

## *Nature Futures Framework - High Seas*

### *Workshop I - Defining the problem space (H1: where we are)*



#### **Workshop 1.1** - Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania

**15 participants:** Essam, Farah, Indi, Fwazia, Eunhee, Renuka, Moriaki, Beth, Daniel\*, Erick Ross, Tom, Ghassen, Frida\*, Wei, David

**5 facilitators:** Laura Pereira\*, Guillermo Ortuno Crespo\*, Bwalya Chibwe; Hanna Lubker; Naomi Terry; Andrew Merrie\*(not present)

#### **Workshop 1.2.** - Africa, Europe, North America & South America

**11 participants:** Diva, Colette, William\*, Gabrielle, Jon, Solamao, Lily, Yow\*, Rashid\*, Glen, Juliano

**5 facilitators:** Laura Pereira\*, Guillermo Ortuno Crespo\*, Bwalya Chibwe; Hanna Lubker; Naomi Terry; Andrew Merrie\*(not present)

## Background & rationale

As the world embarks on the 2021-2030 UN Decade of Ocean Science, the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, the final negotiating stages for a new implementing agreement under UNCLOS for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), and the post-2020 CBD negotiations, we find ourselves at a unique crossroads for High Seas stewardship, which we believe would benefit from the inspirational effects of contemplating what sustainable future scenarios for the High Seas could look like.

The underlying guiding framework for this process, the NFF, is a participatory visioning exercise developed by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Task Force on scenarios and models. The process aims to develop scenarios of desirable futures for nature, to help inform assessments of policy options across multiple scales. This expert-driven visioning exercise relies on the exploration of diverse and rich dialogues between key stakeholders in the system, with the High Seas being the focus of this particular case study.

As a first step towards this visioning process we invited participants to take part in the first of three virtual workshops via two separate sessions that were held on the 12th and 14th of July 2021. We held the workshop on two days to account for the different regional time zones and availability of the participants. The first day hosted the Asia, Oceania, Africa and Europe group and the second the Americas, Africa and Europe.

These three workshops are designed around the *three horizons framework*<sup>1</sup> which is an effective method for making sense of and facilitating cultural transformation and exploring innovation and wise action in the face of uncertainty and not-knowing. Online Workshops 1, 2 & 3 are structured around Horizon 1, Horizon 3 and Horizon 2, respectively. Given the global distribution of workshop participants, each of the three workshops had two sister replicate sessions: Africa, Asia, Europe and Oceania & Africa, Europe, North America and South America. The same structure was followed in both workshops.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://medium.com/activate-the-future/the-three-horizons-of-innovation-and-culture-change-d9681b0e0b0f>

## What we did

### A. Workshop structure and participants

We had a total of 26 participants and 5 facilitators from +20 different countries and a variety of sectors including academia, private, governmental and inter- and non-governmental organisations. The participants were selected and invited via the networks of the researchers and the project's 8-member advisory board (participants with \*). The main objectives of this first workshop were to acquaint participants with the NFF and three horizons frameworks and to identify the main challenges associated with high seas fisheries using the S.T.E.E.P. (Societal, Technological, Economic, Environmental & Political) categories as discrete groups for identifying said challenges. Before the workshop they were invited to fill in an online survey identifying the challenges in the ABNJ.

The virtual workshop was held over Zoom and we used Miro, a virtual whiteboard platform for note taking and voting (Figure 1).

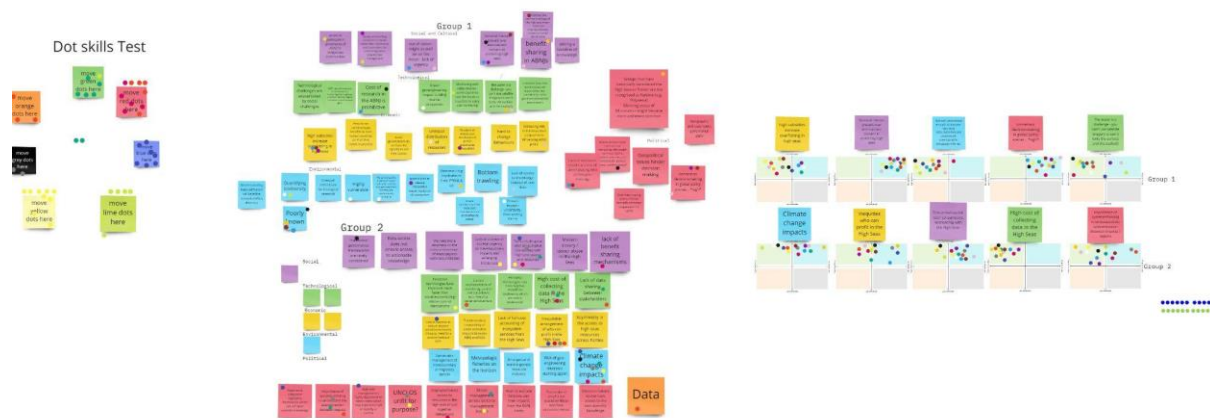


Figure 1: An overview of the Miro whiteboard at the end of Workshop 1.

