Marine CoLABoration

CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION
UK BRANCH

Marine CoLABoration: An Introduction to Our Approach

Growing the change making and systems capabilities of professionals in the marine and coastal sectors through collaborative values and systems based approaches

About the Marine CoLABoration

Towards an ocean friendly society: creating an operating environment fit for our future ocean

The Marine CoLABoration was established in 2015, in response to the threat that our ocean was being undervalued and allowed to deteriorate. There was a clear need for a fresh, collaborative and supportive space for people who recognise both the diverse and critical value of our ocean and the urgency of working together in new ways to achieve better outcomes.

The Marine CoLAB is driven by a light core to ensure that the majority of effort and resources can be directed towards activities which influence the way in which people, across a variety of audiences, think and behave when it comes to the ocean. At the heart of the Marine CoLAB is an established collaborative group of individuals from ten organisations: ClientEarth, Communications Inc, Fauna and Flora International, Forum for the Future, Institute for European Environmental Policy, International Programme on the State of the Ocean, Marine Conservation Society, New Economics Foundation, Thames Estuary Partnership and the Zoological Society of London. As initiator and funder, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has played an integral role in shaping the Marine CoLAB.

The CoLAB is made up of individuals from the following organisations:

CLIENT EARTH

Client Earth uses the power of law to bring about systemic change that protects the earth for – and with – its inhabitants. It comes up with practical solutions to the world's toughest environmental challenges, and works with people, campaigners, governments and industry to make those solutions a reality. Client Earth seeks to change the system from within, working with, instead of against, its most powerful players - and gives people, partners and organisations the tools they need to do the same.

COMMUNICATIONS INC

Communication Inc is a small communications agency with big ideas, working with non-profits around the globe on social and environmental issues. It understands the particular challenges and opportunities of non-profits and international communications, and has worked with clients such as the High Seas Alliance, Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, Shark Alliance, Global Ocean Commission and International Institute for Sustainable Development.

FAUNA AND FLORA INTERNATIONAL

Fauna & Flora International (FFI) is the world's oldest international wildlife conservation organisation. FFI has been quietly shaping and influencing conservation practice since its foundation in 1903. Its focus is on protecting biodiversity (the diversity of life on Earth), which underpins healthy ecosystems and is critical for the life-support systems that humans and all other species rely on.

FORUM FOR THE FUTURE

Forum for the Future is expert in systems analysis, strategic guidance and bringing together stakeholders together to collaborate. Forum works with business, government and civil society to solve complex sustainability challenges and transform and innovate systems. It inspires new thinking, builds creative partnerships and develops practical innovations to change the world.

INSTITUTE FOR EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

The Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) is a sustainability think tank. Working with stakeholders across EU institutions, international bodies, academia, civil society and industry, its team of economists, scientists and lawyers produce evidence-based research and policy insight. Its work spans nine research areas and covers both short-term policy issues and long-term strategic studies. As a not-for-profit organisation with over 40 years of experience, IEEP is committed to advancing impact-driven sustainability policy across the EU & the world.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME ON THE STATE OF THE OCEAN

The International Programme on the State of the Ocean (IPSO) is an initiative created to enable a greater scientific understanding of the services the ocean provides to humankind and the impact of the main human stressors upon it, for both decision-makers and the public. This new level of understanding will enable solutions for the ocean to be explored. Skilled in communication and campaign strategy, IPSO brings together science, communications, policy, and legal disciplines.

MARINE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) is a UK charity fighting for a cleaner, better-protected, healthier ocean: one we can all enjoy. MCS is a community of ocean lovers all working together towards a vision of a sea full of life, where nature flourishes and people thrive. It works with communities, businesses and governments to defend our Marine Protected Areas and our coastal and marine habitats and species, to promote sustainable fishing and seafood and to reduce marine pollution.

NEW ECONOMICS FOUNDATION

For more than three decades, the New Economics Foundation's mission has been to transform the economy, so it works for people and the planet. With expertise in socio-economic approaches and reframing complex ideas and information to influence change, NEF works with people igniting change from below and combines this with rigorous research to fight for change at the top. Its Blue New Deal work promotes good jobs for coastal communities through healthy seas.

THAMES ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

With over 20 years' experience, the Thames Estuary Partnership brings together local knowledge and partners from across London, Essex and Kent. It enables knowledge exchange and a cross-sectoral, multi-discipline approach to sustainable management of the Thames Estuary, striving to make the Thames the most sustainably managed estuary in the world. TEP connects people, sectors and ideas across land and water for the social, environmental and economic benefit of the Thames and her communities.

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY LONDON

The Zoological Society London are leaders in marine science and conservation, with expertise on the impact of ocean pollution. ZSL develops conservation solutions to create a world where wildlife thrives. ZSL's work is realised through ground-breaking science, field conservation around the world and engaging millions of people through its two zoos.

As initiator and funder, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has played an integral role in shaping the Marine CoLAB.

CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION

Since its creation in 1956, the UK Branch of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has made profound and impactful interventions in the arts and culture, social welfare and education. Initial research, published by CGF in 2013, suggested that underlying the threats facing the ocean was the need to improve the flow of information across siloes in the marine environment and make knowledge more accessible to all. As a result, its Valuing the Ocean strand has focused support on improving collaboration and the ability to communicate the value of the ocean to influence long-term change.

The scaling and embedding phase of the Marine CoLABoration, including the Marine CoLAB Community of Practice and the Compass Course is supported by:

COASTAL PARTNERSHIPS NETWORK

The Coastal Partnerships Network (CPN) is a network of 55 Coastal and Estuary Partnerships - and over 30 wider coastal initiatives - around the UK coast. Formed in 2006, it aims to support collaborative working around and across our coastline, connecting across land and sea through enabling knowledge exchange, supporting the co-design and delivery of national projects, linking with key coastal stakeholders and communities and championing the valuable work of Coastal and Estuary Partnerships across socio-economic and environmental challenges.

The Marine CoLABoration would like to give a special thanks to our funder, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (CGF), for their generous support over the years. We would also like to give thanks to the individuals who have been part of the steering group, contributed to shaping the CoLAB or been involved in delivering its projects. We're extremely proud of what we've been able to achieve together, for the ocean.

With special thanks to everyone involved in the core CoLAB:
Sue Ranger, Louisa Hooper, Mirella von Lindenfels, Natalie Hart, Fernanda Balata, Daniel Steadman, Corina Angheloiu, Anna Birney, Hilary Cullen, Amy Pryor, Alice Watts, Fiona Llewellyn, Sophie Benbow, Adam Weiss, Andrew Farmer, Andrew Barnett, Giles Bristow, Aniol Esteban, Liane Veitch, Alasdhair Collins, Rosie Chambers, Catherine Weller, Amy Hill, Tristram Lewis, Nic Frost, Dave Powell, Heather Koldewey, Bridget Gourlay, Sandy Luk, Chris Tuckett, Daniel Ford, Sian Williams, Jess Loring, Esther Goodwin-Brown, Amy Duthie, Isabel Vasconcelos, Madeleine Wild, Sean Andrew, Nik Gaffney, Maja Kuzmanovic, Vali Lalioti and Sarah Ridley.

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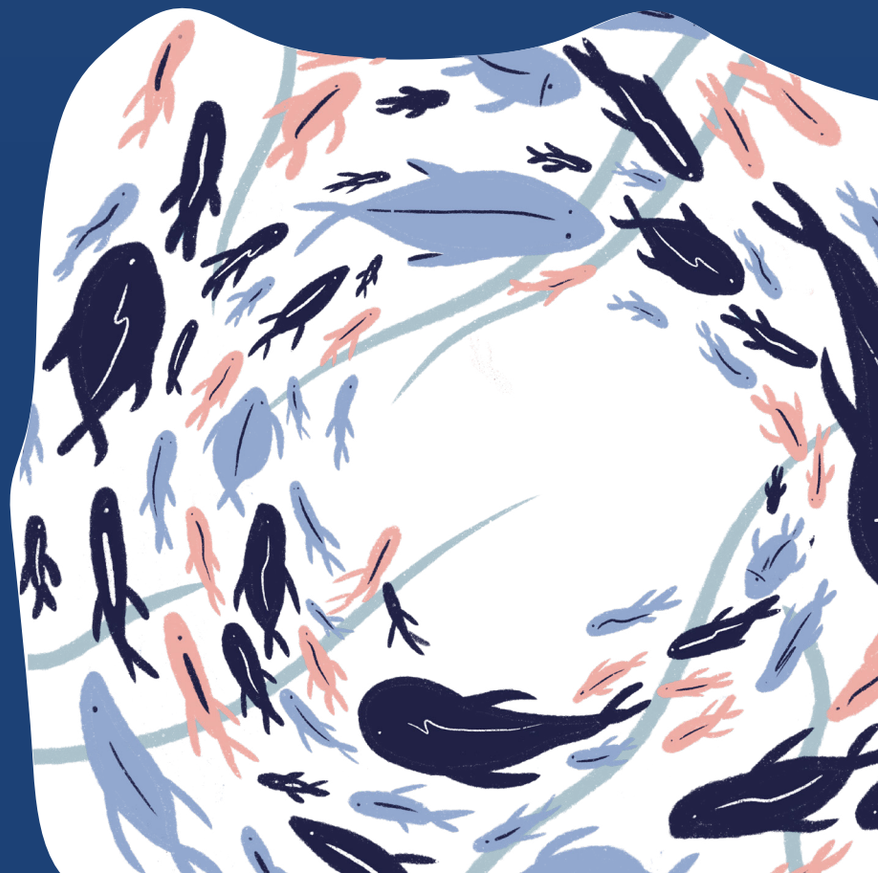

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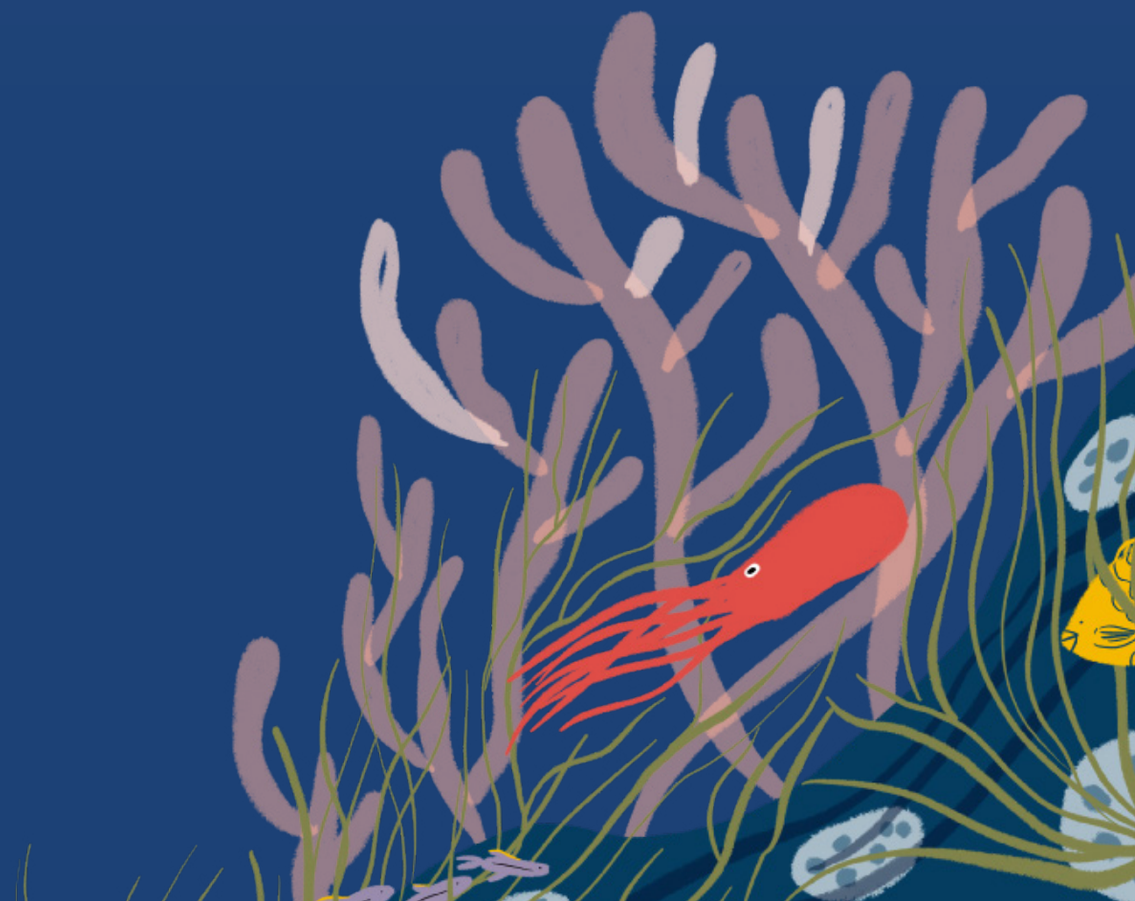


What makes the CoLAB unique?

