

# **GOOS Regional Alliance Council Teleconference**

**6 July, 2022**



# **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

Mr Carl Gouldman, Chair of GRA Council, welcomed participants to the first GRA Council meeting of 2022. The GRA strategy and leadership approach will follow the lead from the GOOS implementation team. The chair encouraged members to advocate the sharing of best practices between GOOS Regional Alliances and welcomed new initiatives such as the Ocean Co-Lab project by the South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON).

The provisional agenda was adopted by the GRA Council without any changes.

# **GRF-X SUMMARY REPORT**

Mr Carl Gouldman, introduced the agenda item on the GRF-X summary report. The report has been completed by the GOOS Secretariat with support of the GRA council members. He asked the Council if they would like to have a second round of revisions. The GRA Council agreed to have a second and final revision of the report.

Discussion

The Chairman, expressed the importance of continuing to push emerging technologies which are finding new capabilities in the GRAs regional or national systems for their adoption in programmes such as (in the case of US-IOOS) the high frequency radar (HRF), Glider Data Assembly (DAC) and Animal Borne Ocean Sensors (AniBOS, among others.

The Chairman added that the GRA success stories recounted in the GRF-X summary report can be a source of use cases for the US-IOOS’s [Benefits of Ocean Observations Catalog (BOOC)](https://www.goosocean.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=389:benefits-of-ocean-observations-catalog-booc&catid=13&Itemid=125) initiative. He provided an update on the present status of the BOOC implementation, currently it is in the pilot phase on building the tool online.

**Action 1** The GRAs success stories from 2021-2022 to be a source of use cases for the development of the Benefits of Ocean Observations Catalog (BOOC).

# **UPDATE ON GRA’S SUCCESS STORIES (2020-2021)**

Mr Denis Chang Seng, GOOS Programme Specialist, introduced the item on the update of GRAs Success Stories (2021-2022). He recalled that since the GRA Survey of 2015, the GRA council leadership expressed an interest to include success stories as a part of GRA reporting with the goal of having better recognition of GRA contributions to the GOOS Strategy and societal benefits. The first article on success stories was published after the [GRF-IX](https://www.goosocean.org/index.php?option=com_oe&task=viewDocumentRecord&docID=26309) which took place in Tokyo, Japan from 5-7 August 2019.

Presently, the GOOS Secretariat is working on an information document called the “Societal Benefits of GOOS Regional Alliances – Challenges and Opportunities” to showcase the success stories of GRAs for the period of (2020-2021) across the GOOS value chain.

Mr Alejandro Rojas, GOOS Secretariat Consultant, presented the information document to the GRA council. The document aims to inform about the GRAs ongoing initiatives (success stories), challenges and opportunities and how they contribute to inter regional alliances among different GRAs, the GOOS 2030 Strategy and the benefits of GOOS Regional Alliances (economical, societal, and governmental) for the increase of governmental support (funding) to GRAs.

Discussion

Mr Denis Chang Seng, recalled that one of the GRF-X proposed key actions and recommendations is to improve visibility, communications and impact of GRAs by producing one or two videos from the GRAs success stories. The information document can be used as a guide or starting platform to produce the videos.

Mr Denis Chang Seng, added that the target audience of the document is the GOOS, UN Ocean Decade community, and the GRAs local/regional governments.

Ms Emma Heslop, Acting Head of GOOS Office, suggested adding the revision of the Regional Policy as a future challenge.

Ms Michelle Heupel, GRA Council Vice-Chair, highlighted that the success stories can be used as ammunition to showcase what the value proposition is for governments to invest in ocean observing.

Mr Srinivasa Kumar, IOGOOS Chair, expressed that it would be good to have the economic benefits of ocean observations reflected.

Ms Michelle Heupel will share the Return on investments report of IMOS, and Mr Carl Gouldman will provide the Return on Investments and an Ocean Enterprise Study result from 5 years of US-IOOS, to include key economic information in the document.

**Action 2** Use GRAs success stories for the production of one or two videos, to improve the visibility, communications and impact of GRAs.

**Action 3** The information document, “Societal Benefits of GOOS Regional Alliances – Challenges and Opportunities” to showcase the benefits of GOOS Regional Alliances (economical, societal, and governmental) for the increase of governmental support (funding) to GRAs.

**Action 4** IMOS and US IOOS to provide information on the return of investments and Ocean Enterprise Study for the past 5 years (US IOOS only), for the making of the “Societal Benefits of GOOS Regional Alliances – Challenges and Opportunities” information document.

