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WORKING PAPER

Our Ocean Conference Commitment Implementation Progress Update: 2025–2026

Alex Lee-Emery and Meaghan Cuddy

CONTENTS

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Highlights

- The ocean is essential to all life, regulating our climate and providing nutrition and livelihoods for billions of people. Yet it faces urgent challenges, including climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.
- The Our Ocean Conference (OOC) is a critical platform to generate international commitments to sustainable ocean action. Since 2014, the conference has generated 2,900 ambitious, concrete commitments from over 500 organizations in 96 countries. Collectively, these commitments are valued at US$169.2 billion in pledged funds.
- Building on the 10-year implementation assessment (Lee-Emery et al. 2025), this progress update reviews the annual implementation status of all OOC commitments. It assesses the extent to which OOC commitments to ocean action have been implemented with a focus on 2025–26 (Table ES-1), as well as the trends, successes, and gaps in implementation.
- Based on progress updates by countries and organizations as of May 1, 2026, 1,200 commitments have been reported complete (41 percent), 1,179 are in progress (41 percent), and 521 (18 percent) have not yet been started (Figure ES-1). This comprises $26.5 billion in delivered funds from completed commitments.
- Since 2025, 285 new commitments were made, 174 were started, and 70 were completed. This equates to an additional $2.7 billion delivered through completed commitments during this period.
- Future OOCs must go beyond mobilizing new commitments and increase the focus on accountability and implementation. Across the world, countries and organizations are making moderate but measurable progress toward their commitments; however, the ambition and urgency of implementation must ramp up if global ocean conservation goals are to be met by 2030.
- Building accountability and transparency in the commitments process, accelerating implementation of existing commitments, elevating examples of best practice and ocean leadership, and addressing regional and thematic gaps (particularly in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean regions) should be a priority for partner countries, organizations, and the Our Ocean Conference going forward.

