

Making Oceans Count in the Nordic financial sector

Financial institutions have a key role to play in ensuring the sustainability of the marine environments and protecting and restoring their biodiversity. Still most financial institutions have limited awareness and understanding of their activities' impacts and dependencies on the marine environments, their potential exposures to multiple pressures and material risks across various sectors, economic activities and geographies, and of how to possibly engage with companies operating in these areas.

The objective of the Making Oceans Count (MOC) initiative is to have material marine ecosystem related risks and opportunities accounted for by key actors within the Nordic financial sector. This is to be achieved by raising awareness and offering support and practical guidance, but also by investigating solutions to further integrate ocean data and metrics in financial decision-making.

Building on global initiatives, studies, data platforms, tools, and roadmaps that are available for financial institutions, the project aims to reduce complexity, raise awareness and enhance the understanding by developing practical and generic guidance that offer basic insights and suggestions enabling financial institutions to kick-start and accelerate their journey for better integrating marine related risks and opportunities.

MOC leverages previous and ongoing work within the global WWF network, the Green Digital Finance Alliance, and is informed by ongoing work as part of UNEP FI (including the [Turning The Tide Guidance](#) and [Diving Deep Guidance](#), and the UNEP FI [Sustainable Blue Finance Principles](#)), the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), Science-based Targets for Nature, as well as by the impact of regulatory initiatives (such as the EU Taxonomy development, and implementation of Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation).

Key facts:

- **Blue economy sectors targeted:** Ports; marine transportation; coastal infrastructure; offshore renewable energy
- **Project:** Making Oceans Count in the Nordic financial sector
- **Timeline of the project:** January 2021 – December 2022
- **Geography:** Denmark/the Nordics, with global applicability
- **Key words:** portfolio analysis; data mapping; blue metrics; risk management; corporate engagement

Who?

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Denmark; Green Digital Finance Alliance; Copenhagen Business School; AkademikerPension; ATP; Danica Pension; PensionDenmark; PKA. Funding granted by VELUX FONDEN.

Where?

The geographic scope of the project in terms of engaging financial institutions is focussed on the Nordic and Danish ecoregions. However, the work conducted as part of the project has global applicability.

What?

The initiative aims to address the limited awareness and understanding of and action on material marine ecosystem related risks among Nordic asset owners and financial institutions by informing about their exposures to ecosystem related risks and opportunities in their investments, and enabling them to explore, assess and respond to the material ones. By creating awareness and enhancing the understanding of marine ecosystem related material risks and opportunities, generating insights in terms of ocean-related data and blue metrics, positive change in the investment, risk management and engagement practice of the financial institutions is sought.

How?

The initiative was implemented by a consortium of WWF Denmark, Green Digital Finance Alliance and Copenhagen Business School with participation of key actors within the Danish financial sector including AkademikerPension, ATP, Danica Pension, PensionDenmark and PKA.

MOC initiative suggests an integrated approach for financial institutions following three key steps for exploring, assessing, and responding to their exposure to marine ecosystem related material risks:

- To develop an understanding and assessment of where the exposures to marine ecosystem related material risks and opportunities are in the investment universe of the financial institutions, and assist in prioritising key areas for action;
- To deep dive into these focus areas, unpacking methods and data resources to better assess ocean-related material risks at sector and ultimately company level, and come up with specific mitigation actions, and
- To turn these recommendations into practical applications for the engagement and investment process, action, and tracking.

The initiative identifies opportunities for integrating ocean-related data and new blue metrics into financial decision-making and processes. It demonstrates that the potential levels of direct and indirect exposures to marine ecosystem related material risks and natural capital overall at portfolio level are significant and calls for action.

MOC concluded with the publication of briefing notes and a request for financial institutions to reach out to the Making Oceans Count project leads for further work and guidance.

Looking back...

"Through the initiative we have gained a better understanding of our portfolio's exposure to risks related to the actual and potential degradation of maritime eco systems. While there are no easy answers, we are now better equipped to ask the right questions and continue our work to mitigate risks to our portfolio and to eco systems alike."

- Spokesperson from AkademikerPension

"Biodiversity is a complex issue, especially ocean related, and the MOC project has made it more concrete for investors in terms of understanding impacts and dependencies. At ATP, we have tested the MOC engagement tool in our dialogue with ocean related investments, which have created good learnings and discussions on how to address the issue."

- Spokesperson from ATP

"It is pivotal to understand how our portfolio companies are impacting and depending on ocean ecosystems in order to select sound investments for our customers. To that end, the initiative has advanced our knowledge of our portfolio's ocean-related risks, which has led us to instigate targeted engagements with companies and help them in improving their work to protect and restore biodiversity in marine environments."

- Spokesperson from Danica Pension

"Even though oceans cover approximately two thirds of the Earth, PensionDanmark only had a limited understanding of the marine environment, and how our investments depend and impact oceans. Being part of the initiative has improved our understanding of marine ecosystems, and how we can engage with companies that are exposed to material ocean-related risks."

- Spokesperson from PensionDenmark

"Being part of the Making Oceans Count project have raised our awareness on the importance of the marine ecosystems. The oceans are crucial for our economies and for human wellbeing. The MOC project identifies how the oceans are exposed to a range of risks. Understanding of

the financial materiality of these risks is key because private investors, such as PKA, are legally obliged to ensure a return to our beneficiaries' pensions."
- Spokesperson from PKA