

Summary of Outcomes: POGO's Role in Influencing Policy, from National to Global Scale

Session Co-leads: Francisco Arias and Margaret Leinen

Executive Summary

The discussion highlighted a shared understanding that effective policy influence requires clarity of audience, strategic communication, and demonstrable value. POGO should prioritise targeted engagement, partnerships with influential organisations, the use of compelling case studies, and robust indicators to assess impact. By doing so, POGO can more effectively integrate ocean observing into national programmes and international agreements, secure long-term funding, and amplify the collective impact of its members.

1. Strengthening the Inclusion of Ocean Observations in Policy and Long-Term National Funding

Participants agreed that POGO must move beyond issuing declarations and adopt more targeted, evidence-based and stakeholder-driven strategies.

Key Recommendations

- Identify priority audiences and stakeholders:
Clarify who POGO aims to influence—national governments, regional bodies, funders, negotiators, or the general public.
- Use case studies to demonstrate value:
Develop compelling, co-created case studies showing how ocean observations directly support decision-making (e.g., for MPAs, BBNJ, plastics, hazards). These real-world examples are viewed as more effective than general declarations.
- Work backwards from policy outcomes:
Identify key global and national policy frameworks (BBNJ, MPAs, climate, pollution) and align messages to the needs of those processes.
- Simplify and amplify messaging:
Clear, accessible communication can help mobilise public support, which in turn influences policymakers.
- Encourage POGO members to promote POGO messages:
Members should use their own communication channels—media, social platforms, stakeholder meetings—to extend the reach of POGO outputs.
- POGO as coordinator and broker:
Leverage POGO's position to connect members with local stakeholders and support aligned national-level advocacy.

2. Understanding and Targeting Relevant Institutional Actors

The group emphasised the importance of influencing the right institutions at both national and international levels, depending on the issue.

Key Institutional Targets

- National level:
Executive and legislative branches are primary decision-makers for funding and policy continuity; judicial bodies may play a supporting role in specific contexts.
- International level:
UN agencies (UNEP, UNDP, FAO), major agreements (UNFCCC, CBD, BBNJ), and global platforms that shape ocean policy and funding.
- Sector-specific partners:
 - Biodiversity/MPAs/BBNJ: IUCN and similar organisations.
 - Hazards and risk: Reinsurance and insurance industries, which rely on data for risk assessment; long-term observations support risk reduction.
 - Assessment bodies: IPOS, IPCC, WOA, and others who translate observations into global assessments.
 - High-level policy forums: National academies, High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy.

Strategic Approaches

- Align declarations with major events or crises:
Timely statements following disasters can gain traction by demonstrating the role of observations in reducing risk or improving response.
- Target interventions to specific points in policy cycles:
Policy frameworks span development, implementation, monitoring and review. POGO must understand which stages are most receptive to observing-system inputs.

3. Measuring Success and Improving POGO's Policy Impact

The need to evaluate POGO's influence and refine strategies was a major theme. Measuring impact requires both qualitative and quantitative indicators.

Suggested Approaches

- Learn from successful organisations:
Consult groups such as IUCN or the High Level Panel to understand how they assess policy influence.

- Develop meaningful impact indicators:
Beyond tracking financial investments in observations, indicators could include:
 - References to ocean observations in statements or reports of major bodies (e.g., COP, CBD).
 - Explicit support for observations by high-level political or institutional leaders.
 - Adoption of observation-related recommendations in national marine strategies or regional action plans.
 - Evidence of stronger cross-sector partnerships (e.g., with insurers, biodiversity networks).
- Targeted focus increases measurable impact:
Working on specific policy processes (e.g., BBNJ negotiations) allows clearer attribution and monitoring of POGO's influence.

Recommendations for POGO:

- Continue to refine its advocacy approach using evidence, case studies and strategic partnerships.
- Develop a structured framework for tracking policy influence and investment trends.
- Strengthen collaboration with organisations already successful in shaping global marine policy.