



INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
COMMISSION OCÉANOGRAPHIQUE INTERGOUVERNEMENTALE
COMISIÓN OCEANOGRÁFICA INTERGUBERNAMENTAL
МЕЖПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВЕННАЯ ОКЕАНОГРАФИЧЕСКАЯ КОМИССИЯ

اللجنة الدولية الحكومية لعلوم المحيطات

政府间海洋学委员会

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(Available in English and French)

IOC/IFAG/KH/xy
18 March 2021

To : IOC National Official Coordinating Bodies for Liaison with IOC

cc. : Permanent Delegates / Observer Missions to UNESCO of IOC Member States
National Commissions for UNESCO of IOC Member States
Chair and Vice-Chairs of IOC and Major Subsidiary Bodies

**Subject : Re-constitution of the Open-ended Intersessional Financial
Advisory Group for the period April–June 2021**

In pursuance to [Resolution EC-53/2](#) adopted by the IOC Executive Council at its 53rd session (3–9 February 2021, online) and attached herewith for ease of reference, the open-ended Intersessional Financial Advisory Group (IFAG) is being re-constituted under the chairmanship of Vice-chair Karim Hilmi. Technical secretariat support will be provided by Xenia Yvinec.

The full terms of reference of the Group as revised by the IOC Assembly through [Resolution XXVIII-3](#) (2015), are also attached.

I invite IOC national coordinating bodies to designate members to work within the IFAG in accordance with its mandate as defined in the Terms of Reference. As in the past, the group will work mainly by correspondence. It is therefore imperative that we have up-to-date nominative email addresses for all designated members. I would appreciate receiving your letters of nomination by 10 April 2021 at the very latest.

While all relevant documentation will be posted online as the work of the group progresses at: <https://oceanexpert.org/event/2996>, I would like to call your attention to the enlarged mandate of this group which is expected to facilitate intersessional consultations on the review of the Commission's Rules of Procedure to adapt them to online meetings and the draft guidelines for reporting in-kind contributions, in addition to its usual remit with regard to programming and budgeting matters, which this time include the Draft Medium Term Strategy for 2022–2029 and the Draft Programme and Budget for 2022–2025.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

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Enclosures: IFAG Terms of Reference (Annex 2 of IOC Resolution XXVIII-3)
Resolution EC-53/2 (full text with annexes)

Resolution XXVIII-3 (Annex 2)

Revised Terms of Reference of IOC Intersessional Financial Advisory Group

Purpose

To provide advice from IOC Member States to the Chairperson of IOC and to the Assembly and the Executive Council in a transparent and objective fashion.

The Financial Advisory Group will be constituted at each Session of the IOC Governing Body and operate for the following intersessional period.

Functions

- (a) To advise on the adequacy of the linkage between the results-based management and the IOC Medium-Term Strategy and the IOC Programme and Budget;
- (b) To advise on preliminary proposals from the Director-General of UNESCO for strategy and draft budgets provided by UNESCO;
- (c) To advise on the adequacy of regular and extrabudgetary resource allocations against expected results; and
- (d) To advise on the overall IOC budget level, taking into account issues of affordability and sustainability.

Composition

- (a) An Officer of the Commission serves as chairperson;
- (b) Open to all IOC Member States; however, the Executive Council and Assembly, as appropriate, may request the participation of Member States as part of the core membership.

Working arrangements

- (a) The Financial Advisory Group will conduct the majority of its business by electronic means;
- (b) If appropriate, the Chairperson may convene a meeting in time, and for a long enough period, to prepare a report prior to the commencement of a session of the Assembly or the Executive Council;
- (c) The Financial Advisory Group will provide a report on all its activities to subsequent sessions of the Assembly and Executive Council, as appropriate;
- (d) Relevant documents should be made available before the Financial Advisory Group, in adequate time for review; and
- (e) The Financial Advisory Group should follow procedures for IOC Subsidiary Bodies, seeking to formulate its conclusions and recommendations through consensus.

(25 June 2015)

Resolution EC-53/2

GOVERNANCE, PROGRAMMING AND BUDGETING MATTERS OF THE COMMISSION

The Executive Council,

Having examined documents:

- (i) [IOC/EC-53/3.1.Doc\(2\)](#) – ‘Report on budget execution 2018–2019 and outline of 2020–2021 budget’,
- (ii) [IOC/EC-53/5.1.Doc\(1\)](#) – ‘Draft IOC Medium-Term Strategy for 2022–2029’,
- (iii) [IOC/EC-53/5.1.Doc\(2\)](#) and Corr. – ‘Draft Programme and Budget for 2022–2025’,

