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INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

INFORMATION DOCUMENT

**(DRAFT) UPDATED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
OF THE JOINT GROUP OF EXPERTS ON THE SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS OF MARINE
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (GESAMP)**

Summary. GESAMP has undergone extensive reorganization following an independent, in-depth review in 2001. Under the New GESAMP Mission statement, the Joint Group of Experts is clearly evolving towards a more autonomous body acting with little supervision or guidance from the sponsoring organizations, especially on policy and governance issues.

This document prepared by the GESAMP Officer is subject to the approval of each sponsoring organization (IMO, FAO, UNESCO-IOC, WMO, IAEA, UN, UNEP and UNIDO).

Introduction

In the late 1960s marine pollution was of particular concern to several organizations and their subsidiary bodies within the United Nations system. In 1969, a number of agencies established GESAMP, a joint group of experts to provide advice on scientific aspects of marine pollution and to help the agencies coordinate, collaborate and minimize duplication of effort. In 1993 the sponsoring organizations of GESAMP (hereinafter referred to as "Sponsoring Organizations") agreed to extend the role of GESAMP to cover all scientific aspects of the prevention, reduction and control of the degradation of the marine environment. To reflect this change, the full name of GESAMP was changed to *Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection*.

In 2001, the Sponsoring Organizations of GESAMP commissioned an independent review, which concluded that GESAMP should continue to provide independent scientific advice on marine environmental protection to the United Nations system, but with changes to its organization, methods of work, and management. The resulting discussions among GESAMP experts, its Sponsoring Organizations, and a variety of interested external parties have led to the formulation of a Strategic Vision for a "New GESAMP" that will:

- Maintain and strengthen the established credibility of GESAMP;
- Strengthen engagement with the broader scientific community and with governments and other major user groups to enhance the relevance and legitimacy of GESAMP's advice; and
- Ensure professionalism in methods of work, management, and delivery of products.

Following a review in 2004 of this Strategic Vision the Sponsoring Organizations, through the Intersecretariat, agreed in September 2005 that GESAMP should continue¹. This Memorandum of Understanding is concluded between the Sponsoring Organizations in order to set out arrangements that will give effect to the strategic vision for a "New GESAMP".

Mission and functions of GESAMP

GESAMP's mission is:

To provide authoritative, independent, interdisciplinary scientific advice to organizations and Governments to support the protection and sustainable use of the marine environment.

To fulfil its mission GESAMP will, in response to requests:

1. Integrate and synthesise the results of regional and thematic assessments and scientific studies to support global assessments of the marine environment;
2. Provide scientific and technical guidance on the design and execution of marine environmental assessments;
3. Provide scientific reviews, analyses and advice on specific topics relevant to the condition of the marine environment, as well as its investigation, protection, and/or management.

In addition GESAMP will regularly:

¹ The current sponsors are: IMO, FAO, UNESCO-IOC, WMO, IAEA, UN, UNEP and UNIDO.

4. Provide an overview of the marine environmental monitoring, assessment, and related activities of United Nations specialized agencies Programmes, and advise on how these activities might be improved and better integrated and coordinated;
5. Identify new and emerging issues regarding the degradation of the marine environment that are of relevance to Governments and Sponsoring Organizations.

Reports and recommendations

The Sponsoring Organizations should make reports by GESAMP available to their governing bodies, Governments and, as appropriate, to other organizations, institutions and individuals concerned with marine environmental protection. Each Sponsoring Organization will arrange for reproduction and distribution of the reports according to its own needs and at its own expense.

Pool of Experts

A GESAMP Pool of Experts will be maintained, from which members of GESAMP and its working groups will be selected. Experts may be nominated to the Pool of Experts by Sponsoring Organizations and their Member States, other intergovernmental organizations, Regional Seas organizations, international scientific bodies and non-governmental organizations, members of GESAMP and other groups. Self-nomination to the Pool of Experts by experts themselves is also possible.

Membership

GESAMP will consist of an agreed number of experts in a wide range of disciplines relevant to marine environmental protection, including socio-economic ones. The members of GESAMP will be appointed by the Executive Committee in accordance with the procedures set out in the Rules of Procedure of GESAMP. As members of GESAMP, experts will act in an individual capacity, and not as representatives of their Governments or institutions, thereby ensuring the independence of GESAMP. Some members of GESAMP may be appointed to serve for a period of up to four years to provide a continuing nucleus, while others maybe appointed as occasion demands, having in mind the particular subjects to be considered at each session of GESAMP.

Each Sponsoring Organization shall nominate two members to GESAMP, In the event that a GESAMP Member cannot fulfil his/her term (two years), the responsible Sponsoring Organization shall appoint a new expert in his/her place. For each session of GESAMP, the Sponsoring Organization shall sponsor the participation of those experts that it has nominated as Members.

