

# ABOUT THE COP26 VIRTUAL OCEAN PAVILION

## Why an Ocean Pavilion?

The ocean has greatly slowed the rate of climate change. But at a cost: the ocean has warmed, acidified and lost oxygen, whilst circulation patterns are changing, and sea levels are rising. The continuation of these changes not only threatens marine ecosystems, but also the future ability of the ocean to support life on Earth. Despite this, the ocean offers a range of key mitigation and adaptation opportunities for nations to combat climate change and increase ambition on emissions reduction and to ensure that the ocean can be developed sustainably for the benefits it provides to people around the world.

The ocean and climate are intrinsically linked, one cannot function without the other, and yet the ocean has lacked any real seat at the table under the UNFCCC climate negotiations. Without this essential piece of the puzzle, climate ambition will be hindered, and the ocean crisis will worsen. Furthermore, since the majority of the global ocean has no “owners” (and therefore no representative or voice of its own like nations) but covers 72% of the world’s surface and over 90% of the living space on the planet, then it should have a pavilion all of its own and thus make that point that it is central to life on Earth. In order to give it a voice, it needs a prominent presence at the climate negotiations in its own right.

A dedicated Ocean Pavilion would raise the visibility of the ocean and showcase why the ocean matters in climate negotiations and to all life on our planet – not surprisingly the ocean transcends across all the COP26 Presidency themes in a unified way like no other topic, from finance to energy to nature, land, resilience, industry, transport, to cities and science and innovation.



## Why Virtual?

As the ocean concerns everyone, the Virtual Ocean Pavilion has the capability of engaging and reaching those that cannot attend COP26 in-person and presents a long-lasting resource for all – leaving no one behind.

A virtual presence during COP26 will ensure that the Pavilion will be:

- Totally within the co-organizers’ control in terms of timing, allowing flexibility to respond to changes in the COP26 schedule as affected by the current pandemic
- Adaptable and scalable
- Long-lasting and accessible – being hosted online means it will be available long-after the VOP has ended
- Relatively less costly – eliminates the costs of a physical pavilion
- Will be more inclusive – will reach a much wider audience than just those able to attend COP26
- Climate friendly – reduces carbon footprint

## Features

The pavilion will:

1. Highlight important ocean events such as planned by the UNFCCC Secretariat under the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action (MP-GCA), and VOP collaborating partners;
2. Host panel sessions linking the ocean with the themes of the GCA events and SBSTA Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue themes to provide input to these discussions;
3. Feature interviews with Party negotiators to gain insights on the status of discussions;
4. Provide a gateway to ocean and climate stories from around the world through virtual exhibits, on-demand videos, reports and other online resources.

Visitors can explore a virtual exhibition with the option to access background information as well as options on what actions they could take towards a more sustainable blue future. Visitors will have the opportunity to explore a COP26 Life Below Water Treasure Trove with, e.g., on-demand or live-streaming of ocean-related films, music, art, games, health and well-being. Throughout its duration and across its component activities, the VOP will carry key messages reinforcing the link between the ocean and climate agenda.