



MENA Oceans
Initiative by Goumbook

**Summit
2025**

Under the Patronage of

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF CLIMATE CHANGE
& ENVIRONMENT



الإمارات العربية المتحدة
وزارة التغير المناخي
والبيئة

In Partnership with



هيئة البيئة - أبوظبي
Environment Agency - ABU DHABI



8 - 11 October 2025, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Summary & Strategic Takeaways

Initiative Strategic Partners



RACE TO ZERO



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Foreword

The IUCN World Conservation Congress was an extraordinary convergence of ideas, commitments, and partnerships — propelling the Ocean Agenda forward and marking a defining moment for global conservation, convening more than 10,000 participants across a week of high-level sessions that set the international agenda for nature, climate, and sustainability.

Goumbook was honoured to host the MENA Oceans Summit 2025 under the patronage of the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, in partnership with Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi and IUCN, as a dedicated platform to advance collective priorities across the Arabian Sea, Arabian Gulf, Red Sea, and Mediterranean. In its 3rd edition, The MENA Oceans Summit 2025 brought together more than 300 leading regional and global experts from 20+ countries, with an unprecedented focus on addressing priorities for sustainable ocean management and blue economy development emerging across the MENA region.

The Summit adopted a unique format this year, convening high level thematic discussions across 4 key pillars: Transboundary Ocean Governance, Blue Science, Regenerative Blue Economies and Mobilising blue financing opportunities.

These discussions were greatly enriched by the valued insights of leading regional and international experts including government entities, private sector organisations, leading academic institutions and research organisations, IGOs and NGOs, banks and financial institutions, community organisations.

Our wider engagement across the Congress, from sessions on seagrass conservation to private-sector nature investments and deep-sea exploration, reaffirmed the region's growing voice within global ocean governance and the importance of linking local insight with international frameworks to drive tangible results.

I am deeply grateful to our MENA Oceans Initiative's Patrons, Advisory Board, Strategic Partners, and Network Members, whose contributions have shaped this shared endeavour. The outcomes of the Congress and the MENA Oceans Summit 2025 together set a collective mandate for the work ahead — grounded in strategic collaboration, scientific rigour, and focused delivery towards a regenerative and resilient ocean future for the MENA region.

I welcome you all to translate the outcomes of this summit into collaborative programmes and the delivery of tangible solutions.

With deep gratitude,

Tatiana Antonelli Abella
Founder and Managing Director, Goumbook
Chair of the MENA Oceans Initiative



MENA Oceans Summit 2025, 3rd Edition

Delivering A Regional Ocean Action Agenda

The **MENA Oceans Summit 2025** by **Goumbook**, under the patronage of the **Ministry of Climate Change and Environment**, in partnership with **Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD)** and the **International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** and embedded within the official programme of the **IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025**, connected regional ocean action with global priorities.

The Summit programme engaged leading experts, practitioners, and decision-makers to advance critical thematic interventions for the sustainable management of our oceans and blue economies.

Taking forward the outcomes of **UNOC3**, discussions focussed on mobilising policy, science, finance and partnerships through defining tangible pathways, identifying enabling conditions, and aligning regional efforts with global conservation and climate goals.

SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS

MENA OCEANS HIGH LEVEL REGIONAL CONSULTATION: GOVERNANCE & POLICY | 8th OCT

The Regional Consultation convened **high level representatives from regional government, policy, and intergovernmental bodies** to identify collective priorities and collaborative mechanisms to enable transboundary cooperation and strengthen coordinated national and regional ocean management in one of the world's most strategically significant maritime regions.

LAUNCH OF THE MENA OCEAN ACTION AGENDA | 8th OCT

The Summit featured the launch of the **MENA Ocean Action Agenda**, a comprehensive blueprint proposed by the MENA Oceans Initiative to identify key indicators, bridge systemic gaps, align diverse stakeholders and mobilise resources to unlock regional collaboration across the Middle East and North Africa, anchored in shared priorities for ocean resilience and regenerative blue economies.