THE VALUES BASED APPROACH

The CoLAB uses the term 'Values Based Approach (VBA)' to describe the unique ethos that is at the heart of the community. In short, CoLABorators share an understanding that we can only accelerate progress towards an ocean friendly society by working holistically. We recognise all the different ways that the ocean has value to people as well as in and of itself and we work to find solutions which will safeguard as much of that value as possible.

SYSTEMS THINKING

Taking a Values Based Approach (VBA) means we actively break down silos, communicate a willingness to look at the world and collaborate across disciplines, value systems and sectors to come at problems and opportunities with system change in mind.

ALWAYS LEARNING

We work in a cyclical and iterative way to ensure we are constantly keeping our eye on the horizon while improving and developing as individuals and as a collective. We are not afraid to take an experimental approach and accept that some experiments are less successful than others.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

The CoLAB fully appreciates the power of effective communication in shaping our future operating environment. CoLABorators are encouraged and enabled to make use of the latest research and best practice to amplify messages that resonate with different audiences.

REAL COLLABORATION

Taking a Values Based Approach (VBA) has allowed us to establish a deep culture of trust and collaboration which allows time and space for new, untested ideas to emerge.

TRACK RECORD

We have gone on to kick-start and help catalyse innovative and collaborative practical experiments. We have also amplified learning and practice by building the capacity of a growing community of people and organisations to collaborate effectively to address the complex challenges facing our ocean.

Introduction

There is no denying that we are living in turbulent times. In order to keep moving forward, those of us who recognise the importance and value of a healthy ocean can't afford to be blown off course by these, or future, choppy waters. Time really is running out. In order to be part of the change we know is urgently needed in the world, we all have to stay on course. We need to focus on what really matters and bring as many people as possible with us on the journey towards a healthy, productive, beautiful future ocean - key to securing our future on this planet.

In many ways, ours is an era of chronic crises. The ocean and climate challenges facing the planet are urgent and stark, but they compete for space in the public consciousness with a number of other crises. The ocean is the lifeblood of our planet. It sequesters carbon, stabilises the climate and has produced more than half of the oxygen that keeps us alive. The ocean sustains all life on earth, our communities and each of us. It is not yet too late for our collective action to restore the connection between people and the ocean, recover what has been damaged and safeguard it.

In 2015, a group of ocean-minded people from a variety of backgrounds were gifted the time and space to try and figure out what we might do differently to accelerate our progress. While the questions we were asking were not new, we recognised a need for new and more impactful responses.

This document sets the foundations of four key threads that have shaped six years of experimenting and learning in the Marine CoLAB: **values**, **collaboration**, **systems**, and **governance**.

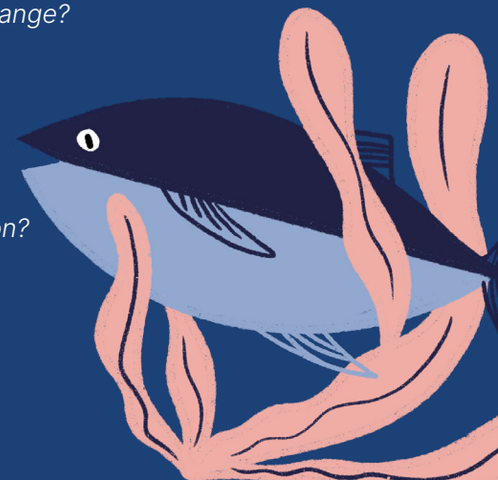
The gift of time and space doesn't come to everyone, so we want to share our learning journey for you, in support of accelerating the pace and scale of change. We hope you'll find these insights, tools, ideas and case studies useful and that you, in turn, will share what you learn as we move forward together.

VALUES
How do we engage with people to ensure they feel like a valued part of the solution?

GOVERNANCE
How do we organise ourselves, make decisions, and take action?

SYSTEMS
How do we identify which actions are most likely to accelerate systemic change?

COLLABORATION
How do we create an enabling environment for sustained action?



How on earth can we focus on the ocean right now?

The impacts of the chronic, interlinked global crises of environmental degradation and climate change are undeniably intensifying across the planet. Nature is declining globally at rates never before seen in human history and the current warming trend, traceable from the early 20th century, has proceeded at a rate that is unprecedented over millennia. These are long-term, existential threats, but of course they still have to compete for space in the public consciousness. They jostle for headlines and airtime with myriad serious social challenges and political issues, with natural disasters and hyper-local stories about potholes, football leagues and shop closures. They also have to contend with the increasing noise of social media and celebrity. And then, every now and then, a shock comes along that totally absorbs everyone's attention.

In 2020, COVID-19 was just such a shock. Primarily a health threat, it created a new set of challenges for the global population that were not planned for. Recession, threats to livelihoods, serious risks to social order, damage to international mechanisms and processes and potential political exploitation of the crisis remain very real and pressing concerns for our global community. The interest in ocean and climate work declined as people rallied to support those most affected by COVID. This left action on the chronic issues lying in the long grass.

In this context, it can be difficult to see how we can keep our own heads above water, let alone try to make a contribution to positive change for our ocean. We know that COVID won't be the last destabilising shock. Our experience over the past six years suggests that taking a values based, CoLABoratory, systems change approach could be an effective way not only of returning ocean and climate issues to the agenda and addressing them, but also of taking care of ourselves and the communities working so hard not to let them slide off.

How on earth can we not focus on the ocean right now?

We have one planet. One ocean. The ocean makes life on earth possible – if we don't look after it, it can't look after us. It's as simple - and as complicated - as that!

Whether you're lucky enough to have a sea view or live miles from the coast, you are inextricably linked to the ocean. Our global ocean ecosystem provides much of what makes life possible - it produces half the oxygen on the planet, is pivotal to climate regulation, feeds billions, resources industry, provides a multitude of livelihoods and contributes to both our physical and mental health. But the ocean also provides many less tangible benefits that are part of what makes life worth living. It is awesome and beautiful. It is a place of restoration and creativity, of challenge, fun and reflection. And research has shown that the more developed societies become, the more important these benefits from connection with blue spaces are. When we access these benefits from the ocean, it increases our sense of wellbeing.

Beneath the surface, our ocean is teeming with life. It is the largest liveable space on the planet and sustains myriad plants and animals in a variety of habitats. It is the heart of our planetary life support system. When our beautiful, wild ocean is healthy and productive, it secures our future. As a society, it is absolutely essential that we are making decisions and living in ways that maximise ocean health - this will be good for us, both mentally and physically - and good for our ocean.

Ocean-Climate-Biodiversity Nexus

The ocean is intrinsically linked to global biodiversity and the climate system.

A healthy ocean is fundamental to life itself and to the health and prosperity of all humanity. It is a system of interconnected habitats, species and processes that provides us with oxygen, carbon sequestration and climate regulation.

The ocean is a carbon sink, removing CO2 from the atmosphere. Ocean currents help to regulate the climate and make the earth habitable by transporting warm water and precipitation away from the equator towards the poles. It is a source of food and livelihoods, providing opportunities for recreation and for sustaining our health and well-being.

The ocean is our buffer, providing stability for the whole planet.

We see the impact of a changing climate on ocean acidification, deoxygenation, warming and sea levels. There is increasing recognition of the connectivity and interdependence across the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus and of the speed of change.

It is essential to talk about the ocean as part of climate conversations.

Is this for me?

Yes! We believe that taking values and systems based approaches can help researchers, practitioners and policy makers working on complex marine and coastal challenges. You don't need to have any particular background or knowledge and you could be working in any number of contexts.

You could be early in your career, or someone with many years of experience. Your journey through the content and how you apply the parts that resonate with you will differ depending on your unique circumstances. We have tried to put this content together in a way that makes it easy for you to choose the most appropriate way of engaging with it.

What does this guide cover?

This document aims to provide you with the foundations behind our four key concepts – **values**, **governance**, **systems**, and **collaboration**. It aims to provide you with a taster and is by no means an exhaustive exploration of the concepts above.

Following this introduction, there are learning modules (formed of videos and worksheets) that you can explore at your own pace. For example, one covers taking a systems approach to strategy and intervention design, and another focuses on taking a Values Based Approach (VBA) to communication. These modules form part of our Compass course, which seeks to further support marine and coastal professionals to use these approaches in their own work.

Values – How do we engage with people to ensure they feel like a valued part of the solution?

Value sits at the heart of all we have done, so we begin by sharing why a focus on value is so powerful. We share what we learned about value and values in general, and about the value of the ocean and ocean literacy in particular. We look at how the combination of a deep value connection and knowledge has proven enabling.

→ To explore more, go to page 14

Systems – How do we identify which actions are most likely to accelerate systemic change?

A system change approach has been integral to some of our most successful experiments - so we provide some insights into what it means and how you might begin to explore the approach.

→ To explore more, go to page 29

Governance – How do we organise ourselves, make decisions, and take action?

Governance is often overlooked when we talk about the need to explore new ways of being and doing together. We share our lessons from how, in the Marine CoLAB, we have experimented with and evolved our governance structures between 2015 - 2021.

→ To explore more, go to page 35

Collaboration – How do we create an enabling environment for sustained action?

We explore what we mean by being CoLABoratory and how it is different from just being collaborative. Learning from our CoLABoratory Approach also enables you to reflect on whether you are looking after yourself, so that you can support and play your role in your community and apply your limited time and energy as effectively and impactfully as possible.

→ To explore more, go to page 21

As strong individuals who are part of a strong community, we are far more likely to be able to make our contribution to the urgent action that is required to make sure our ocean can continue to play its vital role in keeping our planet healthy and ensuring that human life is not only possible, but worth living.

Because the task ahead is so challenging, anything we do that makes the task more difficult for others with the same mission is deeply unhelpful. The time for egos and competitions has passed. Now is the time to work together and celebrate others' success as if it were our own. We need to recognise that we share a mission - a healthy, productive ocean. Being CoLABoratory means collaborating and experimenting in a trusting and supportive community.

Part of being able to navigate turbulent times is making sure that we look after ourselves. For example, if you take the time to reflect on who you are, what really matters to you and what you have to offer, you can fend off feelings of powerlessness and burnout. Knowing that you are doing all you can do (as well as you can do it) and trusting that you are just one person working as part of a global collective effort. A Values Based Approach begins with valuing yourself.

Fig. 1. Self care, community care and planetary care as nested fractals of a Values Based Approach (VBA).

Does your heart beat
for the ocean?

Values

Value and values and why it's important to know the difference

When we talk about 'value', we are talking about the importance, worth, usefulness, desirability or regard in which we hold something. An idea, object, action or even an ecosystem can hold different values to different people depending on their personal connections and experiences. Sometimes this value is quantifiable, often it is not.

'Values', on the other hand, are the deeply held principles - based on our intrinsic judgements of what really matters in life - that shape the way we think and act, guide our choices and behaviours and influence the value we attach to things.

In a way, the value we attach to things is an outward expression of our deeply held values. While these guiding values are thought to be somewhat enduring, they aren't singular and static. They are complex and dynamic, just as the way that we value things, people, places can be complex and dynamic as we move through our lives.

The Marine CoLABoration's Values Based Approach (VBA) focuses on this complex interplay between the value of the ocean and the deeply held values held by individuals and society, which are the underpinnings of our relationship with others and with the more than human world. The focus on values encourages us to recognise and celebrate this diversity. It creates space for us to respectfully consider differences and think holistically - recognising that achieving an 'ocean friendly society' requires systemic change. And that systemic change does not come from engaging only with those who align with one world view or one set of values.

The Values Based Approach (VBA) to change

People are motivated to pursue goals that align with what is important to them. There is now widespread recognition that the positive effects of emotional connection are essential to sustained pro-environmental values and behaviours. In order for people to get behind initiatives to safeguard the ocean, interventions have to resonate with people and reflect their deeply held, personal values. People need to feel that aligning with an initiative will be a way of safeguarding or celebrating what is important to them.

The environmental movement traditionally communicates about what it sees as important - framed as important from its own perspective. As a result, the messaging and calls to action don't always resonate with swathes of society whose views and values don't, on the surface, align with them. A clear understanding of both the ways people value the environment and the human values that underlie them is essential to conservation success. Our ability to successfully communicate with and engage much more broadly and deeply with society is essential for systemic change.

The Values Based Approach (VBA) centres around the hypothesis that uncovering and communicating the rich diversity of ways that people value the ocean creates opportunities for inclusion and diversification. This, in turn, creates potential for people to surface unifying shared motivations or unexpected complimentary routes to mutually beneficial solutions. Broader and deeper engagement encourages wider stakeholder engagement and creates better and faster action for ocean conservation. In short, we believe the Values Based Approach is a means to create the impact required to meet the scale of threat facing our ocean.

