



**United Nations  
Environment  
Programme**



**Ad Hoc Steering Group for the  
“Assessment of Assessments” of  
the Regular Process for Global  
Reporting and Assessment of  
the State of the Marine  
Environment, Including  
Socio-Economic Aspects**



**Intergovernmental  
Oceanographic  
Commission  
of United Nations  
Educational,  
Scientific and Cultural  
Organization**

A/61/GRAME/AHSG/1

English only

**Regular process for global reporting and assessment  
of the state of the marine environment, including  
socio-economic aspects**

**Ad Hoc Steering Group for the “assessment of assessments”**

**First meeting**

New York, United States of America, 7–9 June 2006

## **First meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group for the “assessment of assessments” of the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects**

### **Report of the secretariat**

#### **Summary**

The present report provides an account of the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group for the “assessment of assessments” of the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects, held in New York, United States of America, from 7 to 9 June 2006. The meeting was convened pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/30 XI, by which the Assembly established the Ad Hoc Steering Group to oversee the “assessment of assessments” and invited the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to jointly lead the process of, amongst other things, producing a report on the results of the “assessment of assessment” for the General Assembly.

Present at the first meeting were representatives of the following member States of the United Nations: Australia, China, Iceland, India, Japan, Mexico, Namibia, Philippines, Spain and Uganda. They were joined by representatives from the following United Nations bodies and related international organizations: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Meteorological Organization, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, International Maritime Organization, International Seabed Authority, UNEP and World Meteorological Organization. The outcome of the first meeting was clear: the Ad Hoc Steering Group adopted targeted decisions on substantive agenda items, such as the scope, key questions, process, budget, implementation plan and time-schedule for the “assessment of assessments”. The “assessment of assessments” is to be completed within two years of its launch date, as stipulated by the General Assembly.

## **I. Opening of the meeting (agenda item 1)**

1. The meeting was opened at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 7 June 2006, by Mr. Patricio Bernal, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and Assistant Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). He recalled General Assembly resolution 60/30 on oceans and the law of the sea, as it pertained to the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects. Speaking on behalf of UNEP and the International Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, which constituted the lead agencies responsible for, amongst other things, producing a report on the results of the “assessment of assessment” for the General Assembly, Mr. Bernal welcomed the members of the Ad Hoc Steering Group to its first meeting.

## **II. Organization of work (agenda item 2)**

### **A. Election of co-chairs**

2. The Ad Hoc Steering Group elected Ms. Elva Escobar, representing the Government of Mexico, and Mr. Peter Harris, representing the Government of Australia, as its co-chairs for the first meeting.

### **B. Adoption of the agenda**

3. The Ad Hoc Steering Group adopted the agenda for the meeting on the basis of the provisional annotated agenda set out in document GRAME/AHSG.1/1/1/Rev.1. The annotated agenda is set out in annex I to the present report.

### **C. Attendance**

4. Representatives of the following member States of the Ad Hoc Steering Group attended the meeting: Australia, China, Iceland, India, Japan, Mexico, Namibia, Philippines, Spain and Uganda. The following member States conveyed their regrets for their inability to attend the meeting: Egypt, Mozambique, Romania and Russian Federation. It was noted that additional members of the African, Asian, and Latin America and Caribbean groups still needed to be appointed.

5. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies and related international organizations attended the meeting: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, International Maritime Organization, International Seabed Authority, UNEP and World Meteorological Organization.

6. A full list of participants, including the observers present, is contained in annex III to the present report.

## **III. Consideration of the substantive items of the agenda (agenda items 3–10)**

7. The Ad Hoc Steering Group undertook an in-depth review of the substantive items on the agenda following the introduction by the lead agencies of the documents prepared for the meeting.<sup>1</sup> The outcome of the deliberations is reflected in a decision, which was reached by consensus, and is contained in annex II to the present report.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.unep.org/DEWA/assessments/index.asp>.

#### **IV. Closure of the meeting (agenda item 10)**

8. The meeting was closed at 4 p.m. on Friday, 9 June 2006, by Ms. Elva Escobar. She expressed her appreciation to Mr. Peter Harris for agreeing to co-chair the meeting with her. She also thanked all the participants for their excellent cooperation and contributions, which had led to a successful outcome to the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group.