The workshop was made up of three sessions.

**Session 1:** In the first session participants and facilitators introduced themselves and explained what their relationship with the Ocean is; this helped build trust amongst a diverse group of people who, for the most part, did not know each other. This was followed by a short introduction to the workshop rationale and process, in particular that the Chatham House rules would be followed. Presentations were then made of the NFF and three horizons frameworks, by Laura Pereira and William Cheung and finally the floor was opened to the participants to ask any questions they had pertaining to the frameworks and general workshop process.

**Session 2:** In this session the S.T.E.E.P. challenges from the pre-workshop survey were briefly outlined by Guillermo Ortuno Crespo, with the objective of refreshing everyone’s mind on the potential challenges they may want to identify later in the workshop. Participants were then assigned to one of the two breakout groups. Each breakout room had two facilitators. The participants brainstormed on the most important high seas challenges using the S.T.E.E.P. categories; they could repeat challenges from the pre-workshop survey, or identify new ones.

These challenges were noted on virtual sticky notes by one of the facilitators. Facilitators moved the focus of the discussion across the S.T.E.E.P. categories, but did not force an equal number of challenges across categories. The outcome was a balanced but not symmetric distribution of challenges across the categories. A total of 130 challenges were identified across both workshops. Once the brainstorming session was done, the participants were asked to vote for the chief 5 challenges by placing their assigned color-coded dot on a challenge note. Each of the participants had 6 votes for this (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: 72 of a total of 130 challenges were identified by participants, across each of S.T.E.E.P. categories in both workshops; there was some overlap between the challenges identified across the breakout groups.

**Session 3:** The participants all returned to the main meeting room from their breakout rooms and prioritized the top 10 combined challenges based on their relative importance and feasibility (Figure 3). Each participant was assigned 10 color-coded (five for each of the top-5 challenges from each breakout group).

Since two replicate sessions of Workshop 1 were conducted, a total of 20 high seas challenges were identified (Table 1). Important challenges which are hardest to solve are where innovation is needed the most.

*Table 1: top-10 challenges identified per workshop across the S.T.E.E.P. categories. Societal (purple, n = 4); technological (green, n = 2); economic (yellow, n = 5); environmental (blue, n = 4); political (red = 5).*

Workshop 1.1. top-10 challenges	Workshop 1.2. top-10 challenges
Private sector lobbying for exploitation	Subsidies increase overfishing in high seas
Creating a cohesive vision what should be prioritized nationally and internationally	National interest prevails over international concern in protecting high seas
Rise of economic activities (e.g. deep-sea mining) in the high seas	Not well understood enough to manage - very little data, processes not understood, oceanographic processes inferred
Intergovernmental processes are not inclusive enough (environmental justice)	Consensus decision-making in global policy arenas... *sigh*
Forced labour on fishing vessels	The water is a challenge - you can't use satellite imagery to see it (only the surface and the seabed).
Capitalism's perpetual growth model	Climate change impacts
Climate change impacts	Inequities - who can profit in the High Seas
Harmful subsidies across high seas sectors	Patriarchal/ capitalist consumptive relationships with the High Seas
Biodiversity loss in ABNJ, including lack of understanding of the environmental and ecosystem-level impacts such as cascades	High cost of collecting data in the High Seas
Consensus-based decision-making/ lowest common denominator	Importance of systems-thinking to understand the teleconnection between impacts / regions