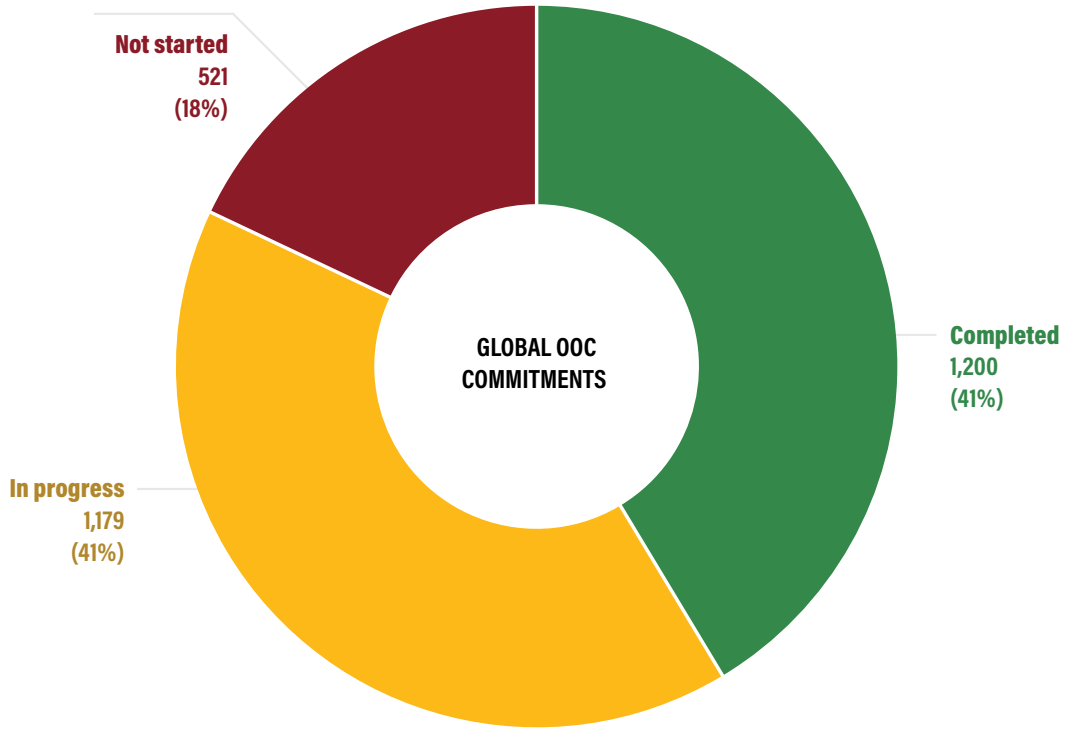
Executive summary

Table ES-1 | **OOC commitment implementation dashboard**

ACTION AREA	2025-2026	2014-2026				
	New commitments	Total commitments	Completed commitments		Pledged finance (US$, billions)	Delivered finance (US$, billions)
			#	%		
Ocean-climate nexus	62	542	196	36	87.7	8.9
Marine pollution	43	550	219	40	17.4	3.4
Marine protected area	48	530	237	45	6.8	0.9
Sustainable fisheries	53	510	242	47	9.5	3.1
Sustainable blue economy	60	534	200	37	38.9	7.9
Maritime security	19	234	106	45	8.9	2.4
Total	**285**	**2,900**	**1,200**	**41**	**169.2**	**26.5**

Note: Commitments are assigned to the six thematic action areas by countries and organizations at the point of submission in the online platform.
Source: WRI authors.

Figure ES-1 | **Global OOC commitment implementation progress**



Note: Implementation status data are aggregated from the Our Ocean Conference online commitment platform. This monitors global commitment implementation based on self-reported progress updates by countries and organizations.
Source: WRI authors.

Introduction

The ocean sustains billions of people, regulates the climate, and underpins global biodiversity. Yet it is under mounting pressure from climate change, overexploitation of marine and coastal resources, and pollution (IOC-UNESCO 2024). Global, regional, and national ocean governance to address these complex challenges has historically been fragmented. Ocean finance and investment, in particular, remains under-resourced and underallocated (Thiele et al. 2025).

The Our Ocean Conference (OOC) was founded in 2014 to help meet this challenge. The conference brings together governments, private sector, civil society, academia, and coastal communities to generate ambitious commitments to sustainably manage, restore, and conserve the ocean. Commitments and investment pledges are mobilized across six OOC action areas: the ocean-climate nexus, marine protected areas (MPAs), marine pollution, sustainable fisheries, the sustainable blue economy, and maritime security.

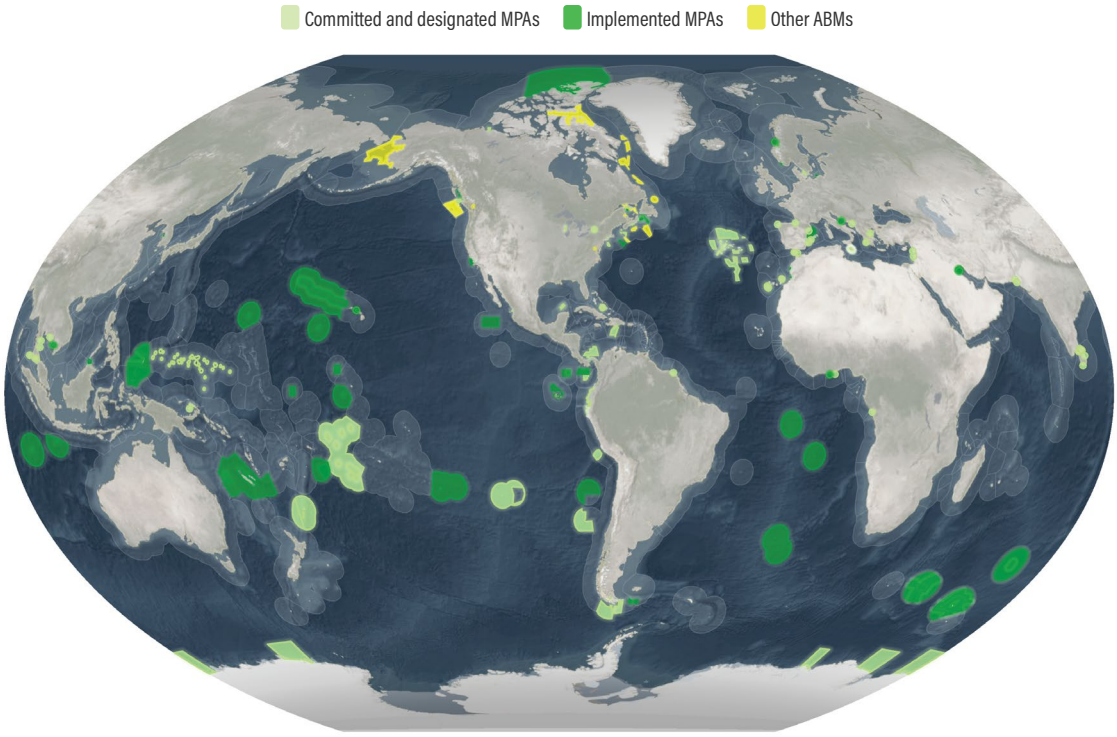
To assess the effectiveness of this platform in converting pledges into action, the OOC Secretariat delivered a progress stocktake of 2,600 commitments in 2025 (Lee-Emery et al. 2025). Authors found that 81 percent of commitments made between 2014 and 2024 were reported as "complete" or "in progress." Additionally, 2.4 percent of all MPAs have been announced through the OOC, equivalent to 8.7 million square kilometers (Figure 1) (Sullivan-Stack et al. 2025).