## Annex I

### **First meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group for the “assessment of assessments” of the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects**

#### **Annotated agenda**

##### **Item 1: Opening and welcoming remarks**

1. The first meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group for the “assessment of assessments” of the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects, will be opened at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 7 June 2006, by representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commissions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the lead agencies responsible for producing a report on the results of the “assessment of assessment” for the General Assembly. The meeting will take place at the headquarters of the United Nations, New York, United States of America. Owing to financial and technical constraints, the meeting will be conducted in English only.

##### **Item 2: Organization of work**

###### **(a) Election of co-chairs**

2. The Ad Hoc Steering Group is invited to present nominations for the election of the co-chairs of the Ad Hoc Steering Group for a two-year period.

###### **(b) Adoption of agenda**

3. The Ad Hoc Steering Group is invited to consider for adoption the draft agenda of the first Ad Hoc Steering Group meeting of the regular process, set out in document GRAME/AHSG.I/1.

##### **Item 3: Background and mandate**

4. The Ad Hoc Steering Group is invited to consider paragraphs 1–11 of document GRAME/AHSG.I/2, which concern General Assembly resolution 60/30 and the recommendations of the second International Workshop of the Regular Process, held on 13–15 June 2005.

5. There will be a presentation by representatives of UNEP and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commissions of UNESCO addressing the question, “What is a credible, legitimate and relevant assessment?” It will be followed by questions, comments and general discussion. On this matter, see paragraph 16 of document GRAME/AHSG.I/2.

##### **Item 4: Review of the updated survey of regional and global marine assessments by the United Nations Environment Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre**

6. In 2002, at the request of UNEP and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, the World Conservation Monitoring Centre carried out a survey of regional and global marine assessments and the institutions involved in them. In 2005, UNEP and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission commissioned the World Conservation Monitoring Centre to update the survey. The representative of the World Conservation Monitoring Centre will introduce the updated survey and present the preliminary results to the meeting. The meeting will review its findings and

give guidance on the completion of the survey. On this matter, see document GRAME/AHSG.1/3/INF.1.

**Item 5: Features of the “assessment of assessments”**

7. UNEP and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission will introduce this agenda item, on the basis of paragraphs 13–18 of document GRAME/ASHG.I/2. There will be a presentation on the nature, aims and output of the “assessment of assessments”. The process for preparing the “assessment of assessments” and the workplan will be presented, followed by questions, comments and general discussion.

**Item 6: Group of experts**

8. UNEP and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission will introduce this agenda item, on the basis of paragraphs 19–31 of document GRAME/ASHG.I/2. The Ad Hoc Steering Group may wish to consider key technical elements for consideration by the group of experts, the desired profile of the experts and the criteria for their selection.

**Item 7: Presentation of budget and resource mobilization strategy for the “assessment of assessments”**

9. UNEP and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission will introduce the budget and resource mobilization for the “assessment of assessments” on the basis of paragraphs 31–32 of document GRAME/ASHG.I/2. The Ad Hoc Steering Group may wish to consider and approve the budget and resource mobilization strategy for the “assessment of assessments”.

**Item 8: Observers**

10. The question of whether to invite observers and the means of identifying individuals qualified to act as observers at the meetings of the Ad Hoc Steering Group will be discussed and a decision taken. On this matter, see paragraphs 33–34 of document GRAME/ASHG.I/2.

**Item 9: Date and venue for the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group**

11. The Ad Hoc Steering Group will decide the date and venue of its second meeting.

**Item 10: Closure of the meeting**

12. The meeting will be closed by the co-chairs of the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group. The Ad Hoc Steering Group is expected to conclude its work by on 4 p.m. on Friday, 9 June 2006.

