

OCEAN TEP – Bridging ocean diplomacy and science diplomacy

Ocean science and diplomacy have been at the forefront in the latest international ocean governance initiatives, e.g., the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) with the COP15 framework for biological diversity, and the latest negotiations at the International Seabed Authority concerning deep-sea mining, in addition to the various commitments under the Conference of the Parties (COPs) of the ocean-related multilateral environmental agreements.

There is a long tradition for ocean scientists to engage with policymakers and with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, Life Below Water, which underlines the importance of engaging in Science Diplomacy.

As part of the EU Science Diplomacy Alliance's efforts to promote science diplomacy in the public arena, it has organised its thematic endeavours in five Thematic Entry Points (TEP). The University of Bergen as a global member of the alliance and a world-leading ocean science institution with partners from around the world, has taken a lead on ocean science diplomacy and initiated the Ocean Science Diplomacy TEP (OCEAN TEP).

Science diplomacy is urgently needed at the frontlines of the major crises in the world today: the triple climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss crises. As one of the triple crisis's frontlines, the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus needs a more effective ocean diplomacy, focussing on the justice dimension of these global challenges. Science diplomacy can achieve this through a shift towards a paradigm where ocean scientists are adequately woven into the ocean diplomacy framework and by involving partners from the global south.

Through this new paradigm, ocean diplomacy can benefit from science diplomacy in many of the emerging themes in ocean governance: Fisheries and aquaculture, food security, biodiversity conservation, marine protected areas, deep-sea mining, ocean acidification and deoxygenation, plastics pollution, marine carbon dioxide removal (with connections to tech diplomacy), marine genetic resources (with connections to health diplomacy), blue justice, and more.

Ocean diplomacy and science diplomacy should be brought together under the umbrella term ocean science diplomacy. This means putting the practitioners and scholars of both ocean and science diplomacy more directly in touch with each other, to strengthen both the ocean and science diplomacy agendas. This will be a key component of the OCEAN TEP.

The OCEAN TEP...

- ...will work to combine the strengths of ocean diplomacy and science diplomacy.
- ...will strive to bring science and diplomacy together for better ocean governance.
- ...aims to focus on the Ocean dimension of Science Diplomacy to strengthen the EU's global position in ocean-related matters.
- ...will work to strengthen science diplomacy ties between the global south and the global north, e.g., by making it mandatory to involve partners from the global south in ocean science diplomacy activities.