# **OCEAN CO-LAB**

Mr Tommy Bornman, SAEON, provided a presentation about Coastal Lab in a Box (Ocean Co-Lab), a project first developed by Mr Greg Cowie, University of Edinburgh, to develop and promote new low cost coastal observing systems supported by the latest innovative technology with a clear aim of being affordable, transportable, trainable, repeatable, and accurate. One of the main objectives is to Co-design it with the under-resourced countries so that we are well aware of their needs and to secure funding for the instrument packages.

Instrumentation includes hydrographic, water sampling, biogeochemical analysis, spectrophotometer, and fluorometer equipment to calculate nutrients, chlorophyll, dissolved oxygen, alkalinity, pH, Suspended Particulate Matter (SPM), etc.

The Ocean Co-Lab is linked to the Ocean Best Practices Task Team on coastal observations in under-resourced countries.

The Ocean Co-Lab project and work of the Ocean Best Practices Task Team were presented at a CLIVAR and POGO training workshop in Mozambique, which was well received by countries from both the western Indian Ocean and the Middle East. The Task Team welcomes ideas from the GRA Council on how to take this forward and roll it out around the world.

Discussion

Mr Karim Hilmi, IOC-UNESCO Vice-chair and MONGOOS representative, expressed that Ocean Co-Lab could be very useful for African countries and encouraged further meetings to share this practice within the continent.

Mr Tommy Bornman noted that the idea is to Co-design what Co-Lab looks like and link it to the ocean based practices. In addition to distinguishing between the remote sensing and modelling sides of the project, further meetings will help accomplish this.

Ms Emma Heslop, queried: 1. What is the role of autonomous vehicles? 2. In regards to the modelling side, how does the data get to the next Focal Point so that it can be harvested for other systems and be used by the local, regional, and global communities? 3.  The long term status of the project, do you want to keep that as an evolving practice or are you looking to settle it into a community or a home?

Mr Tommy Bornman responded that the aim is to produce smaller autonomous vehicles that are cheaper, easier to maintain and deploy. It is important to stay on top of the latest technology and don't get stuck. In addition, to ensure that everything is updated, you need to have a community especially in the coastal environment for under-resourced countries since GOOS has always focused more offshore. Last, there is a need to develop a data management system that goes with the Ocean Co-Lab and the Task Team so that people at a local, regional, and global level can put the data, extract it and use it freely.

Mr Denis Chang Seng, drew parallels between the Tsunami Unit and the Ocean Co-Lab, with the fact that NEAMTWS also uses a low cost technology useful for under-resourced countries, the “Inexpensive Device for Sea Level Measurement” (IDSL). In addition, he asked: 1. How and for how long the funding for the Ocean Co-Lab has been secured? 2. If there is a sustainability strategy/framework in place for the project? 3. How will be the transition to more sophisticated technologies/instruments?

Mr Tommy Bornman replied that funding has not been secured yet. The strategy has been to bring the equipment to the countries for training purposes and then the countries buy the equipment. Two of the success stories of ocean observing in Africa have been the sea level and the ocean acidification network, and there is a need to remain close to these networks for sustainability purposes.

Ms Michelle Heupel, highlighted the need to outlay some cost support for the database, governance and training because if you're not delivering the data, it's going to stumble. If the project can build on the cost, then that's built into the program and get the momentum and other people to invest. In addition, she asked if there are any kind of payment/incentive methods for those that take a lot of their time to support the project development (through training etc)?

Mr Tommy Bornman noted there is a need to look at a budget and to pay specialists such as taxonomists etc.

Mr Carl Gouldman agreed that the aim is not just training them to use and maintain the equipment, but to start to build structures into their educational systems to bring technology and science into the classroom.

Mr Tommy Bornman emphasised that a discussion on how to package the product and sell it to the funders, should take place after the GRA Council meeting.

Ms Emma Heslop suggested that at the upcoming GRF-XI in 2023, it would be good to look for a group that would be prepared to produce a module on how to use this basic data and view it.

Mr Tommy Bornman noted it is needed to look at how to analyze, interpret and use the data from freely available resources.

Ms Juliet Hermes, SAEON, specified that the Task Team is interested in getting a larger group of community, who may have a look at the documents and provide some funding ideas. SAEON would like to use the GRA Council to do that. For example, the Pacific Community Climate Ocean Sciences (PCCOS), is interested in getting involved, if anyone else has an interest, they are welcome to be a part of the Ocean Co-Lab initiative.

**Action 5** GOOS GRAs to arrange a meeting to discuss Ocean Co-Lab initiative, including: the remote sensing and modelling sides of the project, how to package the product and sell it to the funders, and how to analyze, interpret and use the data from freely available resources.

