



INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE TO
COMBAT OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

2020



HIGHLIGHTS, IMPACT AND
PROGRESS REPORT

2020

A YEAR IN REVIEW

This year was different than expected. 2020 brought a steady stream of difficult and painful news, impacts to our collective global health and urgent discourse about systemic inequities facing our communities and civic life. Indeed, it was a profound year we experienced together.

While the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the delay of many pivotal ocean and climate convenings and benchmarks—otherwise impacting the “Ocean Super Year”—the commitment to action and progress was not diminished.

OA Alliance membership represents nearly 300 million people and 366,414 kilometers of coastline. At every level, OA Alliance members have continued to lead by raising ambition for climate action and promoting efforts that increase biodiversity, adaptive capacity and resilience.

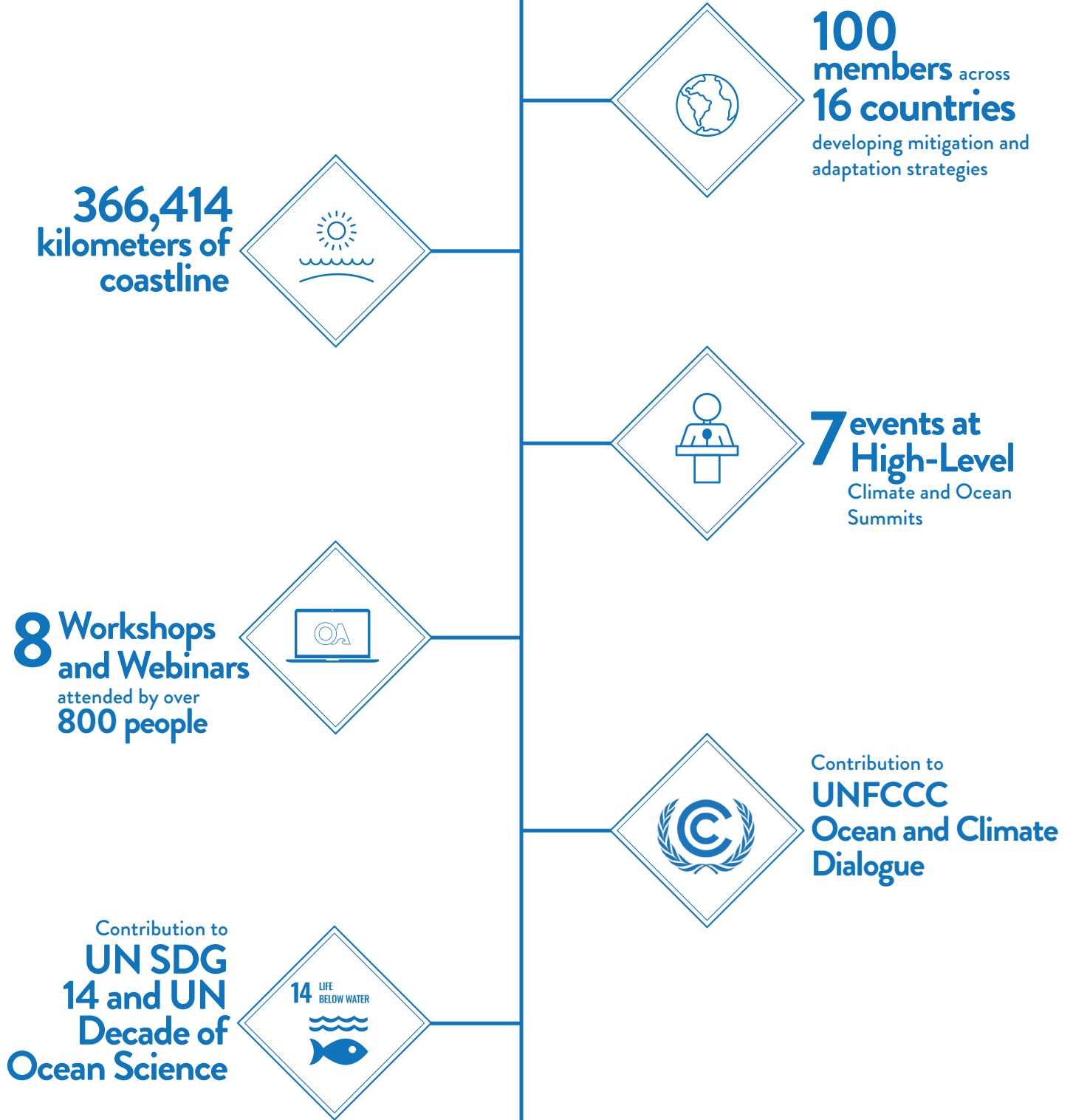
It has been inspiring to witness a sustained commitment to addressing the multiple and intersecting crises and opportunities facing our shared global community.