The Values Based Approach also recognises that there has been more emphasis on some types of value than others. Some of the value of the ocean is realised in the traded economy (through the sale of goods and services), but much of the value that people attach to the ocean - and much of the benefit they derive from it - has no monetary basis.

Perhaps in part because monetary values are seen as easier to measure and report, this relatively narrow set of values has tended to dominate the narrative. For example, while the importance of quality livelihoods to human wellbeing is critical and clear, the 'harder to measure', some would say priceless, value realised in our emotional, social and cultural experiences is often overlooked or omitted.

Because the latter are more widely shared across society, omitting these values results in diminished opportunities for people to find common ground and shared motivations. We can end up in siloes defined by particular aspects of who we are, rather than engaging as whole people and recognising others as such.

In deeply entrenched disagreements defined by narrow views of people and what matters to them, change can sometimes feel impossible to achieve.

We believe that refocusing and placing value at the heart of solutions for our ocean could offer an opportunity to shift the conversation and draw in the breadth of stakeholders we need to engage to make the systemic change we need to see.

We believe that understanding the full range of ocean values and communicating at the level of people's own deeply held values are key tools in enabling people to engage with the restoration and sustainable use of our ocean.

An ocean-friendly society is one where people share an understanding of our inextricable connection with the ocean and act to safeguard all the benefits it provides.

Would you like to find out more about communications and the Values Based Approach?

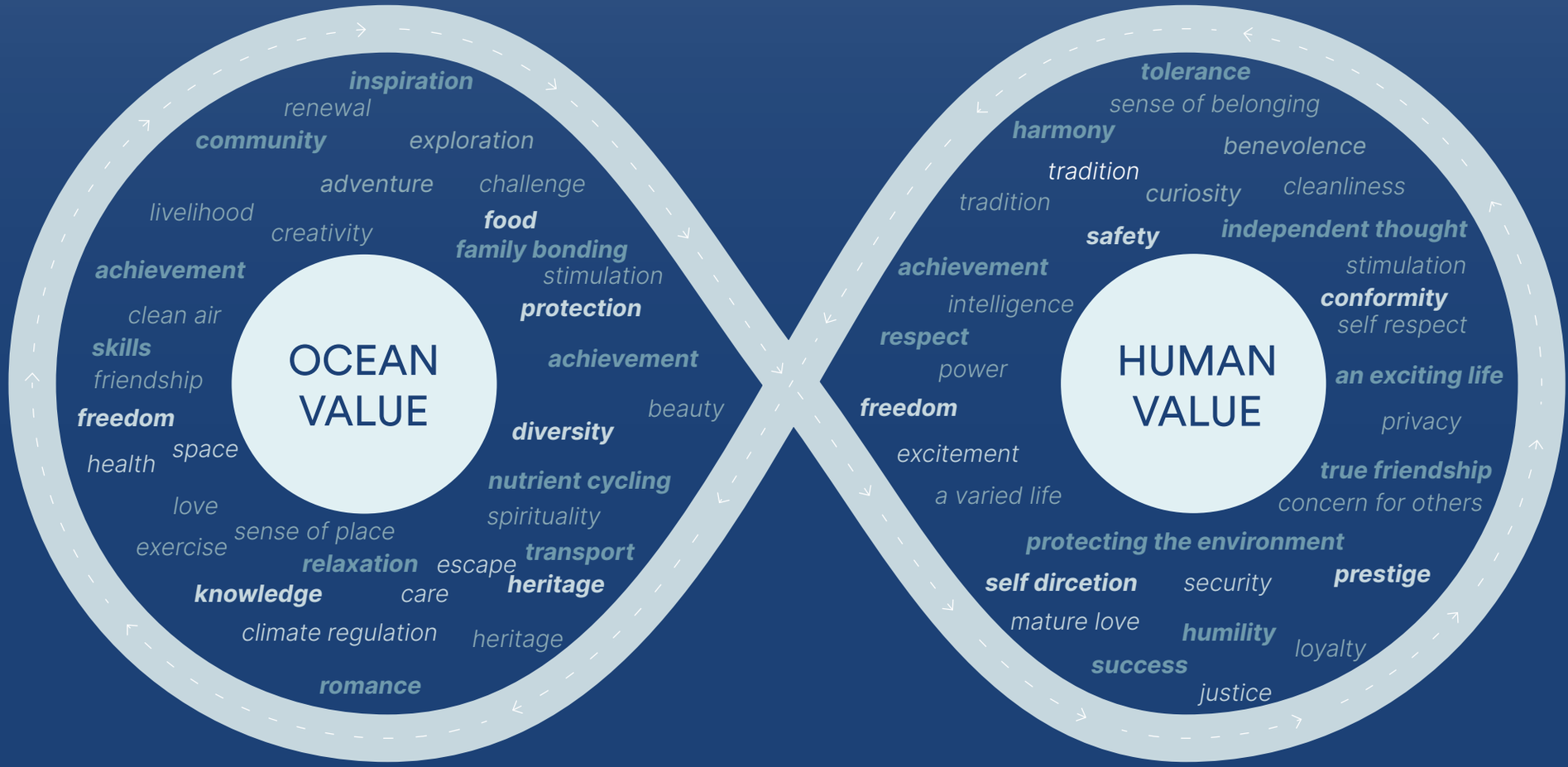


Fig. 2. Navigating ocean value and human values.

Case study

We Are Ocean

By applying our collaborative ethos and Values Based Approach (VBA), we worked to establish a new network with organisations both within and beyond the Marine CoLAB.

This effort led to the development of We Are Ocean. The We Are Ocean collective is a global, values led initiative to accelerate the rise in Ocean Literacy. The mission is to find ways to mobilise messaging, enable positive collusion and hatch new concepts. Through collaborations, the initiative brings together unusual suspects to focus on specific issues and help people to experience the ocean, physically, digitally, or virtually, as a gateway to loving and learning about it.

We Are Ocean's recent report showcases multiple actions to advance Ocean Literacy and protection through education and learning at all ages and seizing opportunities to bake in ocean literacy principles in a range of learning experiences and opportunities.

World Ocean Day For Schools

We Are Ocean has helped launch innovative campaign activities, including Ocean Literacy open design sprints in London and Bristol. These led to the piloting of World Ocean Day for Schools in 2018, engaging 410 schools and rising to 2,500 schools in 2019. In 2022, we had engagement from schools in over 70 countries worldwide, with 32,000+ students tuning in to live lessons on World Ocean Day.

There are stacks of awesome activities, live lessons and resources for schools to take part in - hosted by our incredible partners and contributors each year (a stellar line up of ocean advocates from around the world).

Much of the focus for 2022 is about expanding our ocean story to a water story. Through our new advocacy campaign Our Blue, we're helping students understand that every natural blue space is connected to the ocean and, therefore, they can become ocean advocates no matter where they live. Check out the Our Blue map where 1000s of schools have registered their blue spaces. This has created an opportunity for us to engage with schools beyond World Ocean Day itself.

The teaching resources have been translated into French, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian and World Ocean Day for Schools has been endorsed as a UN Ocean Decade action.

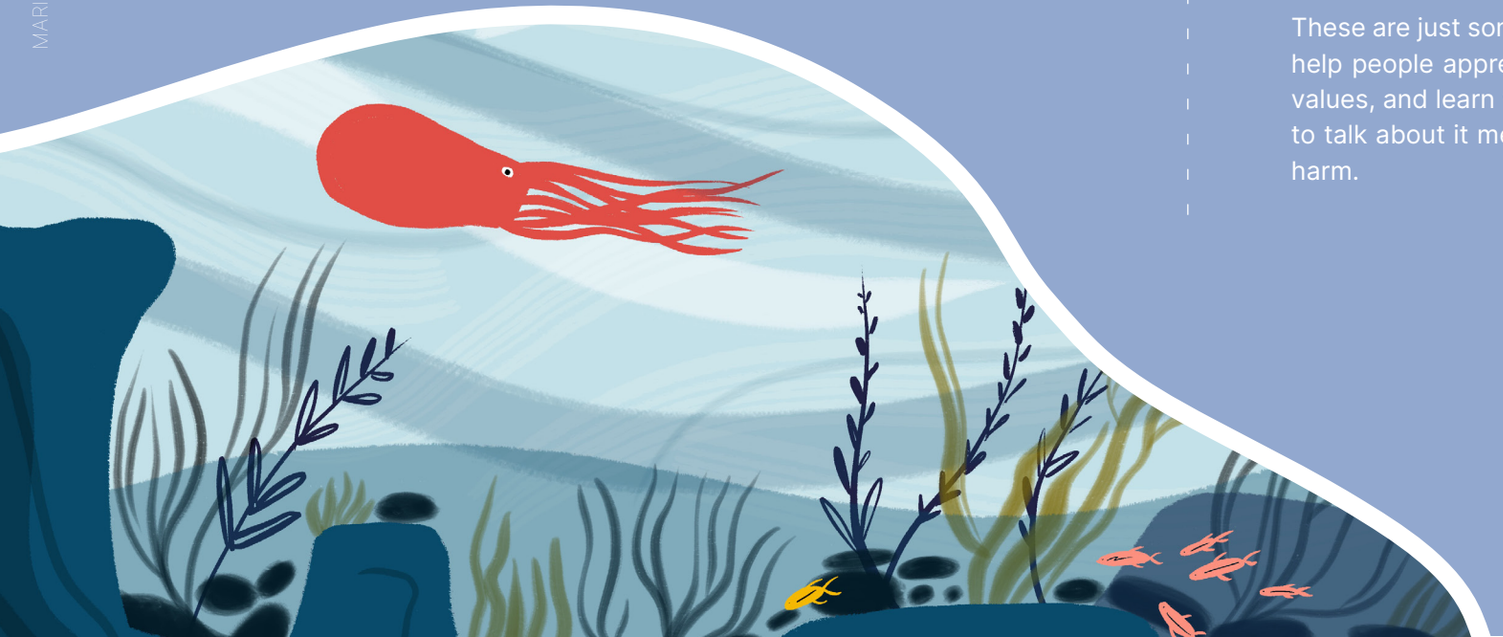
Fig. 3. World Ocean Day for Schools.

Fig. 4. The We Are Ocean journey 2017-2021.

Ocean literacy initiatives are gaining momentum. The Marine CoLAB has been keeping up to date with action from across the CoLAB community and beyond to understand what is happening where. We have been utilising learning from other successful initiatives to shape our thinking and action in the ocean literacy space. Here are some examples of the brilliant ongoing work happening around the world:

- Surfers Against Sewage has been using the plastic crisis to engage schools in learning experiences to raise the level of ocean literacy around our polluting plastic habits through its Plastic Free Schools program.

- Meanwhile, the I am Water Foundation in South Africa is using experience and connection to the ocean to help youngsters in underserved communities discover their relationship to the ocean and to fall in love with it, as a way of shifting negative behaviours.



- Returning to the UK, the Back the Blue Belt campaign from Blue Marine Foundation is widening the conversation on the critical role of marine protected areas. It is highlighting the fact that only 7% of the ocean is currently protected and drawing attention to what that means for the future of ocean and human health.

- At the European level, Sea Change is an EU H2020-funded project aimed at catalysing a fundamental “sea change” in the way European citizens view their relationship with the sea, by empowering them to take direct and sustainable action towards a healthy ocean, healthy communities and ultimately a healthy planet. Using the concept of Ocean Literacy, Sea Change is working to create a deeper understanding of how people’s health depends on the health of our ocean. The objectives will be achieved by a closely interlinked programme of mobilisation activities focused on education, community and governance actors which will be directly targeted at citizens.

These are just some of the initiatives springing up around the world to help people appreciate how the ocean is connected to our lives and values, and learn what they need to know about the ocean to be able to talk about it meaningfully and behave in ways that do not cause it harm.

Would you like to find out more about Ocean Literacy?

Collaboration

The heart of what we do, the bedrock of our experiments and the catalyst for our impact

What is collaboration?

Collaboration is one of those words that has recently become a popular phrase but, partly due to this, its meaning is interpreted differently by different people. The true meaning of the word is simply 'to work with another person or group in order to achieve or do something' and it is often thought of as akin to cooperation. The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation recognised that in order to truly create and accelerate change in the world to benefit the ocean, they needed to support a dynamic group of people embedded in organisations that could reach from grassroots communities to international decision makers, within the marine conservation sector and across other sectors. This group would need to be supported over a long period of time to carve out the time and space to work together and build trust to enable deep impact.

The Marine CoLAB was the result. Each organisation invited to become a member believed in the urgent need to safeguard the ocean and that a Values Based Approach (VBA) could be a gamechanger. The organisations each brought different types of expertise and networks to the mix to create a base from which, over time, we could become more than the sum of our parts. We understood we needed to work in a deeply collaborative way and needed to 'leave our egos and logos' at the door. To visualise this journey, the simple collaborative spectrum in Figure 5 can be a useful tool.

