

NEWSLETTER

#2 December 2024 - March 2025



Continuing the national workshops series

Workshop on awareness raising and stakeholder engagement for the reduction of URN

Cape Town,
South Africa
29 January 2025

The South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA), in partnership with the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloNoise Partnership, hosted and jointly delivered a workshop addressing the issue of URN and highlighting its significant impacts on marine biodiversity. The event also showcased regional efforts to protect large marine ecosystems. The workshop was attended by 167 participants both in person and online from twenty-one countries, including Angola, Cabo Verde, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Togo and Zambia. Notably, representation of women was 41%, reflecting a commitment to gender inclusivity in marine governance. The key takeaways of the workshop will be submitted to the Technical Cooperation Committee of IMO for future partnerships and resource mobilization.

During the workshop, Deputy Minister of Transport Mr. Mkhuleko Hlengwa delivered a compelling message that resonated deeply with all attendees. It was a clear call to action: now is the time to seize the moment, embrace innovation, strengthen collaboration, and renew our commitment to the sustainable management of our oceans. He also reiterated the IMO's 2025 theme: "Our Ocean, Our Obligation, Our Opportunity."

This message aligns strongly with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reminding us that protecting our oceans isn't just an obligation—it's an incredible opportunity for a better future.



Photo: Speech by Deputy Minister of Transport, Mr. Mkhuleko Hlengwa
'Our Ocean, Our Obligation, Our Opportunity' is the IMO's World Maritime Day theme for 2025, which will culminate in the celebration of World Maritime Day on 25 September 2025.



The SAMSA Board Chairperson, Mr. Mahesh Fakir, SAMSA Acting CEO, Ms. Mbalenhle Golding and The Deputy Director-General (DDG) for the Maritime Branch at the Department of Transport, Mr Mthunzi Madiya.

Next national workshops

Trinidad and Tobago

29 April 2025

Costa Rica

02 May 2025



Did you know?

The GloNoise Project is actively advancing women's empowerment through the development of a Learning Exchange Programme (LEP) with the generous co-financing of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, designed to pair women professionals in the Lead Pilot Countries (LPCs) with the organisations advanced on URN for the sharing and exchange of knowledge. This initiative supports the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5, which is dedicated to achieving gender equality and empowering women.



Discussions at SDC 11 focus on tackling URN

GEF-UNDP-IMO GloNoise Partnership presented an update at the 11th session of the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Construction (SDC11) of the IMO, held from 13-17 January 2025. The update covered the project's progress and developments in addressing URN in the shipping industry, as well as how the project contributes to the URN Action Plan.

While challenges remain, the commitment to a quieter, more sustainable shipping industry is stronger than ever. With the Experience Building Phase (EBP) now halfway completed, it is considered important to intensify efforts on URN. A Correspondence Group has been established to facilitate the EBP for the reduction of URN. The deep-dive session on URN has sparked global attention, highlighting the urgent need for international collaboration, and the Member States have expressed their support for the project.



GloNoise Partnership in the Polar Seminar

IMO, in collaboration with Norway's Chairship of the Arctic Council and the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Working Group (PAME) of the Arctic Council, organized the Polar Seminar on 23-24 January 2025 at IMO Headquarters in London.

The GloNoise Partnership was presented during Session 6, which focused on URN discussions, offering a valuable opportunity to stay informed about the latest developments in the polar regions and explore potential synergies. Preliminary findings from the GloNoise study on URN policy gaps were disclosed, with a particular focus on the Polar Code.



TNFD deep dive session on URN

Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) organized online a successful deep dive session on URN on 10 December 2024, shedding light on its impacts on marine life and best practices for mitigation. Speakers, including Nicholas Macfarlane from IUCN, Leila Hatch from NOAA, and Sevtap Ozdogan from GEF-UNDP-IMO GloNoise Partnership, delivered compelling presentations. The session emphasized the importance of URN reduction strategies within the shipping industry to safeguard marine species.

Discussions also centred around refining metrics for tracking noise pollution in the maritime sector, with a focus on developing actionable targets for noise reduction. As the working group moves forward, valuable feedback from participants will shape future TNFD Maritime Transportation guidance.