## Annex II

### **Decision adopted by the Ad Hoc Steering Group for the “assessment of assessments” of the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects at its first meeting**

*The Ad Hoc Steering Group for the “assessment of assessments” of the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects (“the Ad Hoc Steering Group”),*

#### **A. Background and mandate**

*Recognizing* paragraph 93 of General Assembly resolution 60/30, as it pertains to the functions of the Ad Hoc Steering Group,

*Recognizing* paragraph 94 of General Assembly resolution 60/30, as it pertains to the activities to be carried out by the lead agencies responsible for preparing a report on the results of the “assessment of assessments” for presentation to the General Assembly,

*Noting* the importance of establishing the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects (“the regular process”) in order to provide policymakers involved in ocean affairs with more comprehensive scientific information,

*Stressing* the urgency of completing the “assessment of assessments” as a preparatory step towards the establishment of the regular process,

#### **B. Review of the updated survey of regional and global marine assessments by the United Nations Environment Programme’s World Conservation Monitoring Centre**

1. *Welcomes* the draft updated survey of regional and global marine assessments, prepared by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre;

2. *Calls for* a review of the draft survey by relevant Government experts, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and scientific experts to provide feedback to the World Conservation Monitoring Centre for the completion of the report;

3. *Welcomes* the offer of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection to contribute to the peer review of the survey, possibly by conducting a workshop;

#### **C. Features of the “assessment of assessments”**

*Having considered* the conclusions of the second International Workshop on the regular process and, in particular, the nature, aims and expected accomplishments of the “assessment of assessments”,<sup>2</sup> as well as the draft updated survey of regional and global marine assessments prepared by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre:

4. *Recommends* that the thematic and geographic scope of the “assessment of assessments” should cover relevant existing marine and coastal environmental assessments, including their ecological, social and economic aspects, at global and regional levels, complemented by available selected national assessments with broad geographical representation;

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<sup>2</sup> Document A/60/91: Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-Economic Aspects: second International Workshop.

5. *Recommends and affirms* that in implementing the aims and expected outcomes identified in the conclusions of the second International Workshop on the regular process, the group of experts responsible for undertaking the “assessment of assessments” should undertake a critical analysis of the assessments in order to evaluate their scientific credibility, policy relevance, legitimacy and usefulness, in particular by identifying:

- (a) Best practices and approaches;
- (b) Thematic and geographic assessment gaps and needs;
- (c) Uncertainties in scientific knowledge, data gaps and research needs;
- (d) Networking and capacity-building needs in developing countries and countries with economies in transition; and
- (e) A framework and options for the regular process, based upon current relevant assessment process and practices;

6. *Requests* that in drafting the “assessment of assessments” report, the group of experts develop a “summary for decision makers” for the consideration of the Ad-Hoc Steering Group;

7. *Suggests* that the group of experts, when considering the framework and options for the regular process, keep in mind the following:

- (a) The existing internationally agreed goals and targets relating to marine environmental challenges and the indicators and data available to measure progress towards them;
- (b) The extent to which the existing range of assessment mechanisms analyse the status and trends in marine environmental change and the interaction between the marine environment and society, in attempting to meet the internationally agreed goals and targets relating to marine environmental challenges;
- (c) The extent to which the existing range of assessment mechanisms analyse the drivers of marine environmental change and alterations in environmental services, the ways that such changes affect human well-being and prosperity, and the groups and areas are most vulnerable to those changes;
- (d) The implications of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,<sup>3</sup> in areas such as those aspects of human health, food security, poverty alleviation, energy and disaster-preparedness that are related to the marine environment;
- (e) The extent to which the existing range of assessment mechanisms analyse the effectiveness of existing policies and the best means to make the regular process relevant to policy without prescribing policy;

8. *Affirms* that the assessment will be:

- (a) A scientific, credible and independent undertaking, conducted by a group of experts that is balanced in terms of its gender and geographical representation, and co-chaired by one expert from a developing country and one from a developed country;
- (b) Subject to an in-depth peer review by experts and Governments;
- (c) Prepared by a group of authors, including chapter lead authors, drawing on existing assessments and complemented by relevant scientific and technical data and information as appropriate without requiring new scientific research or marine observations;
- (d) A policy-relevant, legitimate and useful assessment, as ensured by the Ad-Hoc Steering Group;

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<sup>3</sup> General Assembly resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000

9. *Affirms* that, as mandated by the General Assembly through its resolution 60/30, the “assessment of assessments” is to be completed within two years of the formation of the group of experts and will serve as a preparatory stage in the establishment of the regular process;