As governments and communities around the world are working to address the health, social justice and economic crises accelerated by the pandemic, it's more important than ever that climate and ocean action are understood as a critical part of immediate and long-term resiliency priorities.

In 2021, OA Alliance members will keep working to promote the suite of science and policy actions that will be needed to support food security and sovereignty, increase resilience of marine ecosystems and build a sustainable ocean economy in the face of future change.

Thank you for being part of such a wonderful community.

MAKING AN IMPACT





HIGHLIGHTS

- [OA Action Plans and Case Studies released](#), delivering on our [voluntary commitment #15195](#) to implement [UN Sustainable Development Goal 14](#). The OA Alliance remains an active member of the UN Community of Ocean Action relevant to implementing UN SDG 14.3, to minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification.
- Contributed input to the [UNFCCC Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue, 2020 UN Ocean Conference Declaration](#) and [UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development](#) ensuring that mitigation, adaptation, monitoring and vulnerability assessments are understood as critical for characterizing and responding to direct impacts of carbon dioxide emissions on ocean resources.
- Hosted, [“Keeping up Momentum for Ocean and Climate Action in 2020,”](#) with remarks and perspectives from: United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, the Honorable Peter Thomson.
- Hosted two side events at NYC Climate Week, [“U.S. States Leading on Climate and Ocean Action”](#) and [“Climate-Ocean Impacts to Food Security and Ocean Economies”](#) featuring 10 national and subnational leaders and partners. The events elevated themes of food security, risk assessment, and resiliency strategies being deployed by nations, states, Tribal governments and coordinating bodies like the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
- Members participated in seven high-level conferences including [World Economic Forum Virtual Dialogues](#), [UN World Ocean Day](#), [High-Level Political Forum \(HLPF\)](#) Under the Auspices of United Nations Economic and Social Council, [AGU Ocean Sciences Meeting](#), NYC [Climate Week](#) in coordination with the UN General Assembly, [UNFCCC Race to Zero Dialogues](#) and [UNFCCC Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue](#) describing the projects and investments that are helping governments increase resilience and deliver on high-level international climate and ocean commitments.
- 200 city partners participated in, [“Engaging Municipalities Ocean Acidification and Climate-Ocean Impacts, What Role Can Cities Play?”](#) workshop co-hosted with the Under2MOU. The workshop supported new OA Action Plan development and provided context for municipal and local-level efforts to address OA within existing climate policy.
- 100 scientists from Latin America, Africa, Europe, North America and the Pacific Region attended, [“Communicating Science OA to Policy Makers”](#) workshop co-hosted with The Ocean Foundation. The workshop focused the actions and investments needed to achieve UN SDG 14.3.1
- 10 U.S. states participated in a workshop to further advance U.S. state leadership to increase climate action and deploy monitoring, mitigation and regional adaptation strategies. These actions aim to protect economically, socially and culturally important ecosystems and species at risk from OA.
- Released 5 new communications products to support members and partners in [describing impacts of climate and ocean change](#) to human communities and [advancing action](#) within their own regions.



INTRODUCTION

THE OA ALLIANCE

The International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification (OA Alliance) brings together governments and organizations from across the globe dedicated to taking urgent action to protect coastal communities and livelihoods from the threat of ocean acidification and other climate- ocean impacts.

