

Table 1. Ecological goals suggested for the development of the systematic conservation planning scenarios for the Atlantic ocean, based on the elements described in the broad ‘High-level’ mission statement to protect and restore the health (organization, productivity, connectivity and resilience) of Atlantic marine ecosystems in a changing ocean, to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use for present and future generations.

High-level statement element	Ecological goals	Relevant international and regional instruments and political commitments
Ecosystem organization/ natural diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and restore biological diversity of marine ecosystems at all its levels; • Ensure protection of vulnerable, endangered, and critically endangered species and habitats; • Ensure protection migratory species and their habitats • Ensure protection of sites of particular importance for biodiversity; • Ensure protection of near-natural areas; • Ensure the protection of representative habitats and associated ecosystems; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) • UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development Goal 14 and other ocean-related goals (e.g. SDG 13) • The Convention on Biological Diversity including the future Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework • United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) • Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the UNCLOS and the development of the regulatory framework for future deep seabed mining under the International Seabed Authority.
Ecosystem organization/ structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and restore food-web structure and networks of trophic relationships in ecosystems; • Maintain present-day species distribution ranges, preventing extirpation (i.e., local depletions); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement • UN General Assembly Resolutions regarding deep-sea fisheries in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ)
Ecosystem productivity/ function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure protection of intact and restoration of degraded essential habitats; • Ensure protection and restoration of keystone and foundation species; • Ensure the long-term maintenance of biologically mediated processes; • Maintain functional diversity of Atlantic ecosystems; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals • Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention on the Convention and Protocol) • The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) and other relevant conventions under the International Maritime Organization
Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure protection of a network of connected areas that benefit from larval and/or species exchanges and other functional linkages; • Ensure protection of the ecological connectivity of migratory species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and restore long-term ecosystem resilience to natural and anthropogenic disturbances and stressors; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNESCO World Heritage Convention • OSPAR Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (Strategy of the OSPAR Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic 2010–2020)
Changing planet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain long-term health (organisation, productivity, ecological connectivity and resilience) of marine ecosystems under future climate conditions; • Ensure protection of climate-resilient and climate refugia areas; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sargasso Sea Commission • Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern Africa Region (Abidjan Convention)
Sustainable use of natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the direct pressures on migratory species and their habitats • Rebuild and restore fisheries stocks of commercially important species, including straddling and highly migratory fish stocks; • Ensure protection of essential habitats of commercially important species. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benguela Current Commission: Angola, Namibia and South Africa • Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention) • EU Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) & Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) • EU Green Deal & Climate Target Plan, EU Green Deal & Farm to Fork Strategy, EU Green Deal & EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, EU International Ocean Governance Agenda.