



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 2957**

(Also available in French, Russian and Spanish)

IOC/VR/JB/AC/ic  
23 August 2023

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

C.c. : 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) – Call for Nominations to the Decade Advisory Board for the period from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025**

At the 31st session of the IOC Assembly (UNESCO, 14–15 June 2021), IOC Member States, UN agencies and partners approved the Terms of Reference for the Decade Advisory Board on the basis of Document [IOC-31/3.7.Doc\(1\)](#), including the selection process of its members. The Decade Advisory Board is a multi-stakeholder advisory body that assists the IOC Secretariat in performing its function as coordinator of the Decade. The Board reports both to the IOC Governing Bodies and the IOC Executive Secretary. The Decade Advisory Board comprises up to 15 expert members drawn from government, private sector, philanthropy, civil society, and the scientific community, as well as representatives of UN entities.

Following a call for nominations via Circular Letter No. [2848](#) (2021), Circular Letter No. [2871](#) identified the first group of 15 selected [expert members of the Decade Advisory Board](#) who were nominated for a two-year term that commenced on 1 January 2022 and will end on 31 December 2023. A report of the work of the Board over this period was presented to the 32nd session of the IOC Assembly (21–30 June 2023) in [IOC/INF-1426](#).

The Rules of Procedure for the Board that were presented in [IOC/INF-1414](#) to the 55th session of the IOC Executive Council (13–17 June 2022) envisage a process to stagger the terms of expert members of the Board. As per the Rules of Procedure, at least five currently serving expert members will be retained for a second term on the Board. This Circular Letter is a call for nominations for new expert members to fill the remaining positions on the Board.

The new expert members of the Board will be nominated through an open call for nominations. The call will be circulated through the following channels:

**Chairperson**

Dr Yutaka MICHIDA  
Professor  
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**Vice-Chairpersons**

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- IOC Member States via IOC Circular Letters;
- Relevant UN bodies via the UN-Oceans;
- Scientific networks using formal and informal communication mechanisms;
- Dedicated ocean policy, business, and sustainable development networks through announcements; and
- The Ocean Decade and IOC websites.

Proposals for nominations can be put forward by Member States of IOC-UNESCO, United Nations or United Nations entities, as well as by intergovernmental organizations. Self-nominations will also be possible to encourage nominations from non-governmental entities.

A Selection Panel to be convened by the IOC Executive Secretary and composed of the IOC Chair and IOC Officers representing the five IOC electoral groups, with the technical support of the Decade Coordination Unit, will be tasked with selecting the expert members of the Decade Advisory Board. The Selection Panel will select at least five currently serving members from those that have expressed interest to serve a second term, and new members to reach a total of 15 expert members.

The Selection Panel will ensure that the expert members have sufficient skills, knowledge, influence and impartiality regarding the vision and objectives of the Decade and are able to undertake the work outlined in the terms of reference. Their skills and expertise should cover at least one of the following areas:

- (i) Intergovernmental processes and coordination;
- (ii) The ocean aspects of sustainable development;
- (iii) Ocean science (natural / social dimensions);
- (iv) Science-policy / decision / end-user interface and engagement;
- (v) Ocean economy / finance/ partnerships;
- (vi) Innovation / technology/ infrastructure development;
- (vii) Capacity development, training and transfer or marine technology, education, communications and outreach; and/or
- (viii) Development of large-scale multi/inter-disciplinary international programmes / projects.

Expert members will be selected with due consideration to expertise, geographic, generational, and gender balance and will serve on a voluntary basis. Membership on the Decade Advisory Board will be for a two-year term, renewable for a second mandate with membership terms to be staggered.

The Decade Advisory Board will work mainly through remote means (teleconferences, virtual meetings). A physical meeting is anticipated at least once a year.

The Decade Coordination Unit located within the IOC Secretariat at UNESCO will be the Secretariat for the Decade Advisory Board.

The nomination form for membership of the Decade Advisory Board can be found here:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024\\_DAB](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024_DAB)

The Terms of Reference for the Board are included in Appendix 1.

The call for nominations will be open until 30 October 2023 at 23.59 hrs CEST.

Additional information can be obtained from the IOC Secretariat, Mr Julian Barbieri ([j.barbieri@unesco.org](mailto:j.barbieri@unesco.org)) or Ms Alison Clausen ([a.clausen@unesco.org](mailto:a.clausen@unesco.org)).

Yours sincerely,

*[signed]*

Vladimir Ryabinin  
Executive Secretary

Enclosure: Terms of Reference of the Decade Advisory Board  
(language versions available online in Annex 1 to [IOC Resolution A-31/1](#)).

## **Advisory Board of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (the Decade Advisory Board)**

### **Terms of Reference<sup>i</sup>**

The Advisory Board of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (the “Decade Advisory Board”) is established as a technical advisory body to the Secretariat and Governing Bodies of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO.

#### **Role of the Decade Advisory Board**

The Decade Advisory Board is responsible for providing direct advice to the IOC Executive Secretary on the implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (‘the Ocean Decade’) over its ten-year implementation phase (2021–2030) with a focus on the endorsement of Decade Actions and scoping of Calls for Decade Actions, and reports to IOC Governing Bodies on strategic matters related to implementation of the Ocean Decade. Specifically, and in accordance with the Ocean Decade Implementation Plan, the Decade Advisory Board will:

- (i) Review and make recommendations to the IOC Executive Secretary on the endorsement of Decade Programmes;
- (ii) Advise the IOC Executive Secretary on the scope of Calls for Actions under the Decade to support the mobilisation of proponents worldwide;
- (iii) Review the regular resource needs assessments prepared by the Decade Coordination Unit and recommend approaches for resource mobilisation and support outreach efforts to potential funders, including Member States, multilateral development banks, climate financing mechanisms, philanthropic foundations, and the private sector in order to help create the enabling environment needed to achieve the ambitions of the Decade;
- (iv) Advise on the engagement and outreach strategy of the Decade in order to help catalyse high-level interest and engagement among key stakeholders, including leaders from Member States, UN Agencies, business, civil society and academia to ensure that the scientific outputs of the Decade support the successful achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- (v) Advise on the regular reviews to be undertaken subject to decision by IOC Governing Bodies, during the implementation phase, including review of the scientific objectives and orientations of the Implementation Plan, annual progress reports, and the mid-term and final reviews, and make recommendations on the results of such reviews, as requested;
- (vi) Advise on the engagement of relevant communities regarding contributions to the objectives of the Decade, with priority given to engaging early career ocean professionals and disadvantaged groups and regions and to the science-policy interface;
- (vii) Monitor the progress and review the outputs of any working groups established by the IOC Secretariat related to structural and cross-cutting operational elements of the Decade Implementation Plan;
- (viii) Provide information to the IOC Executive Secretary to enable his reporting to the IOC Governing Bodies;
- (ix) Report as needed to the Governing Bodies in relation to strategic issues.

## **Chairing of the Decade Advisory Board**

The Decade Advisory Board will appoint two Co-chairs amongst its members, ideally one representing the science fields and another one representing the societal end-users of the Decade. The Co-chairs will be appointed by the IOC Executive Secretary for one year with the possibility of a second one-year term.

## **Decision-making process and organization of work**

The Decade Advisory Board will strive for consensus on all issues in providing recommendations and advice to the IOC Executive Secretary. The minutes of the meeting will record any instances when consensus was not reached.

The working language of the Board will be English. No interpretation will be provided.

## **Decade Advisory Board Composition**

The Decade Advisory Board will comprise up to 15 expert members serving in their individual capacity drawn from government, private sector, philanthropy, civil society, and the scientific community, as well as representatives of UN Agencies. In total, the Decade Advisory Board should not exceed 20 members, including Expert members and UN representatives. Expert members will be nominated through open calls for nominations. The calls will be circulated through the following means:

- IOC Member States via IOC Circular Letters;
- Relevant UN bodies via UN-Oceans;
- Scientific networks using formal and informal communication mechanisms;
- Dedicated ocean policy, business, and sustainable development networks through announcements; and
- The Ocean Decade and IOC website.

Proposals for nominations can be made by IOC-UNESCO and United Nations Member States or United Nations entities, as well as intergovernmental organizations. Self-nomination will also be possible to encourage nominations from non-governmental entities.

Expert members will be selected with due consideration to expertise, geographic, generational, and gender balance and will serve on a voluntary basis in their personal capacities. Decade Advisory Board members do not represent their institutions or countries. They should be able to commit sufficient time to the work of the Decade Advisory Board and will take the responsibility to request the authorization of their employer to participate in this process.

Membership on the Decade Advisory Board will be for a two-year term, renewable for a second mandate. Members' terms will be staggered to ensure there is information exchange and mentoring between current and new Board members. Operational procedures for this process will be defined with the Board and its co-chairs.

Each Member shall comply with the Conflict of Interest guidelines to be prepared by the Secretariat and notify the Decade Coordination Unit with respect to any such potential conflicts.

A Selection Panel convened by the IOC Executive Secretary and composed of the IOC Chair and elected IOC Officers representing the five IOC electoral groups, with the technical support of the Decade Coordination Unit, will be tasked with selecting the members of the Decade Advisory Board.

The Selection Panel will ensure that the proposed members have sufficient skills, knowledge, influence and impartiality regarding the vision and objectives of the Decade and are able to

undertake the work outlined in the terms of reference. Their skills and expertise should cover at least one of the following areas:

- (i) Intergovernmental processes and coordination;
- (ii) The ocean aspects of sustainable development;
- (iii) Ocean science (natural / social dimensions);
- (iv) Science-policy / decision / end-user interface and engagement;
- (v) Ocean Economy / finance/ partnerships;
- (vi) Innovation / technology/ infrastructure development;
- (vii) Capacity development, training and transfer or marine technology, education, communications and outreach; and/or
- (viii) Development of large-scale multi/inter-disciplinary international programmes / projects.

### **UN Agencies representation on the Decade Advisory Board**

UN Legal Counsel/DOALOS, which is the Secretariat and focal point of UN-Oceans and the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea, will have one permanent seat on the Decade Advisory Board. The IOC Secretariat as coordinator of the Decade will also have a permanent seat on the Board. Three more seats will be reserved for UN Agencies and will be identified through consultations via UN-Oceans.

### **Secretariat of the Decade Advisory Board**

The Decade Coordination Unit located within the IOC Secretariat will be the Secretariat for the Decade Advisory Board.

### **Meetings of the Decade Advisory Board**

The Decade Advisory Board shall meet four (4) times per year, with at least one (1) in presentia meeting annually when possible. Additional in-person or virtual meetings will be held as necessary. The Co-chairs of the Decade Advisory Board will be primarily responsible for the development of the Board Meeting Agenda and directing the Decade Advisory Board meetings. All Decade Advisory Board Members can recommend agenda items. The Decade Advisory Board may invite external experts as needed to address specific issues or tasks. The decision to invite these external experts would be a decision of the Board.

Minutes of the Board meetings will be developed and distributed by the Secretariat for the Decade Advisory Board. These will be made public on the Ocean Decade website. Expert Members of the Decade Advisory Board are expected to attend all meetings of the Board in person, without replacement.

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<sup>i</sup> Adopted by the IOC Assembly at its 31<sup>st</sup> session (14–25 June 2021) through [IOC Resolution A-31/1: Implementation of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development \(2021–2030\)](#)