Together, OA Alliance members are:

1. Elevating urgency and ambition for climate action.
2. Integrating ocean into climate commitments.
3. Translating knowledge into policy actions.

This annual report details major accomplishments, actions and programmatic strategies that helped us deliver on our objectives and advance the mission of the OA Alliance in 2020.



The 2020 OA Alliance work plan outlined the following objectives:

1. Support the Development of OA Action Plans.
2. Elevate Ambition Across Climate Frameworks and Inspire Leadership at Ocean and Climate Events.
3. Improve Communications Efforts to Expand our Impact and Improve Information Sharing.
4. Increase Membership and Strategically Strengthen Partnerships.
5. Continue to Build OA Alliance Governance.

1

SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF OA ACTION PLANS

National, subnational, regional and tribal governments are proactively responding to the impacts of ocean acidification as they create OA Action Plans that effectively promote solutions and advance knowledge into action.

OA Action Plans describe real, tangible actions that members are taking— or will take—to better understand and respond to the threat of ocean acidification and other climate-ocean stressors and impacts.

The OA Alliance has created an Action Plan Toolkit for members to use as a guide. The Toolkit outlines options and examples from members across the following themes:

- Reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide emissions, the number one cause of ocean acidification
- Advance scientific understanding of climate-ocean impacts
- Reduce local pollutions that exacerbate ocean acidification
- Protect the environment and coastal communities from climate-ocean impacts
- Expand public awareness
- Sustain international and multi-governmental support for addressing this global problem

At the 2017 UN Ocean Conference to Implement Sustainable Development Goal 14, the OA Alliance registered [Voluntary Commitment \(#15195\)](#) to grow the coalition and support the creation of 15 OA Action Plans. We have delivered on that commitment.

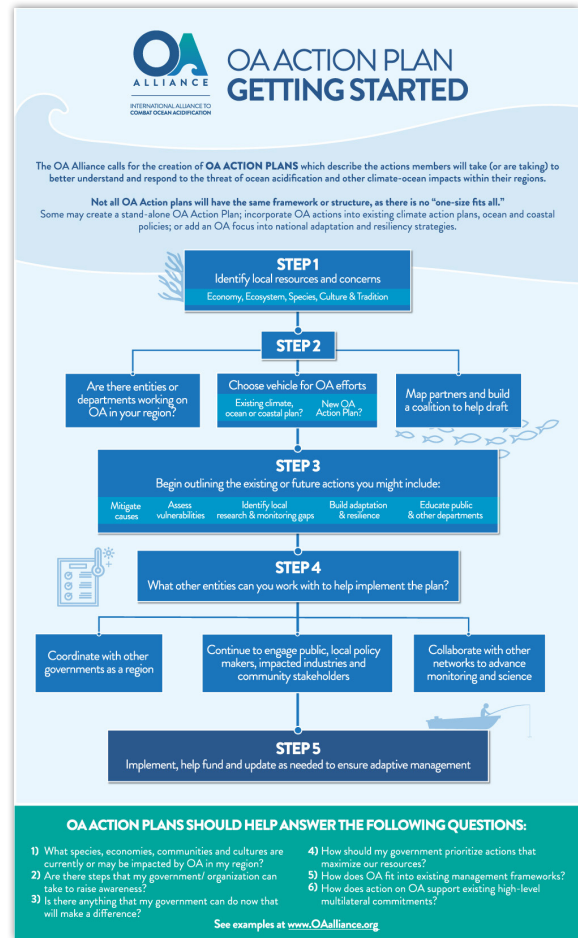
The Alliance has been a proud and active member within the Community of Action to Implement SDG 14.3 and remains committed to issuing new commitments to OA Action Plan development across the [UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda](#) and as part of the [UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development](#).



EFFORTS THAT SUPPORTED OA ACTION PLANNING IN 2020:



Re-release of [OA Action Plan Toolkit](#), which includes new examples and detailed actions from members across six thematic areas.

