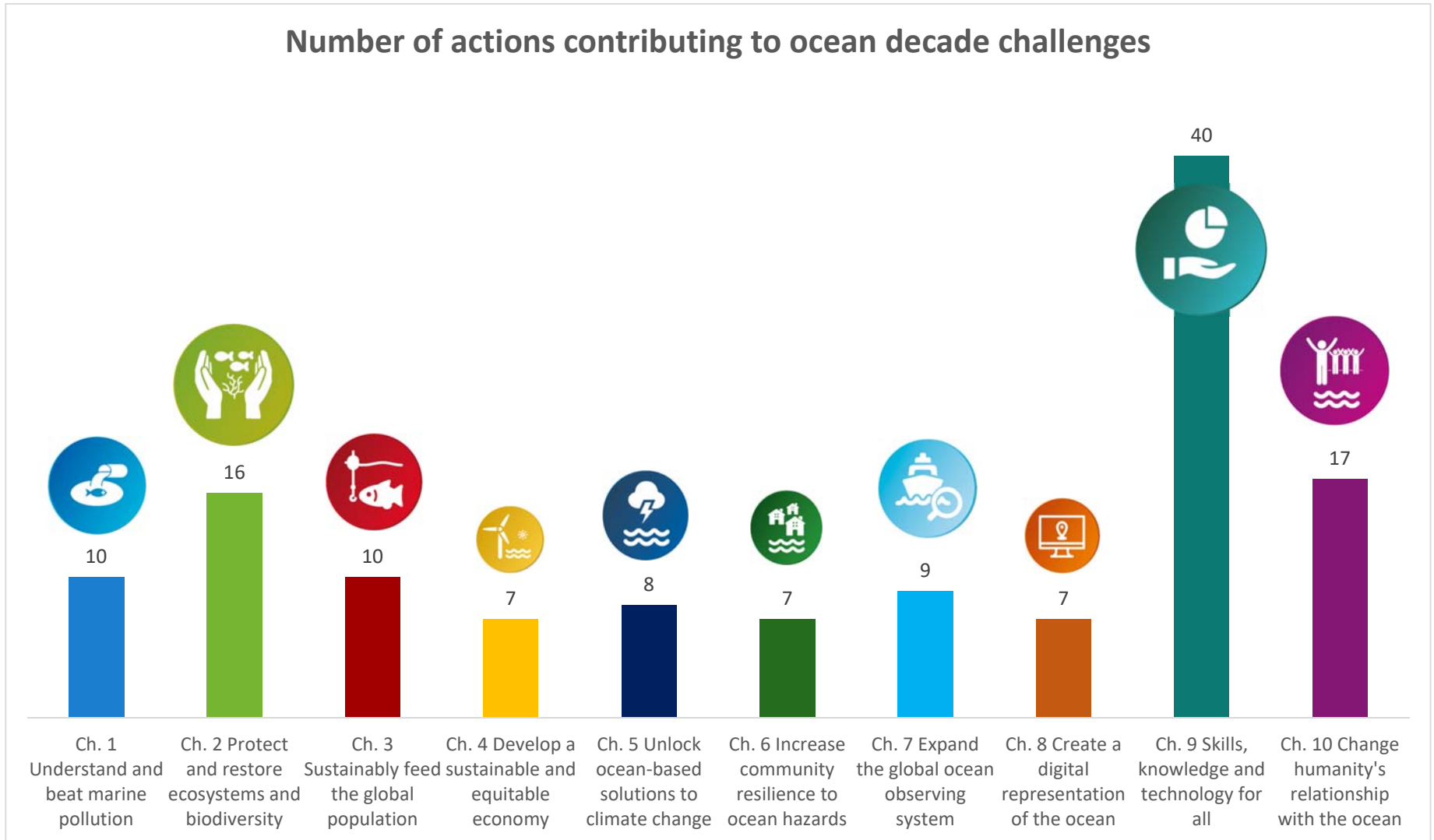


Figure 4. Number of actions under each Ocean Decade challenge

Overview of the NDC-BE Ocean DA in 2023

Table 1 below provides an overview of the Ocean Decade actions as contributions from the NDC-BE in 2023, with an indication of title, progress, lead partner/member, and involved/supporting partners. A detailed list of the NDC-BE 2023 actions is in [annex I](#) and the corresponding reporting factsheets for individual DA can be found here: https://vliz.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/division_international_relations-NationalDecadeCommittee/Gedeelde%20documenten/National%20Decade%20Committee/Documents%20by%20NDC-BE%20core%20group/Annual%20report%202023?csf=1&web=1&e=SigmaM.

Year of implementation	Title	Progress	Belgian partner involved	Contact person	Partners	Link to 2023 report
2023	VLIZ Marine Science Day 2023	on going	VLIZ	Juana Jimenez	GEOxyz, Jan De Nul, HAEDES, The Sea As a Good Cause	9 VMSD23 OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	Brilliant Marine Research Idea Grant	on going	VLIZ Philanthropy	Karen Rappe	DEME	10 BMRI Template OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	Bringing citizen science to young minds	on going	VLIZ	Ana Catarino	COLLECT partners (11 institutes and 11 schools)	15 COLLECT FRONTEIRS for young minds OD report VLIZ.docx
2024	Installation of new sea level station and capacity development	to start in 2024	VLIZ	Francisco Hernandez	IOC, GLOSS data providers	4 SLSMF OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	2023 actions with ABC WoRMS participation	on going	VLIZ	Leen Vandepitte	WoRMS steering Committee, OBIS, SSKI, Challenger 150	1 WoRMS OD report VLIZ.docx
2022-2023	Completing the Library of WoRMS Amphipoda Literature	on going	VLIZ	Leen Vandepitte	UK NOC	12 WoRMS- NOC OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	European Tracking Network - Ocean Tracking Network	on going	VLIZ	Jan Reubens	14 institutions (ETN partners)	2 ETN OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	Quality control by Marine Regions (From global gazetteer to global community)	on going	VLIZ	Britt Lonneville	SEABED 2030, Nippon Foundation	3 Marine Regions OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	Ocean Decade Data Coordination group	on going	VLIZ Marine Data Center	Lennert Tyberghein	OD Data Coordination Group partners	41 OD data coordination group OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	Capacity Development Facility	on going	IODE Project Office	Mary Frances Davidson	VLIZ	42 CDFacility OD report VLIZ.docx