In April 2025, the 10th Our Ocean Conference (OOC10) mobilized 285 new commitments to ocean action, valued at more than US$9 billion (Table 1). Beyond OOC, 2025 was a critical year for the ocean, culminating in the ratification of several key treaties and raising the profile of ocean diplomacy worldwide (Box 1).

The opportunity for these ocean policy milestones to benefit people, nature, and climate is clear. However, tangible action and sustained finance is required if they are to fulfill their potential to drive change. Voluntary commitment platforms such as the OOC can play a key role in mobilizing and tracking investment and convening partners to drive the action needed to meet these ambitious goals. At the same time, the OOC provides a critical forum to report and elevate progress and strengthen accountability.

This update has been developed to assess the implementation progress of OOC commitments in 2025–26. This is the first in a series of regular reports aiming to increase transparency in the commitment-making process and to highlight examples of ocean leadership at all scales of governance.

Figure 1 | **Verified OOC MPA commitments**



Notes: ABM = area-based management; MPA = marine protected area.
Source: Sullivan-Stack et al. 2025.

Table 1 | **Sample commitment outcomes from OOC10 (2025)**

ACTION AREA	NEW COMMITMENTS
Climate change	• The government of Australia commits to invest $2 million in improving ecological conditions for giant kelp forests. • The government of Indonesia commits to create a national Blue Carbon Network and Database.
Marine pollution	• The European Union commits $20 million to develop a comprehensive European strategy to assess and monitor aquatic litter. • The government of Mexico launched the National Campaign for the Cleaning and Conservation of Beaches and Coasts.
Marine protected areas (MPAs)	• The Oceano Azul Foundation, Waitt Foundation and Waitt Institute, and the Blue Nature Alliance commit $104 million to implement the Blue Azores MPA network. • The government of Chile launches the BBNJ First Movers Initiative to create a portfolio of proposed high seas MPAs.
Sustainable fisheries	• The government of Japan commits to finance fishery research vessels in five countries across the Pacific region. • The government of Ecuador launches a program to assess and improve water quality standards for national bivalve farming.
Sustainable blue economy	• The Korea Ocean Business Corporation commits to invest over $4 billion in green shipping, ports, and logistics value chains. • The government of Norway commits $1.15 million to the International Oceanographic Commission and the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.
Maritime security	• WildAid Marine commits $1 million to develop scalable, accessible technologies to monitor fishing and improve surveillance by 2028. • The government of Korea announces $17.9 million to develop vessel situational management technologies based on artificial intelligence by 2030.

Notes: All dollars are in US dollars. BBNJ = Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.
Source: WRI authors.

Box 1 | **2025 was a critical year for the ocean**

In 2025, several key international ocean milestones were reached, while others require renewed focus, ambition, and action to become truly effective.