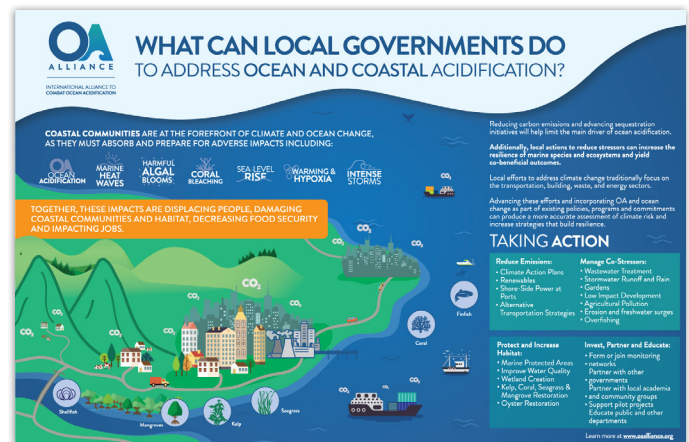


Developed and released, [“Getting Started”](#) infographic which guides members through a series of framing questions to help them develop an OA Action Plan that is unique to their specific government, region, concerns, capacities and goals.



[Download Case Study](#)

Released [eight OA Action Plans and five Case Studies](#) representing the work of national, state, tribal, city governments and affiliate members.



Developed and released [“What Can Local Governments do to Address OA?”](#) infographic for city partners their networks.

VIRTUAL EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS:

- [Hosted webinars](#), “Are we already seeing impacts of OA? Biological studies and research from around the world” on April 15 and “Mitigation and Building Resilience through Kelp and Seagrass” on May 14.
- Co-hosted webinar, [“Introduction to OA Action Planning”](#) for U.S. states alongside the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast Coastal Acidification Networks on April 22. The program included case studies from New York and Maine and provided examples of process, research and recommendations that are helping to guide OA Action Planning.
- Participated in two virtual workshops hosted by Hawai’i Department of Aquatic Resources and University of Hawai’i Manoa on April 16 and April 30 regarding the process for drafting a state-led OA Action Plan.
- Co-hosted [“Innovative Solutions to Address Impacts of Ocean Acidification”](#) alongside The Ocean Foundation and Peace Boat U.S. as part of UN World Ocean Day programming on June 11. The program focused on innovative and inclusive actions that are helping local communities and regions: develop predictive forecasting models and local monitoring that can inform adaptation responses; explore shellfish hatchery techniques; deploy nature-based solutions and submerged aquatic vegetation as a mitigation and adaptation tool; drive private and public collaborations that are helping to advance knowledge and priorities for action.
- Co-hosted, [“Engaging Municipalities on Ocean Acidification and Climate-Ocean Impacts”](#) alongside the Under2MOU on September 16. The workshop provided context for municipal and local-level efforts for addressing OA and discussed priorities for situating OA within existing climate policy and management frameworks.
- Hosted a virtual workshop for U.S. state members and partners of the OA Alliance on December 18. Program included presentations from the states of Oregon, Maryland, Hawai’i, New Jersey and Connecticut as well as updates from federal partners including NOAA Ocean Acidification Program and U.S. EPA Ocean and Coastal Acidification Research Program. Ocean Conservancy provided an overview of the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act of 2020.
- Convened, [“Regional Collaborations for Better Understanding and Addressing Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia within Management Frameworks along the West Coast,”](#) workshop on February 19 as part of the 2020 AGU Ocean Sciences Meeting. Participants included state policy and resource management leads from agencies as well as numerous scientists representing state and academic institutions along the West Coast.

2

ELEVATE AMBITION ACROSS CLIMATE FRAMEWORKS AND INSPIRE LEADERSHIP

Together, OA Alliance members are calling for emissions reductions alongside ocean mitigation and adaptation actions under international climate frameworks like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (UN SDG 13 and 14.)

National, subnational and tribal leaders are integrating ocean acidification and other ocean-climate impacts as part of their climate change commitments, policies and communications.

By integrating science, management and investments, members are demonstrating the types of comprehensive projects that are required to mitigate and adapt to ocean acidification. Members are delivering on the high-level commitments made through platforms like the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, UNFCCC, Convention on Biological Biodiversity, Our Ocean Conferences, and other platforms.