Institutional framework

IMO assigns an Administrative Secretary, who acts as the representative of the Sponsoring Organizations and oversees the work of the GESAMP Office. Each Sponsoring Organization assigns a Technical Secretary to GESAMP. The Administrative and Technical Secretaries will together form the Executive Board of GESAMP. The Executive Board, together with the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of GESAMP, will form the Executive Committee, which will be chaired by the Administrative Secretary.

IMO hosts the GESAMP Office, which, acting upon the instructions of the Executive Committee, shall provide the necessary support functions for GESAMP. IMO shall ensure that the GESAMP Office, and any staff working on its behalf, has the appropriate office space, utilities and administrative support.

Sessions of GESAMP

GESAMP sessions are normally held annually and in rotation at the headquarters, or other offices, of the Sponsoring Organizations, but may be convened elsewhere, if agreed by the Executive Committee.

Participation in sessions of GESAMP is limited to its members and to the Technical Secretaries or other representatives of the Sponsoring Organizations. Organizations, agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, which are not among the sponsors of GESAMP, may be represented at its sessions as observers. The Executive Committee may invite other organizations to attend the sessions of GESAMP as observers.

The provisional agenda for each session is drawn up jointly by the Sponsoring Organizations at the initiative of the Administrative Secretary and after consultation with the Chairman, taking into account any suggestions received from any organizations in the United Nations system which may be interested in taking part in the session. The Technical Secretary from the organization hosting a GESAMP session acts in each case as the secretary for the session and takes responsibility for the preparation of the report of that session.

Financial arrangements

IMO shall provide in-kind support for the GESAMP Office in terms of utilities, office space, and staff time for the Administrative Secretary and the Technical Secretary, as well as secretarial services. All other costs for the GESAMP Office shall be shared among the Sponsoring Organizations of GESAMP, with support from external sponsors, under a cost-sharing agreement to be developed by the Executive Committee, and subsequently approved by the Executive Heads of the Sponsoring Organizations. The Office will be subject to a periodical audit by the Member State Audit and Internal Oversight Section of IMO.

The costs of each session of GESAMP, including conference services, documentation and translation, will be borne by the organization hosting the session. The Sponsoring Organizations will share the expenses for participation in sessions of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of GESAMP, as agreed under the co-sponsoring agreement referred to in paragraph 15 above. The Sponsoring Organizations will also share the official travel expenses of the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of GESAMP when they are authorized to represent GESAMP or act on its behalf at other fora. However, a Sponsoring Organization that invites the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson to participate in a meeting held under its auspices will normally assume the costs of such participation. Each Sponsoring Organization will accept responsibility for the expenses related to the duties of its Technical Secretary, including participation in sessions and in meetings of the Executive Board and Executive Committee, as well as the expenses for participation in sessions of the experts it nominates.

The Sponsoring Organizations shall make every effort to make regular financial contributions to GESAMP and allocate human and financial resources within its programme and budget in support of GESAMP activities.

Rules of Procedure

Detailed arrangements for the conduct of the business of GESAMP and for its support are covered by the Rules of Procedure, which are adopted by the Executive Committee, and may, if necessary, be amended by consensus by the Executive Committee.

Emblem of GESAMP

The GESAMP Office is authorized to take appropriate steps to ensure the protection of the emblem of GESAMP and to prevent its unauthorized use, where necessary in consultation with the

Executive Committee. Any modification of the emblem of GESAMP will require the approval of the Executive Committee.

Settlement of disputes

The Sponsoring Organizations will use their best efforts to promptly settle, through direct negotiations, any dispute, controversy or claim arising out of, or in connection with, this Memorandum of Understanding or any breach thereof. Any dispute, controversy or claim which is not settled within 60 (sixty) days from the day a Sponsoring Organization has notified the other or others of the nature of the dispute, controversy or claim and of the measures which should be taken to rectify it, will be resolved through consultation between the Executive Heads of each of the Sponsoring Organizations.

Final Clauses

This Memorandum of Understanding, which replaces that concluded between the Sponsoring Organizations in January 1994, will take effect upon signature by the duly authorized representatives of the Sponsoring Organizations and will remain in effect until such time as the Sponsoring Organizations decide otherwise.

This Memorandum of Understanding may be amended by written agreement between the Sponsoring Organizations. Any proposal for amendment will first be presented to the Executive Committee for consideration and approval.

GESAMP will be open to sponsorship by any Organization, agency or Programme of the United Nations system wishing to participate in the arrangements described in this Memorandum of Understanding. Any Organization, agency or Programme of the United Nations system that wishes to become a Sponsoring Organization may do so by notifying the Administrative Secretary of its acceptance of the provisions of this Memorandum of Understanding. A Sponsoring Organization that wishes to withdraw from this Memorandum of Understanding may do so by providing six months' notice of withdrawal to the Administrative Secretary.

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