

Exploring hybrid ocean governance approaches for the Sargasso Sea and the Thermal Dome

The 'SARGADOM' project focuses on two remarkable high seas sites – the Sargasso Sea in the North Atlantic ('SARGA') and the Thermal Dome in the Eastern Tropical Pacific ('DOM'). The aim of the project is to contribute to the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and to facilitate the development of hybrid ocean governance approaches for the two sites.

Context

The Sargasso Sea and the Thermal Dome provide illustrative examples of the value of high seas ecosystems, as well as highlighting the barriers to their protection.

The two sites are being held up as pilot sites for the implementation of the hybrid governance structure proposed by the BBNJ agreement due to their dynamic nature and the maturity of their conservation efforts.

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A socioeconomic and ecological analysis will be carried out for each site, as well as an analysis of the current governance of the two sites and potential improvements.

This will lead to different outcomes for the two sites:

For the **Thermal Dome**, it is a multisectoral proposal for the governance and regulation of the high seas, with emphasis on fisheries and navigation, which will be submitted to the UN stakeholders by the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD).

For the Sargasso Sea, it will be a Strategic Action Programme submitted for approval to key stakeholders including the Signatories to the Hamilton Declaration on Collaboration for the Conservation of the Sargasso Sea, established by the Sargasso Sea Commission.

Lessons learned will be distributed through various capacity building activities, including the development of a multilingual Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on governance and conservation on the high seas.

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