



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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**IOC Circular Letter No 2878**  
(Available in English, French and Spanish)

IOC/VR/JB/ic  
16 February 2022

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: United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development  
(2021–2030) – Update 01/2022**

This Circular Letter has been prepared to provide Member States with an update of progress in the implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (the Ocean Decade). It informs Member States of the process to establish an Ocean Decade Expert Roster, provides an update of the submissions received to Call for Decade Actions No. 02/2021 and the process to be followed for the analysis of these submissions, and calls for input from Member States to the Ocean Decade Annual Report and for Expressions of Interest to host the Second International Ocean Decade Conference.

**(i) Establishment of Ocean Decade Expert Roster**

As discussed at the IOC Officers meeting in January 2022, an Ocean Decade Expert Roster is being established that will have the three following roles: (i) input to strategic ambition and target setting for the Ocean Decade Challenges; (ii) input to the technical review of Decade programme and project submissions to inform the deliberations of the Decade Advisory Board, and the decisions on endorsement by the IOC Executive Secretary; and (iii) input to Decade review processes including the State of the Decade reports and discussions during the Ocean Decade Conference series. Individual registration on the Expert Roster will be via a rolling call for self-nominations at the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ExpertRoster>. Once registered on the Expert Roster, individuals will be invited to participate in different activities and discussions around the three abovementioned roles throughout the life of the Decade. Expertise sought should align with 10 Decade challenges including in the area of co-design, partnership building, and capacity development. Registration from SIDS, LDCs, early career professionals and women are particularly encouraged. Information on the Expert Roster, including the registration process, will be widely communicated via IOC and Ocean Decade communication channels and Member States are kindly encouraged to communicate widely about the Expert Roster registration process.

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## **(ii) Update on submissions received to Call for Decade Actions No. 02/2021**

The second Call for Decade Actions No. 02/2021 was open from 15 October 2021 to 31 January 2022 and solicited the following types of Decade Actions: (i) Decade programmes focused on Ocean Decade Challenges related to marine pollution (Challenge 1), ecosystem management and restoration (Challenge 2), and the ocean-climate nexus (Challenge 5); (ii) Decade projects to be attached to one of 25 already endorsed Decade programmes that indicated their readiness to solicit projects; and (iii) Decade projects in response to the sponsored Calls for Decade Actions with the AXA Research Fund and the MeerWissen Initiative for African – German Marine Partnerships, focusing on coastal resilience and nature based solutions, respectively.

In response to Call for Decade Actions No. 02/2021, 38 programme submission were received from lead institutions in 13 countries and include 7 submissions addressing Challenge 1 – Marine Pollution, 20 submissions addressing Challenge 2 – Ecosystem Management and Restoration, and 11 submissions addressing Challenge 5 – Ocean Climate Nexus. In addition, 134 project submissions from lead institutes in 29 countries were received for attachment to endorsed Decade programmes. Sixty-eight (68) submissions were received in total for the two sponsored Calls for Decade Actions.

Key steps and milestones in the analysis process for the submissions will be as follows:

- Review of programme submissions for eligibility by the Decade Coordination Unit and sharing with members of three informal expert review groups that have been established as a precursor to the Ocean Decade Expert roster to provide feedback on the possible endorsement of the programme proposals. *Estimated timeline:* February 2022.
- Review of project submissions for eligibility by the Decade Coordination Unit and sharing with focal points of relevant endorsed Decade programmes to provide on the possible endorsement of the project proposals. *Estimated timeline:* February–March 2022.
- Involvement of the Decade Coordination Unit in review processes of submissions to sponsored Calls for Decade Actions for AXA Research Fund and MeerWissen Initiative. *Estimated timeline:* January–March 2022.
- Meeting of the Decade Advisory Board to review the eligible programme proposals. *Estimated timeline:* 28 – 30 March 2022.
- Completion of due diligence processes and presentation of recommendations to the IOC Executive Secretary on the endorsement of programme and project proposals. *Estimated timeline:* April–May 2022.
- Announcement of endorsed programmes and proposals: June 2022.

Further information on endorsed programmes and projects, together with more detailed information on the geographic distribution of the submissions and an analysis of resource needs, will be provided in future circular letters.

## **(iii) Call for Member State input to Ocean Decade 2021 Annual Report**

The IOC Secretariat is currently preparing the 2021 Ocean Decade Annual Report which is scheduled for publication in the first quarter of 2022, and is seeking information from Member States on national activities for inclusion in the Report. Member States are kindly asked to complete the following online survey before 10 March 2022: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KJPZKFH>.

## **(iv) Call for Expressions of Interest to host Second International Ocean Decade Conference**

As envisaged in the Ocean Decade *Implementation Plan*, it is proposed to hold a multi-stakeholder International Ocean Decade Conference every three years as a means of: (i) carrying out a collective stocktaking of progress against the Ocean Decade vision and mission, (ii) reviewing the Ocean Decade Action Framework, including the Ocean Decade Challenges; and (iii) catalyzing new

partnerships and commitments for the co-design and co-delivery of transformative Decade Actions. The First International Ocean Decade Conference was generously supported by Germany in virtual mode. The IOC Secretariat is now seeking written Expressions of Interest from Member States via their National Focal Points to host the Second International Ocean Decade Conference approximately in late 2023.

It is expected that the Conference will be primarily an in-person event for 800 - 1000 persons, with facilities for hybrid participation / live streaming. The Conference will include a series of plenary and parallel sessions across all Ocean Decade Challenges, and should have scope for side events and cultural / networking events. The Conference can be held consecutively with another major ocean convening in this time period in order to minimize travel. Expressions of Interest should include information on experience of the Member State in hosting similar events, information on the proposed dates and location of the Conference, as well as information on the financial and in-kind resources available to organize and host the Conference, including support to ensure wide participation from less well represented groups. Joint Expressions of Interest that include resourcing from two or more Member States are welcomed, particularly when this may allow the Conference to be held in a Least Developed Country or Small Island Developing State that may have the capacity, but not all the required resources, to host the conference.

Following an initial review of the Expressions of Interest by the IOC Executive Secretary in consultation with the IOC Chair and Officers, the IOC Secretariat will hold discussions with potential hosts on the details of their proposed hosting role for the Conference before making a final decision on the host. The final decision will be made taking into account: (i) available resources; (ii) experience in organizing and hosting similar events; (iii) geographical diversity; (iv) travel and logistical issues include the net carbon footprint of the Conference once any offsets are taken into account; and (v) any other relevant issues. A Host Country Agreement will be established with the selected host of the Conference to formalize the details of the Conference and the roles and responsibilities of the host country and the IOC Secretariat in Conference organization and hosting. It is envisaged that a decision on the host of the Conference will be made by the IOC Executive Secretary in consultation with the IOC Chair and IOC Officers in time for announcements at the 55<sup>th</sup> session of the IOC Executive Council and the UN Ocean Conference in June-July 2022.

Expressions of Interest should be addressed to the IOC Executive Secretary before 30 April 2022 with a copy to [j.barbiere@unesco.org](mailto:j.barbiere@unesco.org) and [a.clausen@unesco.org](mailto:a.clausen@unesco.org). I thank you in advance for acting on issues outlined in this Circular Letter.

Yours sincerely,

*[signed]*

Vladimir Ryabinin  
Executive Secretary