EFFORTS THAT INCREASED AMBITION AND ELEVATED THE OCEAN CLIMATE NEXUS IN 2020:

- Hosted, [“Keeping up Momentum for Ocean and Climate Action in 2020.”](#) on May 27. The event included remarks and perspectives from: United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, the Honorable Peter Thomson; and representatives to the World Economic Forum Virtual Ocean Dialogues, 2020 UN World Ocean Day, UNFCCC Ocean and Climate Dialogue, and UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.



- Programmed [Ocean Acidification Deep Dive Panel](#) during the [World Economic Forum’s Virtual Ocean Dialogues](#) on June 4. The conference drew over 1,300 participants from more than 90 different countries and was designed to maintain momentum for ambitious and urgent global action for a healthy ocean in the face of Covid-19. The OA program was co-hosted alongside Plymouth Marine Laboratory and UK Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs.

Program included:

- UK Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Chief Scientific Adviser Professor Gideon Henderson
 - Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Government of Chile, Minister Couve
 - Office of Washington State Governor Jay Inslee, Senior Ocean Advisor, Jennifer Hennessey, USA Pacific Region
 - Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, Habitat Services Director, Fran Wilshusen
 - Mook Seafood Farms, Director of Research and Development, Dr. Meredith White, USA Atlantic Region
- Featured in, [“Developing capacity to address ocean acidification for a sustainable ocean future,”](#) held on July 8 as part of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2020 Under the Auspices of United Nations Economic and Social Council. The event focused on efforts to achieve SDG target 14.3 to minimize impacts of ocean acidification, warming and deoxygenation.
- Hosted two events during [NYC Climate Week](#) which took place from September 21-27, in coordination with the United Nations General Assembly and the City of New York.



[“U.S. States Leading on Climate and Ocean](#)

[Action”](#) took place on September 23 and was co-convened by the Ocean Conservancy. The event called for increased urgency for climate action alongside efforts that increase biodiversity, adaptive capacity and resiliency of coastal communities.

Program included:

- Governor Jay Inslee (WA)
- U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (RI)
- U.S. Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici (OR)
- Maryland Department of Environment, Secretary Ben Grumbles
- California Natural Resources Agency, Secretary Wade Crowfoot
- Maine Department of Environmental Protection
- Hawai’i Department of Lands and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatics



“[Climate-Ocean Impacts to Food Security and Ocean Economies](#)” took place on September 24 and was co-convened with partners Ocean Climate Platform and Because the Ocean Initiative. The event featured international bodies working to scale the science and suite of actions that will support food security and build a sustainable blue economy for the next several decades.

Program included:

- UN FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department
 - Pacific Community
 - Short Film: The Olympic Coast as a Sentinel – Tribal Communities at the Forefront of Ocean Change
 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chile
 - International Atomic Energy Agency- Ocean Acidification International Coordinating Centre
 - Ocean and Risk and Resilience Action Alliance
 - UNFCCC Secretariat
- Contributed [input](#) to the [UNFCCC Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue](#) held on December 2-3, 2020. The OA Alliance submission emphasized the unique role that ocean acidification knowledge and solutions play in outlining relevant ocean mitigation and adaptation strategies.
 - Contributed to the [2020 UN Ocean Conference Declaration Draft](#) and [Interactive Dialogue](#) related to ocean acidification, warming and deoxygenation. Inputs emphasized the need for: (1) greater ambition to reduce carbon dioxide emissions; (2) subnational and regional engagement; (3) acknowledgement of the threat that climate-related ocean changes pose to many cultural identities and traditions around the world; and (4) connecting emerging science to decision and policy makers. The UN Ocean Conference was scheduled for June 2-6 and was postponed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.