A collaborative spectrum - with thanks to 3KQ

Too often, the term 'collaborate' or 'collaboration' is used as a catch-all phrase, which unhelpfully masks the actual need for groups to work together in different ways, toward differing outputs and outcomes, at different times.

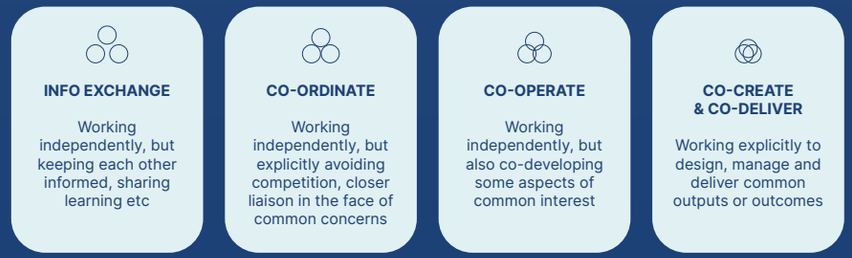


Fig. 5. This spectrum is adapted from Penny Walker's 'Spectrum of Collaboration' from her book "Working Collaboratively – a practical guide to achieving more".

This spectrum is a useful frame to help a group reflect more clearly on how and when they need to work differently together. All four types of collaboration on the spectrum are good and yield benefits, but they are different. There is a progressive rising challenge to ways of working as you move from left to right. We can imagine a simple 'get together' or even an exchange of emails being fine at the far left-hand side, whilst independent facilitation or convening is needed at the far right-hand side, where the stakes are highest, to enable the 'egos and logos' to be left at the door.

Arguably, problems tend to be encountered at a more frequent rate when collaborative groups attempt to work toward the right-hand side of the spectrum. They often don't consider the need for a different way of working together and attempt deep collaboration using everyday methods more suited to the left-hand side of the collaborative spectrum. The demands of co-operation, co-creation and co-delivery necessitate a very different working style to exchanging information and simple co-ordination.

This progression is typified by increasing attention to planning, relationships, agreement building and increasingly well resourced 'whole process management'. This management is vital as, at the right-hand side of the spectrum, simply organising a meeting isn't comprehensive enough and typically leads to (energy and enthusiasm sapping) misunderstanding, conflict between organisations and potential failure.

Standing collaborative groups benefit from:

1. Having a consistent, mutually understood language to describe how they might agree to work.

2. The ability to develop and work in different ways (e.g. styles, formats, disciplines or structures) in order to successfully adjust to the varying demands of their work together.

3. Taking the time to build trust and knowledge of each other's organisational and individual values to ensure each collaborator fully understands what each organisation can bring to the collaboration (e.g. strengths, skills, networks) and seeks to achieve through the collaboration (e.g. the impact and change they want to see in the world and the part they wish to play within that).

Fig. 6. A collaborative early CoLAB session in action.

Case Study

How did the Marine CoLAB work together to achieve a truly collaborative approach?

The Marine CoLAB started on the left-hand side of the spectrum and over time moved into the right-hand side of the spectrum. To achieve this, we met regularly in person as equal and active participants in an innovative, effective and supportive environment, led in the first year by independent creative facilitators, FO:AM.

This helped us break down organisational barriers, arrive as people first and uncover our shared values and love of the ocean. We worked in an action, research and learning cycle so we were constantly monitoring our success, learning and welcoming ideas and expertise from others to help us evolve our practice.

Our work is 'coLABoratory' and guided by four principles: **collaboration**, **experimentation**, **learning** and **communication**.

- **We collaborate**: We meet regularly as equal and active participants in an innovative, effective and supportive collaboration. We welcome ideas and expertise from others.

- **We experiment**: We co-create projects, both within our organisations and in the world, that test our hypothesis and the Values Based Approach (VBA). We accept that not all the interventions we test will be successful.

- **We learn**: We create action-learning cycles to actively reflect on our collaboration and on the small, light touch experiments and larger projects we initiate and run. We share and replicate good practice and adapt and amend plans when we need to.

- **We communicate**: We work together to communicate about how the ocean makes life both possible and worth living. We frame our communication to connect with people's deeply held, personal and shared values to reconnect their wellbeing with the ocean.

Inevitably, there have been closer collaborations between those involved in delivering the CoLAB experiments and times when the wider collaboration has ebbed and flowed. All collaborations need to flex and adapt to the immediate need, but the trust built and dedication to the approach across the organisations has ensured that we come back together when needed.

The LAB offers us **time & space** to shift focus from business as usual and investigate complex, real world challenges and to collaboratively develop solutions.

The LAB approach encourages **co-creation and peer learning**. The more diverse the participants' backgrounds, the more they can learn from each other.

The LAB recognises that **everyone has a contribution to make** - no individual expertise can ever fully cover the breadth of subject matter, helping us realise how interdependent we are.

The LAB is **explicitly experimental** - actively encouraging fresh thinking and embracing the risk of failure.

The LAB values **creativity**.

The LAB is **inclusive and welcoming.**

The LAB leaves **room for the unexpected**, the unplanned and the inconsequential. It encourages free exploration without losing track of the intention the group set for themselves.

The LAB cultivates **agile mindsets, heartfelt values** and **proactive cultures**.

The LAB is a **dynamic network**, able to change its shape and scope depending on its needs and available resources.

Fig. 7. Elements of taking a CoLABoratory approach

What has our CoLABoration achieved to date?

The CoLAB has developed an outstanding collaborative ethos, building an ecosystem of skills, a model for systemic working and bilateral exchange of knowledge and insights, and partnerships among members not previously working together.

It has developed cross sector, systemic interventions that address key needs and fundamental principles around the Values Based Approach, whilst simultaneously helping to embed an experimental approach within our organisations. Our experiments include:

- **Our #OneLess campaign (2016-2022)** – #OneLess was set up as a Marine CoLAB experiment to turn the tide against single-use plastic within a complex urban setting. It catalysed a change in the way Londoners drink water, from single-use plastic water bottles to refilling and reusing. Together with a network of over 94 institutions and businesses, we have eliminated 9 million single-use plastic items, dispensed over 981,000 refills from new drinking fountains and removed 137,000 bottles from the River Thames. The campaign is now a London-wide network achieving positive action every day, and is evolving its approach for different parts of the globe.

  The Zoological Society of London is currently applying their learning from #OneLess to their work in the UK Overseas Territories, empowering stakeholders to mitigate the impacts of plastics and develop long-term strategies to enable systemic change, reduce single-use plastic consumption and improve disposal and recycling practices.

- **Agents of Change** – This experiment has been working with diverse community voices to build a new narrative around the need for marine conservation zones in three pilot areas; Beachy Head East and Kingmere (both in Sussex) and Cromer Shoals (North Norfolk). The project tackles key underlying issues with the public perception of marine protected areas (MPAs) and is supporting a network of new voices to shift the narrative about MPAs. There is already evidence of shared understanding and openness to the range of values people attach to the coast and sea, resulting in improved dialogue and engagement in the project areas.

- **Our Ocean SoundWaves campaign** - SoundWaves helped non-governmental organisations (NGOs) apply the Values Based Approach in their communications for a 'Mental Health Awareness Week' experiment, engaging leading academics in the field of ocean and human health and wellbeing from Exeter University, and One Ocean FM, a communication platform to accelerate action around UN Sustainable Development Goal 14. The initiative reached and resonated with hundreds of thousands of people.

- **We Are Ocean** – Applying the collaborative ethos and Values Based Approach (VBA) of the Marine CoLAB, we worked to establish a new network with organisations beyond the CoLAB. These have significant reach to help accelerate UK ocean literacy (an understanding of the ocean's influence on us and our influence on the ocean) – identified as a systemic gap in communicating the value of the ocean effectively.

- The CoLAB has been instrumental in bringing together a wider network of organisations (connected through LAB members) to collaborate on innovative campaign activities including:
  - **Ocean Literacy design sprints** – These led to the creation of World Ocean Day for Schools. In 2022, we had engagement from schools in over 70 countries worldwide, with 32,000+ students tuning in to live lessons on World Ocean Day. The resources are available for use all year round, with more and more schools signing the Our Blue manifesto.
  - **The #OneLess design challenge and pioneer network** – We worked with designers, technologists, architects and planners to develop, design and scale up transformational refill solutions for London.

Beyond the experiments developed, the Marine CoLAB has also:

- Organised a combined response to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (IPPC SROCC). Twenty-two organisations collaborated for our UK response and then Our Fish took the campaign Europe-wide, getting an impressive 52 NGOs on board. The response featured four key asks around ending illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; a robust High Seas Treaty; protection of at least 30% of the global ocean by 2030 through the implementation of highly and fully Protected Areas; and protection of the deep through a precautionary pause on deep sea mining. You can read our asks and the corresponding letter here.
- Contributed to the #ListenToTheOcean campaign, which was first launched at the G7 and then at COP26. This campaign, led by Creative Coalition, brought 80 ocean charities together to promote one clear message: our leaders need to "listen to the science" and protect the world's ocean
- Convened scientists, policymakers and NGOs in partnership with the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and government (Defra) at the 2019 workshop on the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus, which led to greater collaboration between the government and the marine conservation sector in the run-up to COP26.
- Brought together communications professionals across the Marine CoLAB and beyond to share our thinking about effective communication and taking a Values Based Approach (VBA).
- Encouraged member organisations to embrace innovative approaches that help them build wider networks of support and collaborate more effectively to create change. For example, Marine CoLAB members, Thames Estuary Partnership and Fauna & Flora International, have both taken the 'Three Horizons' horizon scanning approach back to their organisations for wider roll out since experimenting with this approach in the Marine CoLAB.
- Inspired new CoLABoratory approaches to be implemented through member networks beyond the Marine CoLAB. For example, the High Seas Alliance took a Values Based Approach (VBA) to the UN to great effect, using knitted sea creatures to bring the ocean into the room 'switching people out of negotiator mode' and reconnecting them with their purpose for being there.

- Begun increasing awareness of a Values Based Approach (VBA) in the funding community - through a funding system change report, a funders' drinks reception and Environmental Funders Network blog, for example.

- Developed Compass, an applied learning journey supporting marine and coastal professionals to take values and systems approaches. The curriculum created as part of Compass (including this guide) aims to further support a Community of Practice for peer learning and problem-solving among marine and coastal professionals.

Through all of this work, we have strengthened the CoLABoratory approach within the core Marine CoLAB group and have begun to apply and amplify it within our organisations and across wider networks.

Fig. 8. One of the knitted marine critters distributed by the High Seas Alliance at UN High Seas Treaty negotiations.

London is transforming into a city where refilling is the norm

#OneLess impact to date

Supporting policy change

- #OneLess network of drinking fountains dispenses **775,580 bottles** in two years, catalysing a **£5 million** investment from the Mayor and Thames Water to install 100+ fountains.
- The 2018 **London Environment Strategy** sets bottle reduction targets.
- **> 40 organisations and businesses** call on 2021 Mayor of London candidates for urgent action on single-use plastic water bottles.

Brokering collaboration

- #OneLess Pioneer Network of **90+ organisations** remove **five million single-use plastic water bottles** and **nine million single-use plastic items** from supply chains.
- Together with Greater London Authority and MIW Water Cooler Experts, **pioneering a drinking fountain fund** to help support Londoners to refill on the go.
- **Mentoring and learning events** support organisations to reduce single-use plastics.
- Collaboration with **17 designers and innovators** for 2018 London Design Festival creates product-service solutions to eliminate single-use plastic water bottles.
- Teaming up with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to achieve greater impact, e.g. Surfers Against Sewage for the successful 'Plastic Free Parliament' campaign, resulting in **Parliament going single-use plastic free**.

Engaging Londoners and visitors

- **84% of Londoners** report owning a refillable, **60% refill** at least once a month.
- 'Hello London, Goodbye Ocean Plastic' reaches **five million people. One in three Londoners** surveyed report being more likely to stop buying single-use plastic water bottles after seeing this campaign.
- **135,000+ plastic bottles removed** from Thames by hundreds of Thames 21 and North Thames Estuary Litter Picking Group volunteers. **357 volunteers** trained to monitor plastic bottle pollution.

Our broader impact

United Nations HQ goes single-use plastic water bottle free, changing the prescribed behaviour of delegates at all UN meetings. #OneLess provides a **blueprint for other geographies**, where #OneLess is being implemented, e.g. in the Chagos Archipelago.

Systems

Breaking down silos, navigating worldviews, disciplines and sectors to take a holistic approach in tackling the challenges facing the ocean

Why take a systemic approach?

The world is complex and so are the issues facing our ocean. Perhaps because the ocean is so vast and its influence so pervasive, we have underestimated the impact we are having on it. Humans are having a large impact and, unless we act to make our ocean more resilient, its ability to support all life on earth will be compromised. Despite growing knowledge about the importance of the ocean, its ability to sustain life on our planet is being threatened.