- **Entry into force of the High Seas Treaty.** The Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) reached the 60-country ratification threshold in September 2025 and entered into force in January 2026. This represents a critical pathway to achieve the global 30x30 goal and protect the high seas.
- **Entry into force of the World Trade Organization Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (Fish 1).** Following over 20 years of negotiations, this agreement puts in place measures to curb illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and fishing of overfished stocks, a practice estimated to cost US$22 billion globally per year.[a]
- **The third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3).** Hosted by the governments of France and Costa Rica in June 2025, UNOC3 resulted in the adoption of the Nice Ocean Action Plan and produced over 800 new voluntary commitments.[b]
- **International legally binding agreement on plastic pollution.** The fifth negotiation session held in August 2025 in Geneva ended with no outcome, and negotiations are expected to continue. A coordinated global response to plastic pollution is critical to securing the long-term health of the ocean.
- **Deep-sea mining.** International Seabed Authority member states continued negotiations to establish a mining code for deep-sea extraction but were unable to reach a consensus on provisions needed for commercial activities. Support for a moratorium on deep-sea mining from some states has grown, but others are showing increased interest in advancing both exploration and exploitation.
- **International Maritime Organization Net Zero Framework.** Despite approval of the first global shipping net zero framework in April 2025, countries voted to postpone adoption for one year, delaying action to limit emissions and adopt greenhouse gas pricing mechanisms.
- **Thirtieth Conference of the Parties (COP30) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).** The role of the ocean in climate action has been increasingly acknowledged in the UNFCCC. At COP30, a number of Parties included ocean-based mitigation and adaptation actions into their updated nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and national climate strategies. The Blue NDC Taskforce was established to bring together Parties seeking to accelerate the integration of ocean solutions in national climate plans.

Sources: a. Sumaila et al. 2019; b. United Nations 2025.

Methods

Analysis methodologies are adopted from the 10-year OOC study (see Lee-Emery et al. 2025). Commitment data was sourced from the OOC online commitment platform and exported on May 12, 2026. Implementation progress is categorized by platform users as "complete," "in progress," or "not started." Commitments were disaggregated by sector, region, and action areas. Data cleaning addressed inconsistencies in data and official reports, and all changes are tagged in the accompanying dataset to ensure transparency, accuracy, and comparability with previous assessments. Analysis excludes the 14 commitments made under the "Future Our Ocean Conferences" action area and removed three duplicate or withdrawn commitments from the January 2025 baseline data.

Limitations

Commitments are voluntary and progress is self-reported by commitment makers. While the rotating OOC host government and OOC Secretariat review all submissions to ensure quality, we are not able to independently verify all global commitment progress updates without additional resourcing. Therefore, our analysis is limited by the assumption that the ocean impact reported by countries and organizations is accurate.

Data collection is challenging due to the cross-sectoral and global scope of action and the large number and diversity of organizations and countries making commitments. While this captures a large proportion of global ocean action, these factors result in differing data quality, granularity, and reporting between ocean action areas, sectors, and regions. Results also show minor disparities between the reported number of progress updates and net changes across "in progress" and "complete" commitments from the baseline. This is because progress updates do not necessarily result in a change in a commitment implementation status, and a proportion of OOC10 commitments were already in implementation at the point of submission.

Results

As of May 2026, the OOC has mobilized 2,900 commitments for the ocean, valued at $169.2 billion. Approximately 1,200 commitments (41 percent) are complete, 1,179 (40 percent) are in progress, and 521 (18 percent) are not yet started. Global progress statistics, disaggregated by the six action areas, are presented in Table 2. Overall completion rates remain stable as countries and organizations actively implement their new pledges.

Since 2025, 151 commitments received a new progress update, 70 commitments were completed (Table 3), and 174 more are now in progress. At OOC10, climate change and the sustainable blue economy were the most active areas with 62 and 60 new commitments, respectively. Sustainable blue economy commitments mobilized the highest new financial pledge, totaling $6.1 billion. This was driven in part by a multibillion-dollar commitment by the Korea Ocean Business Corporation to invest across a range of maritime sectors, particularly shipping. The total numbers of commitments are fairly evenly distributed among OOC action areas (Figure 2), though maritime security remains the least active area with just 234 commitments.