3

IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS TO EXPAND OUR IMPACT AND IMPROVE INFORMATION SHARING

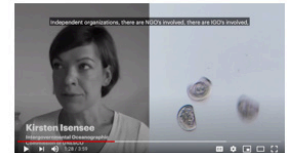
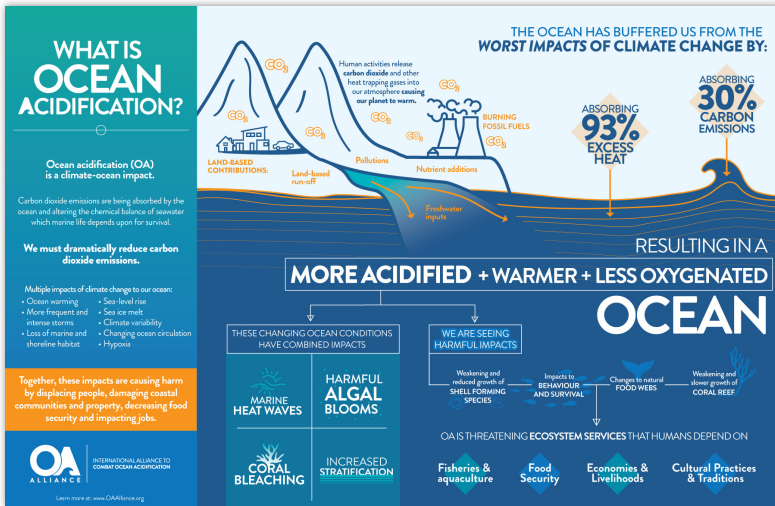
Strong communications strategies help further the mission and goals of the OA Alliance. Communications success is also critical for helping individual members leverage their work and leadership. In 2020, the OA Alliance increased a number of communications activities in order to help members showcase their ocean climate leadership, advance OA Action Plans, educate the public and policy makers about ocean acidification, and elevate ocean mitigation and adaptation within international climate agreements.

With support of a communications consultant, the OA Alliance facilitated an exercise to inventory communications objectives, key audiences, channels or platforms for communicating, and core messages.

EFFORTS THAT IMPROVED AND EXPANDED COMMUNICATIONS IN 2020:

- Developed and released [“What is OA?”](#) infographic which contextualizes how multiple impacts of climate change are threatening marine ecosystem services that humans depend on. The infographic has been utilized across our networks to help describe the relevance of ocean acidification to coastal communities, food security, jobs and livelihoods.
- Released [OA Alliance video](#) on UN World Ocean Day that describes our mission and impact. Produced for social media platforms, website and newsletter recipients.
- Featured in the short film, [“What is the Global Community Doing to Address Ocean Acidification?”](#) released by the International Atomic Energy Agency OA-International Coordinating Center in partnership with members of the global OA research community.
- Featured in Autumn 2020 publication [Journal of the National Association for Environmental Education](#), United Kingdom.
- Co-hosted, [“Communicating OA Science to Policy Makers”](#) workshop alongside The Ocean Foundation on October 20 and 21. The workshop drew over 100 scientists from around the world, including many who are active members of existing OA monitoring networks. It included best practices for communicating OA science to decision and policy makers, drawing upon lessons learned and experiences from national and subnational government members.
- Because of OA Alliance partnerships, the UNFCCC Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue played a short film [highlighting Native American tribes along the Pacific Coast of North America](#) who depend on treaty-protected marine resources and are already experiencing effects of OA, during the Dialogue proceedings on December 3.

- Rebranded the initiative by developing a new logo, color scheme, outreach materials translated into French and Spanish and other template designs.
- Increased presence on [Twitter](#) from 300 to 1000 followers. The OA Alliance continues to utilize Twitter for the purpose of raising the organization’s across partners including elected officials, policy makers, businesses and NGO’s.
- Launched communications survey to inform suite of products and strategies in 2021 including a website restructuring and design of social media and communications toolkit for members.
- Released 12 e-newsletters which help ensure that members and prospective members hear from the OA Alliance regularly, and are seeing examples of how effective the OA Alliance can be in addressing their own in-region concerns.



4

INCREASE MEMBERSHIP AND STRATEGICALLY STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS

Since its launch, the OA Alliance has prioritized collaboration with other international ocean leaders like Ocean Conservancy, The Ocean Foundation, Because the Ocean Initiative, Ocean and Climate Platform, Ocean Pathway Partnership, Friends of Ocean Action, Global Ocean Forum, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Communities of Ocean Action.