10. *Approves* the two-year tentative workplan contained in annex I to the present decision, which commences with the first meeting of the group of experts, subject to the availability of sufficient voluntary contributions and other resources to meet the agreed budget outlined in paragraph 16 of the present decision;

11. *Requests* that the two lead agencies responsible for producing a report on the results of the “assessment of assessments”, specifically the United Nations Environment Programme and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, submit the “assessment of assessments” report to the Ad Hoc Steering Group for its consideration before it is presented to the General Assembly;

#### **D. Group of experts**

12. *Adopts* the notional profile and selection criteria for the group of experts, contained in annex II to the present decision;

13. *Agrees* that nominations of individuals to serve as members of the group of experts or as peer reviewers for the “assessment of assessments” should be submitted to the lead agencies by members of the Ad Hoc Steering Group no later than 1 July 2006. Each proposal should be accompanied by a resume of the expert’s experience;

14. *Requests* the lead agencies to submit the proposed composition of the group of experts to the members of the Ad Hoc Steering Group for approval on “no objection” grounds;

15. *Decides* that the composition of the group of experts of no more than 20 experts will be approved unless written objections are received by the secretariat of the Ad Hoc Steering Group within 10 working days after the lead agencies have submitted the proposed composition of the expert group to the Ad Hoc Steering Group;

#### **E. Budget and resource mobilization strategy for the “assessment of assessments”**

16. *Agrees* to the budget for implementation of the workplan for the “assessment of assessments” of \$2.11 million, as contained in annex III to the present decision;

17. *Welcomes* with appreciation the in-kind and financial support of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to the “assessment of assessments”;

18. *Welcomes* the initiative by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to invite Governments to contribute financially to the “assessment of assessments”;

19. *Calls on* Governments to contribute urgently to the trust funds of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the funding of the “assessment of assessments”;

20. *Agrees* that members of the Ad Hoc Steering Group will collaborate with the lead agencies to pursue possible funding opportunities, including support from the Global Environment Facility and other funding sources;

21. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility to support a “medium-size project” for co-financing the “assessment of assessments”;

22. *Welcomes* the offer of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection to provide its scientific advice to the “assessment of assessments” of the regular process by making selected experts from the Joint Group available according to need;

**F. Observers**

23. *Agrees* to include a limited number of observers in the next Ad Hoc Steering Group meeting to be held in June 2007 in conjunction with the eighth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea;

24. *Requests* the secretariat of the Ad Hoc Steering Group, subject to the availability of funds and taking into consideration the need for geographically balanced representation, to propose a limited number of observers from various organizations, including intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations;

25. *Decides* that the list of observers be approved on a “no objection” basis, unless written objections are received by the secretariat within 10 working days after the Ad Hoc Steering Group has received the proposed list of observers;

**G. Date and venue for the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group**

26. *Agrees* that, subject to the availability of timely financing, the Ad Hoc Steering Group will seek to reconvene for its second meeting three days prior to the eighth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea in 2007.

## Annex I to the decision adopted by the Ad Hoc Steering Group for the “assessment of assessments” of the regular process at its first meeting

### Tentative two-year workplan: key events and outputs

Date	Event	Expected outputs
	Funds made available for implementation of the workplan	
Month 1 (Oct 2006)*	First meeting of the group of experts	Annotated outline of the “assessment of assessments”; specification of additional required inputs and information
Month 5 (Mar 2007)*	Second meeting of the group of experts	First draft of the “assessment of assessments” report; progress report to the Ad Hoc Steering Group
Month 6 (Apr 2007)*	Group of experts’ internal review of the first draft of the “assessment of assessments” report	Internal review of first draft of the “assessment of assessments” report
Month 8 (Jun 2007)*	Mid-term review of the work of the expert group and second meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group, possibly in conjunction with eighth meeting of the Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea	Guidance and oversight provided to the group of experts
Month 9 (Jul 2007)*	Third meeting of the group of experts	Revision of the second draft of the “assessment of assessments” report in response to the mid-term review
Month 12 (Oct 2007)*	Second draft of the “assessment of assessments” report circulated for peer review	Peer review of “assessment of assessments” report
Month 17 (Mar 2008)*	Fourth meeting of the group of experts	Revision of “assessment of assessments” report in response to peer review
Month 20 (Jun 2008)*	Third meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group possibly in conjunction with 2008 meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea	Approval of the summary of the “assessment of assessments” report for decision makers and endorsement of the report itself
Month 24 (Oct 2008)*	Submission of the “assessment of assessments” report to the General Assembly	General Assembly resolution