2023	Workshop on Ocean Literacy best practices for the WIO region	completed	VUB	Diana Di Nitto	VLIZ, KMFRI	8 Ocean Literacy WIO workshop OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	Hybrid workshop by VUB-MICA-IUCN Red List of Mangrove Ecosystems	completed	VUB	Diana Di Nitto	VLIZ, KMFRI	7 MICA workshop OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	Career and networking event: transferable skills for ECOPs	completed	VUB	Liesbeth Pinti	Ugent, VLIZ, OTGA, ULiege, ULB, Uantwerp	5 Career and networking event OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	One Ocean Concerts	completed	Mundus Maris	Patricia Morales	De Cierk	16 One Ocean concert OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	7th World Conference Marine Biodiversity 2026	on going	VLIZ	Leen Vandepitte	WoRMS Steering Committee, VLIZ	17 WCMB 2026 OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	Dag van de Wetenschap 2023	on going	VLIZ	Bart De Smet	VLOOT, Ugent, Technopolis	18 Dag van de Wetenschap 2023 OD report VLIZ.docx
2024	A probabilistic model for plastic clean-up technologies	submitted	VLIZ	Giulia Leone	The Ocean Cleanup, INSPIRE partners	not started, waiting for endorsement
2024	INSPIRE	submitted	VLIZ	Ana Catarino	see INSPIRE partners	not started, waiting for endorsement
2024	ECOP participation in Ocean Decade Conference 2024	on going	NDC Belgium	Ann-Katrien Lescrauwaet	VLIZ, West-Flanders Province, EWI, FOD Health	23 ECOP in OD conference 2024 OD report VLIZ.docx
2024	Development of a Biology data management training course for OTGA	on going	VLIZ Marine Data Center	Leen Vandepitte	OTGA	20 TC biological data VMDC OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	Data publication training at CIBIMA (Dominican Republic)	completed	VLIZ Marine Data Center	Ann-Katrien Lescrauwaet	CIBIMA, WoRMS, EurOBIS/OBIS	21 TC CIBIMA OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	Data management training at AZTI (Basque country)	completed	VLIZ Marine Data Center	Charlotte Dhondt, Carolien Knockaert	AZTI, WoRMS, EurOBIS/OBIS	22 TC AZTI OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	Data publication training at KMFRI (Kenya)	completed	VLIZ Marine Data Center	Carolien Knockaert and Stefanie Dekeyzer	KMFRI, WoRMS, EurOBIS/OBIS	6 KMFRI-VLIZ training OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	2 ECOP Scholarships for UGent Summer School	completed	VLIZ	Karen Rappé	IFOP, ESPOL, VLIZ Philanthropy	24 IFOP-ESPOL summer school OD report VLIZ.docx

2023	Exchange on taxonomic database IMARPE (Peru) - WoRMS-EurOBIS to create PeRMS	completed	VLIZ	Ann-Katrien Lescrauwaet, Juana Jimenez	IMARPE, WoRMS, EurOBIS/OBIS, KBIN	26 IMARPE exchange OD report_VLIZ.docx
2023	Exchange on Zooplankton research and ZooScan methodology between IFOP (Chile) – VLIZ	completed	VLIZ	Ann-Katrien Lescrauwaet, Juana Jimenez	IFOP, VLIZ-MOC, Ugent	25 IFOP exchange OD report_VLIZ.docx
2023	Participation of partners in the ICOS Workshops on surface ocean pCO ₂ : Fishery Development Institute, Chile (IFOP) and exchange with Belgian Climate Centre	completed	VLIZ	Peter Landschützer, Juana Jimenez	IFOP, VLIZ Research, Belgian Climate Center	27 ICOS IFOP BE Climate Center OD report_VLIZ.docx
2023	Development of the NDC for Belgium Handbook	completed	VLIZ	Juana Jimenez, Ann-Katrien Lescrauwaet	core group NDC Belgium	28 NDC handbook OD report_VLIZ.docx
2023	2023 annual coordination ASPnet meeting and Flanders UNESCO Committee	completed	ASPnet	Nele Rabijns, Ann-Katrien Lescrauwaet, Stijn Dhert	VLIZ, DKBuZA	29 ASPnet annual meeting SDG14 combo OD report_VLIZ.docx
2023	VUC day: session on leave no one behind	completed	VUC	Ann-Katrien Lescrauwaet	VLIZ, KU Leuven	30 VUC day session OD report_VLIZ.docx
2023	World Ocean Day - Master Class Ocean Decade - Mission Ocean	completed	Streekhuis Kust	Ann-Katrien Lescrauwaet, Jana Van Elslander	EMB, VLIZ	31 World ocean day masterclass OD report_VLIZ.docx
2023	NDC side event at IOC Assembly	completed	EWI	Gert Verreet	core group NDC Belgium	32 NDC IOC assembly OD report_VLIZ.docx
2023	2023 Open group NDC Belgium meeting	completed	core group NDC	Juana Jimenez, Ann-Katrien Lescrauwaet	VLIZ, VUB, DKBuZA, KU Leuven	33 Open group NDC-BE meeting OD report_VLIZ.docx
2023	2023 core group NDC Belgium meetings	completed	core group NDC	Juana Jimenez, Ann-Katrien Lescrauwaet	core group NDC Belgium	34 core group NDC-BE meetings OD report_VLIZ.docx
2023	Acquired promotional materials	completed	Secretariat NDC	Juana Jimenez	The Sea As a Good Cause, VLIZ	35 promotional materials OD report_VLIZ.docx
2023	Co-design support to Flanders/Belgium stakeholders and international partners	completed	Secretariat NDC	Juana Jimenez, Ann-Katrien Lescrauwaet	(inter)national partners	36 co.design support OD report_VLIZ.docx