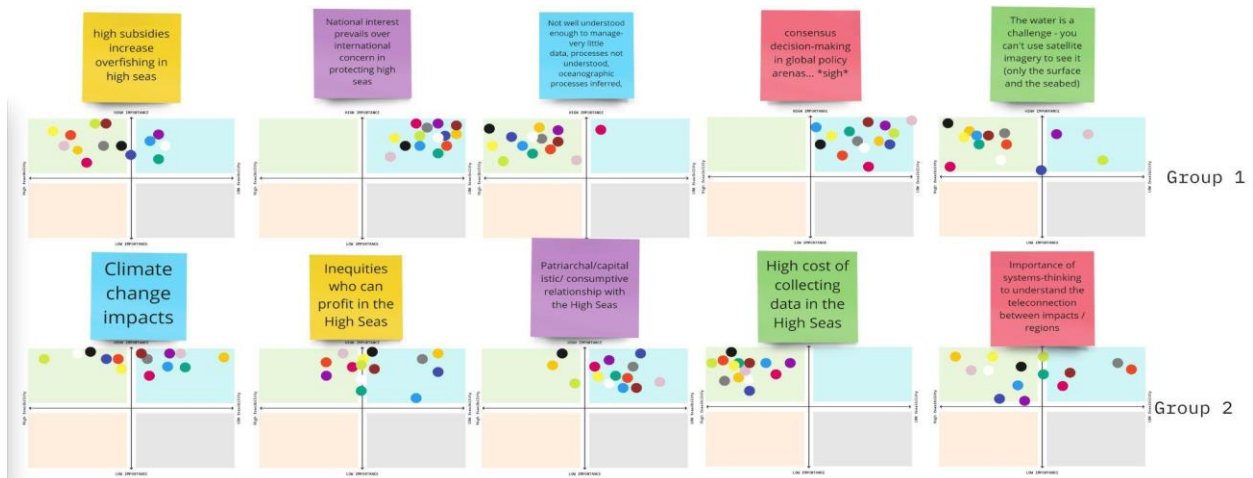


Figure 3: Index of importance (y-axis) and effort to solve (x-axis) for the top-10 challenges in one of the two workshops.

The reasons why addressing a challenge may require more or less effort were left open to interpretation and could be related to political will, technological capabilities or costs. Participants did not make much use of the vertical axis ranking (relative importance). The primary output of this exercise was therefore a relative index of difficulty/feasibility in addressing each of the top-10 challenges.

## B. Post-workshop Thematic Analysis

While the discrete categorical framework provided by S.T.E.E.P. was intuitive and practical for the purpose of identifying challenges during the workshops, participants emphasized the cross-cutting nature of many of the challenges identified. After the workshop we collated all the challenges (that had not been selected for in the final to 20 challenges) from both days. We then conducted a thematic analysis to determine if there were specific themes that may have not been captured using the S.T.E.E.P. categorization.

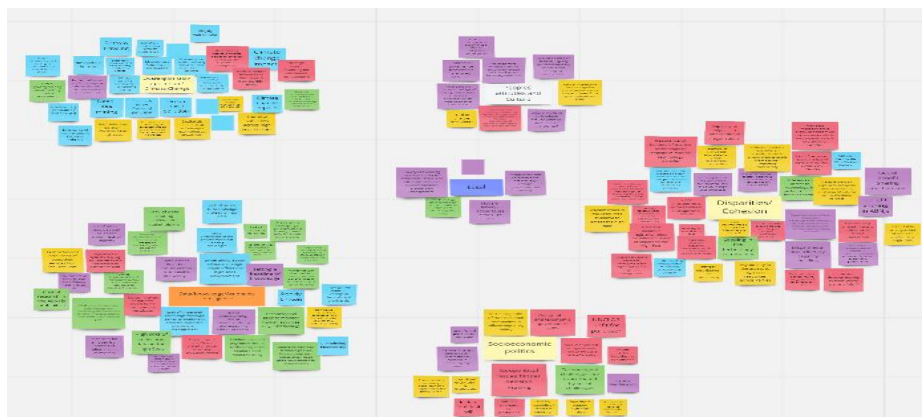


Figure 4: We identified 6 themes in which the challenges were clustered.



**Theme 1:** Overexploitation / pollution / climate change

**Theme 2:** Peoples, attitudes and culture

**Theme 3:** Disparities / cohesion

**Theme 4:** Legal

**Theme 5:** Data / knowledge / actionable intelligence

**Theme 6:** Socioeconomic / politics

These 6 themes, alongside the categories in S.T.E.E.P. provide a useful bi-axial framework through which we can define and refine the ‘problem-space’ in ABNJ, as well as classify the innovative solutions that participants will identify in subsequent workshops and potential pathways for transformation.

	Societal	Technological	Economic	Environmental	Political
Overexploitation / pollution / climate change	1	2	5	21	3
Peoples, attitudes and culture	6	0	2	0	1
Disparities / cohesion	7	2	8	3	15
Legal / criminal	4	1	0	0	0
Data / knowledge / actionable intelligence	7	14	2	7	3
Socioeconomic / politics	3	1	6	0	7