



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

UNESCO – 7 Place de Fontenoy - 75352 Paris Cedex 07 SP, France
<http://ioc.unesco.org> - contact phone: +33 (0)1 45 68 03 18
E-mail: v.ryabinin@unesco.org

IOC Circular Letter No 2925
(Available in English only)

IOC/VR/HE/ss
26 December 2022

- To : Member States of the IOC-FAO Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB)
Official National Coordinating Bodies for liaison with the IOC
- Cc : Permanent Delegations/Observer Missions to UNESCO of IOC Member States
National Commissions of UNESCO in IOC Member States
IOC Officers
Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons of IOC Intergovernmental Subsidiary Bodies
President and Executive Director, SCOR
Executive Director, ICS
Relevant Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations

Subject: Sixteenth Session of the IOC-FAO Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB-XVI), 27–29 March 2023, Rome, Italy

I have the pleasure to invite you, in your capacity as representative of your country or organization, to take part in the forthcoming IPHAB-XVI session, which will be hosted by FAO at its Headquarters in Rome.

The Panel was established by IOC Assembly Resolution XVI-4 in March 1991 (Annex 1). At its Thirty-first Session, June 2021, the IOC Assembly decided to convene a sixteenth session of the IPHAB in order to maintain and accelerate momentum in the development and implementation of the Harmful Algal Bloom Programme (see Annex 2 hereafter).

The basic reason to form the IPHAB was the need to improve the managerial, scientific and financial resources available for the implementation of a global HAB Programme. A primary task is still to identify the required resources, so that the international community jointly can continue to implement activities addressing capacity building, international cooperative research, and communication networks.

For those IOC Member States who have not yet declared their intention to participate actively in the HAB Programme as per Resolution XVI-4 of 1991 but would like to do so, I highlight a paragraph of the resolution that refers to the composition of the IPHAB:

Chairperson

Mr Ariel Hernan TROISI
Technical Secretary
Navy Hydrographic Service
Av. Montes de Oca 2124
C1270ABV Buenos Aires
ARGENTINA

Executive Secretary

Dr Vladimir RYABININ
Intergovernmental Oceanographic
Commission — UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris Cedex 07 SP
FRANCE

Vice-Chairpersons

Dr Marie-Alexandrine SICRE
Directrice de Recherche
Centre national de la recherche scientifique
(CNRS)
3 rue Michel Ange
75016 Paris
FRANCE

Dr Alexander FROLOV
Assistant to the President
National Research Center "Kurchatov Institute"
Academika Kurchatova pl., 1
123182 Moscow
RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr Frederico Antonio SARAIVA NOGUEIRA
Navy Captain (Ret) Directorate
of Hydrography and Navigation
Rua Barao de Jaceguai S/N
24048-900 Niterói
BRAZIL

Dr Srinivasa Kumar TUMMALA
Director
Indian National Centre for Ocean
Information Services (INCOIS)
Pragathi Nagar (BO), Nizampet (SO)
Hyderabad 500090
INDIA

Dr Karim HILMI
Directeur de Recherche
Institut National de Recherche
Halieutique (INRH)
02, Boulevard Sidi Abderrahmane
Ain Diab
20180 Casablanca
MOROCCO

"The membership of the IPHAB is open to Member States of IOC which have declared to the Secretary IOC their involvement or intention to participate in the development and implementation of the HAB Programme on a global, regional, or national scale. The Panel shall include representatives of IOC regional or other subsidiary bodies, and other interested international organizations particularly SCOR. Invitations to participate in the IPHAB activities may be extended to scientific experts at the request of the Panel and with the approval of Secretary IOC."

Member States are expected to declare their interest in the programme by means of a letter of interest and nominate their representative to the governance of the programme.

With reference to section 3 of the Annex to Resolution XVI-4, I would like to remind that the IPHAB Intergovernmental Panel sessions are intergovernmental. Therefore, for the effectiveness of the IPHAB session, it is crucial that nominated representatives have responsibilities in HAB science or management activities at national level, and that their designation on the Panel are acknowledged by the National Coordinating Body for Liaison with IOC (see [list online](#)). Through nominations of national representatives to IPHAB, Member States are able to pursue their priorities and raise any issues deemed important for them. IPHAB helps to implement cooperative and productive efforts in finding solutions at the regional and global scales.

