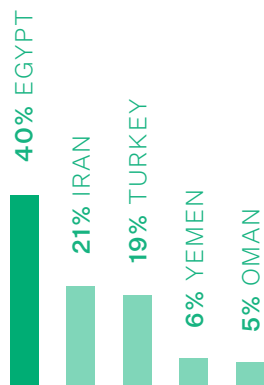


OPPORTUNITY #5

CAN WE SAVE OCEAN ECOSYSTEMS AND HABITATS?

INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATIONS - FOR THE SEA

An independent supranational body enforcing the protection and restoration of ocean ecosystems in international waters, preserving aquatic ecosystems with associated economic benefits and aiding in innovation



In the Middle East, **Egypt is the biggest producer** of capture fisheries and aquaculture.

WHY IT MATTERS TODAY

Nearly three-quarters of the earth's surface is covered by water and 94% of the earth's living species exist in the oceans.³⁷ Much remains to be learned about Earth's vast oceans, over 80% of which are yet to be explored,³⁸ and more research is needed, especially in climate change adaptation strategies and the sustainable development of coastal communities.

A total of 167 countries and the European Union are parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which came into force in 1994, setting sea limits and laying the foundation for the multilateral governance of the oceans.³⁹ Meanwhile, issues such as algal blooms, microplastics and the overfishing of favourite species such as cod, tuna and salmon pose threats to our aquatic ecosystems.

People of the Arabian Gulf are related economically, culturally and socially to the sea. These ecosystems provide important goods and services and are rich in varieties of fish, which represent a major source of food for people in the region.⁴⁰ Other ecosystem benefits range from primary energy production and nutrient cycling to erosion and sedimentation control.⁴¹

SECTORS



At risk, the total production of fresh seafood in the Middle East region amounts to around 2% of the total worldwide⁴² and, since 1961, fish production has been growing at an annual rate of 16%.⁴³ Egypt is the biggest producer in both capture fisheries and aquaculture, supplying 40% of total production in the Middle East. This is followed by Iran (21%), Turkey (19%), Yemen (6%) and Oman (5%). Kuwait, Qatar, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan are the lowest producers.⁴⁴

THE OPPORTUNITY TOMORROW

A future issue-based supranational partnership could see an international agreement between nations. Such an agreement may, for example, establish a sea station focused on marine life in a specific area as a platform for scientists who specialise in marine biology, hydrology, geology and chemistry, as well as experts on climate change adaptation and sustainable development in coastal communities. A partnership of this kind could provide opportunities for technological spin-offs with significant positive socio-economic impacts.

BENEFITS

Restoring oceans mitigates the effects of climate change, such as warming and acidity. Furthering international collaboration enables novel commercial use of the seas – such as rare mineral mining, aquatic farming and deep-sea transport – to be approached sustainably and in ways that benefit all.

RISKS

Rate of climate change and marine pollution exceed efforts to preserve and restore oceans.