



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Assessing 10 years of international commitments to sustainable ocean action

A global stocktake of the Our Ocean Conference

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Working Papers contain preliminary research, analysis, findings, and recommendations. They are circulated to stimulate timely discussion and critical feedback, and to influence ongoing debate on emerging issues.

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Executive summary

Highlights

- Since 2014, the Our Ocean Conference (OOC) has emerged as a key forum to mobilize sustainable ocean action and resources through voluntary commitments across six action areas: the ocean-climate nexus, marine protected areas (MPAs), sustainable fisheries, marine pollution, the sustainable blue economy, and maritime security.
- From 2014 to 2024, the conference generated 2,618 commitments to ocean action, equivalent to US\$160 billion in pledged funds.
- This working paper analyzes, for the first time, the overall implementation progress of all commitments. As of January 2025, approximately 1,130 commitments had been completed (43 percent), 1,005 were in progress (38 percent), and 483 (18 percent) had not been started. The OOCs have mobilized \$133.4 billion for ocean action, comprising \$23.8 billion in delivered funds from completed commitments and \$109.6 billion for commitments under implementation. Most pledged finance (54 percent) is allocated to ocean-climate action.
- Future OOCs should further catalyze action from the private sector and academia, broaden geographic engagement, and encourage commitments that engage and address the needs of small island developing states, least developed countries, youth, women, and Indigenous and local communities.

Background

The sustainable blue economy has the potential to drive sustainable development and create transformative and equitable opportunity (Stuchtey et al. 2020). MPAs and other effective conservation measures can enhance biodiversity and provide valuable co-benefits for coastal communities (Gronrud-Colvert et al. 2021). Ocean-climate solutions can deliver up to 35 percent of the emissions reductions required to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2050 (Hoegh-Guldberg et al. 2023). Addressing marine pollution is necessary to safeguard human and environmental health (Beau-



mont et al. 2019), and enhancing global maritime security can create an enabling environment, peace, and global access to markets (Bueger et al. 2024).

The Our Ocean Conference drives action across six areas: the ocean-climate nexus, the sustainable blue economy, sustainable fisheries, marine protected areas, marine pollution, and maritime security. The conference serves as a forum to coordinate global ocean ambition and develop and strengthen partnerships. OOC outcomes focus on mobilizing voluntary commitments to sustainable ocean action, including finance. Voluntary commitments are made annually by governments and nongovernmental actors and include local, national, and international actions such as financial pledges, research programs, policy or partnership announcements, and capacity-building initiatives. Importantly, the OOC also includes a commitment-tracking process that monitors implementation.

This paper provides a comprehensive assessment of OOC commitment implementation from 2014 to 2024, highlighting the important role of the OOC in driving global ocean policy and identifying opportunities and priorities for future action.

About this working paper and its methodology

This publication, developed for the 10th Our Ocean Conference in 2025, aims to strengthen accountability and transparency in the OOC process. It represents the first in an annual series by World Resources Institute (WRI), in the capacity of the OOC Secretariat, to strengthen the progress tracking of voluntary commitments and provide recommendations for future OOC hosts and participants. OOC reporting can serve as a model for other international forums that mobilize voluntary commitments, such as the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC).

This analysis uses voluntary commitment data derived from the OOC global online platform, cross-referenced against existing host government outcome reports. The analysis assumes accurate self-reporting from governments and other organizations. Information on data cleaning and limitations is provided in the “Research methodology” section and Appendix A.

Key findings

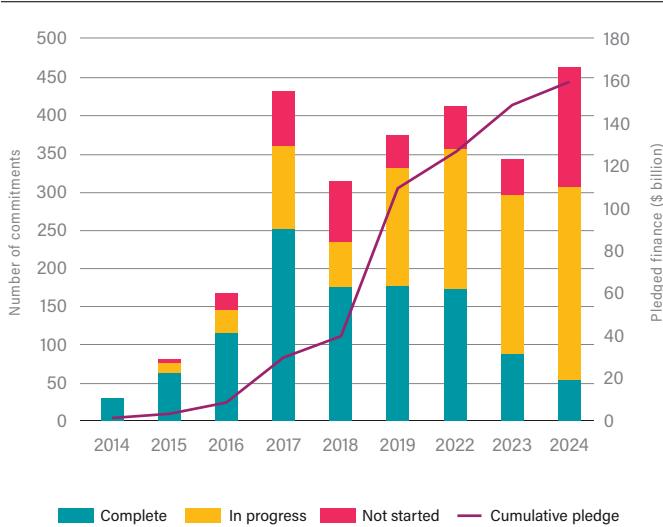
The OOC has mobilized a diversity of commitments across all ocean basins and by organizations in every region. In total, 2,618 commitments were made between 2014 and 2024, with a cumulative finance pledge of \$160 billion (Figure ES-1).

The conference has grown significantly since its initial founding and has made progress toward commitment implementation. Since 2017, each OOC has delivered over 300 new commitments. By January 2025, 1,130 commitments (43 percent) had been completed with a further 1,005 in progress (38 percent) and 483 not yet started (18 percent). This equates to an estimated \$23.8 billion in delivered funds, \$109.6 billion in process of being disbursed, and \$24.9 billion not yet started. Completed commitments tend to be associated with smaller financial pledges. Continued abmition and effort is needed to ensure that ongoing, multiyear commitments with large financial pledges are followed through to completion.