**I. Report on budget execution 2018–2019
and outline of the 2020–2021 budget**

Confirms that the IOC budget for 2018–2019, as reported in Part I of IOC/EC-53/3.1.Doc(2), has been executed in accordance with the approved Programme and Budget for 2018–2019 (39 C/5, US\$518 M Expenditure Plan) and the budgetary allocations approved by the IOC Assembly at its 29th session (IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 5 Rev.2) through Resolution XXIX-2;

Notes that the extrabudgetary resource mobilisation targets set for the 2018–2019 biennium have been achieved to the level of 73% overall, but with considerable variance between the Commission’s Functions;

Thanks Member States who have contributed extrabudgetary funds for the 2018–2020 programme implementation and those committed to contributing in 2021;

Expresses its satisfaction that the Approved Integrated Budgetary Framework for 2020–2021 presented in Part II of IOC/EC-53/3.1.Doc(2) is consistent with the budgetary allocations approved by the IOC Assembly at its 30th session (IOC-XXX/2 Annex 9) through Resolution XXX-3, following the adoption by the 40th session of the General Conference of UNESCO of the budget scenario for 2020–2021 (40 C/5), based on the appropriated regular programme budget of US\$534.6 M (US\$11,075,500 for the IOC);

Acknowledges the information on the financial situation of the IOC provided in Part II of IOC/EC-53/3.1.Doc(2), including the 2020–2021 expenditure forecast for the IOC Special Account, as well as the information on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on 2020 programme implementation, as provided by the IOC Executive Secretary in the update to his report;

Encourages all Member States to provide voluntary contributions to ensure full achievement of the collectively agreed extrabudgetary resource mobilization targets for 2020–2021, preferably to the IOC Special Account;

Requests the IOC Executive Secretary to continue efforts to obtain further voluntary contributions, including from private sector donors and other partners and to achieve full implementation of the Commission’s programmatic targets for 2020–2021;

II. Draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2022–2029

Welcomes the revisions and improvements introduced by the Secretariat in the IOC’s Draft Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for 2022–2029 in response to the recommendations of the IOC Assembly at its 30th session through Resolution XXX-3, as contained in document IOC/EC-53/5.1.Doc(1);

Expresses its appreciation that the document has benefitted from inputs of the IOC Officers at their annual meeting, 13–14 January 2020, and from intersessional consultations through Intersessional Financial Advisory Group (IFAG);

Recalls that the final version of the MTS for 2022–2029 will be further reviewed and adopted by the IOC Assembly at its 31st session in 2021;

Recommends that the following comments be considered in developing a revised version of the Draft MTS for 2022–2029 for review by the IFAG in the intersessional period leading to the 31st session of the IOC Assembly:

- (i) Table of 'IOC Functions and examples of contributing activities' on page 7 to be reviewed, notably to include IOCARIBE-Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) and the tsunami-ready activity;
- (ii) Reflect the importance of tsunami-ready activity to Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) in para 13;
- (iii) Reflect the need to support Member States in assessing the value of ocean science, ecosystems, goods and services, developing national ocean economy accounts and ocean-climate risk assessments, demonstrating the value of investments in nature-based climate adaptation solutions, and the mainstreaming of the ocean considerations in sustainable economic development plans.
- (iv) Through its capacity development programmes, networks and infrastructure (Ocean Data and Information System and supporting activities), the IOC will work to bring greater visibility to capacity development needs and initiatives, including opportunities offered via bilateral relationships, multilateral mechanisms or those delivered by intergovernmental organizations. Such visibility will complement the IOC's ambition to support an International Legally Binding Instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction and can be enabled through the Engagement ambitions in the MTS.

Requests the IOC Executive Secretary to prepare a further revised version of the Draft MTS for 2022–2029 taking into account Member States' views and concerns expressed at this session, for review by IFAG in the intersessional period and the IOC Officers at their annual meeting in 2021, prior to submitting it for consideration and adoption by the IOC Assembly at its 31st session in 2021;

III. Draft Programme and Budget for 2022–2025

Expresses its appreciation to the IOC Secretariat for the useful and pertinent analysis of programme outcomes presented in the IOC Strategic Results Report, as contained in Part I of document [IOC/EC-53/5.1.Doc\(2\)](#) and Corr., allowing Member States to review and reassess the IOC's programmatic objectives, including possible reorientation, reinforcement or termination of programmes;

Endorses the IOC approach to the preparation of the UNESCO Draft Programme and Budget for 2022–2025 (Draft 41 C/5) proposed in document [IOC/EC-53/5.1.Doc\(2\)](#) and Corr. as consistent with the priorities set in Resolution XXVIII-3 of the IOC Assembly and the high level objectives defined in the Draft IOC MTS for 2022–2029;

Recommends the guiding principles for programming and budgeting to be followed by the IOC Secretariat in the preparation of the full proposal for the Draft 41 C/5 as provided in Annex 1 to this Resolution;

Adopts the following wording of the IOC Output for 2022–2025:

‘Member States critically supported in strengthening their capacity to conduct marine scientific research, generate knowledge, and develop and implement science – based tools, services, and policies in order to reverse the decline in ocean health and accelerate the transition towards sustainable management of ocean-related risks and opportunities.’