# **NEW GRA CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT ACROSS THE VALUE CHAIN**

Mr Denis Chang Seng, introduced the agenda item on the New GRA Capability Assessment across the Value Chain. This is an action that has been emphasized during the [GRF-X](https://www.goosocean.org/index.php?option=com_oe&task=viewEventRecord&eventID=3196) and the [Tenth GOOS Steering Committee – Part 2](https://www.goosocean.org/index.php?option=com_oe&task=viewEventRecord&eventID=3317) (GOOS SC –X– part 2). The main concept of the action is that GRAs need to better measure what they do so that they can better manage the ocean.

The GOOS Secretariat wants to do a survey, to assess GRA capabilities across the value chain, and also focus on capacity building, communication, raise of funding/resources and synergies. The information collected from the GRA capability assessment can be used for the new GOOS Regional Policy.

The survey has been prepared using the Alchemer software, and shared with the GRA Council Chair, MONGOOS and IOGOOS for comments and feedback prior to the first GRA Council meeting 2022.

Ms Kim Servin, GOOS Secretariat Intern, and Alejandro Rojas, GOOS Secretariat Consultant, provided a presentation on the questionnaire and the online software, respectively.

Discussion

Mr Carl Gouldman emphasized that the more developed GRAs may find completing the survey a challenge. For instance, he suggested that developed GRAs can do a GRA capability assessment by using an online visualization tool for the data assets in a whole system. Putting numbers may not be the best method because of the changing nature of what is being operated on a given day.

Ms Inga Lips, EuroGOOS, expressed her concerns about filling the survey because the GOOS Secretariat is composed of 44 Member States where each member run their own system. Collecting data from each of the member’s states may take a long time and be a difficult task. She also queried if the collection of information is from all of the assets or only those which are in operation and delivering data. Last, EuroGOOS contains just a fraction of the European Ocean observing capabilities, so it doesn't give you a full picture of what Europe has.

Ms Emma Heslop, noted that a survey is a very good idea, but she is in disagreement with the objective of tracking assets or providing an inventory. There may be overlap of assets such as for example between MONGOOS and EuroGOOS. In addition, the OceanObs has an overview of the global ocean observing networks. She suggested that it would be better to report for example on networks that aren't represented in the global system or report that a given number of assets are not functioning - GRAs don't have a clear way of communicating this. She added that some of the questions that the survey should aim to answer are: What's the focus of that GRA? What are the major priorities in that region? And how can the GRA Council and GOOS help you fulfill those priorities?

Mr Denis Chang Seng noted that a discussion on what GRAs need from GOOS and vice-versa has already started since the GOOS SC –X– part 2, in fact there is a need for more quantitative and in depth information to answer this question. He added that having a good understanding of GRA assets is very useful, but maybe to what detail GRAs can provide this information, is another question.

Mr Kumar Srinivasa, IOC-UNESCO Vice-Chair and IOGOOS Chair, is in agreement with the concerns provided by participants about the GRA Capability Assessment survey. Despite this, if the right questionnaire and approach is agreed, it can represent a good starting point to understand the capabilities of the different GRAs. For example, in the field of ocean forecasting, if the survey asks whether IOGOOS has ocean forecasting capabilities, the answer would be no, because IOGOOS does not have a joint project under the GRAs which focuses on ocean forecasting, but the Member State institutions within IOGOOS have ocean forecasting capabilities.  It should be a Secretariat, which could provide feedback based on their knowledge of capacities within the region.

Denis Chang Seng and Carl Gouldman, noted there are concerns about how to proceed on this action. They suggested to have a session focused on this topic together with invited participants and discuss a clear way forward.

**Actions 6** GRAs to have a meeting and discuss a way forward to complete the new GRA Capability Assessment across the Value Chain.

# **TOWARDS NEW GOOS REGIONAL POLICY**

Mr Denis Chang Seng, provided a presentation “Towards a New GOOS Regional Policy for a Thriving Regional Coordination Ecosystem”. As a decision of the GOOS SC –X– part 2 and action of the GRF-X, GRAs will contribute to a revision of the GOOS Regional Policy. The [GOOS regional policy 2013](https://www.goosocean.org/index.php?option=com_oe&task=viewDocumentRecord&docID=11235) will be analysed to highlight gaps, weaknesses and inconsistencies with the current GOOS Regional Alliances vision in GOOS.

A sub-task or Working Group under the GOOS Governance Task Team will be constructed to complete this task. The sub-task or Working Group should be composed of 15-20 individuals and include members of the Governance Task Team, GOOS Steering Committee, GRA leadership and regional projects.