2023	contributions to 4 editions of the European Marine Board - Ocean Decade newsletter	completed	Secretariat NDC	Juana Jimenez, Jana Van Elslander	EMB	37 EMB OD newsletters OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	contributions to 1 edition of the Blue Cluster newsletter	completed	Secretariat NDC	Juana Jimenez	Blue Cluster	38 Blue Cluster news OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	Contributions to 1 edition of the ECOP programme newsletter	completed	Secretariat NDC	Juana Jimenez, Natalie Fox	ECOP programme	39 Communication via ECOP programme channels OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	Flanders/Belgium actions in Ocean Decade twitter and LinkedIn	completed	Secretariat NDC	Juana Jimenez, Aya Khalil	DCU	40 Communications via OD channels OD report VLIZ.docx
2023-2024	Artificial Intelligence supporting citizen science and citizen engagement, digital field guide application and identification of fish species	to start in 2024	Mundus Maris	Cornelia Nauen	WoRMS, FishBase	reporting March 2024
2023-2024	RDA – Learning and Exchange network, small scale fisheries and science-based monitoring	in development	VLIZ	Ann-Katrien Lescrauwaet	RDA, IFOP, NDC Chile	OD action submitted in call 6
2023-2024	REDCAMP – community led observation and monitoring in MPA	in development	VLIZ	Ann-Katrien Lescrauwaet	REDCAMP, IFOP, University Aysen, NDC Chile	OD action submitted in call 6
2023-2024	Identifying Seashells: Citizen Science initiatives in ocean observation and monitoring	to start in 2024	Horizon Educatief	Phaedra Van Kerrebrouck	Province of West-Flanders, VLIZ	13 Horizon Educatief Identifying Seashells.docx
2023-2024	Sustainable fishing for educational purposes: Citizen Science initiatives in ocean observation and monitoring	to start in 2024	Horizon Educatief	Phaedra Van Kerrebrouck	Province of West-Flanders, VLIZ, Westtoer / Stad Nieuwpoort / Stad Oostende / Toerisme Oostende	14 Horizon Educatief Sustainable fishing.docx
2022-2023	Adapting SLSMF datasets for research uses via Minute Sea-Level Analysis (MISELA)	completed	VLIZ	Francisco Hernandez	SLSMF	11 SLSMF-MISELA OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	Participation in Decade Coordination Office (DCO) for ocean data sharing	on going	VLIZ	Lennert Tyberghein	IODE project office	41 OD data coordination group OD report VLIZ.docx
2023	Gearing up our blue knowledge: tackling ocean challenges in the UN Ocean Decade	completed	EWI	Gert Verreet	Blue Cluster, VLIZ	45 Gearing up brochure OD report VLIZ.docx

As a summary of the focus and content of Ocean DA, we provide an overview by the priority areas as determined at the NDC-BE core-group (details per action are available in the [individual factsheets](#)):

a. Ocean observation and prediction

Actions focused on uptake of science and transformed into actionable service(s) that can be used broadly and globally. Examples include the sea level station monitoring facility SLSMF data services for research purposes (OD action: MISELA), the FishBase app for fish species identification (Mundus Maris). The SLSMF was endorsed (2023) as an OD project under the Ocean Tsunami Warning Programme and 2024 actions will pursue the expansion of SLS in areas with poor coverage, integrated with capacity development opportunities in collaboration with GLOSS centres.

b. Ocean data management and data sharing

Data management and data sharing has a cross-cutting and enabling aspect. As one of the focus areas, the NDC-BE DA integrate data management and data sharing with capacity development activities where relevant, and OD actions tend to actively support the entire data pipeline (from observation to data products/service). This is also actively promoted and supported or addressed through actions by the NDC-BE (see list of actions, see also section d.).

Two OD projects focus on ocean data management and sharing. The World Register of Marine Species Above and Beyond (WoRMS-ABC) is an OD project under the OD programme Marine Life 2030. In 2023, WoRMS ABC engaged with other OD programmes and projects (OBIS, Challenger 150, Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative SSKI, Ocean Census, UK-National Oceanographic Centre) to complete databases of marine taxon names, conduct data rescue and improve interoperability with other global databases and infrastructures.

Marine Regions was recently endorsed under the Ocean Data 2030 programme, with the action 'From global gazetteer to global community'. The aim of this fast-growing global gazetteer is to keep facilitating and co-designing geographical data products with local, regional, and international expert input. Currently Marine Regions is collaborating with the project Seabed 2030 (Nippon Foundation, GEBCO) to produce the definitive map of the world ocean floor and with FAO to improve interoperability and aligning standards and databases.

c. Citizen engagement (including Citizen Science and Ocean Literacy)

Two events focused on ocean literacy: The UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) aimed to bring the ocean in the school curriculum (SDG14, SDG13, SDG6). Students and their teachers/coaches participated in interactive sessions and proposed to work on SDG14 combined with SDG6 to be translated into actions by each associated school in 2024. The second event focused on an exchange on ocean literacy best practices to set initial steps for the Ocean Literacy Western Indian Ocean and Africa network. Lead by VUB, this hybrid workshop was held at the Kenyan Marine Research and Fisheries Institute (KMFRI) on 21-22nd August. Participants were from the WIO region and Belgium.

d. Capacity Development and knowledge transfer/exchange

Marine Biological Data Management trainings and Data publication trainings were held jointly by the VLIZ Marine Data Centre VMDC and partners in Dominican Republic (University of Santo Domingo-Centre for Marine Biology Research CIBIMA, 1 week in April 2023) in Kenya (KMFRI, 3 days in June 2023) and in Basque country SPAIN (AZTI, 1 week in April 2023). Trainings are hands-on and focus on promoting and applying the FAIR principles and steps towards applying standards for interoperability and exchange of data. The involvement of OBIS-EurOBIS, EMODnet, WoRMS, Marine Regions, and OceanTeacher Global Academy (OTGA) as partners in these trainings, facilitate data owner/manager engagement and long-term collaboration on data sharing. Two ocean data training courses were co-designed and co-developed under the NDC-BE by VLIZ: the ocean biological data management TC in close collaboration with OTGA, and

the masterclass on the Nagoya Protocol and Access and Benefit Sharing under the Convention on Biological Diversity CBD, in close collaboration with VLIR and OTGA (in preparation 2023, to be completed in Q1 – 2024).