Be it through direct human activity such as overfishing or marine pollution, or through ocean warming or acidification as a result of the human induced climate crisis – today the ocean and the benefits it provides are under more serious threat than ever before. The ocean is warming and becoming more acidic, sea-levels are rising, oxygen levels are decreasing - threatening marine life already stressed by pervasive pollution, habitat loss and over-exploitation. Around the world, coastal communities are on the frontlines of climate change, facing increased tides and storm surges, and higher salinity of freshwater and groundwater sources.

These issues are complex and interconnected and tackling them requires diverse approaches at different levels – from behaviour change, place-based or local level change and institutional changes across sectors and organisations, to structural changes in policy, incentives, legislation or education.

The world is constantly changing and evolving and, as professionals who seek to address these challenges, we need to devise approaches that can help us navigate complexity and uncertainty, negotiate trade-offs between potential interventions and dynamically learn and evolve our interventions.

Our approach to change-making therefore needs to both match the complexity of the challenges we face, as well as the way in which change happens in our socio-ecological systems, thus ensuring that we create change in line with living systems, as an interconnected, dynamically moving and emergent system. *(Birney, 2015)*

What do we mean by a systems change approach?

System change is both an outcome and a process. Our definition of system change as an outcome is:

> *"System change is the emergence of a new pattern of organisation or system structure. That pattern, being the physical structure, the flows and relationships or the mindsets or paradigms of a system, results in new goals of the system." (Birney, 2015)*

System change processes recognise that the world is complex and interconnected, and that change is non-linear and happens at multiple levels over multiple time scales.

Taking a systems change approach means recognising the interplay between outcome (the change we seek to see in the world) and process (the ways in which we organise and intervene in order to enable change). To do so, a variety of systemic tools and approaches can help us to understand and diagnose a systemic challenge and inform how we strategically design strategies for change, as well as inform how we intervene (such as taking an experimental, collaborative and learning approach). At its core, taking a systems approach recognises the key relationship between experimentation and learning. This relationship is enabled by systemic practices, illustrated in *Figure 9*.

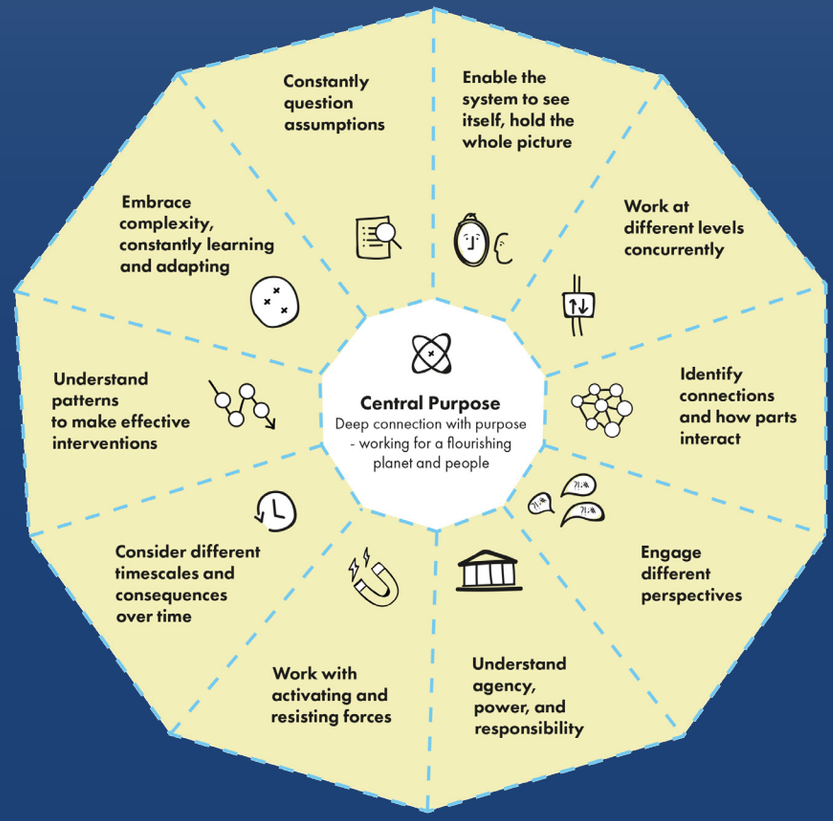
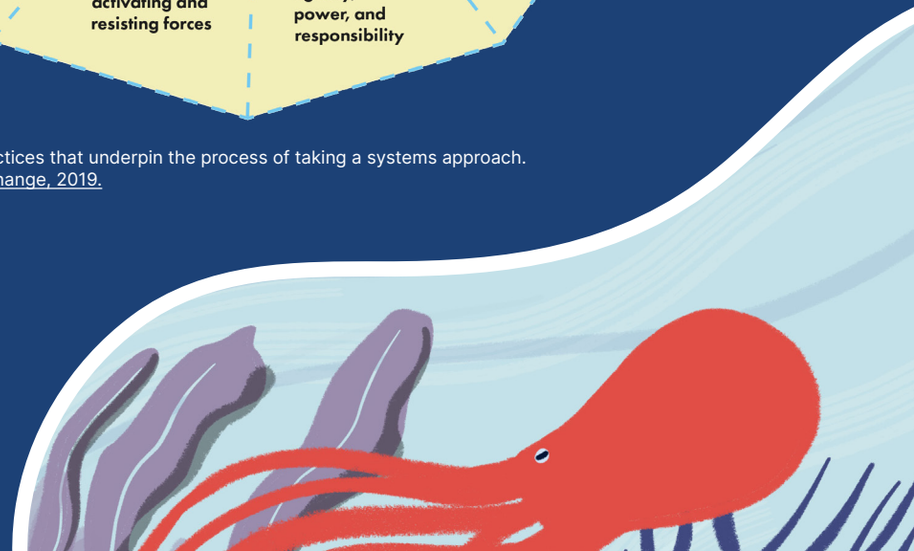


Fig. 9. Systemic practices that underpin the process of taking a systems approach. School of System Change, 2019.



Case Study

Taking a systemic approach to experimenting and learning

In the Marine CoLAB, we have taken a systemic approach to experimenting and learning in a variety of ways.

Understanding marine issues & finding opportunities to act through horizon scanning

We started by exploring which marine issues should be addressed through our collaboration. We did this through regular horizon scanning and through engaging others in determining where there were opportunities for change, and therefore where the CoLAB was best placed to intervene given our assets, knowledge, relationships, and resources. We used the Three Horizons framework to underpin our yearly horizon scanning process, as we aimed to spot strategic gaps. We used the questions in the framework on the next page for discussion.

To understand the trends and pressures that are influencing the issues - think of these as large scale issues that are 'outside' of the main boundary or sphere of concern of marine or ocean issues (e.g. political landscape, climate change and other social and cultural issues) - we used the questions in the landscape section of the framework for discussion (see *Figure 11*).

Developing experiments & learning from them

In being a lab that experiments and learns, it was important to come together regularly to share insights from our respective experiments and look at common threads and implications. This regular learning and iteration took place at the whole CoLAB level, as well as at the individual experiment level.

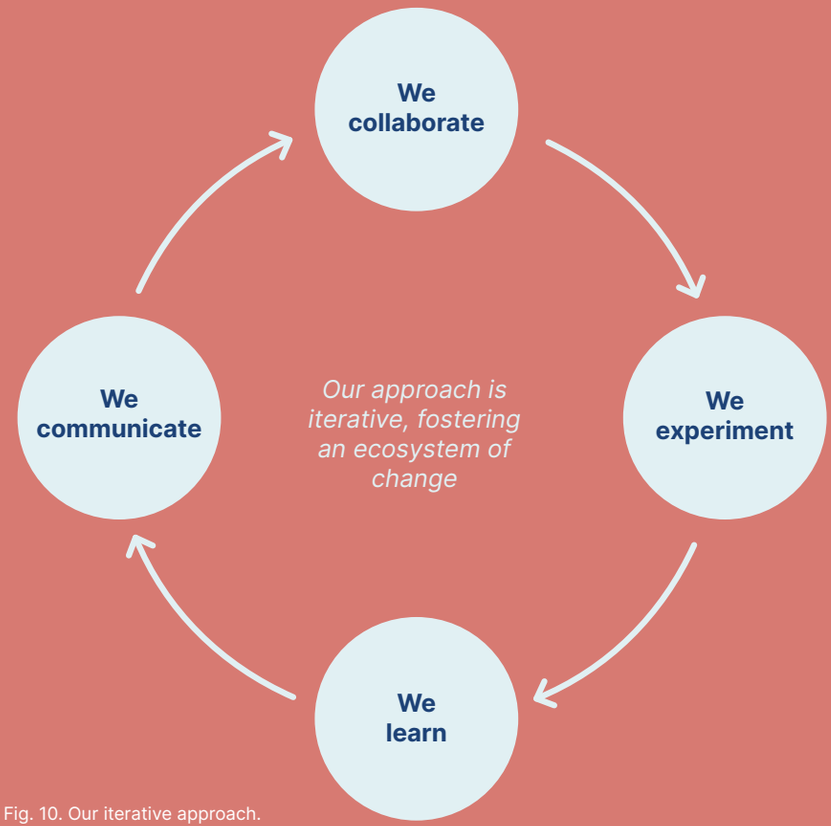


Fig. 10. Our iterative approach.

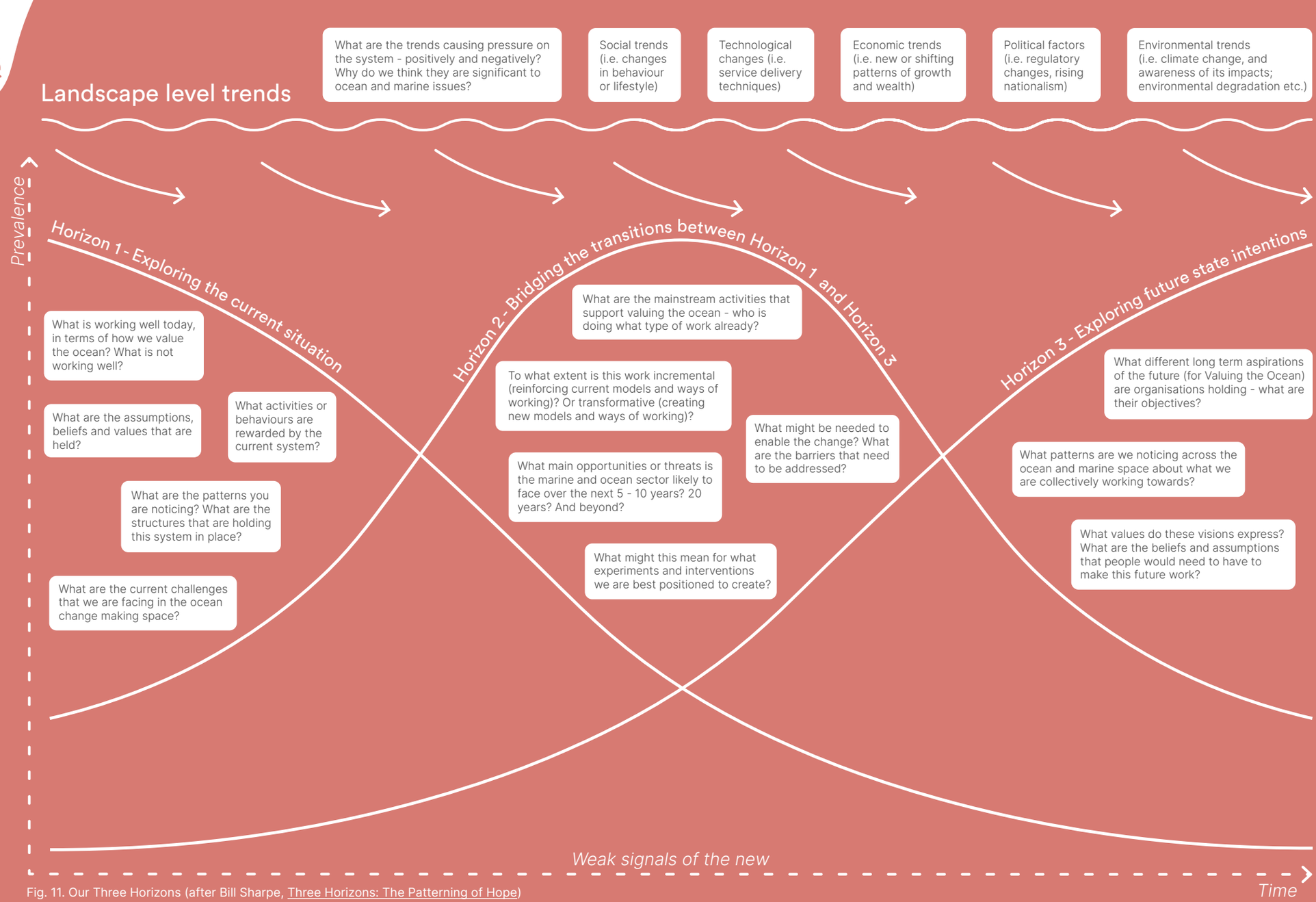


Fig. 11. Our Three Horizons (after Bill Sharpe, Three Horizons: The Patterning of Hope)

