



INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

Thirty-first session of the Assembly
UNESCO, 14–25 June 2021 (online)

Item 3.7 of the Provisional Agenda

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE DECADE ADVISORY BOARD

Summary

This document presents the terms of reference for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development Advisory Board, as foreseen in the Decade Implementation Plan ([IOC/2021/ODS/20](#)).

Financial implications are expected to be supported mostly through extra-budgetary contributions (paragraph 9).

Proposed decision: The Assembly is invited to review and approve the proposed terms of reference with a view of establishing the Decade Advisory Board. A proposed Draft Resolution is referenced as A-31/DR.[3.7] in the Second Revised Provisional Action Paper ([IOC/A-31/AP Rev 2](#)).

Introduction

1. The Implementation Plan for the Decade was taken note of with appreciation by the United Nations General Assembly through its Resolution [A/RES/75/239](#) "Oceans and the Law of the Sea". Together with General Assembly Resolution [A/RES/72/73](#), IOC was mandated to coordinate the Implementation of the Decade in accordance with the Implementation Plan. *Ipsa facto*, the Decade will be implemented in accordance with the IOC Statutes.

2. The day-to-day coordination of the Decade will be supported by the work of the IOC Secretariat composed of the Executive Secretary and a Decade Coordination Unit made up of other staff, provided by UNESCO, as well as such personnel as may be provided, at their expense, by other organizations, the United Nations system, and by Member States of the Commission.

3. The Decade Implementation Plan foresees the establishment of a Decade Advisory Board in 2021.

4. Given the ambition of the Decade in terms of stakeholder engagement from science, governments, UN, industry and civil society, the Decade Advisory Board is therefore conceived as a multi-stakeholder advisory body that will assist the IOC Secretariat in performing its function as coordinator of the Decade. While the Decade Advisory Board will not exercise policy-making functions, its advice will concern strategic elements of the Decade implementation as well as operational support to facilitate the endorsement process of Decade actions.

5. Examples of such strategic advice may include reviews of the Decade progress in moving towards the Decade societal outcomes and on the research work in the domains of Decade challenges, identifying gaps and opportunities, advising on data stewardship strategies, the development of resource mobilisation strategies, supporting the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework of the Decade. This advice which bears on the strategic aspects of the Decade will be brought up by the Executive Secretary to Member States and IOC Governing Bodies for further consideration and guidance.

6. The Decade Advisory Board will also play a key role in advising on the endorsement of Decade Actions, specifically at the Decade Programme level. Decade Actions are the tangible initiatives that will be carried out across the globe over the next ten years to fulfil the Decade vision. These are focused on the advancement and application of knowledge to support the development of solutions and are not policy-prescriptive by nature. (Ref. to section 2.4 of the Decade Implementation Plan). Requests for endorsement of Ocean Decade Actions at the programme and project level will be via periodic Calls for Actions. Specifically, the Decade Advisory Board will provide recommendations on the endorsement of Decade programmes, following an initial technical review conducted by the Decade Coordination Unit, as well as advice on the scoping of further Calls for Actions to be issued regularly during the Decade.

7. It was originally anticipated that the Decade Advisory Board be established as an advisory body reporting directly to the IOC Governing Bodies. However, the endorsement process of Decade Actions rests with the IOC Executive Secretary on the basis of technical inputs provided by the Decade Coordination Unit and the recommendations of the Decade Advisory Board. It is therefore proposed that the Decade Advisory Board reports directly to the IOC Executive Secretary in relation to the endorsement of Decade Actions and the scoping of future Calls for Decade Actions. This will ensure timely provision of advice related to Decade Actions and therefore support decision-making by the Executive Secretary as relevant. With regards to more strategic matters, the Decade Advisory Board will report on its work to the IOC Governing Bodies. A list of endorsed Decade Actions will also be provided for information to the IOC Governing Bodies. At least two Calls for Actions will be issued every year, generating a large workflow both within the Decade Coordination Unit and the Decade Advisory Board. Thus, at minima, four meetings of the Decade Advisory Board are expected each year.

8. It is expected that the Secretariat will launch a call for nominations to the Decade Advisory Board in August/September 2021 with a view to formally establish it and hold a first meeting ideally before the end of the year.

Financial and Administrative Implications

9. Whilst the Decade Advisory Board will work mainly through remote means (teleconferences, virtual meetings), a physical meeting is anticipated at least once a year, only if and when the sanitary situation allows. In this event, the cost of a face-to-face meeting, estimated at US\$30,000, would be subject to the provision of extra-budgetary financial resources.

Proposed Decision

10. In light of the foregoing, the IOC Assembly may wish to consider Draft Resolution A-31/DR.[3.7] proposed in the Second Revised Action Paper ([IOC/A-31AP Rev.2](#)).

ANNEX 1

Advisory Board of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (the Decade Advisory Board)

Terms of Reference

The Advisory Board of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (the “Decade Advisory Board”) is established as a technical advisory body to the Secretariat and Governing Bodies of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO.