Knowledge transfer events are user- and needs-driven. The need for networking and transferable skills for the job market were highlighted during the Career and networking event by VUB, ULB, UGent, UAntwerp, ULiège by the international tropical marine and lacustrine master programmes in Belgium (TROPIMUNDO and Oceans&Lakes). It was the first ever event where MSc. programmes from Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia collaborate. Another request came from the mangrove scientific community, the Mangrove International Collaboration Action MICA (an FWO ICA network)-IUCN workshop aimed to exchange knowledge on mangrove conservation between experts from Flanders and the Western Indian Ocean region. It was led by VUB and held at the Kenyan Marine Fisheries and Research Institute (KMFRI), in collaboration with VLIZ.

International Mobility: exchange of researchers focuses on supporting ECOPs from the global south while strengthening the connection with partner institutions in Flanders-Belgium, with partner institutions that have ongoing bilateral cooperation agreements with partners in Flanders. The exchanges aimed to develop new local platforms or data products and services (Peruvian Register of Marine Species – PeRMS by IMARPE-Peru) strengthen the collaboration with global databases (OBIS-WoRMS-MarineRegions; IFOP/IMARPE/KMFRI/CIBIMA) or exchange of best practices on common research infrastructure, e.g. ZooSCAN and zooplankton research (exchange between IFOP-Chile and VLIZ-LifeWatch). The NDC-BE supported the participation of CIBIMA (Dominican Republic) mangrove expert to the MMM6 conference on Mangroves and the connection to the FUST MangRes project and the ICA and TROPIMUNDO networks.

ECOPs participation in training opportunities in Belgium were facilitated and/or supported with travel grants: 2 travel grants and exchanges in science for sustainable blue economy SBE in the Blue Summer School with Gent University (ESPOL-Ecuador and IFOP-Chile), in collaboration with VLIZ philanthropy ‘Sea as a Good Cause’. Support was provided to the ICOS/SOCAT workshop on surface ocean pCO₂ observations, synthesis, and data products, by facilitating the participation of an ECOP from Chile (IFOP).

e. National Crosslinking / Partnerships and networks

Other local institutions were involved during the exchanges mentioned above to further strengthen international cooperation with different experts and NDCE-BE members and partners where relevant. These institutions and initiatives include a.o. Gent University and the UGent science museum collections, Tropimundo (VUB-ULB), INBO, FUST, VLIR, the RBINS-KBIN and its collections, Belgium Climate Centre, Flanders Blue Cluster.

The meetings of the NDC-BE serve as a platform for exchange among national actors from different sectors: academic, NGOs, private sector, innovation actors, federal, regional, and provincial government.

Networking events like the VLIZ Marine Science Day 2023, the Ocean Decade and Mission Ocean MasterClass (by Province of West-Flanders, VLIZ, European Marine Board) provide opportunities to inform on wider and complementary initiatives, such as the Mission Restore Our Ocean and Waters ‘Mission Ocean’ (EU) and the UN Ocean Decade (global level). Thus, where possible, the NDC-BE events and initiatives look for synergies between local/regional/global initiatives to leverage impact, avoid stakeholder fatigue, align different governmental instruments, and create increased awareness.

f. Awareness and communication

One of the main functions of a NDC is to raise awareness and disseminate the vision and mission of the OD. Like many global initiatives, the goals are high-level and at times may seem difficult to relate to for local actors and initiatives. Embedding the goals of the OD in a local context is therefore key to effective and sustainable implementation.

Multidisciplinary approach and co-design are key messages in dissemination and outreach of the NDC-BE to motivate engagement in the OD. Our activities reach different audiences: citizens (Dag van de Wetenschap, One Ocean Concerts), ECOPs (VLIZ Marine Science Day, Oceans and Lakes networking day ‘Catching the Wave’), educators, and local actors and practitioners (Ocean Decade and Mission Ocean Master Class, VUC Trefdag). Other stakeholders are informed on the latest news and actions from the NDC-BE via e.g. the Blue Cluster Newsletter, the European Marine Board – Ocean

Decade newsletter, the Compendium for Coast and Sea News section, the Testerep (VLIZ), VLEVA news section and blogs, the Streekhuis Kust news section etc.

Promotional materials were designed and developed (puzzles, stickers, leaflets, banners) or acquired (SDG seating cushions, throwable microphone for more interactive sessions). These are used during the OD activities and events and are freely available for core-group member from the NDC-BE and their partners, as well as the (international) partners at InnovOcean to be used in their OD activities.

Concluding remarks on 2023 actions

The NDC-BE focuses on delivering actionable and transformative ocean science. In its first year of activity, the NDC-BE has focused on establishing the core group, agreeing on priority areas and actions, and a collective understanding on how to deliver on the OD mission by building on our strengths. The secretariat has invested considerable effort in reaching out to the broader (marine and non-marine) community and stakeholders to promote the objectives and benefits of the Ocean Decade. The secretariat has also dedicated considerable efforts in supporting the opportunities (calls, resources, platforms) and actual submitting of proposals for endorsements of key actions, projects, and initiatives. These efforts are not quantified in the current reporting and overview. They are, however, fundamental as a first step in building a broader community of practice for the Ocean Decade and beyond.

As suggested both by the open meetings and core-group of the NDC-BE, it is priority to keep efforts in engaging other actors like industry and the private sector. There is still room for improvement for more multidisciplinary collaboration. Upcoming actions will keep a focus on ECOPs and their engagement in the OD like in the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference and together with the pre- and post- conference events.

In next phase it is important to consolidate these actions by engaging more and diverse actors and resources around the endorsed Ocean Decade actions that are contributions from Flanders to the Ocean decade, moving towards a stronger network and more multi-actors and multi-disciplinary actions.