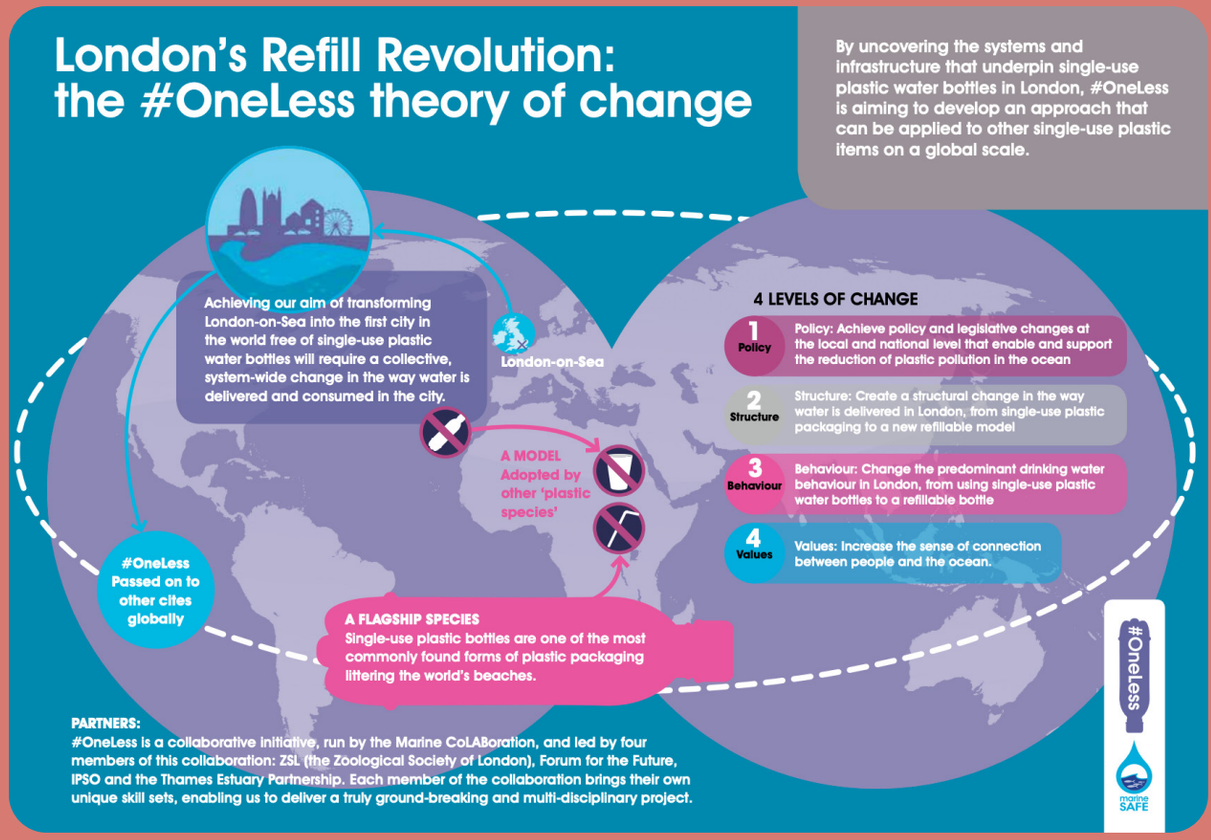
What characterises a CoLAB experiment?

We used the following questions to help reflect and decide on the experiments we might undertake as part of our strategy:

- ☑ *Is it innovative / novel?*
- ☑ *Is there energy and excitement around the idea?*
- ☑ *Will it create opportunities for action research?*
- ☑ *Will it facilitate collaborative working?*
- ☑ *Does it play to our strengths?*
- ☑ *Will we need to engage other collaborators?*
- ☑ *Does it have a UK / EU focus?*
- ☑ *How is it testing our central hypothesis?*
- ☑ *What values is it exploring / measuring / applying?*
- ☑ *Is it evidence-based / adding to the evidence base?*
- ☑ *Does the project create opportunities for exploring / generating shared value? (shared understanding)*
- ☑ *Can we affect change by doing this? What could change as a result?*
- ☑ *Will we be able to capture changes in value / perception?*
- ☑ *Will we be able to measure impact?*

Using systemic diagnosis as part of standalone experiments

The theory of change visual below represents the systemic diagnosis we undertook as part of #OneLess, one of the flagship CoLAB experiments. To document our learnings and process, we have published a standalone practical guide, which can be found here.



Governance

How we organise, decide and take action through forms, structures and social processes across scale and time

What is governance?

Our current ways of organising and creating change need to align with our values and the wider systemic and collaborative approach we want to take. How we operate and organise – our governance – needs to embody the approach to change we want to see in the outside world. Much of the work in this space is uncharted territory. For example, the current dominant view sees the 'organisation' as the main form of organising and 'projects' as the main unit of implementing actions within and between organisations. Evolving these patterns to more fluid and emergent ways of organising, that enable us to work with and in collaboration with others, is a considerable challenge. We believe, however, that experimenting with new forms of organising has the potential to bring more to the work that we do. For example, collaborative governance can help facilitate collective intelligence building and enable us to respond to issues through bringing together different skills, capabilities and ways of knowing.

How we relate, work together and organise are cornerstones of change making. We define governance as:

> *"How we organise, decide and take action - at multiple levels of society - the forms, structures and social processes that actors engage in a diversity of ways across scale and time."*
> *Forum for the Future, 2021*

Systemic governance has both soft and hard elements. The arc and perhaps dance of any governance journey is about the flow between this emergent and structured format, working between the soft and hard elements of governance at different stages.

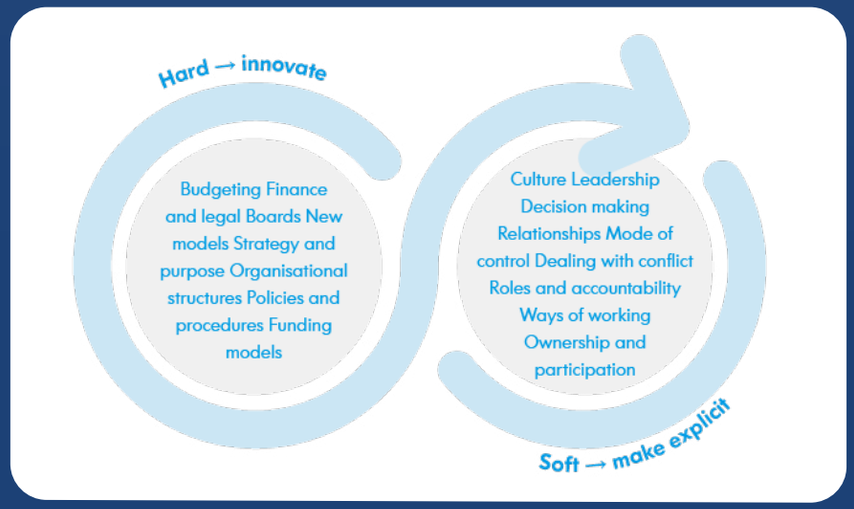


Fig. 12. The soft and hard elements of governance. Forum for the Future, 2021.

The Marine CoLAB has been through different phases of development, from being more open and emergent at the beginning, to establishing some roles and organising forms around the various experiments, to taking a more structured approach to thinking through our scaling and embedding, looking at how we share our learning and meaningfully engage the wider community.

Phase 1: Inception (2013 - 2015)

The Calouste Gulbenkian Oceans Initiative (GOI) was launched in Lisbon, Portugal in 2013, with the following stated mission:

> *"Our ocean needs to be in better shape if it is to make enhanced and sustainable contributions to our wellbeing and economies, and for this we not only need to understand its real value, but to look at its protection and restoration not only as a cost but as an investment".*

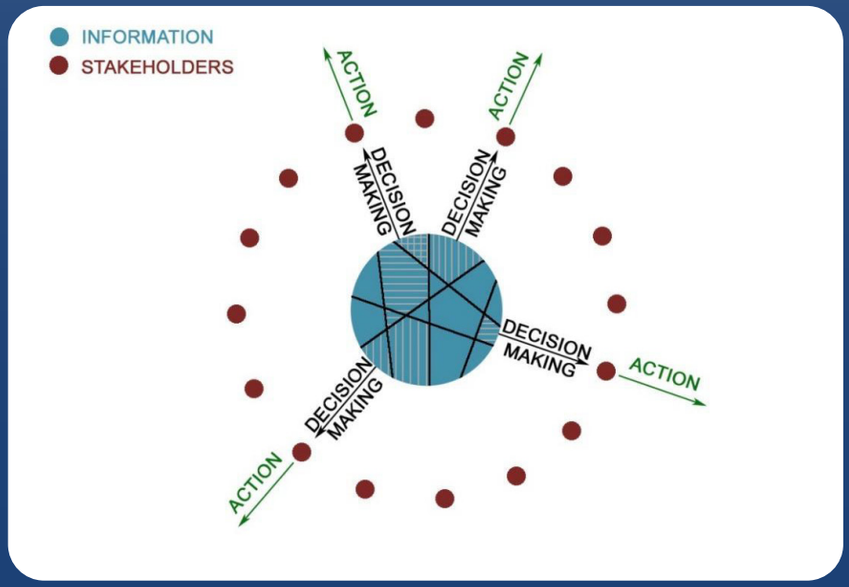
As part of the wider GOI, the 'Valuing the Ocean' work strand was initiated by the CGF UK Branch. In 2013, Forum for the Future was commissioned to identify leverage points to enable and accelerate change in the marine sphere. The result was a report entitled: A Systems Programme for Leveraging Change on Marine Issues.

The report found that progress towards sustainable management of our ocean was being hampered by:

1. The lack of information available about the marine environment.

2. The fact that existing information does not currently flow to the right stakeholders at the right times or in the right ways to drive better management decisions.

The report hypothesised that improving this flow of information would lead to strengthened collaborations across stakeholder groups and that taking action in both areas would influence two very powerful levers of system change.



THE CURRENT SYSTEM
Siloed information, limited decision-making and uncoordinated action taken by too few stakeholders.

POTENTITAL FUTURE SYSTEM

More porous partitions between siloes of information, wider distribution of data and translation of data to accessible formats for all. Action by more stakeholders.

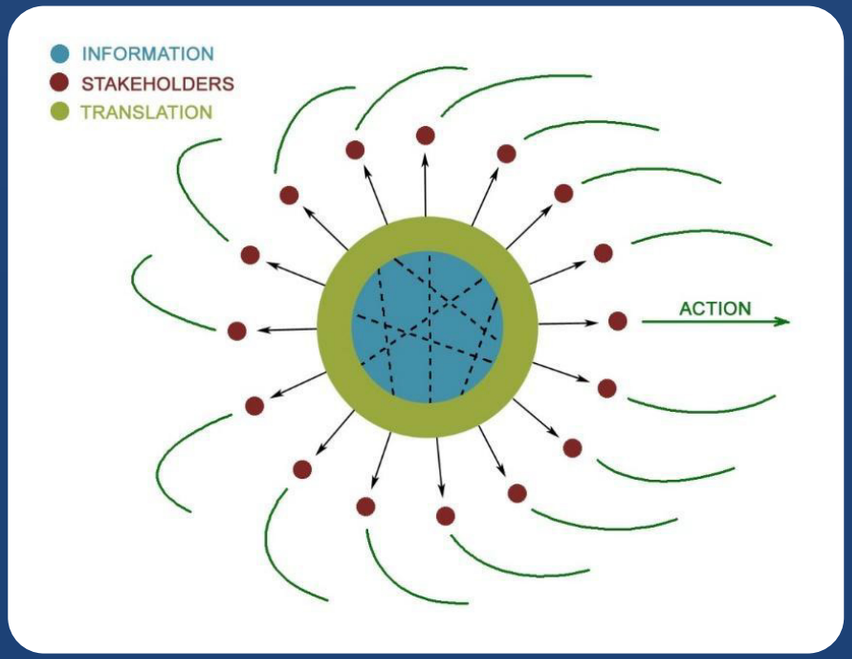


Fig. 13. Current versus future governance system in the marine and coastal sectors. Forum for the Future, 2013.

The report recommended two key interventions to bring about this system change:

1. Make information widely available to all, as a result of more porous partitions between silos of information.

2. Convert this information into formats accessible to a full range of stakeholder groups.

In response to these findings, the Marine CoLABoration was initiated. It was initially established to enable a relatively small group of participants to access the space and resources needed to explore existing practice, and to innovate and experiment. Participants were selected through an open call or via invitation, on the basis of their distinctive experience, interests and network.