THEMATIC DEEPDIVE SESSIONS & PANEL DISCUSSIONS | 9th - 11th OCT

Closed door in-depth Panel Discussions and Deep Dive Sessions focused on strategic themes based on regional priorities, to set directions for and inform the Initiative's upcoming collaborative programmes of work.

Sessions included the first Regenerative Fisheries Majlis, Deep Dives on Marine Protected Areas, Desalination and Water Management, Regenerative Coastal Tourism, Mobilising the Ocean Breakthroughs, and Panel Discussions on Maritime Decarbonisation and Accelerating Regional Collaboration.

High Level Regional Consultation: Governance and Policy

8 October 15:30 - 17:00

The **MENA High-Level Regional Consultation: Governance and Policy** marked the beginning of MENA Oceans Summit 2025 as a milestone dialogue on advancing transboundary ocean governance across the Arabian Sea, Arabian Gulf, Red Sea, and the Mediterranean. Convening senior representatives from governments, intergovernmental organisations, and development partners, the session set the stage for a coherent regional framework for the sustainable management of shared seas and coastal ecosystems.



L-R: Mr. Ashok Adicéam, Dr. Maryam Ficociello, H.R.H. Prince Sultan bin Fahd bin Salman Al Saud, Tatiana Antonelli Abella, H.E. Hiba Al Shehhi, H.E. Ahmed Alhashmi, and Mr. Obaid Al Shamsi

The session was anchored around three **strategic inputs**:

- The **MENA Ocean Action Agenda**, formally launched by the MENA Oceans Initiative at this session, presented a roadmap for transformative change including 38 near- and long-term priorities identified under four pillars: Blue Governance, Blue Science, Regenerative Blue Economy, and Blue Finance.
- **Situation Analyses** for the **Mediterranean** and **West Asia**, presented by IUCN Med and IUCN ROWA, identified opportunities to integrate marine resource management into national development plans, foster inclusive governance, and strengthen cross-border coordination.
- The **Neptune Mission**, launched by the Government of France as an outcome of UNOC3, showcased a model of science diplomacy that makes ocean science actionable through shared observation, storytelling, and regional collaboration.

Emerging Directions

Building on previous Regional Consultations at the Blue Talks: From Riyadh to Nice in February 2025, the MENA Blue Finance Leadership Think Tank at the Blue Economy and Finance Forum, and the MENA Policy Roundtable at UNOC3 in June 2025, this gathering witnessed the room grow in size and representation with over 40 participants, demonstrating growing commitment to advance collaborative ocean stewardship across the MENA seascapes. Discussions converged on several areas of collective focus to guide the next phase of regional cooperation:

- A **regional ocean governance framework** anchored in strong local-to-regional partnerships to align policies, strategies, and resources across seascapes and enable coherent, transboundary action.
- An **ocean science hub** and **enhanced science diplomacy** to harmonise methodologies, promote open data sharing, and inform evidence-based policy and practice.

- Integrating **economic development and ecological protection**, to link conservation outcomes with value creation and mobilise innovative financing for long-term ocean recovery.
- **Inclusive stewardship** that centres local knowledge, civil society, the private sector, and youth, ensuring outcomes that are equitable, resonant, and sustainable.

Key Speakers

H.E. Hiba Al Shehhi — Acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Biodiversity and Marine Life Sector, UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment

H.E. Ahmed Alhashmi — Executive Director, Terrestrial and Marine Biodiversity Sector, Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD)

H.R.H. Prince Sultan bin Fahd bin Salman Al Saud — Chairman, Saudi Water Sports and Diving Federation (SWSDF)

Maher Mahjoub — Director, IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN-Med)

Dr. Filippo Carli — Senior Project Coordinator, IUCN Regional Office for West Asia (IUCN ROWA)

Ashok Adicéam — Managing Director, Neptune Mission, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Government of France

Tatiana Antonelli Abella — Founder and Managing Director, Goumbook; Chair, MENA Oceans Initiative

Facilitators

Prof. Ameer A. Eweida — Executive Committee Member, IUCN WCPA; Advisor, MENA Oceans Initiative