Next steps for 2024

Towards the end of the current reporting period January-December 2023, 18 OD actions have initiated and/or scheduled or in preparation in view of their implementation in 2024. These OD actions follow the core principles of co-design, multidisciplinary approach, innovation and abide by the 'leave no-one behind' principle. An action plan 2024 will be submitted for approval in February 2024 to kick-off the 2024 work. The preliminary list of activities of the NDC-BE in 2024 includes (subject to input and co-design of the NDC-BE partners):

1. Testing new sea level stations supported with capacity development by SLSMF in the Western Indian Ocean.
2. Master Class on the Nagoya Protocol and ABS regulations, in cooperation with VLIR and OTGA (23/02/2024)
3. VLIZ Marine Science Day, under auspices of the EU Belgian Presidency and endorsed by Mission Ocean (06/03/2024))
4. Ocean Decade Conference 2024 – participation of ECOPs and support to local Ocean Decade actors and partners (8-12/04/2024)
5. Ocean Decade meets Mission Ocean (EU Presidency event), co-organisation by Vlaamse UNESCO Commissie (VUC) and VLIZ, and support by VLEVA (25/04/2024)
6. Blue Economy Science Summit BESS, under auspices of the EU Belgian Presidency and endorsed by Mission Ocean. Co-organisation Blue Cluster, VLIZ, POM WV (23/05/2024)
7. Dag van de Wetenschap – VLIZ 2024 (24/11/2024)
8. Route for the Blue Economy (Belgium – Portugal cooperation), led by HAEDES. (date tbc)
9. The (preparations towards) the 7th World Conference on Marine Biodiversity. Co-organisation by VLIZ. This event will guide side events and preparatory actions in close cooperation with WoRMS ABC and participation of other OD actions (November 2026)
10. Marine Biodiversity data management training course – VLIZ Marine Data Centre, in cooperation with OTGA (to be launched online, date tbc)
11. (in development) GOOD database: exchange of best practices and facilitation of first steps towards integration and data sharing, led by ULiege. In cooperation with EMODNet, DCO Data Sharing, IODE Project Office, OTGA

12. (application in progress) Monsoon School by VUB (Diana Di Nitto, master programme Oceans and Lakes)
13. Horizon Educatief – Citizen Science initiatives in ocean observation and monitoring (preparations started in 2023, full implementation in 2024) in close cooperation with the province West-Flanders, Horizon Educatief.
14. RDA – Learning and Exchange network, small scale fisheries and science-based monitoring, in collaboration with IFOP and NDC-Chile. OD actions (submitted in call 6 in association to the OD programmes FISHSCORE and Ocean Best Practices)
15. REDCAMP – community led observation and monitoring in MPA, in collaboration with IFOP, University Aysen (Delphine Vanhaecke), and NDC-Chile. Ocean observation practices and monitoring in the 3 largest (85% of total MPA area in Chile EEZ) (OD action submitted in call 6 in association to the OD programmes FISHSCORE and Ocean Best Practices)
16. Mundus Maris: Artificial Intelligence supporting citizen science and citizen engagement, user's feedback updates and improvements to the digital field guide application and identification of fish species (in collaboration with WoRMS, FAO, FishBase...), preparations started in 2023, full implementation, follow-up and impact in 2024
17. FUST-mangroves: support actions in the context of FUST project (to be defined with project coordinators)
18. FUST e-DNA for assessments on invasive species and climate change impacts (to be defined with project coordinators)

The Decade Coordination Unit has opened space for interaction with other Decade Implementing Partners (DIP), Decade Coordination Offices (DCO) and Decade Collaborative Centres (DCC). Due the current engagement of the NDC-BE member VLIZ (DIP) in the Data Strategy Implementation Group and VLIZ-DIP engagement in the entire ocean data value chain (from ocean observation, capacity development, data sharing and products and services) VLIZ-DIP is engaging with the DCO for Ocean Data Sharing. This is in line with the priority areas of the NDC-BE.

First interactions with other NDCs have served to exchange on best practices, discuss common priority areas, explore opportunities for joint actions. We expect in 2024 to keep this engagement, to liaise with other NDCs and their linkages with national institutions and use these platforms to strengthen international cooperation in relevant areas/actions.

The Ocean Decade Conference 2024 will provide strong guidance for the upcoming work plans. Hence a special section is dedicated to explaining VLIZ and the NDC-BE engagement and participation to the conference (see below).

PARTICIPATION IN THE OCEAN DECADE CONFERENCE 2024

Ocean Decade Conference 2024

The Ocean Decade Conference 2024 will be held in Barcelona from 08 to 12 of April. After four years of implementation, the Ocean Decade has engaged thousands of partners around the world to start delivering the science we need for the ocean we want. The conference will be the time for actors to come together and create new partnerships, strengthen existing collaboration, and propose joint priorities for the upcoming years. For the NDC-BE, the OD Conference is a milestone, an instrument to leverage for increased engagement, and should be fully integrated in the objectives and workplan.

Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs)

An ECOP is defined by the Ocean Decade as a person with 10 years or less of professional experience in any field related to the ocean. This includes post-secondary students and any volunteer roles, not only employed/paid positions. The term 'professional' is used to be inclusive to various sectors of society. The ECOPs have an important role in the Ocean Decade: they bring the diversity of perspectives of new generations of ocean professionals and will ensure the knowledge transfer and exchange from and with experienced professionals.

A Belgium ECOP node is currently in development, and it will aim to foster ECOP participation in the Ocean Decade. It will use the conference as a momentum to bring their voice in a diversity of topics like university curricula, transversal skills, sustainable blue economy, ocean and water research, ocean literacy, coastal management, among others.

Pre and post conference events

Two events organised by the NDC-BE core-group members will serve as pre and post conferences events:

- **Preconference event:** VLIZ Marine Science Day (VMSD), de Grote Post (Ostend), 6th of March 2024
- **Post conference event:** Ocean Decade meets Mission Ocean (EU Presidency event), led by Vlaamse UNESCO Commissie (VUC), InnovOcean Campus (Ostend), 25 of April 2024.

