



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, French, Russian and Spanish)

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9 November 2021

To : Official National Coordinating Bodies for liaison with the IOC
(IOC Member States)

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

**Subject: Revision of the IOC Oceanographic Data Exchange Policy:
proposed way forward**

The IOC Assembly, at its thirty-first Session (14-25 June 2021) adopted Decision A-31/3.4.2 (International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange) including part III “Revision of the IOC Oceanographic Data Exchange Policy (2003, 2019)” by which the Assembly decided to establish the IOC inter-sessional working group on the Revision of the IOC Oceanographic Data Exchange Policy (2003, 2019) (IWG-DATAPOLICY) and defined its terms of reference. Decision A-31/3.4.2 is annexed hereafter.

Through this letter, I wish to inform you on the status of this matter.

In view of the complexity of the issue and the need for the most extensive inclusiveness possible the IODE Co-Chairs have agreed on the following process to facilitate the work of the inter-sessional working group starting January 2022 with the following tentative timeline:

- **STEP 1** (December 2021–February 2022): implementation of desk study on existing policies (IOC, UN, non-UN) by the IOC/IODE Secretariat
- **STEP 2**: (December 2021–February 2022): The IOC/IODE Secretariat will invite the following IOC regional subsidiary bodies and IOC programmes and projects to designate representatives to the IWG-DATAPOLICY as follows:
 - IOCAFRICA: 1-2 representatives
 - IOCARIBE: 1-2 representatives
 - IOCINDIO: 1-2 representatives
 - WESTPAC: 1-2 representatives
 - IODE: 1-2 representatives
 - Ocean Science (HAB, Ocean Acidification and GOSR): 3 representatives

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GOOS: 1-2 representatives
Marine Policy and Regional Coordination: 1-2 representatives
Tsunami: 1-2 representatives.

This will result in a total of between 20 and 28 members (including 8 members of the IOC Secretariat).

- STEP 3: (March–May 2022): The IWG-DATAPOLICY will be invited to discuss the issue and draft a first version of the new policy (the group will be invited to elect a Chair and possibly a Co-Chair)
- STEP 4: (May–July 2022): The IWG-DATAPOLICY will share the draft with selected UN and non-UN organizations and partners and seek their comments
- STEP 5: (August/September 2022): An information session will be organized (online) for IOC Member States (national focal points) to collect feedback
- STEP 6: (September–November 2022): The IWG-DATAPOLICY will revise the first draft of the new IOC data policy based on input from steps 4 and 5.
- STEP 7: (February/March 2023): The IWG-DATAPOLICY will submit the first draft of the new IOC data policy to IODE intergovernmental Committee at its 27th session
- STEP 8: (May/June 2023): The IWG-DATAPOLICY will submit the final draft of the new proposed policy to the IOC Assembly at its 32nd session for adoption.

We look forward to your active participation throughout this process.

With the assurances of my highest consideration, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

Vladimir Ryabinin
Executive Secretary

Enclosures: IOC Assembly Decision A-31/3.4.2 (25 June 2021), including the terms of reference of IWG-DATAPOLICY

IOC Decision A-31/3.4.2

International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange

[...]

III – Revision of the IOC Oceanographic Data Exchange Policy (2003, 2019)

Having examined the proposed arrangements contained in document IOC/A-31/3.4.2.Doc(2),

Recalling IOC [Resolution XXII-6](#) that established the IOC Oceanographic Data Exchange Policy in 2003 and [Decision IOC-XXX/7.2.1\(II\)](#) that amended Clause 5 in 2019,

Noting that partner and sister organizations are changing their data policies, which can serve as a model for updating the IOC data policy,

Noting further that principles of data sharing and licensing are becoming globally recognized and adopted, e.g., FAIR Principles and Creative Commons licences,

Decides to establish the IOC inter-sessional working group on the Revision of the IOC Oceanographic Data Exchange Policy (2003, 2019) with terms of reference as included in Annex 3 to this decision;

Annex 3 to Dec. A-31/3.4.2

Terms of Reference of the IOC Inter-sessional Working Group on the Revision of the IOC Oceanographic Data Exchange Policy (IWG-DATAPOLICY)

Objectives: This working group will:

- (i) create an inventory of existing international, national and organizational data policies,
- (ii) review and compare existing international, national and organizational data policies,
- (iii) develop a glossary with clear definitions (e.g. open vs free and unrestricted; data vs metadata vs information, licence options),
- (iv) investigate the expansion of scope and name of the IOC Oceanographic Data Exchange Policy,
- (v) gather advice from partner/sister organizations and recognized data provider/manager organizations,
- (vi) organize a broad consultation on the proposed revised IOC Ocean Data Policy with Member States, IOC global and regional programmes,
- (vii) submit a revised IOC Oceanographic Data Exchange Policy to the IOC Assembly at its 32nd Session in 2023.

Modalities: The IWG-DATAPOLICY aims to have at least three meetings (second half 2021, first half 2022). The group may meet online, face-to-face or mixed as appropriate. For face-to-face meetings participation will be self-funded.

Membership: The IWG-DATAPOLICY will be composed, inter alia, of:

- Chair of the working group (to be designated by the group)
- Invited experts from the global data and information communities including UN agencies
- Representatives of IOC programmes and projects
- IOC (including IODE) Secretariat