Role of the Decade Advisory Board

The Decade Advisory Board is responsible for providing direct advice to the IOC Executive Secretary on the implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (‘the Ocean Decade’) over its ten-year implementation phase (2021–2030) with a focus on the endorsement of Decade Actions and scoping of Calls for Decade Actions, and reports to IOC Governing Bodies on strategic matters related to implementation of the Ocean Decade. Specifically, and in accordance with the Ocean Decade Implementation Plan, the Decade Advisory Board will:

- (i) Review and make recommendations to the IOC Executive Secretary on the endorsement of Decade Programmes;
- (ii) Advise the IOC Executive Secretary on the scope of Calls for Actions under the Decade to support the mobilisation of proponents worldwide;
- (iii) Review the regular resource needs assessments prepared by the Decade Coordination Unit and recommend approaches for resource mobilisation and support outreach efforts to potential funders, including Member States, multilateral development banks, climate financing mechanisms, philanthropic foundations, and the private sector in order to help create the enabling environment needed to achieve the ambitions of the Decade;
- (iv) Advise on the engagement and outreach strategy of the Decade in order to help catalyse high-level interest and engagement among key stakeholders, including leaders from Member States, UN Agencies, business, civil society and academia to ensure that the scientific outputs of the Decade support the successful achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- (v) Advise on the regular reviews to be undertaken subject to decision by IOC Governing Bodies, during the implementation phase, including review of the scientific objectives and orientations of the Implementation Plan, annual progress reports, and the mid-term and final reviews, and make recommendations on the results of such reviews, as requested;
- (vi) Advise on the engagement of relevant communities regarding contributions to the objectives of the Decade, with priority given to engaging early career ocean professionals and disadvantaged groups and regions and to the science-policy interface;
- (vii) Monitor the progress and review the outputs of any working groups established by the IOC Secretariat related to structural and cross-cutting operational elements of the Decade Implementation Plan;
- (viii) Provide information to the IOC Executive Secretary to enable his reporting to the IOC Governing Bodies;
- (ix) Report as needed to the Governing Bodies in relation to strategic issues.

Chairing of the Decade Advisory Board

The Decade Advisory Board will appoint two Co-chairs amongst its members, ideally one representing the science fields and another one representing the societal end-users of the Decade. The Co-chairs will be appointed by the IOC Executive Secretary for one year with the possibility of a second one-year term.

Decision-making process and organization of work

The Decade Advisory Board will strive for consensus on all issues in providing recommendations and advice to the IOC Executive Secretary. The minutes of the meeting will record any instances when consensus was not reached.

The working language of the Board will be English. No interpretation will be provided.

Decade Advisory Board Composition

The Decade Advisory Board will comprise up to 15 expert members serving in their individual capacity drawn from government, private sector, philanthropy, civil society, and the scientific community, as well as representatives of UN Agencies. In total, the Decade Advisory Board should not exceed 20 members, including Expert members and UN representatives. Expert members will be nominated through open calls for nominations. The calls will be circulated through the following means:

- IOC Member States via IOC Circular Letters;
- Relevant UN bodies via UN-Oceans;
- Scientific networks using formal and informal communication mechanisms;
- Dedicated ocean policy, business, and sustainable development networks through announcements; and
- The Ocean Decade and IOC website.

Proposals for nominations can be made by IOC-UNESCO and United Nations Member States or United Nations entities, as well as intergovernmental organizations. Self-nomination will also be possible to encourage nominations from non-governmental entities.

Expert members will be selected with due consideration to expertise, geographic, generational, and gender balance and will serve on a voluntary basis in their personal capacities. Decade Advisory Board members do not represent their institutions or countries. They should be able to commit sufficient time to the work of the Decade Advisory Board and will take the responsibility to request the authorization of their employer to participate in this process.

Membership on the Decade Advisory Board will be for a two-year term, renewable for a second mandate.

Each Member shall comply with the Conflict of Interest guidelines to be prepared by the Secretariat and notify the Decade Coordination Unit with respect to any such potential conflicts.

A Selection Panel convened by the IOC Executive Secretary and composed of the IOC Chair and elected IOC Officers representing the five IOC electoral groups, with the technical support of the Decade Coordination Unit, will be tasked with selecting the members of the Decade Advisory Board.

The Selection Panel will ensure that the proposed members have sufficient skills, knowledge, influence and impartiality regarding the vision and objectives of the Decade and are able to

undertake the work outlined in the terms of reference. Their skills and expertise should cover at least one of the following areas:

- (i) Intergovernmental processes and coordination;
- (ii) The ocean aspects of sustainable development;
- (iii) Ocean science (natural / social dimensions);
- (iv) Science-policy / decision / end-user interface and engagement;
- (v) Ocean Economy / finance/ partnerships;
- (vi) Innovation / technology/ infrastructure development;
- (vii) Capacity development, training and transfer of marine technology, education, communications and outreach; and/or
- (viii) Development of large-scale multi/inter-disciplinary international programmes / projects.

UN Agencies representation on the Decade Advisory Board

UN Legal Counsel/DOALOS, which is the Secretariat and focal point of UN-Oceans and the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea, will have one permanent seat on the Decade Advisory Board. The IOC Secretariat as coordinator of the Decade will also have a permanent seat on the Board. Three more seats will be reserved for UN Agencies and will be identified through consultations via UN-Oceans.

