

GLOBAL OCEAN SOCIAL SCIENCES (GLOSS)

MY TAKE-HOME MESSAGES FROM TWO DAYS OF GLOSS DIALOGUES AND WORKSHOPS BREST, NOVEMBER 5 & 6, 2019

BY PIERRE STROSSER



BACKGROUND

Organised in Brest on November 5th and 6th by the Ocean University Initiative, the two days of dialogues on **Global Ocean Social Sciences (GLOSS)** mobilised a diversity of marine social scientists committed to strengthening the role of social science in the agenda and priorities of the **United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable**

Development. Overall, a very enjoyable and fruitful event—with many ideas shared, feedback on experiences, and new contacts taken. From our perspective, we take home 6 key messages that emerged from the richness of contributions and discussions (which will be summarised in a specific synthesis of the event).

KEY MESSAGES

Message 1 – To ensure the societal relevance of the Decade so it contributes effectively to sustainable development, it is essential that **the Ocean**, i.e. the main focus of the Decade, is **defined as a human-natural system** including the ocean ecosystem and all human activities impacting on, or benefiting from, this ecosystem.

Message 2 – Being by essence transversal, trans-sectoral and trans-thematic, Social Sciences are **relevant to each of the 6 priority objectives** of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Thus, **Social Sciences need to be fully internalised in the research (agenda and activities) proposed under each priority objective** so it delivers **effective multi/trans-disciplinarity** that is key to making knowledge relevant to, and effectively used for supporting, sustainable development.

Message 3 – In practical terms, Social Scientists can deliver answers to **four main questions** that are key to the success of the decade. These include (see below for a schematic representation of the integration of these four questions to the 6 priority objectives proposed for the Decade):

Q1. How important is the ocean for society? (our baseline—addressing the economic importance of activities and uses, their

diversity, social and economic values—including in relation to ecosystem services, current inequalities and conflicts, the integration of the ocean with the rest of the economy, governance, current policy—coherence and incoherence...)

Q2. How will we make transformation a reality? so it delivers a clean, healthy, resilient, safe... ocean... (constraints for/drivers to transformation, change in behaviour—at all levels and throughout value chains, incentives, literacy/knowledge, winners & losers of transition, policy adaptation required to support transition...)

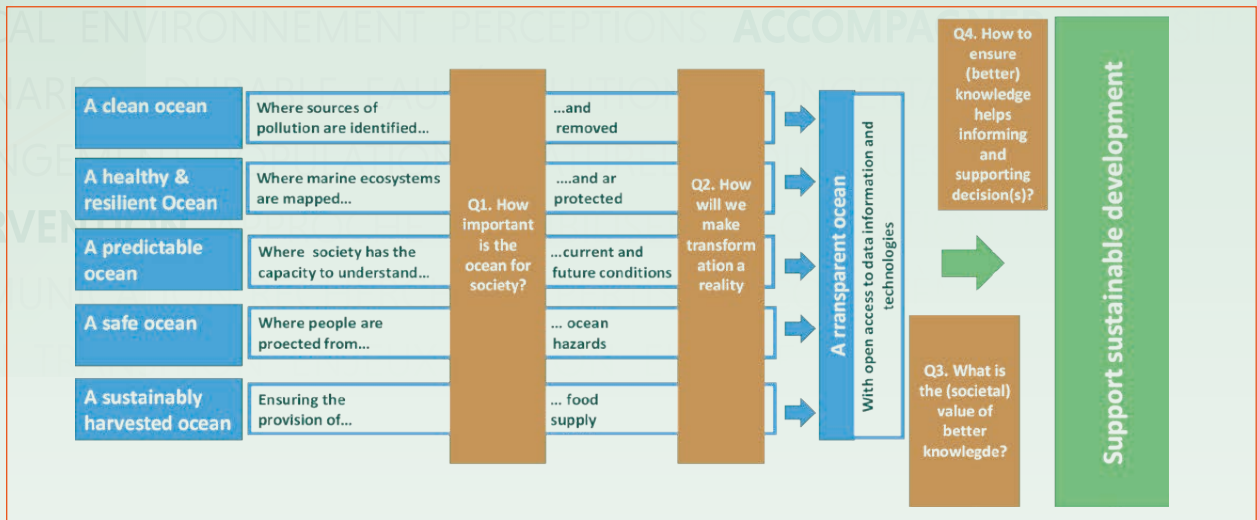
Q3. What is the societal value of 'better knowledge'? Why are we investing in 'better knowledge'? (how does better knowledge 'makes a difference', supporting changes in understanding, perceptions, values, attitude, decisions..., under which conditions, what is in particular the added value of Social Science knowledge in informing better decisions)

Q4. How to ensure better knowledge helps informing and supporting decision(s)? (ensuring an effective science-policy interface, governance of the ocean knowledge system, looking at processes for developing, translating and using ocean knowledge...)

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Message 4 – Being essential to the success of the Decade, it is important that **sufficient funding is allocated to ‘transdisciplinary’ knowledge sharing and consolidation** in the coordination and management of the Decade.

Message 5 – It is important that **marine Social Science capacity** is strengthened world-wide to support the delivery of the Decade’s objectives. This can build on attracting more social scientists to the ocean (topics), while giving **high priority** on marine Social Sciences **in the capacity building activities supported by the Decade**.

Message 6 – From the fruitful discussions at the November 2019 GLOSS workshop, the marine Social Science community can now move forward to develop and implement a **road map for supporting the effective integration of Social Sciences in the Decade**

of Ocean Science for sustainable development. Practical contributions already identified during the GLOSS workshop include:

Supporting the organisation of dedicated marine Social Science contributions (presentations, workshops...) at the next **June 2020 UN Ocean Conference in Lisboa** (Portugal), illustrating, and sharing with the wider ocean community what marine social science can offer to the Decade;

Participation of social scientists in the **regional workshops of the Decade** so the outcome of GLOSS can be shared and contextualised;

Supporting the development of a **‘virtual platform’ for sharing the experiences and results of marine social scientists.**



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