



2020 REVIEW & 2021 OUTLOOK

2020, the year turned upside down by Covid19, was a surprisingly good one for progress on maritime and ocean conservation finance. Chronologically in 2020, our contributions included:

- **Member, Technical Committee - Shipping Standards, [Climate Bonds Initiative](#):** Our pro-bono participation in this expert group was rewarded by the release of standards for maritime issuers of green bonds, charting a feasible pathway toward zero emission fleets.
- **Author, Shipping & Ports Chapters, [Turning the Tide: How to Finance a Sustainable Ocean Recovery](#):** We were pleased to write the guidance for financiers of shipping and ports, as part of a high-level team under the Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Initiative, hosted by UNEP-FI. Grateful for the input from several of you on our working group, we hope this practical toolkit will speed the transition to more sustainable maritime industries. The companion piece to the guidance, [Rising Tide: Mapping Ocean Finance for a New Decade](#), is also highly recommended. Please circulate both to your colleagues!
- **Lead Consultant, Blue Economy Knowledge Product** for the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) [Healthy Ocean Action Plan](#). ADB hired us to support its \$5B commitment to the regional blue economy with this comprehensive analysis and tool kit. [UNEP-UNDP's Poverty Environment Action Program](#) is contributing metrics, resources and visibility to this vast project. Our work, to be published in Q3, covers:
 - **Rankings:** Each of 15 blue economy segments is given a ranking that we created from ADB and UNEP-UNDP inputs - financial, economic, social and environmental - helping establish priorities for financiers and project developers.
 - **Metrics:** We mapped the array of metrics by which each major stakeholder group - finance, industry, policy - measures sustainability progress and compliance in each segment.
 - **Financing Gaps:** We calculated the financing gaps for each segment and each of 30 countries, quantifying the capital needed to progress toward sustainability by 2030.
 - **Investor Demand:** What do private investors expect from the blue economy in developing Asia? This status report gives ADB and project leaders a most useful guide to developing projects and investment vehicles that meet the needs of private investors.
 - **Investment Dossiers:** A selection of current SME blue projects are evaluated for financing by ADB, with a view towards attracting co-investment and achieving both financial and impact goals in blue projects that can be replicated in multiple countries.

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- **Recommendations:** Our project will conclude with a final report charting a course to select and finance impactful, scalable, profitable blue projects in the region.
- **Member, [AspBAN Consortium](#):** We are part of an outstanding group that won this bid with the EU, to put in place an acceleration platform for EU Atlantic ports. This exciting 3-year project will draw on our experience with both the EU and ADB as we leverage the assets and networks of maritime ports to develop more successful blue economy SMEs.

What's ahead in 2021? In addition to the AspBAN project noted above, we expect to develop a BlueInvest Asia platform, modeled after the EU's BlueInvest platform (which we helped structure and launch in 2018). This is a core recommendation to ADB and UNEP-UNDP, filling the enormous financing gap for blue SMEs and start-ups in 30 developing countries with coastlines on the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Blended finance from ADB and philanthropic sources will catalyse private investment and technical assistance. We are now busy designing the framework for two components of the BlueInvest Asia platform, targeting impact SMEs:

- Debt/Trade Finance, operated by a Peer-to-Peer lending platform
- Equity Finance, supported by a Digital-based Maritime Accelerator

Other mandates that leverage our skills in some of the above areas may be considered as the year progresses. Suddenly, blue economy projects are popping up all over our blue planet, after decades of neglect and missed opportunities. Making the link of blue to green is our mandate, so we are certainly in the right place for this promising new awareness.

Our success has largely depended on our network of advisors and friends, so I wish to express my sincere thanks to each of you who has played some role in the OAI story so far.

Additional thanks go to our Senior Analyst, [Nicola Lei Ravello](#), who has done a terrific job at my side on the ADB project. Nicola and others will be asked to play key roles in the BlueInvest Asia platform as well.

I would be happy to have a call with any of you to give more colour on these activities and to hear your own updates. Thanks always for your support and advice.

Fair Winds,

Michael

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