Anuradha Bhattacharya — Director, MENA Oceans Initiative, Goumbook



L-R: H.E. Hiba Al Shehhi, H.E. Ahmed Alhashmi, H.R.H. Prince Sultan bin Fahd bin Salman Al Saud, and Ashok Adicéam



The Regenerative Fisheries Majlis - UAE Edit

9 October, 14:00 - 15:30

In the presence of **H.E. Dr. Amna bint Abdullah Al Dahak**, Minister of Climate Change and Environment, the Regenerative Fisheries Majlis – UAE Edit was held on the sidelines of the first day of the IUCN WCC 2025, as part of the MENA Oceans Summit 2025.

The session was organised and attended by the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD), Goumbook, and Seafood Souq LLC, facilitated by **H.E. Sheikh Fahim Sultan al Qasimi**, co-founder and co-CEO of Seafood Souq, with the participation of a number of fishermen, fishermen's associations in the UAE, representatives from local environmental authorities, and academic institutions.

During the council, participants discussed topics including the **future of fisheries**, exploring **new avenues for partnership including engagement of the private sector**, and **developing innovative policies that place community priorities at the heart of decision-making**, contributing to a sustainable economy and the protection of the nation's natural resources.



H.E. Dr. Amna bint Abdullah Al Dahak, H.E. Sheikh Fahim Al Qasimi, and H.E. Ahmed Alhashmi at the Regenerative Fisheries Majlis



MENA Oceans Deep Dive Session: Marine Protected Areas

9 October, 16:00 - 17:30

This Deepdive Session laid the foundations of a multidisciplinary technical Working Group on MENA Marine Protected Areas (MPA) under the MENA Oceans Network, in partnership with IUCN WCPA. Given the global commitment, utility, but underrepresentation of MPAs in MENA, the Technical Working Group was identified as critically necessary to accelerate progress and enhance the development and effectiveness of Marine Protected and Managed Areas in the region.

Key Themes and Emerging Directions

- Mapping **regional conservation priorities and biodiversity hotspots**;
- Developing approaches for **resilience-based management and restoration**;
- The need for improved **monitoring and socio-economic assessments**, and
- The importance of **capacity-building strategies for long-term management and stewardship**

Participants agreed that next steps would include finalising the programme of work and terms of reference for the Working Group, and engaging all representative stakeholder groups to identify priority projects.

By connecting science, governance, and practice, the Working Group will enable a unified, evidence-driven approach to accelerate progress toward the global 30x30 targets, ensuring the MENA region's diverse seascapes are effectively represented in global conservation efforts.

Key Speakers

Mr. Obaid Alshamsi — Head of Marine Biodiversity Section, MOCCAE

Dr. Manal Nader — Associate Professor, University of Balamand

Dr. Giuseppe Di Carlo — Ocean Advisor, Dona Bertarelli Philanthropy

Dr. Filippo Carli — Senior Project Coordinator, IUCN Regional Office for West Asia

Facilitator

Prof. Ameer A. Eweida — Executive Committee Member, IUCN WCPA; Advisor, MENA Oceans Initiative



Participants at the MENA Marine Protected Areas Deep Dive Session

Panel Discussion and Interactive Session: Transitioning beyond decarbonisation to ocean health & biodiversity in the maritime sector

10 October, 10:30 - 12:00

This Panel Discussion and Interactive Session marked the announcement of Phase 2 of the MENA Maritime Programme, in partnership between the UN Climate High Level Champions, the Sustainable Shipping Initiative, the UN Foundation, and the MENA Oceans Initiative.

Using the Decarbonisation to Biodiversity and Ocean Health Roadmap developed by the Maritime Breakthrough, the session explored how the maritime and shipping sector can coordinate efforts across the value chain to integrate decarbonisation, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable governance to deliver a net-zero maritime future for the MENA region. As the Regional Engagement and Delivery Partner for the Maritime Breakthrough, the MENA Oceans Initiative aims to mobilise cross-sector coalitions to pilot nature-positive, low-carbon maritime solutions and support stakeholders in embedding biodiversity into maritime transition plans.