The OA Alliance has strengthened collaboration with international organizations working to increase scientific knowledge and capacity to measure ocean acidification and pH trends around the world including the International Atomic Energy Agency's Ocean Acidification International Coordination Centre (OA-ICC) and the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network (GOA-ON.) By continuing to advance and deepen these partnerships, the OA Alliance is better able to connect emergent science directly to decision makers and end users of information.

The OA Alliance has stived to increase partnerships with other climate leaders and initiatives including the Under2MOU, U.S. Climate Alliance, COP23, COP25 and COP26 Presidencies and UNFCCC Secretariat.

While 2020 included a specific focus on engaging city, port and local government partners, we have strategically identified and built relationships with partners and potential new members each month.

Due to the pandemic, the OA Alliance decided to pause recruitment, understanding that many governments are facing uncertainty across program operations and budgets. Despite a pause on recruitment, nine members joined the OA Alliance this year.

EFFORTS THAT INCREASED MEMBERSHIP AND STRENGTHENED PARTNERSHIPS IN 2020:

- Featured presenter during [“Friends of GOA-ON Panel”](#) convened as part of the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network's week of OA Action, which included participation from seven regional hubs around the world.
- Co-hosted events across a number of platforms with the following partners: Plymouth Marine Laboratory, The Ocean Foundation, Under2MOU, Peace Boat US, Ocean and Climate Platform, Because the Ocean Initiative and Ocean Conservancy.
- Developed new welcome packets for national, subnational and affiliate members; updated 2-pager for recruitment.
- Welcomed new members:
 - Coral Reef Alliance
 - Port of Seattle
 - German Ocean Foundation
 - Chile- California Council
 - NW Straits Commission
 - Oceanus Environmental
 - Sea Life Rescue
 - Sea Keepers Alliance

5

CONTINUE TO BUILD OA ALLIANCE GOVERNANCE

An Executive Committee comprised of 12 governments continued to guide OA Alliance growth, strategic direction, activities and outcomes.

The 2020 Executive Committee included representatives from New Zealand, Chile, United Kingdom, Fiji, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC), States of New York, California, Washington and Oregon and City of Vancouver in British Columbia, Canada.

Responsibilities of Executive Committee members include:

- Review and approve the annual work plan.
- Provide input on OA Alliance programming (webinars, trainings, meetings, tools and products) that advance the work plan.
- Represent the OA Alliance, and their government or affiliation's leadership, experience, and priorities at international meetings, workshops and other learning exchanges.
- Set the direction for OA Alliance activities at high-level international ocean and climate events such as, but not limited to UN SDG 14 Oceans Conference, Our Ocean Conference, UN Climate Week, UNFCCC COPs and others.

OA Alliance Secretariat:

The OA Alliance receives facilitation and project management support from Cascadia Policy Solutions, serving as the Secretariat. The Secretariat helps to carry-out the strategic direction of the initiative, develop annual programming, establish partnerships across a wide variety of disciplines and coalitions, and support members in the development of practicable and implementable adaptation and resiliency strategies. The Secretariat also manages day-to-day operations which include all interactions with members, communications, content creation and recruitment.



THANK YOU



The OA Alliance is grateful to so many who led the way this year.

Adapting to virtual formats, members of the OA Alliance continued to make an impact by increasing ambition for climate action and demonstrating mitigation and adaptation measures across climate, ocean and biodiversity agendas.

As the science, research and observed impacts of ocean acidification continue to grow, there is a continued need for increased knowledge exchange and expertise on the substance and process for developing local, regional and national responses in the face of cumulative ocean change.

A special thank you to the Rockefeller Brothers Fund for your partnership and support.

Finally, the success of the OA Alliance is brought about by the commitment of members. The OA Alliance's work would not be possible without the passion, expertise and commitment of all our members and partners.

Thank you to everyone who has lent time, expertise and energy to this initiative.

We look forward to continuing our work together in 2021 ensuring that climate and ocean commitments, policies and response strategies accurately reflect their interdependence. Indeed, our shared global recovery depends on it.



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