



#1st PURE OCEAN Summit – Thursday the 26th April 2018 – Brussels

Synthesis

Both workshops made clear a common desire from participants to see [Pure Ocean](#) foster cooperation between stakeholders of the field: for example, to develop awareness campaign on plastic pollution with fishermen or to mobilize the public and consumers with the industry to influence governments.

The workshops also allowed us to identify a strong will to see the development of new frameworks/tools for raising awareness and education of consumers and producers. On the contrary, discussions did not really focus on developing new technologies or on supporting innovative projects solely focused on technical aspects.

Participants also proposed during the two workshops to develop platforms dedicated to the inventory of best practices, expertise or experiments so that it would be possible to foster interactions between actors and knowledge management.

In both workshops, climate change was not a big topic of discussion. It could be a proof that there is a current lack of interest for the existing risks and the role of the industry in the fight against climate change. It might thus be another topic of interest for future action by [Pure Ocean](#).

At last, participants have underlined the fact that several initiatives dedicated to the protection of oceans and biodiversity already exist and that the Found should not hesitate to learn from those.

Proposed next steps

In future meetings and events, we strongly feel that [Pure Ocean](#) should try to answer the following questions with its partners and all actors of the field:

- What themes and cooperation schemes are possible between firms of the field to protect oceans and marine biodiversity?
- How can we have better cooperation between firms and NGOs working on protecting oceans and marine biodiversity?
- How can the actors of the field cooperate to have more influence towards the government and bureaucracy to improve sustainability?

We did not have time to delve into these issues as the workshops were less than 1-hour long. Answering these questions could be of help to identify projects well aligned with expectations from the actors of the field.

Workshop #1

facilitated by Valentin Desfontaines – Climates



Just as in the second workshop, our discussion started with naming what are the major issues for our oceans. The participants identified many of them such as: overfishing, plastic pollution, sea acidification, nitrate pollution, hydrocarbon extraction, invasive species increase and overconsumption. Even if many issues were named and because of the short timeframe we had, we mainly talked about two of these issues: plastic pollution and overfishing. To conclude, an important time of the workshop was used to discuss educative and awareness issues. This discussion was the occasion to brainstorm about new instruments enabling to better diffuse knowledge.

Concerning plastic pollutions, two major points were raised during our discussion. First, the participants considered it was dangerous to exclusively tackle plastic pollutions issues by developing cleaning technologies. According to them, these cleaning technologies contribute to spread the idea that people can keep wasting because there are solutions existing to free the oceans from plastics. Several participants also proposed to include more the fishing industry. According to them, it would be an efficient way to improve the image of the industry. To do so, campaigns strengthening the impact of plastic pollution on fishing could be created, the creation of a label highlighting what fishermen are doing to tackle plastic waste was also proposed. These propositions illustrate well the participants wish to see more and more initiatives gathering all stakeholders: from fishermen to NGOs or scientists ...

About overfishing, the participants emphasized the importance of a better regulation to manage fishing stocks and to fight against illegal fisheries. The participants also insisted on the role that marine protected areas must play. It was also proposed to create a scientific mediation document that would detail the state of fishing stocks in the world to better raise awareness. To conclude, the participants gave the example of the *World Ocean Council* which is a platform gathering industries that want to act for ocean protection. This platform could be taken as an example for *Pure Ocean* future initiatives.

Our workshop was not long enough to discuss in detail the many solutions proposed by the participants. However more than research and innovation, participants emphasized the importance of education, awareness and knowledge sharing. It was said that a lot of initiatives to protect our oceans do already exist but there are often unknown. As an answer to that observation, it was proposed to create a platform gathering all these initiatives. Such a platform could permit to reuse the best practices and to multiply their impact. It would also be a good opportunity to improve interactions between the stakeholders and to better found these best initiatives. The *Volunteer commitment agenda 2030* platform was given as a source of inspiration to create this useful and unique platform.

As it was largely discussed, the development of innovative instruments for education and awareness seems to be one of the major expectation of the workshop participants.

Workshop #2

facilitated by Sami Cheikh Moussa – Place to B



The workshop began with a reminder by participants of the specific threats to marine biodiversity. Ocean acidification, plastic pollution, pollution produced by shipping, overexploitation and trashing were quickly named while climate change seemed less identified by representatives of the industries. There was no identification of the threats of invasion by nonnative species or destruction of the habitats, showing that there is room for improvement in the knowledge of actors about those important threats.

The participants took also time to discuss what they saw as some relevant causes of these threats. Among them, the lack of awareness at all levels was recognized by many. Whether citizens, governments or even NGOs, they are seen as lacking understanding of the mechanism and impacts of the fishing industry. Another cause that was identified was the difficulty to find an equilibrium between what we need (to feed, to make a living, to maintain our way of life or traditions) and what we can use (without threatening oceans and marine biodiversity).

The consequences of an endangerment of marine biodiversity to human societies are pretty well identified: food safety risks, bad use and bad quality of resources, insufficient food for humans and animals, disturbance of the global food chain. Also, it seems all consider the extinction of some species, not only concerning fish stocks but also as loss of biodiversity, as a loss for our societies having direct effect on humanity. People from the industry are aware of the potential loss it would represent even if it didn't threaten directly their business.

One of the main topic of discussion was the difficulty for all actors to understand all the links between their actions and the different impacts on marine biodiversity. Whether you are a consumer buying one product or another, or a fisherman having to decide what technology to use or even the government when implementing new regulation. Therefore, participants recognized the importance of creating new coalition with different actors within and orienting more money into research, especially to develop now technologies aimed at conservation and sustainability and not only at increasing production. It was also recognized that there was a strong need of promoting local solutions with a lack of a platform dedicated to diffusion of local techniques, expertise and experiments.

Concerning the obstacles encountered by actors, there was a long discussion around the difficulty to inform and teach consumers. Consumers are the most powerful as their consumption define the market and the practices of producers. But as we live in a "convenience culture", actors observe a real lack of understanding and awareness among consumers. This state of the market is one of the major obstacles to increased sustainability and support for responsible actors. If the long-term strategy is of course to create a sensible consumer, it seems that for the short term there is a strong need of products with a story that would be able to differentiate themselves in front of the consumers.

For several participants, it must be noted that government and bureaucracy especially are seen as potential obstacles to change and sustainability. They found it difficult to collaborate and negotiate with the administration in charge, even when they have projects to increase sustainability or to produce better crafted information for the consumers. In Europe for

example, the formatting of consumer information is felt as at the same time too stringent and not useful for most actors and especially the consumers. They felt in short terms that traceability was going too far from what would be expected.

Therefore, the participants were interested in future schemes that would enable leveraging the public opinion for more sustainability in the industry and in regulation. They felt that such dynamics will be necessary if responsible actors want to spread their practices and overcome possible opposition from the government or the administration in charge. Without schemes able to foster support from all stakeholders and especially the consumers, protecting marine biodiversity will remain a futile hope.