Key Themes and Emerging Directions

- Bridging **science and policy** to accurately reflect shipping's ecological impacts in national and regional maritime policies and decarbonisation strategies;
- Aligning **fragmented mandates** across shipping, ports, fisheries, and environment through unified frameworks like maritime spatial planning and joint decision-making bodies;
- Leveraging **corporate leadership and vessel design advances** to move from “less harmful” to “nature-positive” shipping, while scaling retrofits and next-gen technologies;
- Embedding **ecological corridors, marine protected areas, and sensitive zones** into shipping and port planning to safeguard megafauna and biodiversity, and
- Strengthening **partnerships between industry, science, and governments**, while building monitoring baselines and local stewardship capacity.

Key Speakers

Prof. Ameer A. Eweida — Executive Committee Member, IUCN WCPA; Advisor, MENA Oceans Initiative

Lisa Outtier — Chief Sustainability Officer, CMA-CGM

Ken FitzGerald — Board Chair & Principal, Glostén

Kilaparti Ramakrishna — Director, Marine Policy Center, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

Facilitator

Anuradha Bhattacharya — Director, MENA Oceans Initiative, Goumbook



Participants at the Panel Discussion and Interactive Session

MENA Oceans Deep Dive Session: MENA Desalination and Water Management Working Group

10 October, 14:00 - 15:30

This Deepdive Session convened a cross-sector group of experts and practitioners to unpack the ocean-related challenges of desalination and water management in the MENA region and chart a path toward sustainable, low-impact growth for the industry.

The session marked the inaugural meeting of the MENA Desalination and Water Management Working Group under the MENA Oceans Network, with Roland Berger as Knowledge Partner, laying the groundwork for an ongoing collaborative endeavour towards identifying sector baselines and needs, priority setting, and KPI design, translating insights into a blueprint for action.

An interactive discussion saw participants from EWEC, Metito Utilities, Xylem, MediSun Energy, Ayesa, NatureMetrics, WSP, Enviros Middle East, WSENSE, and more contributing perspectives, experiences, and insights from their work in the region and beyond.

Key Themes and Emerging Directions

- The urgent need for **robust data and evidence** to guide strategic action and policy planning;
- How **membrane technologies, energy recovery systems, and brine valorisation pilots** are reshaping the sector's carbon and brine footprint;
- Opportunities for demand-side **awareness and integrated water resource planning** to reduce over-reliance on desalinated water and improve circularity; and
- Aligning **technical innovation** across the desalination value chain with ecosystem protection and regional governance.

Brine Management and Plant Design were identified as potential workstreams for the Group, with Policy and Governance as cross-cutting enablers.

Key Speakers

Tatiana Antonelli Abella — Founder and Managing Director, Goumbook; Chair, MENA Oceans Initiative

Latifa Lahsine — Head of Desalination Center of Excellence, ENGIE AMEA

Daxita Rajcoomar — Chief Sustainability Officer, ENGIE AMEA

Facilitator

Ismail Alaoui Belghiti — Principal, Water, Roland Berger



Participants at the MENA Desalination and Water Management Working Group Deep Dive Session

MENA Oceans Deep Dive Session: MENA Regenerative Coastal Tourism

10 October, 16:00 - 17:30

Bringing together leaders from the hospitality sector, cruise operators, marine tourism innovators, regulators, NGOs, and research institutions, this Deep Dive Session explored pathways for a regenerative coastal and marine tourism sector across the MENA region.

A central exercise of the session involved defining what a regenerative coastal tourism sector would entail in practice. The discussion framed this transformation as one that requires businesses to comprehensively rethink operational models, stakeholder engagement, and the integration of nature-positive practices into decision-making.

Key Themes and Emerging Directions

- Exploring **current projects and emerging opportunities** in sustainable operations and infrastructure — across decarbonisation, circularity in water, energy, and waste systems, and nature-positive destination design;
- Enabling **ecosystem and community resilience** that integrates marine biodiversity protection, community benefits, and cultural preservation into tourism planning; and
- The need for **improved metrics, policy, and governance**, including establishing ESG-aligned sustainability indicators, certification pathways, and frameworks for cross-sector collaboration to strengthen and complement regulatory mandates.