IPHAB sessions are conducted in English. The executive summary together with the adopted decisions and recommendations to the IOC governing bodies will be prepared in the four working languages of the Commission and submitted to the forthcoming Assembly session in June 2023. The draft Provisional Agenda for the session is attached as Annex 3. The documentation for the session will be sent to the IPHAB members in due time and be available at the IPHAB home page at <https://prod.hab.ioc-unesco.org/ioc-intergovernmental-panel-on-harmful-algal-blooms-iphab/>.

The Panel will discuss progress and actions to be taken on the issues raised at the last session ([IOC/IPHAB-XV/3s](#)). However, the draft Provisional Agenda for the session is open to other priorities expressed by Member States in writing by e-mail to the Secretariat before 1st of March 2023 at the latest (att. the IPHAB Technical Secretary, Mr Henrik Enevoldsen, h.enevoldsen@unesco.org). Member States who wish to update their [representative](#) to the programme are invited to inform me in the same way, with a copy to Mr Enevoldsen.

As an outcome of the session, IPHAB will recommend a workplan for both the IOC HAB Programme for 2024–2025 to be presented to the forthcoming IOC Assembly and the FAO HAB activities for 2024–2025 to be presented to the relevant body of the FAO.

By this letter, we are seeking additional information to be received **by 1 March 2023 at the very latest**. It is about:

1. Composition of your delegation at the Sixteenth Session of the IPHAB;
2. Comments on the draft Agenda and suggestions for supplementary items requiring attention;
3. Possible nominations for one position as Chair and one position as Vice-chair of IPHAB. Elected Officers serve a term of two years corresponding to the intersessional period of IPHAB, renewable only once. Please note that both Dr Joe Silke (Ireland) as Chair and Dr Alexandra Silva (Portugal) as Vice-chair will be completing their second mandate at the closure of IPHAB-XVI. Candidates should submit their names and contact information, as well as a *curriculum vitae* and a short statement outlining their views on the future of IPHAB. Nominations should be emailed to the IPHAB Technical Secretary, Mr Henrik Enevoldsen, h.enevoldsen@unesco.org. Elected Officers of the IPHAB are expected to actively work together the Secretariat in implementing the workplan adopted by the Panel. They may need to participate in meetings, on-line discussions during the intersessional period of the Panel and be involved in the drafting of documents, and other activities in support of the IPHAB.

With the assurance of my highest consideration, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Vladimir Ryabinin
Executive Secretary

Enclosures (3): Annex 1: Decision A-31/3.4.3 and summary of discussions
Annex 2: IOC Resolution XVI-4 and IPHAB Terms of Reference
Annex 3: Provisional Agenda (IOC-FAO/IPHAB-XVI/1 prov.(draft))

Annex 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE *ad hoc** IOC-FAO INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

The IOC Assembly, at its Sixteenth Session, Paris, 7–21 March 1991, adopted the following resolution with respect to the formation of an *Ad hoc* Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms in order to identify adequate resources for a sufficiently broad programme to solve some of the real problems caused by algal blooms.

Resolution XVI-4

AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission,

Recalling that the IOC, at the Fourteenth Session of its Assembly, endorsed the development of the sub-programme on Harmful Algal Blooms, and that the Twenty-third Executive Council, through its Resolution EC-XXIII.1, endorsed the programme development so far,

Being aware of the increasing socio-economic risks posed by toxic algae and harmful algal blooms to marine organisms, fisheries, aquaculture, human health and the coastal environment,

Approves the formation of an *Ad hoc* Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms, with the Terms of Reference shown in the Annex hereto;

Invites FAO to co-sponsor the *Ad hoc* Panel;

Invites Member States which intend to be involved in the implementation of a programme on Harmful Algal Blooms to nominate their representatives for the *Ad hoc* Panel and inform the Secretary IOC accordingly;

Decides to review, at the Seventeenth Session of the Assembly, the Terms of Reference of the *Ad hoc* Panel, in conjunction with the Commission's review of the overall organization of the OSLR Programme;

Instructs the Secretary to convene the First Session of the *Ad hoc* Panel as soon as possible.

Annex

Terms of Reference of the *Ad hoc* Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms

1. FUNCTIONS

The *Ad hoc* Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms is established to meet the scientific, managerial, implementation, and resource needs of the Harmful Algal Blooms Programme.