The events aim to highlight the current engagement of Flanders-Belgian stakeholders (ECOPs, ocean experts, citizens) and promote the involvement of new actors. Besides, it is highly recommended by the DCU to raise ECOPs engagement in Ocean Decade events by supporting their participation at the Ocean Decade Conference 2024. Their participation will include a pre-guidance and debriefing on DA in Belgium, priorities at (sub)national level and an overview of (access to and opportunities in) the international framework for cooperation.

Travel grants

Travel grants to participate to the OD Conference will support two ECOP profiles:

1. BE ECOPs: for ECOPs who are affiliated/working in an institution based in Belgium, to ensure and strengthen engagement with Flanders-Belgium institutions as a post-conference follow-up.
2. Global South ECOPs: for ECOPs from the global south affiliated to a partner institution in Flanders-Belgium and/or its partnerships.

An open call will be launched for travel grants. The jury will be composed of core-members of the NDC-BE and members of VLIZ Philanthropy and VLIZ scientific board. This call will be announced in December 2023, based on the requirements of the Decade Coordination Unit (DCU). Awards will be presented at the VLIZ Marine Science Day 2024 on 06th March. Finally, the awardees will present their experience and outputs during the event organised by Vlaamse Unesco Commissie VUC on 25th April 2024.

The following institutions have shown their intention to support ECOPs participation in 2024:

- Two travel grants are offered by FPS Health for BE ECOPs Belgium
- VLIZ-DIP will cover two travel grants for Global South ECOPs
- Two travel grants covered by the Provincie West-Vlaanderen/Streekhuis Kust.

In conclusion, there will be an engagement and support from three different levels: federal level, Flanders region and province of West Flanders to travel grants for ECOPs based in or with connection to partners in Belgium. The participation of the NDC-BE at the conference will be composed by the selected ECOPs and the secretariat as guidance and support to decade projects and actors from Belgium.

Resources

The NDC-BE is supported by the engagement of its members and members' institutions and partnerships. Additionally, the Flanders government (EWI) has reserved earmarked funding to support the Ocean Decade in response to Flanders government ambition to adhere to the Ocean Decade. This funding and mobilisation of resources is reflected in the outputs/outcomes of the VLIZ DIP and the NDC-BE, and includes a 1 FTE in support of the Implementation of the Ocean Decade, and 1 PTE in support of the implementation of the Ocean Decade and related programmes and initiatives at EU, sea basin, regional, national, and local level. Additional funding secured through Flanders government provides 'seed money' for actions and initiatives under the Ocean Decade.

References

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Relevant Ocean Decade documents

- [The Science We Need for The Ocean We Want](#)
- [Join the movement for the Ocean We Want](#)
- [Co-designing the Science We Need: Guidance and recommendations for DA](#)
- [State-of-the-Art of Ocean Literacy](#)
- OD Implementation plan [full report](#) and [summary](#)
- [Decade Collaborative Centers and Decade Implementing Partners: Operational guidelines 2021](#)
- [Ocean Literacy framework for the UN Ocean Decade](#)
- [Advancing science for sustainable ocean business: an opportunity for the Private Sector](#)
- [Ocean Knowledge for a Sustainable Ocean Economy](#)
- [The transformative role of Foundations in the Ocean Decade](#)
- [Foundations Dialogue – The Bouknadel Statement](#)
- [Brand Guidelines for the Ocean Decade](#)
- [National Decade Committee for Belgium HANDBOOK](#)

ANNEX I

Overview of actions developed by the NDC-BE in support of the Ocean Decade, in 2023

Actions are grouped according to their focus, however each action addresses at least two strategic components. Each action is reported in a factsheet that summarises objective(s), outcome or impact, contribution to Ocean Decade challenges and Sustainable Development Goals, and the engaged actors and partnerships. Note that the ‘actions’ listed below are not necessarily formally ‘endorsed’ as Ocean Decade actions.

List of 2023 NDC-BE actions, by focus area

2023 endorsed Ocean DA (projects):

- Acoustics to Assess the Health Status of Reefs (ULiege)
- Downscaling Climate and Ocean Change to Services (ULiege)
- Sea Level Station Monitoring Facility (VLIZ)
- ARTPORT - We are Ocean Global Program (Mundus Maris)
- From global gazetteer to global community – Marine Regions (VLIZ)
- Conservation of the deep-sea in the light of deep-sea mining (UGent as partner)

2023 submitted for endorsement: Ocean Decade (projects):

- INSPIRE (Innovative Solutions for Plastic Free European Rivers) by VLIZ
- A probabilistic model for plastic clean-up technologies by VLIZ (PhD project)

2023 endorsed actions (projects) on Ocean data management and data sharing:

1. Marine Regions in the Ocean Decade (VLIZ): as first action Marine Regions will conduct a quality control and data gap analysis, identify potential sources (local knowledge and priorities). In collaboration with FAO, OBIS, Protected Seas, WoRMS, FishBase, and many other partners.
2. World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) Above and Beyond. In collaboration with the WoRMS Steering Committee, and the National Oceanography Centre (NOC) UK: Filling gaps via facilitating access to Amphipoda library collection and link to respective species.

2023 endorsed actions On Ocean Literacy:

3. 24-25 Aug: Ocean Literacy workshop for the Western Indian Ocean (Kenya): VUB, EMSEA, Kenyan Marine Fisheries and Research Institute (KMFRI)
4. Bringing citizen science to young minds: writing a scientific paper for children to share COLLECT (Citizen Observation of Local Litter in Coastal Ecosystems) project outputs and methodology in an engaging and understandable way.