Speakers highlighted the importance of mapping ecosystem and market opportunities, understanding sectoral impacts on the oceans, and aligning private-sector incentives with regenerative outcomes.

The session culminated with consensus on the need for continued collaboration through a dedicated **Working Group** under the MENA Oceans Network to co-develop Regenerative Ocean Health Standards for the tourism sector. This effort would aim to inform the Blue Economies for Coastal Resilience Outlook Report and the Coastal Tourism Breakthrough, advancing a region-wide transition toward a blue economy that sustains both nature and prosperity.

Key Speakers

Daniela Picco — Executive Director, MSC Foundation

Victor Galvan — Head of Nature-Based Solutions, Iberostar Group

Tatiana Antonelli Abella — Founder and Managing Director, Goumbook; Chair, MENA Oceans Initiative

Moderators

Prof. Ameer A. Eweida — Executive Committee Member, IUCN WCPA; Advisor, MENA Oceans Initiative

Anuradha Bhattacharya — Director, MENA Oceans Initiative, Goumbook



Participants at the MENA Regenerative Coastal Tourism Deep Dive Session

Panel Discussion:

Accelerating regional collaboration across the Arabian Sea, Arabian Gulf, Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea

10 October, 18:15 - 19:00

Building on the outcomes of the **MENA Oceans Summit 2025** and the **MENA High Level Regional Consultation: Governance and Policy**, this Panel Discussion at the IUCN Arabia Pavilion initiated a partnership framework, bringing together **IUCN Regional Office for West Asia**, **IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation**, and **IUCN World Commission for Protected Areas** with the MENA Oceans Initiative to unlock scientific advances and mobilise effective ocean governance for transformative conservation.

The discussion focused on key priorities, including expanding marine protected areas, enhancing regional frameworks for inclusive and nature-positive development, and supporting coastal communities in building resilience for people and planet.

Key Speakers

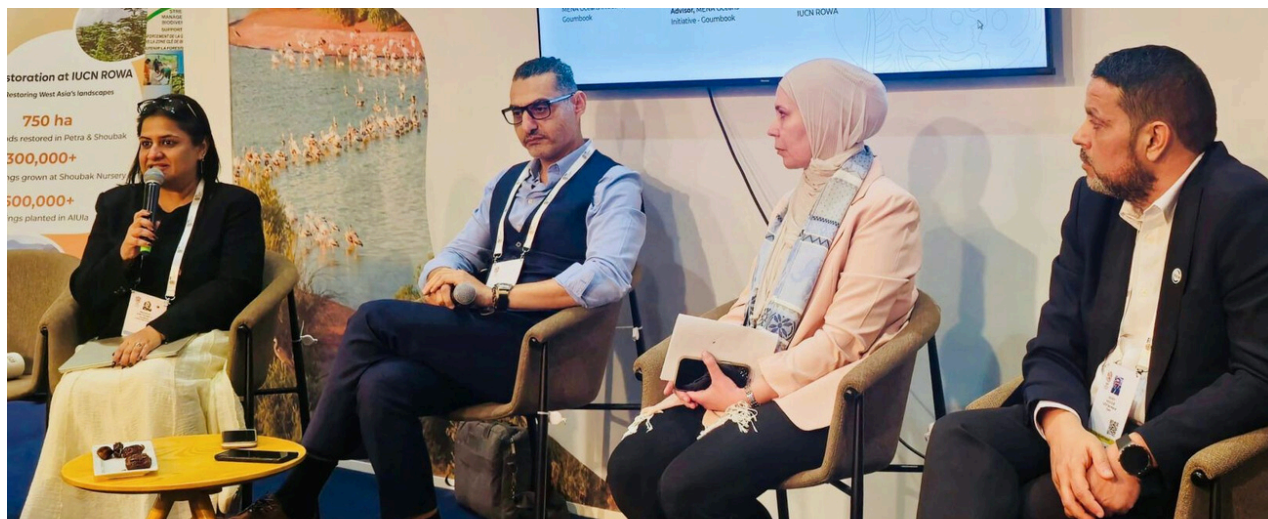
Maher Mahjoub — Director, IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation

Eng. Natalia Boulad — Protected Areas, World Heritage and Biodiversity Programme Manager, IUCN Regional Office for West Asia

Prof. Ameer A. Eweida — Executive Committee Member, IUCN WCPA; Advisor, MENA Oceans Initiative

Moderator

Anuradha Bhattacharya — Director, MENA Oceans Initiative, Goumbook



L-R: Anuradha Bhattacharya, Maher Mahjoub, Eng. Natalia Boulad, Prof. Ameer A. Eweida

MENA Oceans Deep Dive Session:

From Abu Dhabi to Belém: Mobilising the Ocean Breakthroughs through Ecosystem Connectivity in the MENA Region

11 October, 14:00 - 15:30

The capstone session of the MENA Oceans Summit 2025 spotlighted regional efforts to build the conservation project pipeline, mobilise finance, strengthen research and innovation, and embed ocean priorities into national and regional strategies, translating commitments into delivery.

The Deep Dive brought together an inspiring mix of global changemakers: leaders, innovators, and field experts, aiming to enable the acceleration of ocean protection to benefit both humanity and the planet, champion the **Marine Conservation Breakthroughs**, and showcasing how strategic alliances can turn vision into impact — for mangrove forests, coral reefs, and seagrass meadows.

Key Themes and Future Directions

- Linking the **Ocean Breakthroughs and Marrakech Partnership** outcomes to MENA-specific progress, challenges, and expectations ahead of COP30
- **Integration of marine and coastal ecosystems into industry and policy planning**, ensuring decarbonisation and restoration efforts do not compromise biodiversity, and engaging cross-sector stakeholders to align efforts and mobilise collaboration.
- **Identifying and scaling conservation projects**, innovation, and research capacity, integrating initiatives into national NDCs, and mobilising funding.
- Translating insights and initiatives into coordinated, **actionable strategies for a regenerative ocean plan** and strengthened regional participation in global ocean governance.



Participants at the From Abu Dhabi to Belém: Mobilising the Ocean Breakthroughs through Ecosystem Connectivity in the MENA Region Deep Dive Session

Passing of the Nature's Baton

During the session, **H.E. Dr. Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri**, Secretary General, Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, IUCN Councillor for West Asia and Vice Chair of the Global Council on SDG14 ceremonially handed over the Nature's Baton to **Loreley Picourt**, Secretary General of the Ocean and Climate Platform, symbolising the transfer of leadership and shared commitment from the MENA region to the global community, marking the next step on the road to COP30 in Belém and our collective journey toward ocean regeneration.

This Deep Dive also served as a continuation of **The Ocean Relay: From Nice to Abu Dhabi** by the MENA Oceans Initiative at the Third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3) 2025, where The Ocean Race Chairman **Richard Brisius** first entrusted the baton to Her Excellency.

Middle East Mangrove Knowledge Hub

The session also announced the launch of an initiative aimed at bringing together partners and knowledge required for the development of a **Middle East Mangrove Knowledge Hub**, by the MENA Oceans Initiative by Goumbook, in partnership with **HSBC** and Advising Partner – **Wetlands International**.

The initiative will engage stakeholders across eight countries to contextualise global best practices in mangrove restoration and lay the foundations for a Regional Mangrove Capacity Development and Learning Strategy to deliver on the Mangrove Breakthrough.

As members of the **Global Mangrove Alliance (GMA)**, we recognise mangroves as a critical nature-based solution to climate change, vital to halting deforestation, restoring lost habitats, and doubling protection efforts.

The session concluded the MENA Oceans Summit by underscoring the importance of strategic collaboration, science-driven methodologies, and harmonised global frameworks in advancing conservation and regeneration across the region's coastal and marine ecosystems.

