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[KSxAOV1I-16] User-Centred Digital Twins of the Ocean for a Sustainable Blue Economy: Insights from an India–Europe World Café with ocean stakeholders

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The transition towards a sustainable Blue Economy requires not only technological innovation but also greater collaboration between stakeholders who manage, use, and protect ocean resources. While Digital Twins of the Ocean (DTOs) and related digital decision-support tools have advanced rapidly in recent years, their successful adoption depends on how well they respond to the needs of key societal ocean stakeholders such as coastal communities, civil society, industry and policymakers. Too often, DTOs are developed without sufficient early engagement with the stakeholders expected to use them, creating a gap between technological capabilities and users' practical needs for real-world applications and hinders the potential impact of the tools. Structured dialogue between scientists and societal ocean actors beyond the scientific community is therefore essential for developing tools that can effectively address real-world governance challenges.

To this end, a World Café workshop in New Delhi (October 2026) was designed to convene a diverse group of Indian and European stakeholders working on sustainable ocean management. The event examined how data can be made more accessible and useful for the development of user-centred DTOs. The World Café was designed to convene a diverse group of Indian and European stakeholders working on sustainable ocean management, through utilizing a combination of short presentations and facilitated interactive table discussions to learn from their different development contexts. Europe has accumulated substantial experience in developing DTOs and the data infrastructures that underpin them, while India brings strong capabilities in developing scalable, cost-effective and adaptable digital solutions that can operate across diverse contexts, including data- and resource-constrained settings. These complementary strengths can help address challenges around data availability, accessibility, interoperability and usability. This contribution is an overview of lessons learned about user-centered DTOs from European-Indian collaborations that can be reapplied to new contexts and partnerships.

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