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### **IOC Ocean Best Practices System Project Governance Processes**

Draft : 29 Oct 2021; 15 Nov 2021; 03 Dec 2021

**IOC Ocean Best Practices System Project Objectives**

The objectives of this project are to:

(i) Increase efficiency, reproducibility and interoperability of the entire ocean

observing value chain by providing the community with a unified, sustained and readily accessible knowledge base of interdisciplinary best practices;

(ii) Provide coordinated and sustained global access to best practices in ocean

observing to foster innovation and excellence by developing a system and

engaging ocean observing communities in a joint and coordinated effort in

producing, reviewing and sustaining best practice documents.

This updated OBPS Governance Process expands upon and replaces the previous governance document dated 12 May 2021 (Annex 1).

The structure and processes below arise from inputs from the ocean research and applications community through workshops and other venues. The processes are meant to be more inclusive and balanced in providing inputs to the SG-OBPS

**Participants:**

* **Stakeholder Community Forum (SCF)**  -
  + The SCF consists of anyone who has participated in or is interested in the project or provided community guidance to the project (perhaps participated in previous workshops and task teams) . Individuals can join through a registration process and membership will be confirmed. There will be no limit on the number of members in the Stakeholder Community Forum. The confirmed individuals will be termed “OBPS SCF members”.
  + The SCF registration form asking for very basic information (name, email, organization and a statement why interested in OBPS) will be available via the OBPS website.
  + SCF Members will participate in an annual SCF meeting (workshop) where strategic and tactical advances and issues are discussed and community input and guidance sought - for action through the OBPS Steering Group and Task Teams.
  + Term limit for SCF members - no limit
* **Steering Group (SG-OBPS)** 
  + The SG-OBPS is responsible for strategic planning and strategy level decisions. It will produce a Strategic Plan and an Implementation Plan. Both Strategic and Implementation Plans will be submitted for approval to the IODE Committee and GOOS Steering Committee.
  + The SG-OBPS will have the following **Terms of Reference:**

| (i) | Propose the vision, strategy, work plan and timetable for the Ocean Best Practices System Project; |
| --- | --- |
| (ii) | Advise on technical aspects such as user interface, back office, etc. to WP2 and 3 |
| (iii) | Report to the IOC and to other partners on the progress of the Ocean  Best Practices System Project |
| (iv) | Provide guidance to the project manager and project technical manager; |
| (v) | Identify funding sources to further develop the OBPS. |

* **Membership**

The Steering Group will be composed, inter alia, of:

| (i) | Representatives from IOC Programmes |
| --- | --- |
| (ii) | Project Manager/Repository Manager; |
| (iii) | Project Technical Manager; |
| (iv) | Invited Experts from the ocean observing community; |
| (v) | Representatives of the IODE and GOOS Secretariats; |

* + SG-OBPS member commitment is a demonstrated interest to dedicate time and leadership to work on the evolution of OBPS towards its’ vision and mission through the fulfilment of the Strategic and implementation Plans; attend monthly SG-OBPS meetings, annual SG-OBPS meeting, and the global annual Stakeholder Community Forum (Workshop)
  + The SG-OBPS will have approximately 20 people representing various elements of ocean research and applications.
  + The SG-OBPS will elect new members when appropriate from a pool of volunteers that have indicated interest in becoming SG members. Alongside subject discipline needs, gender and geographic balance will be taken into consideration in the composition of the SG.
  + Some SG-OBPS members will have responsibilities for WP (leads/contributors) and/or Task Team responsibilities (see respective document)
  + SG-OBPS participation is voluntary and does not include a remuneration (except for travel funding for annual meetings of the SG-OBPS as appropriate)
  + SG-OBPS members serve for a three year term that is renewable.
  + SG will meet annually; and every month for 1 hour.