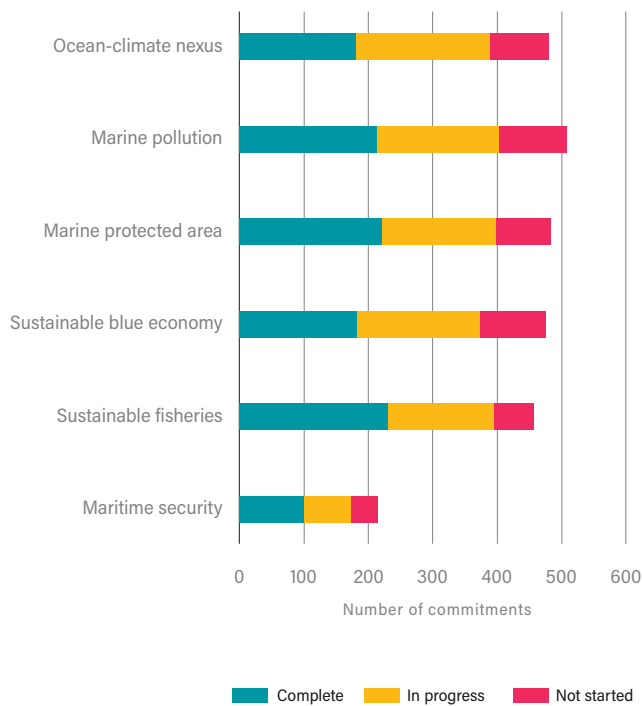
Commitment-makers are mainly governments and non-governmental organizations from Europe, North America, and East Asia and the Pacific. Governments have the highest number of commitments and pledged funds of any sector, reflecting their critical role in mobilizing and investing in ocean action.

The total number of commitments and pledged funds diverge across thematic ocean action areas (Figures ES-2 and ES-3). The action areas, in descending order of number of commitments, are marine pollution (508), marine protected areas (483), the ocean-climate nexus (480), the sustainable blue economy (475), sustainable fisheries (457), and maritime security (215). Commitments related to ocean-climate solutions have received the highest amount of pledged funding (\$86.6 billion) while MPAs have received the lowest (\$6.7 billion).

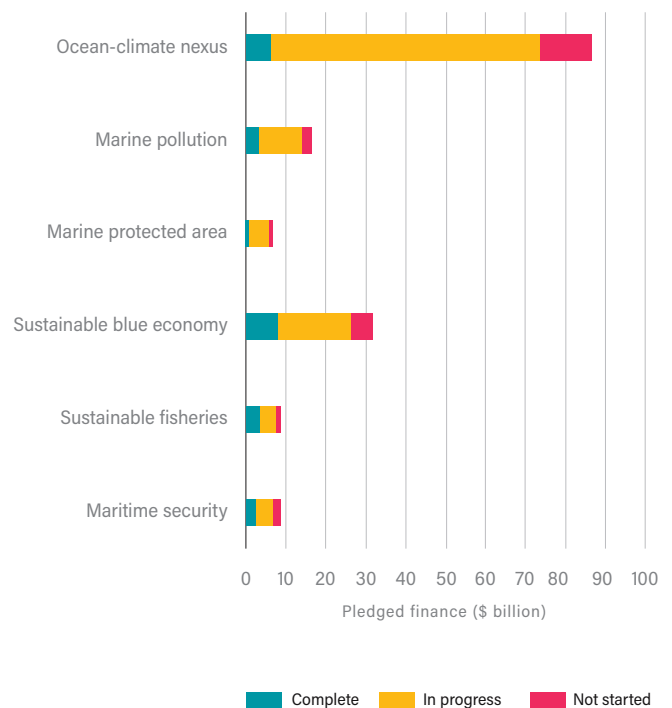
Figure ES-1 | Number of Our Ocean Conference commitments, cumulative pledged finance, and progress by year, 2014–2024



Notes: Due to COVID-19, no Our Ocean Conference events were held in 2020 and 2021. Source: WRI authors.

Figure ES-2 | **Number of Our Ocean Conference commitments and progress by action area**

Source: WRI authors.

Figure ES-3 | **Pledged Our Ocean Conference finance and progress by action area**

Source: WRI authors.

Conclusions and recommendations

Since 2014, the Our Ocean Conference has driven ambitious global action and successfully mobilized resources. With 81 percent of commitments complete or in progress, commitment-makers appear to be making concerted efforts to meet their pledges. However, gaps remain, particularly in the full disbursement of pledged finance.

Recommendations to improve OOC outcomes include the following:

- **Actively fill geographic and policy gaps in OOC commitments**, increasing inclusion and commitment mobilization across Africa, Latin America, and South Asia.
- **Strengthen partnerships with governments while scaling engagement** with the private sector, academia, intergovernmental organizations, local communities, and underrepresented groups.

- **Improve the OOC online platform** to improve data quality and increase transparency.
- **Develop further thematic analyses of commitments** including deep dives, regular progress assessments, and analyses of implementation barriers and solutions.
- **Increase coordination between the OOC and other multilateral forums**, including UNOC, to address duplication risk across voluntary commitment platforms and drive global ocean ambition.
- **Explore options to provide more concrete support for organizations to implement their commitments** through internal knowledge-sharing and external partnerships.

A positive, productive, and equitable future for the ocean is possible with ambitious and coordinated action. The OOC has a key role in past, present, and future efforts to realize this vision.

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This Executive Summary is part of a larger WRI Working Paper, Assessing 10 years of international commitments to sustainable ocean action, which is available in full at WRI.org.



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