The GRA Council Chair discussed with the GOOS Secretariat about the membership structure of the sub-task or working group and made an initial proposal to have members based on a balanced geographic location, and level of maturity from GRAs (advanced vs emerging GRAs). Pending on which GRAs volunteer to support and an agreement from the GRA Council Leadership and GOOS Secretariat. Calls are open for all GRAs.

After all the nominations, the GOOS Secretariat will draft a revised regional policy content outline; discuss the terms of reference; organize, prepare, and compile meeting reports and documents; organize a series of meetings liaising closely with a consultant working on connecting GOOS and National Focal Points (NFPs); complete a first draft of the GOOS Regional Policy; undergo a GOOS community consultation; provide a second draft of the GOOS regional Policy; report it to the GOOS Steering Committee; provide a final revised draft and publication. The objective is to present the GOOS Regional Policy at the 32nd Session of the IOC Assembly in 2023 for endorsement.

Discussion

Mr Srinivasa Kumar queried if GOOS NFPs already exist or are being proposed through a mechanism?

Ms Emma Heslop replied that GOOS NFPs exist, but not all nations are represented. The Terms of Reference (ToRs) are being revised at the moment and there are discussions to have a National Focal Point Forum.  There is a mechanism for proposing somebody to be a GOOS NFP. If Member States in the GRA council are interested, the GOOS Secretariat could share the base document.

**Action 7** GRAs to support the development of a new GOOS Regional Policy, (GRAs agreed to the membership of the GOOS Regional Policy Sub-Task Team).

# **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Denis Chang Seng, reminded that the GRF-XI will take place in 2023. The GOOS Secretariat asked the GRAs to please send an e-mail, with proposals about a location on where to have the next GRA Forum and any remark they may have about this event. In addition, he noted that the Forum will be looking to have invited members of the GOOS Expert Panels and different ocean observing organizations.

# **CLOSING**

The meeting was closed at 13: 00 hours.

**ANNEX I**

**LIST OF ACTIONS**

**Action 1** The GRAs success stories from 2021-2022 to be a source of use cases for the development of the Benefits of Ocean Observations Catalog (BOOC).

**Action 2** Use GRAs success stories for the production of one or two videos, to improve the visibility, communications and impact of GRAs.

**Action 3** The information document, “Societal Benefits of GOOS Regional Alliances – Challenges and Opportunities” to showcase the benefits of GOOS Regional Alliances (economical, societal, and governmental) for the increase of governmental support (funding) to GRAs.

**Action 4** IMOS and US IOOS to provide information on the return of investments and Ocean Enterprise Study for the past 5 years (US IOOS only), for the making of the “Societal Benefits of GOOS Regional Alliances – Challenges and Opportunities” information document.

**Action 5** GOOS GRAs to arrange a meeting to discuss Ocean Co-Lab initiative, including: the remote sensing and modelling sides of the project, how to package the product and sell it to the funders, and how to analyze, interpret and use the data from freely available resources.

**Actions 6** GRAs to have a meeting and discuss a way forward to complete the new GRA Capability Assessment across the Value Chain.

**Action 7** GRAs to support the development of a new GOOS Regional Policy, (GRAs agreed to the membership of the GOOS Regional Policy Sub-Task Team).

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# **ANNEX II**

**AGENDA**

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| **Hour (CEST)** | **6th July, 2022** | **Presenter** |
| 10:00-10:15 | Welcome and Introduction | Mr Denis Chang Seng and Mr Carl Gouldman |
| 10:15-10:45 | GRF-X Summary Report | Mr Carl Gouldman |
| 10:45-11:15 | Update on GRAs Success Stories (2021-2022) | Mr Denis Chang Seng and Mr Alejandro Rojas |
| 11:15-11:45 | Ocean Co-Lab | Mr Tommy Bornman |
| 11:45-12:15 | New GRA Capability Assessment across the Value Chain | Mr Denis Chang Seng, Ms Kim Servin, and Mr Alejandro Rojas |
| 12:15-12:25 | Towards new GOOS Regional Policy | Mr Denis Chang Seng |
| 12:25-12:30 | Any Other Business | Mr Carl Gouldman |
| Closing | Mr Carl Gouldman |

# **ANNEX III**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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| Ms. Andréane Bastien  Director General  Global Observatory of Saint-Laurent  Rimouski, Canada  bastiena@ogsl.ca | Mr. Andrew Stewart  [Fisheries and Oceans Canada](https://oceanexpert.org/institution/19387)  Charlottetown, Canada  Andrew.stewart@dfo-mpo.gc.ca |
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**GOOS Secretariat**

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