ECOSOC
Partnership
Forum

**PARTNERSHIP
SNAPSHOT**

FEBRUARY 2025

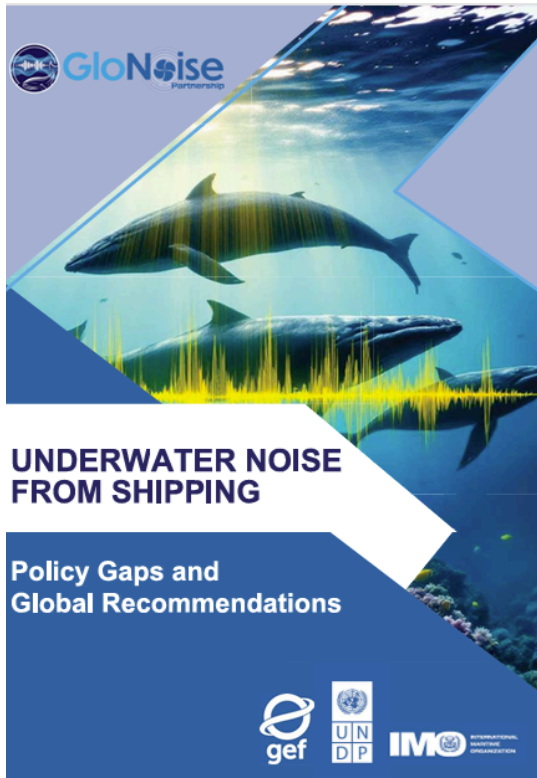
United Nations
Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

This inclusion is based on a careful examination of Partnership-related Voluntary Commitments submitted within the framework of the UN Ocean Conferences. The health of our oceans is critical to achieving sustainable development, and this snapshot highlights how collaborative efforts are driving real progress toward the 2030 Agenda.

The Partnership will also be included in the Forum Impact Report to be published by UN DESA as a successful SDG 14-related partnership.

The URN online toolkit, is designed to enhance global capacities for assessing and mitigating the impacts of URN from shipping. This tool will incorporate a step-by-step framework to guide baseline analyses, environmental risk assessments, and policy formulation. Structured into Basic and Advanced Modules, the toolkit will be accessible to a wide range of users, offering an easy-to-use online platform with interactive components including learning modules.

Underwater Noise from Shipping: Policy Gaps and Global Recommendations completed



Detailed gap analysis was conducted analysing current global, regional and national policies, guidelines and standards associated with mitigation of URN from shipping and proposed recommendations for global policy options in consistency with UNDP social and environmental standards in December 2024.

To this end, all global treaties including all relevant IMO instruments and UN conventions and agreements e.g. UNCLOS, BBNJ Agreement, UN Fish Stocks Agreement, Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species and regional treaties and some non-binding legal instruments applicable in Asian Seas, Atlantic, Baltic Sea, Black and Caspian Sea, Caribbean Sea, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, Pacific Ocean, Red Sea and Antarctic and Arctic Ocean were analysed thoroughly to diagnose the reference to URN and its introduction as pollution.

The study also includes a separate chapter for the LPCs and their national policy analysis. Based on this holistic and horizontal analysis, policy options were introduced for IMO instruments. Following its approval by the Project Board Members, it will be consolidated, released and presented in the upcoming IMO committee and sub-committee meetings. The study stands alone as a comprehensive analysis and tool both for the IMO Secretariat and the Member States by shedding light to future steps and also providing solid and wide-ranging “as is” case on the URN matter.

Contribution to IMO Committees – MEPC 83

Key takeaways of the IMO-WMU Workshop on URN Reduction Policies and Strategies with a Focus on Developing Countries has been submitted as a paper and contribution to the MEPC 83 and co-sponsored by Argentina, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Georgia, India, Madagascar, Malaysia, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, World Maritime University and GEF-UNDP-IMO GloNoise Partnership showcasing the priority of the project, translating discussions and engagements into concrete actions to inform the policy development.