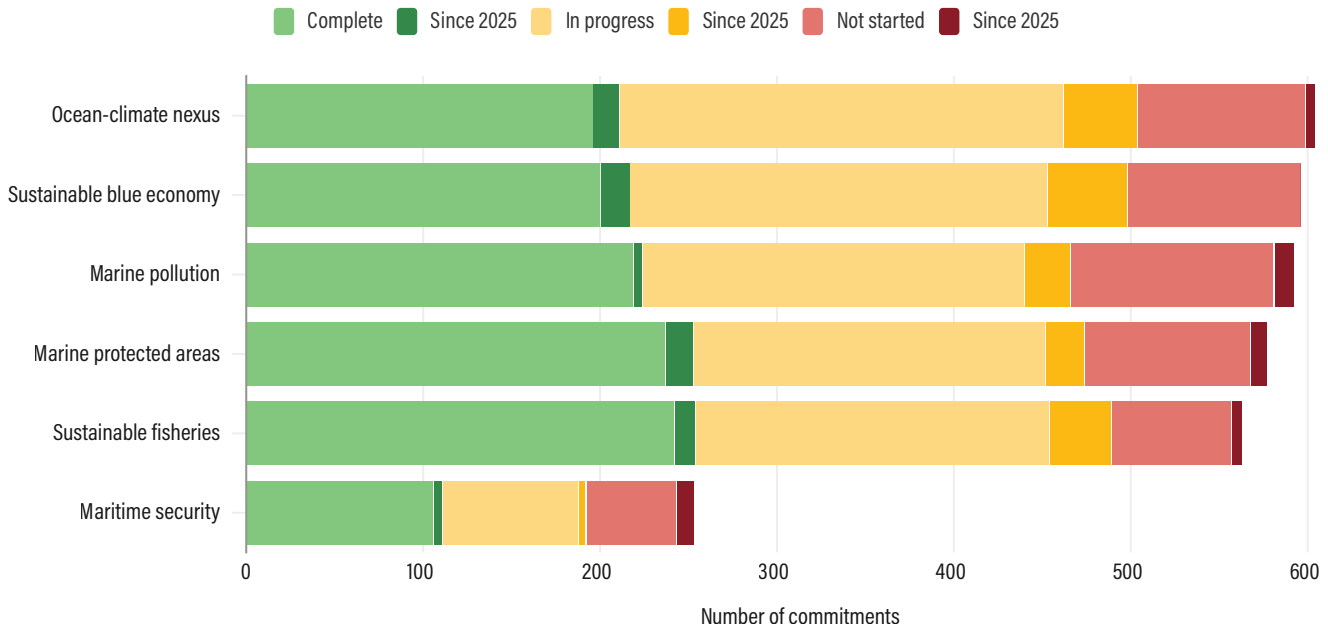
Table 2 | **Commitment implementation by action area**

ACTION AREA	TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMITMENTS	IMPLEMENTATION STATUS (NUMBER OF COMMITMENTS)					
		Complete	Net change since 2025	In progress	Net change since 2025	Not started	Net change since 2025
Ocean-climate nexus	542	196	*+15*	251	*+42*	95	*+5*
Marine pollution	550	219	*+5*	216	*+26*	115	*+11*
Marine protected areas	530	237	*+16*	199	*+22*	94	*+9*
Sustainable fisheries	510	242	*+12*	200	*+35*	68	*+6*
Sustainable blue economy	534	200	*+17*	236	*+45*	98	*-3*
Maritime security	234	106	*+5*	77	*+4*	51	*+10*
Total	**2,900**	**1,200**	**+70**	**1,179**	**+174**	**521**	**+38**

Note: Net changes calculated from the 2025 Our Ocean Conference (OOC) report baseline, including new commitments from the 10th OOC and progress updates resulting in a status change.

Source: WRI authors.

Figure 2 | **Number of OOC commitments and progress by action area (2014–2026)**



Source: WRI authors.

Our updated analysis projects that $26.5 billion in ocean finance has been delivered through completed commitments since 2014, with an additional $2.7 billion delivered between 2025 and 2026. Most pledged finance remains in progress, equivalent to $112.4 billion (66 percent). Notably, the ocean-climate action area accounts for around half of all global OOC finance. Implementation progress and pledged finance by year are shown in Figure 3.