*For discussion : Monthly meeting content will rotate over 3 month period- Month 1: community dialogue with invited speaker(s) ; Month 2: Open Chat; Month 3: agenda items and strategic decisions (formal meeting where a quorum will be required)*

* **Co-Chairs OBPS**

The OBPS will have two co-chairs

* + Elected by members of the SG-OBPS from the SG unless there are no SG applicants
  + Following election, Co-chairs are members of the SG-OBPS
  + Motivates and represents the OBPS in all its facets of its development and operations
  + Represents OBPS in related organizational structures (such as IODE, GOOS, etc.)
  + Work in close coordination with the Project Manager and other SG-OBPS members
  + Is first point of contact for collaborative dialogue with organizations and projects
  + Term limit of 3 years with one renewal
* **Management Group (MG-OBPS)**

MG-OBPS will make tactical decisions for Implementation Plan evolution following

strategic decisions of the SG-OBPS,

* + Be responsible for reviewing progress of the Work Plan and budget approved by the SG-OBPS and make any necessary recommendations to the SG-OBPS
  + The MG-OBPS is drawn from the SG-OBPS membership
  + The MG-OBPS will consist of 5 people including the Co-chairs and the Project Manager
  + Membership for the additional 2 positions is through self nomination from SG-OBPS members and selected by the SG-OBPS election
  + MG-OBPS will meet as required but at least once per month in addition to the monthly SG meeting

**Staff**

* The SG-OBPS, MG-OBPS and Co-Chairs are supported by a Project Manager
* Everyday IT support for the repository server is via IODE IT

**Decision Processes**

Strategic decisions will be voted upon by the SG-OBPS. These are at the level of policy and cover:

* Decisions on commitment of OBPS monetary funds
* Decisions about the formal structure of OBPS project at or above WP level
* Decisions on strategic directions

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For Strategic decision voting, there should be a quorum of the SG-OBPS which shall be a majority of the total SG-OBPS members (>=50%) at the time of the vote.

Tactical issues will be addressed by the MG-OBPS

Rapid response issues will be decided by the Co-Chairs with support from the Project Manager and will be consistent with the current strategy.

All decisions will be recorded and available and a link provided to all decisions will be provided in the monthly SG-OBPS agenda.

**Resources:**

Foundational budgets will be provided by co-sponsors (IODE and GOOS).

Technology development and applications will be supported through grants.

Grant funding should be proposed to a full range of potential sponsors (national and international governments and agencies), NGOs, foundations, etc. Grant funding for the OBPS may be applied for by SG member organizations as well as by UNESCO.

**Priorities of this document**

Where there is a conflict in provisions in the above and with the statements of Annex 1 below, the provisions above will be the governing terms.

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**ANNEX 1**

Decision Making within the SG-OBPS

Version : 3.0 2021-05-12

# Decision Making

Decisions of the Steering Group will occur throughout the project.

## **1.1 Decisions by the SG-OBPS**

Decisions will be reached by consensus (Consensus is achieved when there are no objections to the proposed solution, even though it may not be their most preferred solution. (Gray 1989)[[1]](#footnote-0), built through

1. discussion at monthly Steering Group virtual meetings;
2. discussion at annual Steering Group meetings.
3. In urgent cases either:
   1. an exceptional meeting of the SG can be called (subject to quorum, described below) or
   2. an email calling for consensus building and signatures on a shared document (GDoc) of a proposed decision. The text can be revised until a fixed date and time, after which it will be considered final. After that time, the SG members will be asked to sign their approval on the final text. If quorum is reached, the decision may be made.
   3. In the above cases, decisions made will be recognized/noted in a regular SG meeting and recorded in the minutes, and announced by the SG meeting chair at the beginning of the meeting

**Decisions to be made by SG:**

* Decisions on commitment of OBPS monetary funds
* Decisions about the formal structure of OBPS project at or above WP level
* Decisions on strategic directions
* Decisions on official and formally documented partnership (a partner who wishes to be an OBPS partner and/or for whom we will commit resources to undertake actions)

In general, other decisions which are not included in the above list and have no funding impact on the OBPS project or its perception/optics should not be brought to the SG. If in doubt, work package leads should check with the co-chairs or project manager.

Once a decision is made by the SG, implementation is delegated to a Work Package. Decisions on implementation are done at the Work Package level except where the decisions impact funding or strategic direction. Recommendations for decisions on funding or overarching strategy will be brought to the SG for consideration and resolution.