The Committee is invited through the submission to become strategic partners to the project and provide in-kind and financial support for the ongoing work on reduction of URN; and supporting the efforts of IMO and sharing information and best practices through the experience-building phase (EBP) including contributions to the Correspondence Group on URN established at SDC 11 with the steps taken at national level in that regard.



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MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION
COMMITTEE
83rd session
Agenda item 9

MEPC 83/9
31 January 2025
Original: ENGLISH
Pre-session public release: ☒

EXPERIENCE-BUILDING PHASE FOR THE REDUCTION OF UNDERWATER RADIATED NOISE FROM SHIPPING

Key takeaways from IMO-WMU Workshop on Underwater Radiated Noise Reduction Policies and Strategies with a Focus on Developing Countries

Submitted by Argentina, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Georgia, India, Madagascar, Malaysia, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago and the Secretariat

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document provides information on the outcomes of the IMO-WMU Workshop on Underwater Radiated Noise (URN) Reduction Policies and Strategies with a Focus on Developing Countries, which took place in Malmö, Sweden, on 15 and 16 October 2024.

Strategic direction, if applicable: 1

Output: 1.16

Action to be taken: Paragraph 11

Related documents: MEPC 75/14/3 and MEPC 82/INF.9

Introduction

1 Underwater radiated noise (URN) from shipping and other marine activities has become a pressing concern for marine ecosystems worldwide, with adverse transboundary effects on marine biodiversity. URN causes significant disturbances to the behaviour, reproduction, navigation and communication of numerous marine species. Developing countries encounter distinct challenges in addressing URN, often influenced by factors, such as resource availability, levels of awareness, technical capacity, access to financial support and the lack of national and regional policy framework.

2 The Global Partnership for Mitigation of Underwater Noise from Shipping (GEF-UNDP-IMO GloNoise Partnership) project in collaboration with the World Maritime University (WMU), with support from the Schlüter Foundation delivered the Workshop on Underwater Radiated Noise (URN) Reduction Policies and Strategies with a Focus on Developing Countries from 15 to 16 October 2024, in Malmö, Sweden. The aim of the workshop was to raise awareness and foster dialogue on reduction of URN from shipping through linkages with regulatory organizations, industry, similar projects and developing countries. The workshop was attended by nearly 200 participants, 40% of whom were women, including representatives from the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloNoise Partnership countries

Regular Coordination Meetings on URN in Argentina



Argentina holds regular meetings with the members of the National Task Force from various stakeholders involved in the GloNoise project. The first coordination meeting delivered on 20 January 2025 focused on several key actions including sharing experience with the IMO based on any existing studies and feasibility assessment on the URN risk assessment studies to be conducted under the project. Furthermore, Cethus Foundation and other institutions presented studies on the impacts of URN on endangered cetaceans and monitoring studies in critical Patagonian marine areas.

National awareness raising efforts are also undertaken in coordination with line Ministries to update the country's actions regarding URN and support for the GloNoise Partnership as well as engagement of relevant stakeholders in the National Task Force.

Looking ahead, workshops are scheduled in May/June 2025 in Buenos Aires and Puerto Madryn in the second half the year to strengthen collaboration between involved agencies.



XIII Ibero-American Acoustic Congress - FIA 2024 Chile

Santiago hosted the XIII Ibero-American Acoustics Congress (FIA 2024) on 2-4 December 2024, bringing together international experts to discuss acoustic challenges where the Chilean Maritime Authority (DIRECTEMAR) provided a key contribution, as presented by Captain Manuel Fuenzalida on "URN from Shipping: Impacts on Biodiversity, International Guidelines, and the Chilean Case" sparking productive exchanges on mitigation strategies. Participation of DIRECTEMAR is a part of ongoing efforts in close collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment, to address marine noise pollution, contribute to the GEF UNDP IMO GloNoise Partnership.

First report on acoustic data from Chile

A report on the acoustic data collected from the Francisco Coloane Marine Protected Area (Chilean Patagonia) has been prepared with valuable insights into URN levels in the region. The study covers the period of May-September 2023 analysing both natural and human-generated sources of noise, including shipping activities and cetaceans.