Highlights the importance of ensuring that the IOC has the adequate strategy and the necessary resources, both in terms of regular programme budget and voluntary contributions, to fulfil its role in the implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030), hereafter the Decade;

Requests the IOC Executive Secretary to:

- (i) prepare a fully developed Draft Programme and Budget for 2022–2025 (Draft 41 C/5), including a comprehensive implementation strategy through a conceptual framework of functions, performance indicators and benchmarks, to be submitted to the IOC Assembly at its 31st session, based on discussions and decisions of this session of the IOC Executive Council and in close consultation with the IOC Officers;
- (ii) provide the IOC Assembly at its 31st session with an estimate of the necessary budget to effectively operate the IOC at an optimum level, to help identify how and what additional resources might be secured;
- (iii) keep the IOC Officers and Member States updated on the 41 C/5 adoption process by UNESCO;
- (iv) support the work of the IFAG by providing timely information on the UNESCO programming and budgetary planning process;

Invites the Director-General of UNESCO to:

- (i) continue every effort to enhance the resources available to the IOC in the 41 C/5, to enable the IOC to fulfil its increasing mandate and to address current and emerging priorities, including those related to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Decade;
- (ii) ensure that the budgetary appropriation for the IOC approved in the 41 C/5 shall not be decreased by transfers of funds to other parts of UNESCO’s budget;

Invites IOC Member States to:

- (i) continue to advocate to the Director-General of UNESCO and the Governing Bodies of UNESCO on the importance of the IOC as a body with functional autonomy within UNESCO, focusing in particular on the value that the IOC provides to UNESCO and to sustainable development;
- (ii) support the reinforcement of the IOC in the consultation process for the UNESCO Draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2022–2029 and the Draft Programme and Budget for 2022–2025 (Draft 41 C/5);
- (iii) increase their voluntary contributions to support the IOC in the face of its increasing responsibilities, preferably to the IOC Special Account, as well as, *inter alia*, by providing in-kind support such as staff loans (either in-person or via telework arrangements) to the IOC Secretariat;

IV. Governance and Working Methods

Recalls that the IOC Assembly at its 30th session through Resolution XXX-3 invited the IFAG ‘to continue reflecting on the best practices to further enhance the efficiency of the IOC Governing Bodies’ meetings’;

Acknowledges that the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the need to review and possibly update the IOC's Rules of Procedure in order to align and adapt them to the prevailing United Nations' best practices concerning online meetings facilitating informed and timely decision-making by IOC Member States;

Invites the IFAG to initiate the reflection on this matter, in close consultation with the IOC Officers and the UNESCO Legal Advisor, with a view of presenting a set of preliminary proposals for consideration by the IOC Assembly at its 31st session in 2021.

Annex I to Resolution EC-53/2

Guiding Principles for Programming and Budgeting

1. Provide focused leadership on those themes where IOC has clear leadership/ ownership in the programme theme;
2. Fulfill IOC's intergovernmental mandate: incompressible costs related to governing and subsidiary bodies' meetings, statutory requirements and commitments vis-à-vis partners and other United Nations agencies, including their implications in terms of staff time;
3. Support governments in national activities and strengthen regional subsidiary bodies of the IOC;
4. Incorporate the scope of Member States participation (inclusiveness);
5. Maximize synergies between UNESCO and IOC programmes and interlinked functions;
6. Preserve/sustain core programmes, while raising extrabudgetary funds for capacity development actions;
7. Provide some seed money for new high potential impact programmes and emerging ocean science issues (likely to attract extrabudgetary funding);
8. Balance IOC's strong engagement with the ocean science community and its strong focus on applications and services;
9. Programmes should develop strong partnerships which would increase financial resilience in the event of funding pressures, enabling partners to take a greater share in supporting these programmes, on the condition that those partners respect the objectives and guidelines established by the IOC's governing bodies and respond to the IOC Secretariat in this regard;
10. Identify Member States willing to establish funded and staffed offices to take a larger share of an IOC programme based on existing good practices, on the condition that those Member States respect the objectives and guidelines established by the IOC's governing bodies and respond to the IOC Secretariat in this regard;
11. Identify activities that can be sustained with extrabudgetary funding and in-kind contributions, and, according to that, prioritize the allocation of resources from the regular budget to activities and functions of the IOC that cannot be sustained with extrabudgetary funding, in order to ensure that resources from both the regular budget and extrabudgetary sources will be expended in a way that enables the adequate and balanced implementation of all IOC's functions.