**Eighth Meeting,** 1-3 May 2019[goosocean.org/goos-sc-8](http://goosocean.org/goos-sc-8)

**“Designing” the GOOS Steering Committee we need to deliver the Global Ocean Observing System 2030 Strategy**

*Agenda item: 13 Steering Committee renewal*

*25 April 2019  
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Purpose : This paper has been developed to support discussions at GOOS SC-8 focussed on the roles/functions of the GOOS Steering Committee and the optimal capability/skill mix of Steering Committee members as we embark on implementing the new Global Ocean Observing System 2030 Strategy.

1. **Background**

Since 2012, following the acceptance by the IOC Assembly of recommendations in the Framework for Ocean Observations[[1]](#footnote-1), the GOOS Steering Committee has been constituted by : Two GOOS Co-Chair(s); Five Members representing IOC Regions; (up to) Ten Scientific and Technical Experts (including the co-chairs); ex-officio Officers of subsidiary bodies (JCOMM, GOOS Regional Council, IODE); Representatives of co-Sponsoring bodies (WMO, ICSU, UNE). In addition, the Chairs of the Physics, Biogeochemistry and Biology Panels, and the Chair of the GOOS Regional Alliance Forum have also attended the Steering Committee meetings in an ex-officio basis. The GOOS Project Office Director, supported by members of the GPO and the Project Officers to the three Panels, has served as the Secretariat.

As we have developed the Global Ocean Observing System 2030 Strategy over the last two years we have begun to critically evaluate the capability (people, institutional support) and resources that will be required to implement the strategy. These discussions have included the need to strengthen partnerships with other bodies/organizations who have the capability and interest to help deliver on one or more of the eleven Strategic Objectives. These organizations will hopefully take a lead in these activities.

In parallel, there has been an increasing number of discussions across the ocean observing community about how the “new” Global Ocean Observing System should be governed. These discussions are ongoing but centre around questions such as : What is the best governance model? Who should lead/be involved? How has the current governance been going – what has the GOOS-IOC “model” done well/less well? What are alternatives/options going forward? What resources are required to deliver the strategy? We don’t expect any conclusions regarding an “optimal” governance model will be agreed until well after OceanObs'19.

To add to the challenge, as we begin development of an implementation plan (IP) for the Global Ocean Observing Strategy, WMO and IOC are in the middle of discussions around how the two organizations will harmonize/increase the effectiveness of functions that are currently shared, including ocean observations, data management and provision of services and products!

The challenges associated with implementing the strategy, together with the potential impacts of a review of Governance and the IOC-WMO relationship remapping will impose significant demands on the GOOS Leadership, including the Steering Committee.

It thus seems sensible to review the functions of the GOOS Steering Committee and ensure we have the skills on the committee required to assist the GOOS Leadership in their mission.

In this paper, I’ve assumed that the skill base for a Global Ocean Observing System SC would be similar regardless of whether the high-level governance remains under IOC/an intergovernmental framework, or moves to become a more independent body in which IOC/WMO/UNE would be partners.



*Fig 1. Strategic Goals of Global Ocean Observing System 2030 Strategy*

1. **Steering Committee Functions**

Throughout the history of GOOS, the SC has played an important role in guiding development and reviewing progress towards goals of the various technical/operational components of the “system”. As a result, the SC leadership (Chair/Co-Chairs) and membership has been dominated by scientists/technical experts, supported by IOC-appointed members representing the 5 regions. The SC has helped ensure that the system was designed to meet scientific needs, was critically evaluated on agreed technical measures, and that the data were fit for purpose and available.

However, in addition to the technical tasks, the SC has also had responsibility for:

* advocacy for ocean observations within the IOC system – through regular reports to its parent bodies the Executive Assembly and General Assembly – and across the scientific community, stakeholder groups, and the public;
* raising the funds to support the running of the system;
* ensuring that the system is aligned and delivering to the needs of end-users; and
* guiding capacity development for ocean observations across the broad spectrum of countries involved in the GRAs.

Arguably, the SC’s delivery on these additional tasks has been patchy.

The SC has been pretty good at advocacy into the IOC and its sponsors, but it has become increasingly obvious that GOOS has fallen short in its communications and advocacy activities across other channels, including into the science and end-user communities. The 2030 Strategy establishes Communications and Advocacy as a core strategic goal and **to meet this demand the GOOS SC will need to have expertise in communications and advocacy.**

The GOOS SC has also developed proposals for IOC Core and extra-budgetary funding, with limited success. However, the constrained fiscal environment within IOC has increasingly driven the GOOS Executive to seek funds from other sources. Over the last five years, generous and direct (i.e. not through IOC) funding from supportive institutions and funding bodies has provided the bare minimum funding to support the three panels. Similarly, the GOOS Executive has worked hard to secure support from the G7 Science Ministries to stand up a distributed GOOS-Co-ordination office. However, these are all limited-tenure contracts and provide nowhere near the funding required to deliver the 2030 Strategy. **To meet the 2030 funding requirements, the GOOS SC will need to have expertise and influence in raising resources across a number of funding channels.**