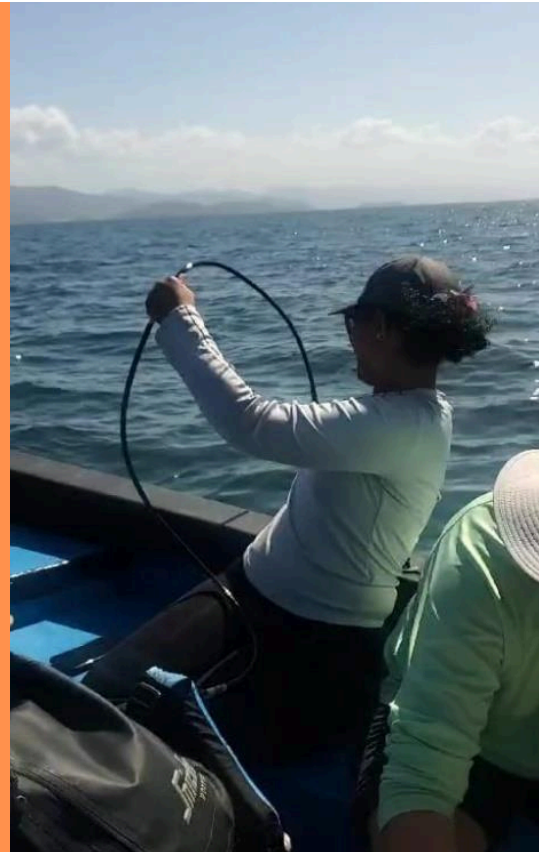
This report marks the first detailed analysis of acoustic monitoring in this area, offering a clear understanding of acoustic stationary patterns. The findings underscore the importance of acoustic monitoring for marine conservation, particularly in protected areas, and highlight the ongoing need for such efforts to protect marine ecosystems.

Recent Initiatives at Trinidad and Tobago

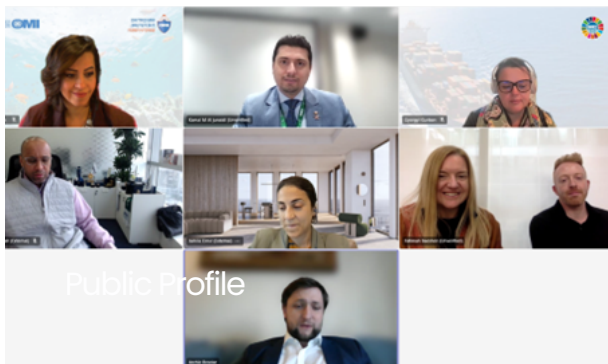
The University of Trinidad and Tobago is taking the initiatives towards capacity building for the acoustics monitoring by acquiring the technical equipment, e.g. five HydroMoth units combined with training in several software programs for sound analysis. Comparisons of four popular bioacoustics sound analysis tools are currently being tested. While the training is voluntary, the goal is to continue development of capacity in underwater soundscape analysis. As part of the educational initiatives, an interactive Kahoot game on underwater soundscapes was introduced at Presentation College, engaging students in marine conservation through fun, interactive learning.

In line with gender equality, three talented women are advancing research on acoustic communication, shipping noise, and cetacean acoustics. Data collection with the HydroMoths is launched in strategic sites along Trinidad's coast, marking an exciting step forward in marine research.

Stakeholder engagement is also ensured through conduct of a national and regional survey also raising awareness on URN.

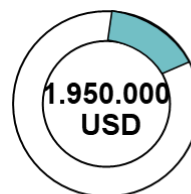


In the Meetings

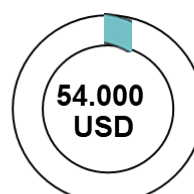


A series of meetings held with Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, exploring potential synergies and collaborations both in terms of the gender initiatives of the project and industry engagement into the global strategic partnership.

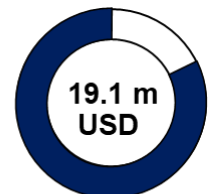
Current status of Global Strategic Partnership



GEF funds



Cash Support



Co-financing