On Capacity development and knowledge transfer/exchange:

5. 24 – 28 April: Data publication training by VMDC (WoRMS, EurOBIS/OBIS) at CIBIMA (Dominican Republic)
6. April 2023: AZTI data management training course
7. 7 – 9 June: Data publication training by VMDC (WoRMS, EurOBIS/OBIS) at KMFRI (Kenya)
8. 3 – 7 July: A scholarship for UGent Summer School, via Sea As a Good Cause
9. 3-7 July: scholarship UGent Summer School
10. 20 – 31 August: Exchange on taxonomic database between IMARPE-WoRMS-EurOBIS to create PeRMS: Peruvian Register of Marine Species, plus taxonomic collections management with RBINS.
11. 21 – 22 Aug: Hybrid workshop by VUB-MICA (Mangroves International Coordination Action)-IUCN Red List of Mangrove Ecosystems
12. 09 Sep: Career and networking event – master programmes: transferable skills for ECOPs (VUB, ULB, UGent, UAntwerp, ULiege)
13. 01 – 12 October: Exchange on ZooScan methodology between Fishery Development Institute, Chile (IFOP) – VLIZ plus zooplankton research with UGent

14. 6 – 10 Nov: Participation of partners in the ICOS Workshops on surface ocean pCO₂: Fishery Development Institute, Chile (IFOP) and exchange with Belgian Climate Centre, VLIZ

On Communication, outreach, and awareness:

15. Development of the NDC for Belgium Handbook: <https://www.vliz.be/en/imis?module=ref&refid=365106>
16. Development of the brochure: Gearing up our blue knowledge. Tackling Ocean challenges in the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development by Department of Economy, the Blue Cluster and Flanders Marine Institute. <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/view-file/59012>.
17. 02 March: VLIZ Marine Science Day 2023
18. 17 March: UNESCO schools coordination meeting, 2023 annual coordination ASPnet meeting and Flanders UNESCO Committee. VLIZ will support to embed SDG14, in combination with SDG13 and SDG6, into curricular programme of UNESCO Schools in 2024.
19. 11 May: VUC day, session on leave no one behind (DKBUZA, KU Leuven)
20. 8 June (World Ocean Day): Master Class Ocean Decade – Mission Ocean, De Panne, Streekhuis Kust – European Marine Board – VLIZ
21. 11 June (World Ocean Day): One Ocean Concert, Ostend by NGO Mundus Maris
22. 28 June: National Decade Committee (NDC) side event at IOC Assembly: Gert Verreet (EWI and IOC NFP) represented the NDC for Belgium and presented how to establish one.
23. 26 Nov: Dag van de Wetenschap 2023
24. 01 Dec: Open group National Decade Committee for Belgium meeting (together with open VLIZ Scientific Committee meeting)
25. Acquired promotion materials, available for core-member decade activities: Stickers, SDG seating cubes, Throwable microphone, SDG Matching game, One Ocean puzzle, 3 Ocean Decade banners.
26. Assistance to (inter)national partners to co-design Ocean DA and application procedures to endorse their actions. *Communication about Ocean Decade updates, actions and awareness in the following channels:*
27. 4 editions of the European Marine Board - Ocean Decade newsletter
28. 1 edition of the Blue Cluster newsletter
29. 1 edition of the ECOP programme newsletter
30. Ocean Decade twitter and LinkedIn

Bi- and multilateral meetings:

31. NDC Germany
32. NDC Italy
33. Netherlands (NDC in development)
34. NDC Chile
35. DCU – NDCs focal points every three months
36. DCU – DIPs focal points every three months
37. EU DIPs
38. 15 one-one meetings with core-members of the NDC-Belgium
39. Horizon Educatief (after event Ocean Decade – Mission Ocean masterclass)
40. Group from Ostend that focus on SDGs (after event Ocean Decade – Mission Ocean masterclass)
41. FAO – MarineRegions, VLIZ Marine Data Center – IODE
42. OceanTeacher Global Academy (OTGA)
43. OBIS writing Ocean Decade proposal
44. WoRMS – NOC
45. WoRMS – Challenger 150
46. KMFRI – Jackeline Uku
47. KMFRI – Harrison Uganda
48. Decade Coordination Office on Data Sharing - VLIZ Marine Data Center (VLIZ – DIP) and NDC Secretariat
49. Capacity Development Facility – Ann-Katrien as member of the IOC Capacity Development expert group
50. Ocean Decade Data Coordination group – Lennert Tyberghein
51. ECOP programme general coordinator to develop ECOP node in Belgium

ANNEX II

Formally endorsed Ocean DA involving partners based in Belgium (including NDC-BE members projects and activities).

Last updated January 2024

Disclaimer: It was possible to keep track of the decade activities by partners in Belgium which were shared via email by the Decade Coordination Unit. If you are a partner based in Belgium and your activity/project/programme that you are involved in is not in the list, you can share it with us to oceandecade@vliz.be.

N°	Title	Category	Lead/Partner institution in Belgium	Contact person	Ocean Decade Programme assigned
1	VLIZ Marine Science Day (editions 2023-24-25-26)	Activity	VLIZ	Juana Jimenez	n/a
2	Bringing citizen science to young minds: writing a scientific paper for children to share COLLECT (Citizen Observation of Local Litter in Coastal Ecosystems) project outputs and methodology in an engaging and understandable way.	Activity	VLIZ	Ana Catarino	n/a
3	Hybrid workshop by VUB-MICA (Mangroves International Coordination Action)-IUCN Red List of Mangrove Ecosystems	Activity	VUB	Diana Di Nitto	n/a
4	Career and networking event – master programmes: transferable skills for ECOPs (VUB, ULB, UGent, UAntwerp, ULiege)	Activity	VUB	Liesbeth Pinti	n/a
5	One Ocean Concerts	Activity	Mundus Maris	Patricia Morales	n/a
6	7th World Conference Marine Biodiversity 2026	Activity	VLIZ	Leen Vandepitte	n/a
7	JPI Oceans "Science for Good Environmental Status" Oceanographic Cruise"	Activity	JPI Oceans	Lavinia Giulia Pomarico	n/a
8	TRASH TALK IN ACTION	Activity	EMSEA	Martina Gaglioti	n/a
9	Southern Ocean Essential Variables Workshop	Activity	RBINS	Anton Van de Putte	n/a
10	Dag van de Wetenschap / Science Day 2024 (2025, 2026)	Activity	VLIZ	Bart De Smet	n/a
11	EMB Policy Brief on Blue Carbon	Activity	EMB	Ana Rodriguez	n/a
12	Building Coastal Resilience in Europe	Activity	EMB	Britt Alexander	n/a
13	EOOS Technology Forum 2024 Catching the momentum in ocean observing technology	Activity	EuroGOOS	Alicia Blanco	n/a
14	EMBracing the Ocean	Activity	EMB	Britt Alexander	n/a