Secretariat of the Decade Advisory Board

The Decade Coordination Unit located within the IOC Secretariat will be the Secretariat for the Decade Advisory Board.

Meetings of the Decade Advisory Board

The Decade Advisory Board shall meet four (4) times per year, with at least one (1) in presentia meeting annually when possible. Additional in-person or virtual meetings will be held as necessary. The Co-chairs of the Decade Advisory Board will be primarily responsible for the development of the Board Meeting Agenda and directing the Decade Advisory Board meetings. All Decade Advisory Board Members can recommend agenda items. The Decade Advisory Board may invite external experts as needed to address specific issues or tasks. The decision to invite these external experts would be a decision of the Board.

Minutes of the Board meetings will be developed and distributed by the Secretariat for the Decade Advisory Board. These will be made public on the Ocean Decade website. Expert Members of the Decade Advisory Board are expected to attend all meetings of the Board in person, without replacement.

ANNEX 2

Nomination form for the selection process of the Decade Advisory Board (DAB)

HOW TO NOMINATE A CANDIDATE

Submit the **nomination form, together with a recent *curriculum vitae***, to the IOC Secretariat no later than the close of business by **5 September 2021** by emailing it to ocean.decade@unesco.org or mailing it to:

IOC Secretariat
7 Place de Fontenoy
75352 PARIS 07 SP
FRANCE

Please provide the submission in English.

ELIGIBILITY

The selection process is intended to identify experts who have internationally recognized skills, knowledge, and expertise relevant to the objectives and working areas of the Decade. Their skills and expertise should cover: (i) intergovernmental processes and coordination; (ii) the ocean aspects of sustainable development; (iii) the ocean science (natural and social science as outlined in the Decade Implementation Plan); (iv) the science-policy/decision/user interface; (v) capacity development, training, innovation/technology, and education; (vi) development of large programmes/projects.

SELECTION PROCESS

A Selection Panel, composed of the IOC Officers together with the IOC Executive Secretary, will select the Decade Advisory Board experts. The selection process will be guided by the attached Decade Advisory Board Terms of Reference, endorsed by the IOC Assembly at its 31st session.

The Selection Panel will aim to ensure that the proposed members have the skills and knowledge. In this process, it will be assumed that the candidates are ready to commit required time and are able to undertake the work outlined in the terms of reference.

Consideration will be given to maintaining representativeness while maximizing overall effectiveness, taking into account gender, age and regional balance (also considering interests of developing and developed countries), with the objective of combining knowledge and experience with expected potential of generating new ideas.

All applicants will receive an email informing them about the outcome of the selection process.

DETAILED BIO-DATA

Q1. Is this a self-nomination? Yes/No

Q2. If you answered 'No' to the above question, please tell us what type of entity is making this nomination:

- IOC/UNESCO
- United Nations Member State
- United Nations entity

Q3. Contact Details of the Nominating Body

Name of Nominating Body:

Contact Full Name:

Contact Email Address:

NOMINEE DETAILS (If you are nominating someone else, please answer these on behalf of the nominee, no yourself)

Q4. Your Details:

First Name:

Last Name:

Professional Title:

Mobile Phone Number (with country code):

Email Address:

Q5. Nationality

Country:

Q6. Name of Your Employer:

Q7. Gender:

Q8. Career Level

- Student
- Early Career (less than 10 years post higher education)
- Mid-level
- Senior-level

Q9. Please upload an up-to-date version of your CV

Q10. What sector do you work in? Please select as many as are applicable.

- Government
- Intergovernmental Organisation
- Research Institution
- Private Sector
- Philanthropy
- Education
- Non-Governmental Organisation
- Other (Please Specify):

Q11. What Aspect of the Decade Implementation are you Most Interested in? You may select up to 3.

- Intergovernmental processes and coordination
- Ocean science (natural and social sciences) (Please specify in the below questions your field of research, experience in inter/multidisciplinary and co-designed initiatives)
- Science/policy/decision/end-user interface
- Ocean economy, financing and partnerships
- Innovation, technology advancement, and infrastructure development
- Capacity development, training and transfer of marine technology, education
- Communications and outreach

- Development and resource mobilisation for large-scale multi/inter-disciplinary international programmes/projects

Q12. Please describe your field of expertise and your professional experience as relevant to the categories above and describe how it will contribute to the work of the Decade Advisory Board (no more than 200 words per category)

Q13. Please describe your motivation to contribute to the Ocean Decade, what kind of strength you will bring to the process, and your experience in building multi-stakeholder partnerships (max 400 words)

Q14. Please describe any previous or existing involvement in the Ocean Decade (max 200 words)

Q15. Please upload a statement from your employer stating the following:

“ I acknowledge that in the case Ms/Mrs/Mr _____ is selected to serve as a member of the Decade Advisory Board, he/she will be allowed to act in a personal capacity and will not be expected to represent in any way our organization or institution but act in the interest of the community associated with her/his field of expertise”.

Name and signature of the representative of the employing structure
_____”