Capacity development has been on the SC Agenda throughout GOOS’s history, and in collaboration with the broader IOC efforts, some significant efforts have had impact. However, the feedback from member states is that much more needs to be done to achieve the 2030 goals of every member state delivering observations into the Global Ocean Observing System. **To meet the Capacity Development strategies goal, it will be important for the SC to have dedicated expertise in capacity development.**

As the GOOS Executive has worked through how we will develop programs to implement each of the 2030 Strategic Goals it has become clear that a **GOOS SC with the capability to provide high level advice on end-user needs, partnerships, evaluating impact, capacity development, governance, and driving innovation is essential.**

1. **Steering Committee “Design”**

For all of the reasons outlined above, the GOOS Executive suggests that the SC be “reshaped” to provide the optimal mix of skills and experience required to guide delivery of the 2030 Strategy.

3.1 Technical Ocean Observations/Scientific Capability

Since 2012, the expansion of GOOS to incorporate three Panels – Physics and Climate, Biogeochemistry and Biology and Ecosystems – has greatly increased the technical capability of our leadership group. The Panel Co-Chairs, International Project Officers, and members are all recognised technical experts in their fields. This has allowed each of the Panels to play enhanced roles in the core functions of “system” design, development and review. As the two new panels have matured in their capability, we have also seen increased (and highly desirable) efforts to achieve synergies across the Panels. This has largely been facilitated by the informal GOOS “Executive Group”, comprising GOOS Co-Chairs, GOOS Project Office, Panel Chairs and IPOs, and the GRA and OCG Chairs) which meets regularly to progress cross-cutting GOOS activities.

Our observations over the last 6 years suggest that the combined technical capability of the GOOS Executive and Panels reduces the requirement for technical skills on the GOOS SC. Based on the assumption that we don’t want to significantly increase the size of the SC, our suggestion is that we cut the number of full technical SC members down 2-3, but include as ex-Officio members the : GOOS Executive, Executive leaders of Core System “Partners” (e.g. POGO Chair, Ocean Predict Chair etc) and Sponsors.

In addition, being mindful that independent reviews are an important elements of “system” design, implementation and measuring impact, we suggest that the SC sponsor a rolling series of technical reviews of system components. GOOS Executive, Panels, OCG, JCOMM and other core sub-elements of the GOOS infrastructure would work with the independent reviews to ensure they deliver the products the SC sets out in the Terms of Reference. Review findings would be reported back to the SC for consideration and action.

* 1. GOOS Chair/Co-Chair

This important role has traditionally been filled on a voluntary basis by science leaders with skills and experience in ocean observations. The requirement to speak with authority to both technical and non-technical audiences suggests that the Chair(s) would ideally continue to be sourced from the science community. However, the growing demands on GOOS to be well-connected to end-users and partners, suggest that future GOOS chairs will also need to adept at navigating the world external to the ocean observations community and bring extensive experience in working at the interfaces between science-industry-government-community. A background in program leadership would be important, as would the ability to dedicate a minimum of 15% of their time to the role. Ideally the Chair would have dedicated support from her/his institution.

3.2 Other skill requirements:

As flagged above, the SC will increasingly be required to provide advice and oversight of non-technical elements of the 2030 Strategy delivery. Assuming that we are successful in forming partnerships for delivery of strategic goals, the right mix of skills for the SC will need to evaluated in light of the skills brought to the table by Core Partners.

However, at a bare minimum, we suggest that the SC include high level capability in:

* Communications and Outreach – across a broad spectrum of channels
* Organizational Risk and Governance – particularly as it relates to distributed joint ventures.
* Observing System Technology Development
* Capacity Development
* Delivery of Products and Services
* Fundraising - across public and philanthropic funding streams
* Directors of prominent Ocean Observing Systems

1. **Steering Committee Agenda and Commitment**

The Steering Committee would effectively be responsible for guiding delivery of the 2030 Strategy over the next decade. Clearly sponsors would be an important contributor to the Agenda of the SC and have high level ownership of the System. However, we envisage that the SC would in effect be the core governing and advisory body for GOOS.

In thinking through how the GOOS SC might operate, the decadal Census of Marie Life (CoML) Program (200-2010) provides a useful example. The CoML was supported by the Sloan Foundation and involved hundreds of organizations and thousands of individuals across the globe – much as we envisage the Gloabal Ocean Observing System doing.

The CoML Steering Committee involved senior leaders from the Science Community, supported by a significant secretariat and leadership teams from a number of programs. The Sloan Foundation provided virtually NO funding for science. Their US$60m of funding provided the “glue” to ensure programs were well-planned, delivered on the plans and that the outputs and outcomes of the CoML were effectively communicated to the world. By most measures, the CoML was a huge success.

The CoML SC met quarterly, and were responsible for strategy, design, review, communications, governance and advocacy.

We suggest that a Global Ocean Observing System SC would need to meet at least twice per year face to face and virtually on a bi-monthly basis.

1. [IOC Resolution XXVI-8](http://www.goosocean.org/index.php?option=com_oe&task=viewDocumentRecord&docID=8600) to “Strengthen and Streamline GOOS” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)