## **1.2 Quorum for a decision**

The minimum quorum to debate a proposed decision for approval/rejection is reached when a majority (>50%) of the SG members are present. The minutes will record whether a quorum is present.

As the proposed decision text will be available before the meeting (see below), those that cannot attend the meeting (e.g. due to timezones) will have the opportunity to comment on the decision text and work with the proposer to amend the text in order to remove any objections prior to the meeting. This exchange will be linked in the agenda, so all attending the meeting are aware of it.

If the decision or course of action relies on actions from one or more WPs, at least one lead, or their nominated proxy, from those WPs must be present to achieve a quorum. The choice of the preferred lead WP(s) should be stated when the proposed decision is created and circulated (see below). The nominated proxy should be identified in the minutes of meeting when attendance is noted.

# 2. Decision methodology

Each of the actions below will be documented in the minutes and/or proceedings of meetings, and/or by archiving related electronic communication in the meeting folder in GDrive. The following shall be considered in preparing decisions through consensus during SG-OBPS meetings .

## **2.1 Placing the motion for decision on the agenda of any formal SG Annual, monthly, or exceptional meeting**

Any other meetings involving SG members have limits on decision-making power consistent with section 1 above.

* 1. The opportunity to call for discussion, consensus, and decisions by the SG can occur
     1. prior to (a minimum of 3 working days) any SG meeting, by adding points to be discussed and the time needed for the discussion to the annotated agenda of the meeting and
     2. As an SG meeting begins, when the chair calls for the acceptance of the agenda, if it is a matter of urgency and subject to 2.1.b.
  2. In the case of 2.1.a.ii, time will be allocated only if there is unallocated time in the agenda, or if time is ceded on another point. Due to their consequential nature, decisions at the SG level (see Section 1) shall not be included in the “miscellaneous” or “any other business” sections of the agenda.
  3. Agenda points should be clearly and concisely framed, and always accompanied with text which captures the motion and which will be added to the agenda. Only what is recorded, in the minutes, will be considered or treated as binding.

## **2.2 Debating and amending the proposed course of action:**

1. Following presentation of the issue and proposed decision on a course of action, the SG will have a defined amount of time to debate and amend the motion, if needed. If the time does not allow for a decision, an SG meeting will be called within one week.
2. Any reservations or substantive comments will be noted in the minutes
3. As the proposed course of action and draft decision will be included - prior to the meeting - in the annotated agenda, any comments made by SG members unable to attend the meeting will also be discussed during this phase.

**2.3 Acting on the outcomes of the debate:**

1. At the end of the debate, members shall actively voice either
   * 1. Approval
     2. Abstention or
     3. Objection (accompanying text in minutes)

## **2.3.1 Deferring a decision:**

## If the debate is inconclusive (e.g. objections are not resolved) and a consensus has not been reached, the motion is deferred until the next meeting or an alternative process is agreed upon.

**2.3.2.Achieving consensus**:

If the debate concludes in a consensus (as defined at the start of this document), the decision and associated course of action is declared as provisionally accepted, subject to Section 3 below.

**2.3.3 Delegating a decision**:

If consensus is not achieved and deferral is not an option (e.g. due to deadlines which require that decision), a working group can be formed and empowered to make decisions on the issue, ensuring those that wish to engage on the issue are included.

# 3. Recording the consensus and decision:

3.1 Each motion, decision and agreed course of action will be clearly and concisely recorded in

the minutes of the meeting, as the meeting proceeds.

3.2 At the end of each meeting, sufficient time will be allocated (min. 5 minutes) for the SG to review the final text of each motion made during that meeting. If no objections are lodged this time, it will be understood that the SG has approved those decisions.

3.3 Only the text recorded in the minutes will be considered as a valid reflection of decisions

and agreements endorsed by the SG.

**A suggestion was made that in the future, the SG should look at the concept of an Executive Committee to address inter-meeting decisions.**

Average attendance at meetings Jan-Apr 2021 = 17

1. Gray, B. (1989). Collaborating: Finding Common Ground for Multiparty Problems. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)