The first Marine CoLAB meeting was held in January 2015. Initially, the group was professionally facilitated by FoAM, but advanced to self-facilitate. The group co-developed the CoLAB's driving hypothesis, approach, way of working and action learning process.

Phase 2: Establishment (2016 - 2018)

As part of this phase, we implemented our strategy, seeking to act as a catalyst for the marine and coastal sectors - exploring strategic opportunities and incubating and implementing experiments that tested our hypothesis and would be of value to the sector.

Some experiments matured to a 'project stage', with additional funding and increased capacity to deliver specific outcomes and impacts. Whilst projects operated as satellites of the Marine CoLAB, the core group benefited from opportunities for further experimentation, learning and communication.

Throughout all our activities we have taken a systems approach - operating across the whole ecosystem - but we are particularly interested in three spheres of influence:

1. The marine and coastal sector: including NGOs, director/ managers of communications, directors/managers of programmes, policy and advocacy, CEOs, trustees, ocean funders, amplifiers (for example media and high profile individuals).

2. Wider civil society sector: other NGOs and funders who might adopt a collaborative and Values Based Approach (VBA).

3. Others engaged through our experimental projects: businesses, individuals.

Our model for systemic change

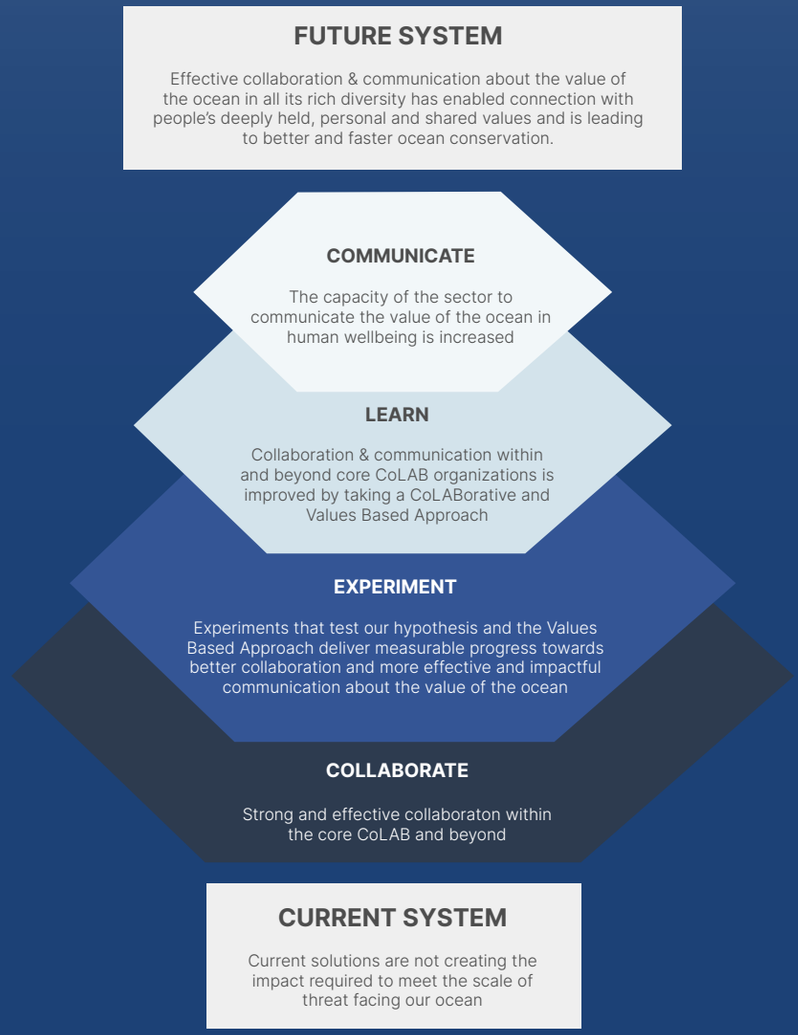


Fig.14. The model for systemic change we developed as part of our second phase.

Phase 3: Reaching Maturity (2019 - 2020)

The participation of Marine CoLAB members had thus far been facilitated by core funding from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, with a recognition that good collaboration takes time and resources and that NGOs need core support to connect and work together well.

Building on the Marine CoLAB experience to date - and learning from other collaborative initiatives to create systemic change (for example the Garfield Foundation's RE-AMP initiative and the Finance Innovation Lab)- the Marine CoLAB adjusted its operating model as illustrated in *Figure 15* below.

This enhanced our collaborative accountability and increased efficiencies in the use of resources enabled us to scale work in three key areas: shifting the narrative, addressing gaps and building capacity.

The following roles emerged as part of this phase:

- **Steering Committee:** This provided overall governance and was responsible for maintaining the purpose, strategy and whole perspective of the initiative – as well as designing the collaborative infrastructure. All steering committee member organisations were funded to participate in four half-day meetings per year.

- **Coordinators:** The CoLAB has been supported by a Marine CoLABoration coordinator (from early 2017 - spring 2020) and a Communications Officer (from 2019). These posts have been managed by Steering Group members on behalf of the Marine CoLAB, the Marine Conservation Society and IPSO / Communications Inc. This ensured coordination was distributed across the network and that resources went to member organisations.

- **Working groups:** We organised ourselves into three working groups to deliver on each of the key strands of the strategy (shifting the narrative, addressing gaps and building capacity). Activities were primarily funded through specific projects, for example, through the Compass capacity building programme or through our communications campaigns, with contributions from project costs supporting the core coordination.

- **Information sharing and collaboration:** We use the online platform, Slack, for information sharing and day-to-day collaboration.

- **Learning:** The learning system was facilitated by the CoLAB coordinator, in an attempt to decrease the burden on each organisation to do separate reporting. Members were asked to input data online and to track progress against their goals. The coordinator analysed this data looking for cross-cutting patterns, gaps and opportunities for critical reflection and improvement.

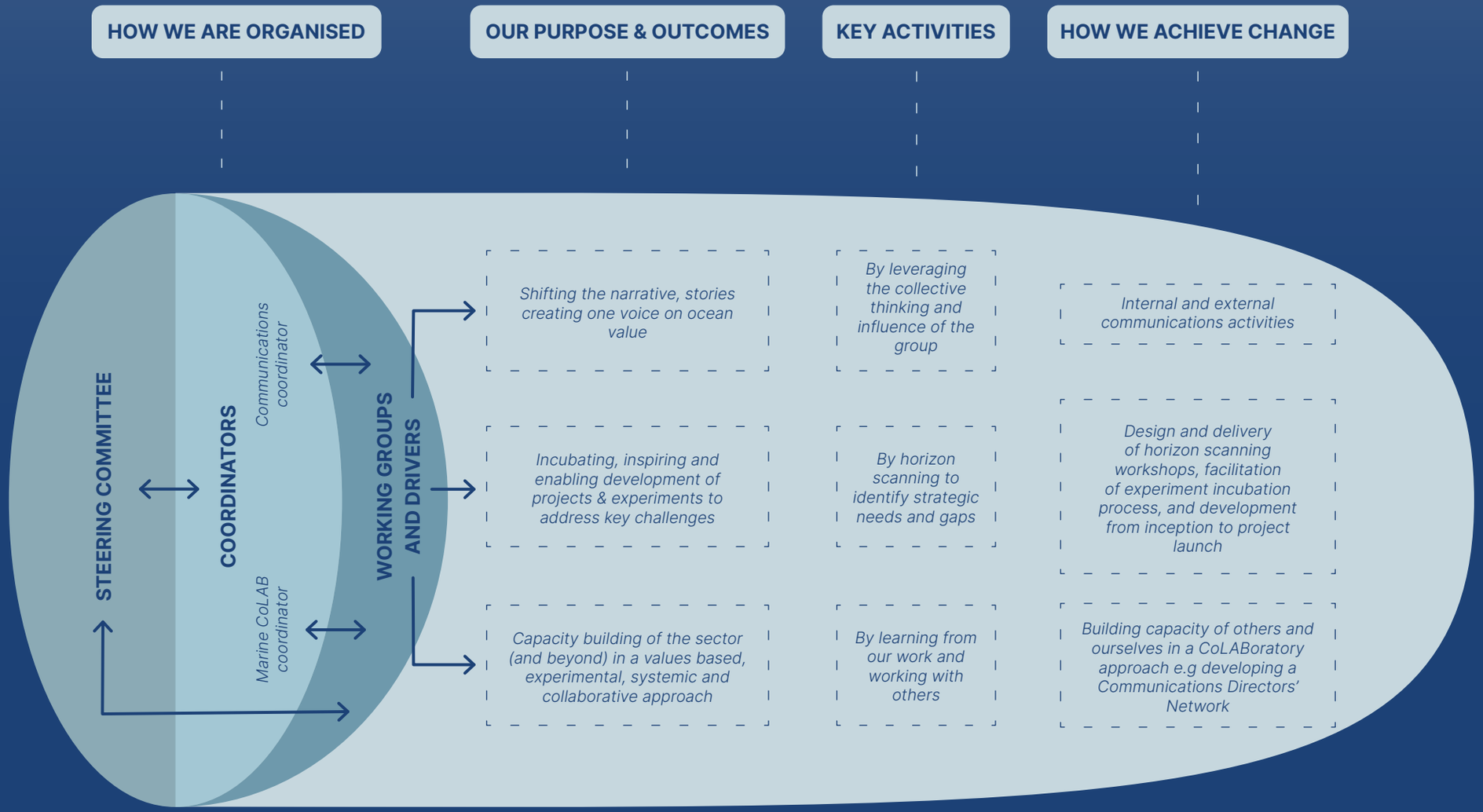


Fig. 15. Our adjusted operating model.

Phase 4: Adaptation and Influence (2021 - onwards)

Against a back-drop of the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic - recognising the urgent need for timely action - the CoLAB carefully reflected on the new social, economic and environmental context within which we all now operate. With the framing of 'Navigating the New Normal', the CoLAB undertook research to better understand the challenges faced by the wider ocean community and brought together a diverse group to consider how we all stay on course to drive forward and plan in a world where, increasingly, shocks derail plans.

As part of this phase, we undertook a structural review and developed an evolved approach to undertaking our core work - to better support the wider community, while reducing our operational budget and increasing our flexibility. The new structure is focused around a small subset of the existing CoLAB Steering Group who undertake general coordination and lead work on the key approaches of Communications, Capacity Building and developing our Community of Practice. This leaner 'Engine Room' is supported by a wider voluntary Advisory Group, formed of the remaining members of the previous Steering Group. This new approach has drastically reduced the operational budget by removing the need for a full time CoLAB coordinator, as well as no longer covering the cost of partner participation.

As part of our work to spread and embed the CoLAB's learning and approaches, we have undertaken the following activities:

CAPACITY BUILDING

We developed and ran the first live version of Compass in Autumn 2021, a learning journey for marine and coastal professionals to develop their capabilities to apply systems change tools and a Values Based Approach (VBA) in their work. The Compass course - which this guide and our associated resources and videos are a part of - has codified our work and approaches ready to share with the wider ocean and coastal community.

VALUES BASED COMMUNICATIONS

We used the UK-based opportunities of the G7 and climate COP26 to focus engagement with ocean and climate groups and to channel collaborative approaches. This built on the work of the CoLAB around the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate launch in 2019 and included the development of a shared statement and other activities and assets.

MARINE COLAB COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

As part of capturing and sharing the learning from the CoLAB, we have developed the Marine CoLAB Community of Practice. This community connects and supports like minded individuals and organisations who have been involved in, or are interested in, the CoLAB's approaches. Through this, we aim to widen the influence of the CoLABoration's learning and continue to promote and support placing the value of the ocean at the heart of all we do.

Fig. 16. One of the #ListenToTheOcean posters used to raise awareness during the 2021 G7 summit in Cornwall.

Final Reflections

The Marine CoLAB seeks to grow the community of organisations interested in a collaborative approach to creating a more ocean-friendly society and will refine its support to the community through specific tools. The CoLAB exemplifies the value of building effective, long-lasting and cross-sectoral collaboration beyond existing networks to tackle complex, systemic issues such as ocean health. It requires honesty, transparency and time to build relationships and foster group commitment.In order to make the case for investment in collaboration across the sector, it will be crucial to communicate its often less tangible, but long-term, value.

We end this guide with some cross-cutting reflections:

THE IMPORTANCE OF MANAGING THE DYNAMIC BETWEEN FORMAL AND INFORMAL

In our years of experimenting, we have often come back to the question - what is a good enough structure? Our structure needed to support equal opportunities for collaboration but also accept there would be times when different people would have different priorities or willingness to participate. Reflecting on power - and how power was distributed - was a valuable element to embed in decision making processes.

SUPPORTING COLLECTIVE VALUES AND CULTURE

This was important, as people have come in and out of the CoLAB over the years as organisational roles have shifted and changed.