\* The dates in parenthesis indicate tentative target dates for the events

## **Annex II to the decision adopted by the Ad Hoc Steering Group for the “assessment of assessments” of the regular process at its first meeting**

### **Recommended notional profile and selection criteria for the group of experts**

#### **I. Notional profile**

1. Experts who are or have been involved at a high level in major global, regional or national marine assessments should make up 50–75 per cent of the total membership of the group of experts. Such experts should come from a range of institutional and regional settings and should preferably have considerable experience or knowledge of assessment processes outside their primary area of work or region. They should also provide a balanced representation of expertise from across the physical, biological, and social sciences;
2. Experts with high-level knowledge or experience of important international assessment processes outside the marine realm, e.g., atmospheric, agricultural, and freshwater assessments, should account for 5–15 per cent of the total membership of the group;
3. Experts who have participated in the independent analysis of assessment processes and the interface between science and policy should account for 10–20 per cent of the total membership of the group;
4. Independent senior scientists, including social scientists should account for 15–35 per cent of the total membership of the group;
5. Experts with extensive knowledge of United Nations processes related to the marine environment should account for 5–10 per cent of the total membership of the group;
6. Experts in the law of the sea and ocean governance issues should account for 5–15 per cent of the total membership of the group;
7. Experts with experience in the design and management of major international initiatives in marine science, assessment, environmental protection or related areas, should account for 10–15 per cent of the total membership of the group; and
8. Experts with experience as “users” of major assessments, i.e., in the application of assessment results in the formulation and implementation of related policies, should account for at least 20 per cent of the total membership of the group but preferably as high a proportion as possible.

#### **II. Criteria for the selection of experts**

9. The recommended criteria for the selection of individual members of the group of experts, bearing in mind the need for balanced geographic and gender representation, are set out below. Individuals selected to participate in the group of experts must have:
  - (a) Experience and expertise in one or several of the categories described in the collective profile of the group of experts;
  - (b) Internationally recognized excellence in their field or fields of expertise;
  - (c) Demonstrated high-level participation in international processes relevant to the marine environment; and
  - (d) The ability to serve in an independent, individual capacity.

## Annex III to the decision adopted by the Ad Hoc Steering Group for the “assessment of assessments” of the regular process at its first meeting

### Proposed budget for the two lead agencies responsible for execute the “assessment of assessments” (in thousand United States dollars)

	Year 1 (2006)*	Year 2 (2007)*	Year 3 (2008)*
Expert group meetings (expert travel, per diem and meeting support)	140	255	130
Preparation of necessary inputs to meetings of the group of experts (consultancies and collaborating organizations)	100	100	50
Ad Hoc Steering Group meetings (support for developing country participation)	-	100	100
Mid-term review	-	100	-
Peer review	-	25	-
Two temporary positions located at UNEP and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO at G-4/G-5 and P-3/P-4 levels, to provide support for the overall Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-Economic Aspects (GRAME) process**	80	200	200
Publications	-	-	100
Website	20	5	5
<i>In-kind contribution by lead agencies in preparation for the Ad Hoc Steering Group and the group of experts (staff time, travel, consultants and survey)</i>	200	-	-
<i>In-kind contribution by lead agencies (staff time, travel consultants)</i>	-	100	100
<b>Yearly subtotals</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>685</b>
<b>Annual funds to be mobilized</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>585</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>2,110</b>		
<b>Total funds to be mobilized</b>	<b>1,710</b>		

\* The number in parenthesis indicates tentative target dates

\*\* For the two year start-up phase of the “assessment of assessments” a secretariat and two fixed-term appointments at P3/P4 located at UNEP, Nairobi, and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, Paris, will be required to support the overall GRAME process.

## Annex III

### First meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group for the “assessment of assessments” of the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects

#### List of participants

##### Participants nominated by states

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