15	Brilliant Marine Research Idea Grant	Contribution	VLIZ Philanthropy		Karen Rappe	n/a
16	Capacity Development Facility (IODE)	Contribution	IODE Office	Project	Mary Frances Davidson	n/a
17	Decade Coordination Office for Ocean Data Sharing	Contribution	IODE Office	Project	Jan-Bart Calewaert	n/a
18	The Joint Call on Underwater Noise in the Marine Environment	Contribution	JPI Oceans		Thorsten Kiefer	n/a
19	Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ)	Contribution	VLIZ		Jan Mees	n/a
20	Joint Programming Initiative Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans	Contribution	JPIOceans		Thorsten Kiefer	n/a
21	EMODnet European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet)	Contribution	EMODnet		Kate Larkin	n/a
22	European Marine Board (EMB)	Contribution	EMB		Sheila Heymans	n/a
23	ECOP participation in Ocean Decade Conference 2024	Contribution	NDC Belgium		Ann-Katrien Lescauwaeet	n/a
24	Ocean Practices for the Decade	Programme	IODE Office	Project	decade@oceanbestpractices.org	n/a
25	Ocean Literacy With All (OLWA): the change we need for the ocean we want	Programme	EMSEA		Evy Copejans	n/a
26	OceanData 2030: An Ocean Data and Information System supporting the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development	Programme	IODE Office	Project	Peter Pissierssens	n/a
27	Sea Level Station Monitoring Facility for the Ocean Decade	Project	VLIZ		Francisco Hernandez	The Ocean Decade Tsunami programme
28	ABC WoRMS: Above and Beyond - Completing the World Register of Marine Species	Project	VLIZ		Leen Vandepitte	MarineLife 2030
29	Ocean Tracking Network - European Tracking Network (ETN)	Project	ETN-VLIZ		Jan Reubens	MarineLife 2030
30	From global gazetteer to global community	Project	VLIZ		Britt Lonneville	OceanData 2030
31	Global Ocean oxygen Database and Atlas	Project	University of Liege		Marilaure Gregorie	Global Ocean Oxygen Decade (GOOD)
32	OceanTeacher Global Academy	Project	IODE Office	Project	Greg Reed	Not yet defined
33	E-DNA expeditions in marine World Heritage sites	Project	IODE Office	Project	Ward Appeltans & Fanny Douve	Ocean Biomolecular Observing Network (ODON)
34	OBIS 2030 - The biodiversity data hub for the Ocean DA (OBIS 2030)	Project	IODE Office	Project	Ward Appeltans	MarineLife 2030

35	PacMan: Pacific Islands Marine Bioinvasions Alert Network	Project	IODE Project Office	Ward Appeltans	Ocean Observing Network (ODON)	Biomolecular Network
36	Scientists for Ocean Literacy (Oceanographers and Meteorologists for Ocean Literacy)	Project	EuroGOOS	Dina Eparkhina	Ocean Literacy With All (OLWA)	
37	European Knowledge Hub on Sea Level Rise	Project	JPI Oceans	Lavinia Giulia Pomarico	Coast Predict	
38	Sail For Ethics (S4E)	Project	Sail 4 Ethics Prospective International (NGO)	Marie-Laure Drouet	SMARNET, ECOP, Ocean Corps	
39	Acoustics to Assess the Health Status of Reefs	Project	University of Liege	Xavier Raick	Ocean Decade Research Programme on the Maritime Acoustic Environment (OD-MAE)	
40	ARTPORT_WE ARE OCEAN Global Program	Project	Mundus Maris	no specific contact	Ocean Literacy With All (OLWA)	
41	Downscaling Climate and Ocean Change to Services	Project	University of Liege	no specific contact	Ocean Acidification Research for Sustainability (OABS)	
42	Integrating coastal ocean observing and predicting	Project	EuroGOOS	no specific contact	Coast Predict	
43	Conservation of the deep-sea in light of mining	Project	University of Ghent	no specific contact	Challenger150	

ANNEX III

Membership to the core group of the National Ocean Decade Committee for Belgium NDC-BE

Participants (in alphabetical order):

Affiliation	Name	Last name
Belspo (Federal Public Planning Service Science Policy)	Koen	LEFEVER
Blue Cluster	Kinnie	DE BEULE
Department of Chancellery and Foreign Affairs (DKBUZA)	Nele	RABIJNS
EMSEA (European Marine Science Educators Association)	Evy	COPEJANS
Economy, Science and Innovation department (EWI) Flanders Government	Gert	VERREET
Federal Public Service (FPS) Mobility and Transport, DG Shipping	Marie-Lucie	SUSINI
Federal Public Service Public Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment of Belgium (FPS Health, Chair)	Sophie	MIRGAUX
HAEDES Consultancy & Engineering	Piet	HAERENS
ILVO (Flanders Research Institute for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food)	Johan	ROBBENS
NGO Mundus Maris	Patricia	MORALES
The Sea As a Good Cause (VLIZ philanthropy)	Karen	RAPPE
Province of West-Flanders /Coastal office (Streekhuis Kust)	Hannelore	MAELFAIT
University of Ghent /Ostend Science Park	Colin *Sara	JANSSEN VANDAMME
University of Liege	Marilaure	GRÉGOIRE
VLIZ (Focal point, co-chair)	Ann-Katrien	LESCRAUWAET
VLIZ (NDC Secretariat)	Juana	JIMENEZ
VLIZ Marine Data Center	Lennert	TYBERGHEIN
University of Brussels / Oceans and Lakes	Diana *Karolien	DI NITTO VAN PUYVELDE