Facilitators

Thomas Sberna — Ocean Lead, UN Climate High Level Champions; Regional Head - Coastal and Ocean Resilience, IUCN

Anuradha Bhattacharya — Director, MENA Oceans Initiative, Goumbook



L-R: Tatiana Antonelli Abella, Loreley Picourt, H.E. Dr. Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri

MENA Oceans Initiative: Participation within the IUCN WCC 2025

**Panels & Talks Hosted by
Partners and Network Members**

Panel Discussion: Nature Investment Opportunities for the Private Sector

10 October

At a panel discussion hosted by **First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB)**, Tatiana Antonelli Abella joined panellists Vriko Yu (Archireef), and Ayasha Alghas (FAB), and moderator Dean Muruven (BCG), to explore how the private sector can accelerate nature-positive investments.

Key Themes

- **Embedding nature in decisions** via a shift from treating nature as an externality to integrating natural capital into core finance & risk;
- **Science-based integrity** whereby “nature-positive/ net gain” claims must rest on metrics, baselines, and independent validation;
- **Setting clear rules, incentives, and disclosure standards** to unlock collaboration and private finance, and
- **Recognising first-mover opportunities** that lie in restorative and regenerative projects beyond the footprint, and building shared ecological resilience.



Panel Discussion: Regional Collaboration on Seagrass

11 October

Yas SeaWorld Research and Rescue Centre and **Al Ain Zoo** hosted a panel on Regional Collaboration for Seagrass Conservation, where Tatiana Antonelli Abella joined Dr. Abdelmenam Mohamed (Convention for Migratory Species Dugong MoU), Dr. Manh Hung Nguyen (Yas SeaWorld Research and Rescue Centre), Noura Al-Mansoori (Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi), and Dr. Eman Sabbagh (National Centre for Wildlife, KSA) .

The session spotlighted joint regional efforts to protect and restore seagrass meadows, the importance of seagrasses as vital marine habitats, their role in carbon sequestration, and the conservation of species like dugongs and sea turtles that depend on them.

Discussions underscored the importance of strengthening research collaboration, policy coherence, and restoration initiatives to safeguard these ecosystems across the MENA region's interconnected seas.



Panel Discussion: From exploration to stewardship: can seamount exploration balance the blue economy and deep-sea protection?

11 October

This session hosted by **Ocean Quest** convened a panel of leading experts to examine how ocean financing, governance, and exploration can transition from extractive and destructive practices toward a precautionary, ecosystem-based blue economy and scientific discovery. Co-moderated by Anuradha Bhattacharya, **the discussion offered valuable insights into current market opportunities, research priorities, scientific gaps, and policy frameworks guiding the protection of vulnerable deep-sea seamount ecosystems.**

Key Themes

- The unique **ecological importance and fragility of seamount ecosystems**, highlighting the risks of irreversible impacts from poorly governed exploitation.
- Whether existing commercial activities on seamounts can evolve toward **sustainable practices** that coexist with, and contribute to, the protection of marine biodiversity.
- The **pathways and trade-offs** required to enable blue economy initiatives that foster innovation and economic growth while maintaining ecological integrity; and
- How **emerging blue economies** could enhance the perceived and tangible value of seamount ecosystems by transforming conservation imperatives into opportunities for sustainable economic development.



Launch: Dugong Assessment Report

12 October

The Global Assessment of Dugong Status and Conservation Needs Report 2025 was officially launched at a session organised by the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment in collaboration with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) at the UAE Pavilion.

Commissioned by CMS and prepared by James Cook University with support from Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi, **the report is the most comprehensive review to date of dugong populations, threats, and conservation priorities, synthesising contributions from 72 international experts and extensive field data.**

It was a proud moment to witness the launch of the report, a reflection of years of collaborative science and regional engagement. The findings, which identify the dugong as “vulnerable to extinction” with substantial regional variation, reinforce the urgent need to address habitat loss, pollution, fisheries interactions, vessel strikes, and climate pressures through cross-sectoral action, coordinated, science-led policy responses, and sustained investment across the species’ range.

The full report is available [HERE](#)





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