SHIFTING ROLES, MANDATES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Managing and enabling shifts requires the recognition of different capabilities and contributions. An awareness of how this is linked to who gets financial compensation is also necessary.

COLLABORATIVE DECISION MAKING

The need for facilitation in decision making was key. This role has been taken on by different people at different times, from employing an organisation in the beginning (FoAM), to bringing on a coordinator, to having a more formal driver or 'chair' role. We have also adopted core practices to support this - from check-ins and reflective practices in our meetings, to facilitating banking decisions using processes such as Co-Resolve.

FUNDER AND COLLABORATOR RELATIONSHIPS

There has been a key shift from a transactional to a relational dynamic as our funder, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, has been an integral part of the CoLAB and acted as an enabler throughout. This dynamic was set up from the get go, building trusting relationships and a healthy power dynamic, which was empowering as well as supportive.

The CoLAB's experiments reveal that through collaboration and communicating why the ocean matters in a way that speaks to and uncovers shared human values, it is possible to achieve greater cut through to audiences. There is a growing appetite in the wider sector to learn from the CoLAB's approach and experiments are resonating with funders.

Insights from this approach and model of collaboration may advance ongoing research around the relationship between human values and behaviour change, with potentially substantial impact for ocean protection.

What Next?

You have now explored the four key concepts we have been practising in the Marine CoLAB: **values, collaboration, systems,** and **governance.** Alongside this introductory guide, you can:

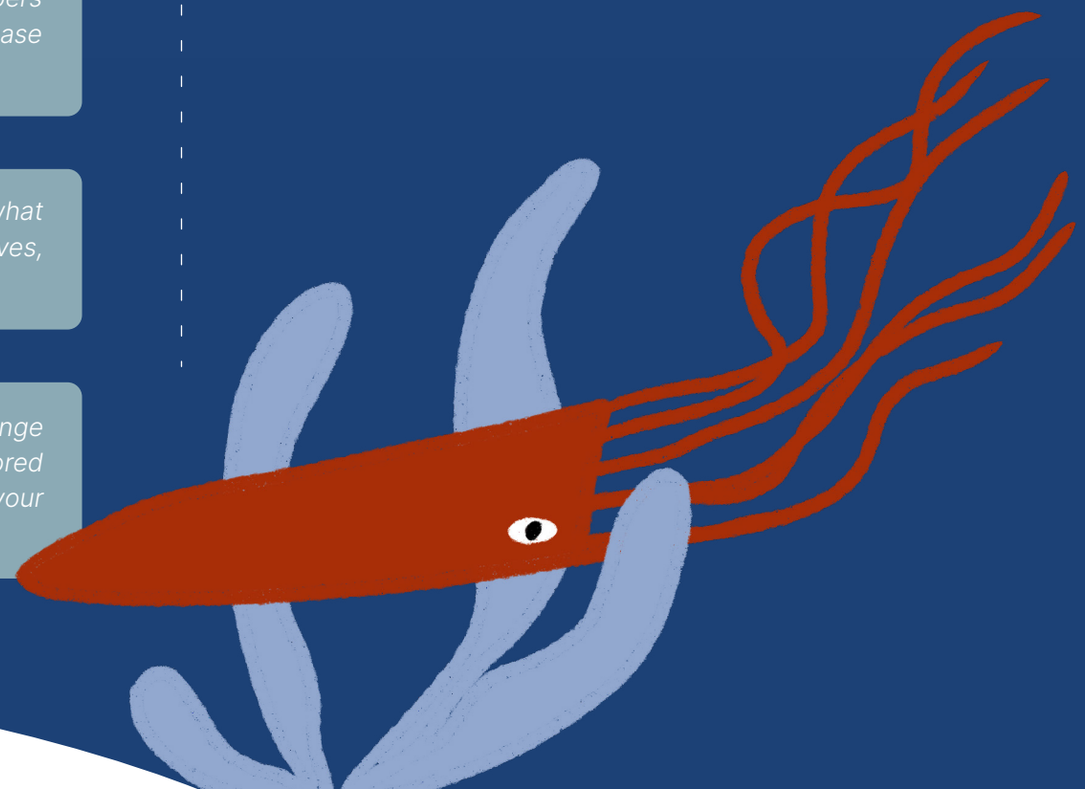
Complete the Marine CoLABoration's online Compass course - a learning journey for marine and coastal professionals to develop their capabilities to apply systems and values based approaches in their work.

Watch a series of videos where Marine CoLAB members introduce these four key words and share stories and case studies from our experiments.

Use our worksheets to reflect on these concepts and what they might mean in practice for your projects and initiatives, your organisation or your collaborations.

Take a deeper dive into how to apply systems change tools and a Values Based Approach (VBA) through tailored modules, featuring videos and exercises to help put your learning into practice.

Join the Marine CoLAB Community of Practice to connect with our network. Take the opportunity to form a peer learning group to apply these tools and methods and to deepen your learning and application of systems based and values based approaches to strategy design, intervention design, communications or monitoring and evaluation.



Glossary

ACTION-LEARNING CYCLES
The Marine CoLAB creates action-learning cycles to reflect on our collaboration and on the experiments and projects we initiate and run. We adapt and amend our plans based on our learning, share and replicate good practice.

ACTOR
An individual or a group that plays an active role within the system, for example, humans, organisations or policymakers.

AGENTS OF CHANGE
A Marine CoLAB experiment, led by the Marine Conservation Society, that aims to bring diverse stakeholders together in coastal communities to enable a more holistic narrative about the value of Marine Protected Areas.

BARRIER
Something preventing or blocking change within the system. This could be economic, social, political, technological or another type of barrier.

COLABORATORY
The Marine CoLAB's approach, guided by our four key principles; collaboration, experimentation, learning and communication.

DRIVER
Something that encourages the development or evolution of a system. This could be economic, social, political, technological or another type of driver.

ENABLER
Something that aids or supports the desired change within the system.

EXPERIMENTS
The co-created projects of the Marine CoLAB that test our central hypothesis and the Values Based Approach (VBA).

EXTERNAL PRESSURE
Anything that sits outside the boundary of the system but influences what happens within the system.

HOLISTIC
An approach that aims to describe or tackle an issue as a whole, rather than targeting specific parts.

HUMAN VALUES
These are ideas that guide our individual and collective actions and behaviours. Human values include truth, honesty, loyalty, love and peace.

INCUBATOR
Where Marine CoLAB members developed or 'incubated' the strategic experiments that furthered the goals of the CoLAB, with wider group input and refinement.

INNOVATION
Taking action to create or implement a new idea, for example a solution, method, product or process.

INTRINSIC OCEAN VALUE
The essential characteristics of the ocean that make it valuable to all life on Earth, and the understanding that the ocean is important by its very nature. (The contrasting type of value is instrumental value, which is the value that something offers as a means to a specific desired or valued end).

LEVERAGE POINT
An area where, if a little pressure is applied, or small action is taken, much larger change can be affected within the system.

MENTAL MODEL
A construction of thought processes, assumptions and beliefs about how the system works. A mental model illustrates how an individual or group perceives their reality and their role within it.

Glossary

OCEAN LITERACY
Ocean literacy describes a person's understanding of the ocean's influence on them and their influence on the ocean. An ocean-literate person understands the essential ocean literacy principles and fundamental concepts; can communicate about the ocean in a meaningful way; and is able to make informed and responsible decisions regarding the ocean and its resources. The key ocean literacy principles underpin how we communicate the value of the ocean.

#ONELESS
Hosted by the Zoological Society of London and the Marine CoLAB's first experiment. This campaign set out to create a refill revolution in London and drastically reduce single use plastic water bottle consumption by connecting Londoners to their impact on the ocean through the use of these bottles. The #OneLess experiment was anchored in ocean values and tapped directly into why the environment is important to people.

SOCIAL LEARNING SYSTEM
A system of designing learning around people and how they work, so that knowledge is a living process of learning - for example, storytelling, conversations or coaching. The Marine CoLAB's day to day work is all part of a social learning and knowledge system.

SYSTEM
A set of things – objects, individuals, groups or processes – interconnected in such a way that they produce their own pattern of behaviour over time.

SYSTEMIC
Describes an action that affects the system as a whole, rather than targeting parts within it.

SYSTEMS APPROACH
A holistic approach that considers attributes of an entire system to solve a problem.

SYSTEM CHANGE
System change is the pursuit or emergence of a new pattern of organisation or system structure.

SYSTEM DIAGNOSIS
Developing an understanding of the system you are seeking to work with by looking at the behaviours, enablers, barriers, actors, innovations and external pressures that are affecting it, as well as how they might relate to each other and how they might, together, create change.

SYSTEM DYNAMICS
The interactions and relationships between various actors and elements within the system.

SYSTEMS THINKING
A school of thought which focuses on recognising the interconnections between the parts of a system and synthesising them into a unified view of the whole.

THEORY OF CHANGE
This is an explanation or description of how the desired system change will become a reality, and the effectiveness of certain actions and/or approaches to achieve this change.

VALUES BASED APPROACH (VBA)
An approach that places values at the root of an initiative. We believe that we can accelerate progress towards an ocean friendly society by collaborating and by placing value at the heart of shaping solutions.

VALUING THE OCEAN
The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation UK branch's strand of work that has supported and pioneered the Marine CoLAB. This programme of work hypothesises that developing skills to communicate the value of the ocean to people in new ways, whether that's economic, cultural, aesthetic or intrinsic value, may help to create a culture in which a step change to protect ocean health becomes possible.

WE ARE OCEAN
A UK ocean literacy network, building on the Ocean Literacy WildLab and spearheaded by Marine Conservation Society CoLAB member, Sue Ranger.

Resources

Tools to support you as changemakers

Methods and Tools for Using a Systems Approach

- Read a practitioner's guide to systemic change
- Learn more about systems mapping and the different tools available - including the Multi-Level Perspective, the Iceberg Model and Levels of Paradigm Framework – through Forum for the Future's Stories of Change
- A Systemic Perspective on the Breakthrough of Rock'n'roll, Corina Angheloiu
- Read more information about theories of change
- Forum for the Future's framework of five core capabilities for system change
- Read more about systems approaches on the School of System Change blog
- The Dawn of Systems Leadership by Peter Senge, Hal Hamilton, & John Kania
- Deep Equity Monograph, Sheryl Petty & Mark Leach
- Conflict & Collective Intelligence, Diane Musho Hamilton (video)
- Tools for Systems Thinkers: The 6 Fundamental Concepts of Systems Thinking, Leyla Acaroglu
- Three Perspectives, Three Truths chapter from Everything is Workable, Diane Musho Hamilton
- Dancing with Systems by Donella Meadows
- Systems Thinking and Complex Problems in a Volatile, Uncertain, Changing, and Ambiguous World by Jean Boulton
- Building Better Systems, Rockwool Foundation
- Emergent Strategy, Adrienne Marie Brown
- Elements of a Liberating Ecosystem, Change Elemental

#OneLess Resources

- #OneLess summary video
- The #OneLess Toolkit - A Practical Guide to Tackling Ocean Pollution at Source
- #OneLess Practical Guide – Executive Summary
- Webinar introduction to the practical guide
- Eliminating Single-Use Plastic at Source: A Roadmap for the #OneLess Movement in London
- Download our Guide to Installing Drinking Fountains, including a map of London's new fountain network
- Download The River Thames: Plastic Bottle Pollution - 2019 report
- Download our Pioneer Network case studies

We Are Ocean and Ocean Literacy Resources

- We Are Ocean summary video
- We Are Ocean – Wild Labs video
- We Are Ocean: Accelerating Ocean Literacy in UK Culture, Wild Labs
- World Ocean Day for Schools – resources and teachers' toolkit
- WAVES framework
- The Sea is in the Sky

Resources

Tools to support you as changemakers

Agents of Change Resources

- Agents of Change summary video
- Sussex projects – Help Our Kelp, Wild Coast Sussex, Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone, Kingmere Marine Conservation Zone
- Norfolk: The Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone

Resources to Help With Values Based Communications

- Our Ocean Has Value article, Sue Ranger
- The FrameWorks Institute Report: Getting Below the Surface
- The FrameWorks Institute: How to Talk About the Ocean so That People Will Listen
- Video resources on Ocean Reframing
- The Marine CoLAB: Taking a CoLABorative, Values Based Approach to Connect People to the Ocean (researchgate.net)
- Turning the Tide: Findings from Reframing Research on Ocean Health & Marine Conservation in the UK
- Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation: Giving the Ocean a Voice (poster and slide deck)
- Ocean Soundwaves playlist and Mental Health Awareness Week poster

Capacity Building and Learning Opportunities to Help You Apply Systems Approaches

- School of System Change Basecamp
- The Marine CoLAB's Compass course - a learning journey to support marine and coastal practitioners to apply systems and values approaches in their work
- Acumen Academy and Omidyar Foundation – Systems Practice Course
- The Omidyar Group: Systems Practice Mindset Video
- Systems Sanctuary
- DRIFT

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