The Panel will carry out the following functions:

- 1.1 Review and identify programme requirements;
- 1.2 Promote efficient and cost-effective implementation of the HAB programme and prepare recommendations on this implementation to the Assembly and Executive Council;
- 1.3 Identify the resources necessary to meet HAB programme needs;
- 1.4 Ensure effective interaction and communication with regional intergovernmental (e.g., ICES, ICSEM and GFCM) as well as regional and global non-governmental (e.g., SCOR) organizations involved in research on toxic algae and harmful algal blooms; and
- 1.5 Report to the Twenty-fifth Session of the Executive Council and the Seventeenth Session of the Assembly.

2. COMPOSITION

The membership of the *Ad hoc* Panel is open to Member States of IOC (and FAO, if it agrees to co-sponsor the Panel) which have declared to the Secretary IOC their involvement or intention to participate in the development and implementation of the Harmful Algal Bloom Programme on a global, regional, or national scale. The Panel shall include the Chairman of the OSLR Guiding Group of Experts, representatives of IOC regional and other subsidiary bodies, and of other interested international organizations, particularly SCOR. Invitations to participate in Panel activities may be extended to scientific experts at the request of the Panel and with the approval of the Secretary of the IOC.

3. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSIONS

- 3.1 The Panel will, prior to the closure of each Session, elect from its members a Chairman who will serve in that capacity until the closure of the next Session.
- 3.2 The Sessions shall, in principle, be arranged without financial costs to IOC. Sessions will be conducted, documentation will be provided, and the report of each session will be prepared in English and in other working languages of the Commission as appropriate and required.
- 3.3 Secretariat support for the Panel will be provided by the Secretary IOC.

** The IPHAB is by decision of the IOC Assembly permanently established and the prefix ad-hoc does no longer apply*

Annex 2

Thirty-first Session of the IOC Assembly Paris, 14–25 June 2021

Decision A-31/3.4.3 and summary of discussions

(Extract from Doc [IOC/A-31/SR](#))

3.4.3 HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS: 15TH SESSION OF IPHAB, 23–25 MARCH 2021

1. Mr Joe Silke, Chair of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB), presented the main outputs of the 15th session of the Panel. The Panel took eight decisions and endorsed two recommendations for the consideration of the Assembly at its 31st session. The decisions concern: (i) Regional HAB Programme Development taking into account the difference of support for the various groups and networks depending on whether they are affiliated to a regional IOC subsidiary body or not; (ii) the continuation of the Task Team on the Early Detection, Warning and Forecasting of HAB Events with new terms of reference; (iii) the continuation of the Task Team on the development of the Harmful algal Information System and a periodic Global Harmful Algal Bloom Status Report with new terms of reference; (iv) the continuation of the Task Team on a Global Inter-Agency Ciguatera Strategy for Improved Research and Management with new terms of reference; (v) the continuation of the Task Team on Harmful Algae and Desalination of Seawater to assess and explore the feasibility of a joint FAO-IOC food safety risk assessment (or what available data allow) for toxins in drinking water coming from desalination plants; (vi) the continuation of the Task Team on Biotoxin Monitoring, Management and Regulations with new terms of reference; (vii) the continuation of the Task Team on Algal Taxonomy with new terms of reference; and (viii) the continuation of the Task Team on Harmful Algae and Fish Kills with new terms of reference and renamed to Task Team on Fish Killing Microalgae and Ecosystem Effects.
2. In addition to the above, the Intergovernmental Panel submitted to the Assembly its planned intersessional activities in the form of a workplan and budget for the IOC HAB Programme 2022–2023 and recommended to it the continuation of IPHAB as a major technical subsidiary body with unchanged terms of reference.
3. The Chair of IPHAB informed the Assembly that the Memorandum of Understanding between FAO, IAEA, IOC and WHO on Ciguatera Poisoning, presented to the 30th session of the Assembly as IOC-XXX/Inf.4, and subsequently approved by the UNESCO's Executive Board, has not yet been signed due to delays caused by organization changes in WHO.
4. The Assembly was informed that Dr Joe Silke (Ireland) was re-elected as Chair and Dr Alexandra Silva (Portugal) was re-elected as Vice-Chair.
5. Finally, he drew the attention of the Assembly to the interest of FAO to investigate the possibility of returning as a cosponsor of IPHAB as set out in IOC Assembly Resolution XVI-4.
6. The representatives of 13 Member States took the floor.
7. The Assembly acknowledged that the activities under IPHAB provide a valuable resource to the global HAB community including pathways to improve management of HAB impacts.
8. The Assembly noted that the activities, initiatives and programmes of IPHAB are enhancing research on HAB especially in relation to how HAB occurrences may respond to climate change and that this understanding is of key importance in relation to fishery resources, as well as the development of HAB management capacity.
9. The Assembly stressed (i) the importance of early warning systems as of critical importance to HAB affected member states; (ii) the importance of sharing of data in HEADAT and OBIS, as the source

of information for all around the world involved in research or management of HAB's; (iii) and that the coordinated activities on Ciguatera are important as Ciguatera may have an increasing impact on world food supply and fishery resources.

