11th GEF INTERNATIONAL WATERS CONFERENCE
19-22 OCTOBER 2026 • BALI, INDONESIA

IWC11 SESSION DESCRIPTION

You are kindly requested to complete the Session Description by 21 September 2026. See the Annex below for the session development guidelines. If you have additional questions, please contact iwc11-secretariat@iwlearn.org

Session Title: Marine Game Room: Serious Play for Marine Action	
Session Type and Code: WS15	
Session lead(s) (name, affiliation and email)	**FAO** (Common Oceans Child Projects, REBYC, Clean and Healthy Oceans Integrated Programme) Khristine Gudczinski, UNEP/UNOPS SCS SAP Project khristinecg@unops.org Joe Zelasney, FAO Common Oceans Tuna Project joseph.zelasney@fao.org Laurent-Charles Tremblay-Levesque, Clean and Health Ocean Integrated Program, FAO laurentcharles.tremblaylevesque@fao.org
Proposed format:	☒ Game Show or Serious Game– Interactive learning event for all conference participants through gamification
Room setup:	☒ **roundtable setup** ☒ **screen and projector** ☒ **roving mics (2)** ☒ **tables (5)**
Expected attendance (number of participants)	**45-50**
Rapporteur (name, affiliation, email)	**TBC**
Agenda (please include allocated time and speakers names and affiliation)	
14:00 – 14:05 | Welcome, Overview & Co-Organizer Introductions (5 mins) • Khristine Custodio Gudczinski (UNOPS, South China Sea SAP Project)	

- Welcome and scene-setting on gamification in ocean governance, as well as a quick introduction of co-organizers and a glimpse of their project mandates, and fun facts about our work across global marine systems.

14:05 – 14:20 | Game 1: Pub Quiz – Humans vs. AI (15 mins)

- UNEP/UNOPS SCS SAP Project
- Participants divide into 4-5 competing teams to test their marine ecosystem knowledge, not just against each other, but against AI! AI generates rapid answers live, but only authoritative findings from GEF IW regional experts (such as Regional TDA reports) serve as the ultimate truth. Let's see who gets it right!

14:20 – 14:45 | Game 2: Dead Zone – Nutrient Pollution Board Game (25 mins)

- Laurent-Charles Tremblay-Levesque (FAO, CHO-IP)
- Dead Zone is an interactive strategy board game where players manage watershed nutrient flows to prevent dead zones using source-to-sea governance. Players strategically balance economic activity cards against intervention solution cards to protect transboundary waters.

14:45 – 15:10 | Game 3: GEF Bingo – Sustainable Fisheries Toolbox (25 mins)

- Joseph Zelasney (FAO Common Oceans Tuna) / Anthony Thompson (FAO Common Oceans Deep Sea) / Nerissa Lucky (FAO REBYC III + CLME)
- A fast-paced, interactive bingo game exploring innovative tools and success stories from the Common Oceans Program. Participants mark matching interventions on their cards to discover practical approaches for sustainable fisheries, bycatch reduction, and biodiversity conservation.

15:10 – 15:30 | Game 4 & Wrap-Up: ReelWords & Closing Synthesis (20 mins total)

- Nerissa Lucky (FAO, REBYC)
- *ReelWords* is a lively taboo-style group game raising awareness of key fisheries management terms and practical bycatch tools.
- *Closing (5 mins):* Wrap-up linking game mechanics, systems thinking, and actionable ocean governance.

Session Description:

Serious Play for Marine Action is an immersive, high-energy workshop that replaces standard presentations with dynamic gamification. This session brings together critical marine management topics—from land-based nutrient pollution and source-to-sea governance to sustainable fisheries, bycatch reduction, and verified ocean data. Through four interactive gaming formats, participants will explore why integrated solutions are vital for safeguarding transboundary marine ecosystems across key regions worldwide. You will test your understanding of complex ocean governance issues, evaluate how curated regional data holds up against AI-generated answers, and discover practical tools to scale up in your own projects. Behind the fun lies a serious purpose: demonstrating how serious games can break down communication

silos, foster systems thinking, and make complex marine science accessible and engaging for stakeholders.

We invite GEF IWC11 participants to roll up their sleeves, test their knowledge, experience environmental trade-offs firsthand, and have fun! Serious Play for Marine **Action** is a venue to collaborate with peers, tackle transboundary marine challenges and actionable blue solutions, build new professional connections, and maybe even walk away with exciting prizes!

Session Objectives:

1. Strengthen systems thinking by allowing participants to experience environmental, social and management trade-offs through serious-game simulations.
2. Increase participants' awareness and practical understanding of fisheries management tools and approaches, including when and how they can be applied in different contexts.
3. Demonstrate the importance of reliable, curated knowledge and evidence in transboundary marine decision-making, including consideration of AI-generated information.
4. Encourage participants to connect knowledge, tools and action and identify approaches that can be adapted, replicated or scaled in their own projects and regions.

Expected outcomes:

1. Participants identify and engage with practical knowledge resources, platforms and fisheries management tools that can support their own work.
2. Participants gain a stronger understanding of when different tools can be applied to specific fisheries and marine management challenges.
3. Participants develop a stronger grasp of how interventions interact across complex marine transboundary systems, identifying trade-offs and feedback loops.
4. Participants develop at least one integrated response to a marine management scenario combining knowledge, tools and systems-level action, that can be adapted or scaled up across GEF IW regions and diverse contexts.

Specific inputs to GEF-9

The session will generate practical reflections relevant to the next generation of GEF International Waters projects, particularly around:

- strengthening the use of knowledge and evidence in project decision-making;

- improving the uptake, transfer and replication of practical fisheries and marine management tools;
- applying systems thinking to complex transboundary environmental challenges;
- linking project-level interventions with broader governance, collaboration and systems change.

The session can also contribute practical feedback on which knowledge resources, tools and approaches participants identify as most relevant and transferable, potentially informing future knowledge-sharing and tools-compendium activities within the GEF International Waters portfolio.