The sustainable blue economy action area saw the highest number of commitments completed since 2025 (17 additional). These commitments focus on investments in green shipping, smart ports, aquaculture, and low emissions technologies. They also emphasize strengthening ocean governance, marine spatial planning, and scientific research and data. The fewest progress updates were seen in the maritime security action area, which was introduced in 2018 and remains underrepresented. Maritime security stakeholders (such as national navies) tend to be less involved in the OOC compared to other sectors. Commitments in this action area in 2025 focused on maritime surveillance technology, port security, and improving coast guard capabilities.

Geographic distributions show that most new completed and in progress commitments were registered in the Pacific Ocean basin (156 commitments) or had a cross-regional focus (68 commitments). This reflects the regional priorities of OOC10 hosted by the Republic of Korea and the greater commitment mobilization from governments and organizations working in East Asia and the Pacific. OOC brings elevated attention to building strong partnerships and the ambition of governments, civil society, and finance institutions in the host region.

Twenty-four countries and organizations based in the region made new commitments in 2025, and the overall number of commitment makers grew by 25. This brings the total number of organizations and governments making OOC commitments to 503 across 96 countries. Overall, most commitment makers remain organizations and countries based in Europe (43 percent) and North America (24 percent)—the regions that have hosted the largest number of OOCs.

Governments remain the most common sector making and implementing commitments, accounting for 63 percent of the total (1,813 commitments). This is followed by civil society (444 commitments) and then by the private sector (231 commitments). These statistics do not represent a significant change from the 2014–24 analysis, reflecting stability in the ways organizations and governments engage in OOC.

Greater engagement with small island developing states, least developed countries, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, and youth was flagged as a key gap in the 2025 report. A lack of inclusion and ocean equity is a key barrier to sustainable ocean governance and meeting global ocean goals (Blythe et al. 2026). While the proportion of global commitments referencing gender and youth outcomes remains similar in 2026 (3 percent and 4 percent, respectively), a higher proportion of OOC10 commitments in 2025 were made to directly address these issues (7 percent) (Table 4). Overall, these findings suggest incremental improvements in visibility though not yet a systemic integration of equity into the OOC commitment landscape.

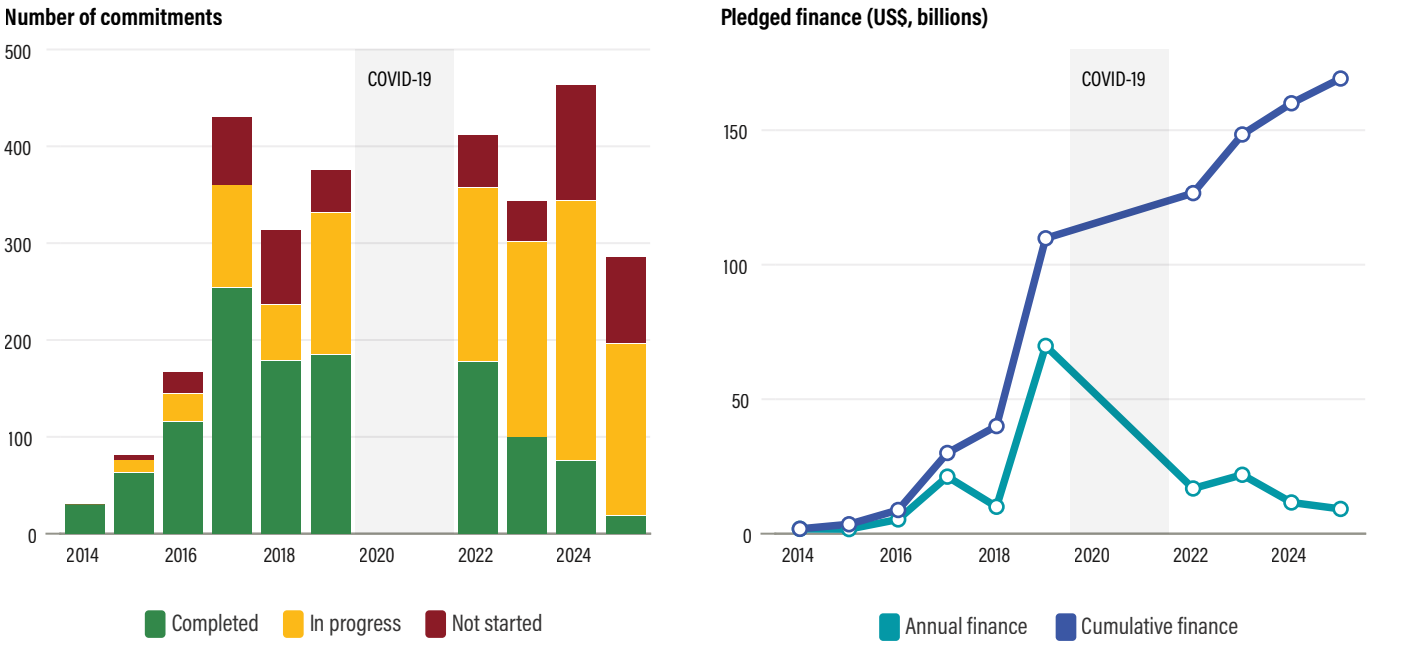
Table 3 | **Sample of completed commitments (2025–2026)**