10. The Assembly noted the importance of the role of national IPHAB representatives and urged that they be reactivated if not active and that they keep close contact with their IOC national focal points to share information.
11. The Assembly acknowledged the value and importance of regional activities on HAB in particular for capacity enhancement and noted that HAB's continues to impact society at a level of concern to governments and the public. Several Member States referred to *Sargassum* as a challenge and as a high priority to address together with the risk HAB poses for people living on the coast and being dependent on seafood.
12. The Assembly took positive note of the interest of the FAO to investigate the possibility of returning as co-sponsor of IPHAB.
13. The following Member States chose to provide records of their plenary intervention on this agenda item for the informational annex to the meeting report: Chile, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Spain, Thailand, United Kingdom.
14. The Assembly adopted IOC Decision A-31/3.4.3.

Harmful Algal Blooms

The Assembly,

Having considered the Executive Summary Report of the 15th online session (23–25 March 2021) of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB),

Endorses the Executive Summary Report of IPHAB-XIV and the recommendations contained therein (IOC/IPHAB-XV/3s);

Takes note of the information related to the status of the FAO-WHO-IAEA-IOC Memorandum of Understanding of Ciguatera Poisoning, and commends cooperation between the four UN organizations in this area;

Agrees that the regular budget for these activities will be identified as part of the Resolution on Governance, Programming and Budgeting Matters of the Commission (IOC Resolution A-31/2).

Annex 3

Restricted distribution

IOC/IPHAB-XVI/1 Prov. (Draft)
Paris, 22 November 2022
English only

INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

Sixteenth Session of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms

27–29 March 2023

DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. OPENING

- 1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS
- 1.2 DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE IOC ASSEMBLY

2. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

- 2.1 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
- 2.2 DESIGNATION OF RAPPORTEUR

3. SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE IOC HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM PROGRAMME, FAO HAB ACTIVITIES AND THE IPHAB STRATEGY

4. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

- 4.1 CHAIR IPHAB AND TECHNICAL SECRETARY'S SUMMARY REPORT

4.1.1 Implementation of IPHAB-XV decisions

- 4.2 HAB Capacity Building
- 4.3 REGIONAL HAB WORKING GROUPS
 - 4.3.1. IOC/IOCARIBE-ANCA
 - 4.3.2. IOC/WESTPAC-HAB
 - 4.3.3. IOC/WESTPAC-Toxic Marine Organisms
 - 4.3.4. FANSA
 - 4.3.5. HANA
 - 4.3.6. IOCAFRICA

4.4. IPHAB XV TASK TEAMS

- 4.4.1. Task Team on the early detection, warning and forecasting of harmful algal events
- 4.4.2. Task Team on the development of the Harmful Algal Information System (HAIS) and the Global HAB Status Report (GHSR).
- 4.4.3. Task Team on a Global Inter-Agency Ciguatera Strategy for Improved Research and Management
- 4.4.4. Task Team on Harmful Algae and Desalination of Seawater
- 4.4.5. Task Team on Biotxin Monitoring, Management and Regulations
- 4.4.6. Task Team on Algal Taxonomy

4.4.7. Task Team on Fish Killing Microalgae and Ecosystem Effects

4.5. GlobalHAB

4.5.1. GlobalHAB Guidelines for the study of climate change effects on HABs

4.5.2. GlobalHAB/Euromarine workshop on modelling and prediction of HABS

4.5.3. Global Advances in Molecular Approaches to HAB Studies

4.6. IPHAB AND THE UN DECADE OF OCEAN SCIENCE
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

4.7. OTHER ACTIVITIES

4.7.1. ISSHA and the ICHA

**5. REVIEW AND FINALIZATION OF DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS
AND DECISIONS OF IPHAB-XVI**

6. WORKPLAN FOR 2024–2025 INCLUDING OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES AND NEEDS

7. OPERATION OF THE IPHAB

8. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10. ADOPTION OF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

11. CLOSURE