



The Sustainable Ocean (SO) Community stems from the need to address key issues and challenges related to ocean health and sustainability and is part of the 'Pathways to Sustainability' (PtS) strategic theme. We are an inclusive and inspiring platform where scholars and stakeholders from a broad range of disciplines meet to facilitate innovative transdisciplinary research and education.

In this newsletter you find short reports on two recent SO events: the *Whose Ocean* session during the Pathways to Sustainability Conference and the Ocean Café on new ocean treaty an introduction to the new *Virtual Ship Learning Experience* project invitations to two upcoming events: a PtS café on Sea Level Rise on May 11 and our Sustainable Ocean community kick-off meeting on June 12 - **note and save the changed date!**

Announcements

| Pathways to Sustainability Conference 2023 - 'Whose Ocean – different voices heard'

On 7 April 2023, we came together with the other Pathways to Sustainability Communities at TivoliVredenburg to "See the future". With the help of arts and storytelling we did time travel to 2060 and back, imagining a completely different world compared to today. A world that has seen a deep transformation, both of nature and of society. A world in which sustainability is at the heart of politics. Together we reflected on which triggers were crucial for this transformation. Check out the [conference wrap-up](#) for the after-movie, highlighted talks, and pictures.

Within the "Whose Ocean" session we focused on the transition to a sustainable future for the ocean and in particular whose voices (should) count when "we" talk about and shape "our" ocean. Together we discussed what the ocean means to us (see wordcloud below), which voices have not been (sufficiently) heard so far and how they could be better included. The discussion was supported by short presentations by Alex Oude Elferink, Mikki Stelder, and Stef Veldhuis, who shared their views on "Whose Ocean", as well as by a presentation of Barnita Bagchi on [radical ocean futures](#). These narrative scenarios were developed by making use of science fiction prototyping and show how the dominance of distinct voices could lead to

drastically different positive or negative transitions. The session was moderated by Francesca Sangiorgi of our Sustainable Ocean Community and Kei Otsuki of the Critical Pathways Community.

We concluded that there are still many barriers to break to overcome ego-, terra- and anthropocentrism and reach a sustainable and just transition. Increasing ocean literacy and improving trans-disciplinary communication are important first steps. We obtained a lot of food for thought for our ongoing *Whose Ocean Incubator project*, as well as for potential future Sustainable Ocean Community activities.



| Ocean Cafe - ‘The new ‘Ocean Treaty’: Set to ensure ocean sustainability?’

On 4 March 2023, after two decades of discussions, states finally concluded the [agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction](#), which has been dubbed the ‘Ocean Treaty’ in the press. The agreement is intended to provide a comprehensive governance regime for areas beyond national jurisdiction, which comprise more than half of the surface area of the ocean. It is intended to ‘operationalize’ the general rules contained in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to protect 30% of the global marine areas beyond national jurisdiction until 2030.

On 11 April 2023, the Sustainable Ocean Community hosted the Ocean Café *The new ‘Ocean Treaty’: Set to ensure ocean sustainability?* The Café offered an opportunity to make a first assessment of the agreement and what the future holds for it. The speakers were Tom Diederer of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Catherine Blanchard of the Utrecht University Centre of Water Ocean and Sustainability Law and the Netherlands Institute for the Law of the Sea of Utrecht University, and Sabine Gollner of the Netherlands Institute for Sea Research. The café was moderated by Alex Oude Elferink of our Sustainable Ocean Community and Seline Trevisanut of the Critical Pathways Community.

Discussions at the Ocean Café indicated that the conclusion of the agreement is a step towards sustainability of the ocean, but that to really have impact much depends on its future implementation. We should pick up on this!

| New Project - ‘Virtual Ship Learning Experience?’

While the experience of sea-going research is valuable, it is very expensive and logistically challenging to support large groups of students joining research expeditions at sea. There thus is a need for novel technologies to provide students with some experience similar to sea-going field work.

In the new *Virtual Ship Learning Experience* project, a collaboration between NIOZ and the Freudenthal Institute at Utrecht University lead by Erik van Sebille, we will develop a 'virtual ocean-going expedition/mission' for the Marine Science curriculum at Utrecht University as well as individual courses in other (under)graduate programs. We will develop a set of interactive python notebooks to elaborate (pre-)acquired oceanographic data and evaluate the viability (and identify challenges) of integrating the "virtual expedition" by assessing its pedagogical usability and student learning outcomes.

Let us know if you're interested to join this project!



Upcoming Events

May 11

Time: 16:00 –
18:00

Venue: [Vening
Meineszgebouw
A, Bistro,](#)

Princetonlaan 8a,
3584 CB Utrecht

Registration:

Please register via
[this form](#)

Pathways to Sustainability Café 'Not just plans but actions – sea level rise adaption in Pacific nations and the Netherlands'

Our guest presenter is Sybil Seitzinger, a professor in the School of Environmental Studies and former director of the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions at the University of Victoria, BC, Canada. She will share her perspectives on actions to address sea level rise in Hawaii, Singapore and Taiwan collected during her sabbatical travels over the past year. She wants to discuss the question with you: How do these examples compare to sea level rise adaptation in the Netherlands and what can we learn from each other?

The Pathway to Sustainability Cafés provide an easy way to get to know, inform and inspire each other within and beyond the Sustainable Ocean community. You don't need to be actively involved (yet). Fancy a drink and a chat, join us, we look forward to see you there!

June 12

Sustainable Ocean Community kick-off" meeting

Time: 10:30 –
14:00

Venue: [Paushuize](#),
Kromme
Nieuwegracht 49,
3512 HE Utrecht

Join us to get to know the community and collectively define the most pressing challenges in ocean health and sustainability that we want to address. Save the date, spread the word, and stay tuned for more info!

About this newsletter

The Sustainable Ocean Community is an initiative born out of the imperative to tackle critical challenges in ocean sustainability. Aligned with Utrecht University's 'Pathways to Sustainability' strategic theme and formed in collaboration with NIOZ, we strive to be an inclusive, diverse, and inspirational national platform. Our mission is to unite scholars and stakeholders across disciplines to craft and implement regional solutions for urgent global ocean and sustainability issues.

Contact

sustainableocean@uu.nl

[Sustainable Ocean Website](#)

Please contact us if you no longer wish to receive this newsletter.



**Utrecht
University**



**Royal Netherlands
Institute for
Sea Research**