ACTION AREA	COMPLETED COMMITMENTS
Climate change	▪ The government of the United Kingdom delivered £152,000 to support the Ocean Acidification Research for Sustainability (OARS) program under the framework of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. ▪ The government of Peru completed two oceanographic research cruises in the Peruvian Sea to enhance understanding of development of the "El Niño" and "La Niña" phenomena.
Marine pollution	▪ The government of Greece improved systemic monitoring in five areas of the Aegean Sea through remote satellite sensing techniques to enhance evidence-based marine management. ▪ Taiwan International Cooperation and Development Fund delivered $120,000 for the St. Kitts and Nevis Solid Waste Management and Recycling Project, establishing a national recycling strategy and analyzing waste management systems with government and private sector partners.
Marine protected areas (MPAs)	▪ EarthEcho International expanded its partnership with the High Seas Alliance through the High Seas Youth Ambassador program. This equipped youth leaders from Canada, Jamaica, the Philippines, Samoa, Trinidad and Tobago, Tanzania, and Zambia with training, funding, and tools to advance BBNJ Treaty ratification. ▪ The government of Norway adopted the Ocean Protection Act, which entered into force in January 2026. This provides a legal basis for designating MPAs and substantially expands the national "toolbox" for marine protection toward the implementation of 30x30.
Sustainable fisheries	▪ The government of Japan delivered its annual contribution to the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center Project on Promotion of Sustainable Fisheries in Southeast Asia. This enhanced the capabilities of countries to improve the compilation and utilization of fishery statistics and to promote sustainable aquaculture. ▪ The government of Australia and Pacific Island countries and territories conducted research on the impacts of climate change on tuna fisheries and increased their monitoring capabilities.
Sustainable blue economy	▪ The government of Indonesia progressed its national marine spatial planning efforts, conducting 10 zoning plan reviews, and legalized two new marine planning regulations. ▪ The Zero Emission Maritime Buyers Alliance (ZEMBA) completed its inaugural tender for freight buyers. This was won by global container shipping company Hapag-Lloyd, and ZEMBA collectively is expected to avoid 82,000 tons of carbon dioxide through waste-based biomethane solutions.
Maritime security	▪ The government of Norway delivered $7.6 million to tackle crimes in the fisheries sector, improving law enforcement and increased international cooperation in West Africa. ▪ The government of Japan delivered $2 million to enhance navigational safety, cooperation, and environmental protection in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.

Notes: All dollars are in US dollars. BBNJ = Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.

Source: WRI authors.

Figure 3 | **Number of OOC commitments, cumulative and annual pledged finance, and implementation progress by year (2014–2026)**



Source: WRI authors.

Table 4 | **New commitments with a focus on Indigenous Peoples, local communities, youth, and gender dimensions**

GENDER	The government of Korea announced $2.9 million to improve processing and distribution for women fishers in Ghana, reduce resource loss, and promote value-added production in the fisheries sector. The government of Japan, in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme, will support green jobs creation for women and youth in South Sudan through circular and affordable waste management solutions. The Coral Triangle Center's Blue Swimming Crab project in Indonesia will strengthen local fishery governance and empower women fishers. Training will build the capacity of local women's groups and connect women leaders through learning exchanges.
YOUTH	The government of Portugal's Blue Hub School Initiative commits to improve youth ocean skills development through the Hub Azul Portugal Network. The government of the Philippines' Palakasan Para Sa Kalikasanis project will engage young athletes in coastal cleanups, mangrove planting, and environmental education workshops to increase public engagement in marine conservation. EarthEcho International launched a youth-led advocacy campaign to ban bottom trawl fishing in EU marine protected areas.
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES	The government of Canada announced over $16 million through the Indigenous and Local Communities Engagement and Partnership Program, including job creation for marine coordinators.
LOCAL COMMUNITIES	Anambas Foundation pledges $224,000 for integrated waste solutions in the Anambas Islands, Indonesia. The project will build a network of grassroots waste management solutions in collaboration with village heads, local leaders, youth, and community members.

Note: All dollars are in US dollars.

Source: WRI authors.

Conclusion

The OOC continues to drive global ocean action and investment through voluntary commitments. Self-reported updates show moderate but measurable implementation progress as countries and organizations actively deliver impact across all world regions and action areas. The total number of commitments has grown by 11 percent to 2,900, and progress rates (percentage of complete, in progress, and not started commitments) have remained stable. Although moving in the right direction, the slow pace of implementation reflects broader disruptions across the environment and development sectors during this period. In a shrinking global finance landscape, ensuring that the past decade of ocean ambition, cooperation, and momentum is maintained and accelerated will be vital to achieve global goals on conservation; ocean-climate action; illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing; and more.

As the OOC moves into its second decade, there should be a greater focus on ensuring rapid implementation and follow-through of existing pledges, alongside the mobilization of new commitments to action. Raising the profile and expectations for commitment reporting and accountability should be a priority to mitigate data collection challenges in future reporting years. In October 2025, the OOC Secretariat launched an improved commitment reporting platform to enhance transparency. This is especially needed when tracking the implementation and impact of long-term and large-scale commitments (multimillion-dollar pledges and cross-regional initiatives). Analysis shows that previously identified regional gaps in OOC action and investment (particularly in the Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean regions), as well as global gaps in mainstreaming ocean equity considerations, persist and should be addressed through future conferences.

In 2026 maritime security has emerged as a global priority, bringing new focus to the conditions under which world trade and sustainable ocean governance are made possible. Greater focus on this action area is a clear necessity and area of opportunity for future OOCs.

If the global community is to meet the ocean goals it has set for itself, future OOCs should seek to not only mobilize new commitments, but leverage the conference's unique focus on transparency, voluntary ambition, and innovative solutions to ramp up progress and accelerate implementation. The OOC plays a key role in promoting accountability and delivery of commitments year over year by elevating best practices, celebrating success, and sharing global knowledge and lessons learned. Host governments and ocean stakeholders should lead this effort, driving a "race to the top" for meaningful solutions and greater ambition.

Appendix A

Table A-1 | **Number of OOC commitments, pledged finance, and completion rate by year (2014–2025)**

OUR OCEAN CONFERENCE	YEAR	NUMBER OF COMMITMENTS	PLEDGED FUNDS (US$, BILLIONS)	COMPLETED COMMITMENTS	COMPLETION RATE (%)
OOC1	2014	30	1.8	30	100
OOC2	2015	81	1.7	63	78
OOC3	2016	167	5.3	116	69
OOC4	2017	430	21.2	254	59
OOC5	2018	314	10.0	179	57
OOC6	2019	375	69.8	185	49
OOC7	2022	412	16.8	178	43
OOC8	2023	343	21.9	100	29
OOC9	2024	463	11.6	76	16
OOC10	2025	285	9.2	19	7
Total		**2,900**	**169.2**	**1,200**	**41**

Source: WRI authors.

Abbreviations

ABM	area-based management
BBNJ	Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
COP	Conference of the Parties
MPA	marine protected area
NDC	nationally determined contribution
OOC	Our Ocean Conference
OOC10	10th Our Ocean Conference
UNOC3	Third United Nations Ocean Conference
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
ZEMBA	Zero Emission Maritime Buyers Alliance

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About the authors

Alex Lee-Emery is a researcher in the World Resources Institute Ocean Program. His work supports the Our Ocean Conference Secretariat.

Meaghan Cuddy is a project manager in the World Resources Institute Ocean Program. She manages the Our Ocean Conference Secretariat.

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