

MEETING REPORT



The Global Ocean
Observing System

Global Ocean Observing System National Focal Point Forum Report

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Group photo



Executive Summary

The first 'all hands on deck' meeting of Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) National Focal Points (NFP Forum) was held online on 25 October 2023. The meeting discussed the role of GOOS NFPs and enabled interaction between NFPs and GOOS on the topics of national ocean observing initiatives and priorities, support, communications and reporting, as well as the UN Ocean Decade. This was a first step towards establishing two-way communication between GOOS and the NFPs and among NFPs.

There were five sessions:

- An update on GOOS,
- Presentations of national ocean observation systems from 5 selected NFPs across the 5 IOC regions,
- GOOS communications and messaging being developed specifically for the NFPs,
- Developing the role of the GOOS NFPs.
- Next steps and way forward

Through discussions and some quick polls the following were highlighted for action:

Community building: Organizing regular NFP Forum and developing a LinkedIn private group to share information amongst NFPs as well as between GOOS and NFPs.

Communications: GOOS NFPs are encouraged to link with national focal points of GOOS partners, including WMO, UNEP and IOC. GOOS office engagement will support NFPs to feel confident to represent GOOS at national level, and will provide guidance on priority connections and support in finding these connections.

Report

Note that this is an interactive document with links to recordings, presentations, and background and working documents. Click the blue underlined hyperlinks to reach those resources. The Report covers the discussions and follows the GOOS NFP Forum Agenda ([here](#)), the actions arising from these discussions are noted in the text and compiled in the Actions Table.


I. Introduction, GOOS, NFP role & key initiatives

This first session ([presentation link](#)) facilitated NFPs to understand the structure and key initiatives of GOOS. Toste Tanhua Co-Chair of GOOS Steering Committee (SC), and Joanna Post GOOS Director, emphasized that a two-way dialogue with the National Focal Points is important so as to hear national needs, and strengthen national connections. The annual Forum is a real opportunity to raise the profile of ocean observing in the context of climate change, forecasting, ocean health and coastal issues, and it is expected to be a learning opportunity for both GOOS and NFPs. The GOOS SC adopted the updated [GOOS NFP ToRs](#), at its most recent session in April 2023 (see GOOS SC-12 Final Report [here](#)) that reflect the important role of the NFPs. The SC also advocated for the importance of NFP at the national level in achieving the target of sustained global ocean observation with emphasis on benefits to GOOS and nations. GOOS now has 75 GOOS NFPs and more are expected to be added. The session highlighted GOOS collaboration activities with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and in the UN Ocean Decade. GOOS is a global framework and the role of the GOOS management team is to coordinate between the ecosystem of observation infrastructure providers and beneficiaries of ocean information, including government, international multilateral agreements and policy, industry, ocean information service providers, national biodiversity and climate targets, and early warning systems.

DISCUSSION:

Visibility of GOOS at national level

NFPs noted the lack of public awareness about the role of ocean observations in daily life, such as weather forecasts, and highlighted the potential for NFPs to enhance visibility of ocean data and GOOS efforts. The need to strengthen the National Ocean Observing System visibility through OceanOPS was emphasized. Increasing the visibility of national contribution and aligning nationally, regionally and globally relevant information were identified as the priorities to improve GOOS efficiency.



Explore how to support nations in raising funds or leveraging global programmes for national activities

NFPs raised the need for an actionable, integrated implementation plan with regard to the scope of the NFP role and priorities, and a set of guidelines or guidance for the observing system. GOOS could assist in coordination around infrastructure, advocacy and communication. It was suggested that GOOS coordinate with NFPs to understand national needs and develop a system to support observations needs and planning.

NFPs emphasized the importance of strengthening national connections, since the main source of investment in ocean observing comes from the nations. The role of the GOOS NFP is to promote and support GOOS activities at the national level and to foster national-level connections towards achieving GOOS strategic goals. NFPs were informed that GOOS currently does not have a funding mechanism for national activities but will advocate for and explore the possibility in future (such as through the Systematic Observations Financing Facility). Additionally, the need for collaboration among IOC NFPs and WMO Permanent Representatives in messaging and national connectivity was recognized.

Essential Ocean Variables (EOVs) and their applications

NFPs expressed interest in documents available on spatial and temporal requirements for observing EOVs for different applications like climate, operational services and ocean health. GOOS responded that the [EOV specification sheet](#) provides relevant information and societal needs on EOVs. There are several projects such as [CoastPredict](#) working on the coast. CoastPredict aims to revolutionize global coastal ocean observing and forecasting, offering open and free access to coastal information and predictions. WMO is also looking at Rolling Review Requirements (RRR) and GOOS is working on ocean application areas.

II. NFPs across the world

This session ([presentation link](#)) was aimed at hearing from 5 NFPs representing 5 IOC Regions on their ocean observation activities and the needs from GOOS (Presentation links: [Belgium](#), [Poland](#), [Argentina](#), [Indonesia](#), [South Africa](#)). Summary of these presentations is given in Annex 2. It was informed that step by step efforts will be made to invite all NFPs (currently 75 NFPs) to present their national system in future meetings. NFPs have also been invited to share a brief presentation on their national system which

are collected in an online folder to enable the GOOS community and other regional NFPs to understand and learn more about national ocean observing systems of all nations. So far, 38 video presentations have been uploaded to this [folder](#).

III. Communications

Laura Stukonyte, GOOS Junior Communications Consultant, ([presentation link](#)) presented GOOS communications and discussed the communication support needed by NFPs. Sample messaging for NFPs developed by GOOS with an external communications agency was introduced. A poll was conducted to assess NFP preferences for an online platform for further NFP community building and to facilitate communication between GOOS and NFPs. The poll also included a question on NFP priorities for supporting communications items to be provided by GOOS. In regard to community building platforms, the poll result showed the highest preference (75%) for a private NFP LinkedIn group. As for communication support, highest priorities were given to the development of use cases about value/users of ocean observations, and a GOOS NFP Slide Deck.

During the discussion on communications, some NFPs expressed challenges in communicating ocean observing needs to politicians. Another NFP shared positive feedback about the feature story previously developed together with GOOS and highlighted the value of featuring national initiatives in GOOS communications. The meeting noted that opportunities are available for effective two-way communication between nations and GOOS that would enable GOOS to better understand national needs, support NFPs in advocating for sustained ocean observations, and facilitate communication and knowledge exchange between the NFPs. GOOS also notes opportunities to feature the news and successes of national observing initiatives in feature stories.

Resulting action

Communication support for NFPs

- GOOS to share a GOOS NFP messaging guide that will assist NFPs in communicating about their role and the benefits of forming part of a global system.
- GOOS to develop use cases about the value and/or users of ocean observations, and a GOOS NFP Slide Deck to be used by NFPs in their meetings.
- NFP Forum reports and presentations to be made available through GOOS website.
- GOOS to work together with NFPs to build GOOS recognition, for example using GOOS "labeling" for advocacy at the national level.

Resulting action

Community building

- A GOOS NFP private LinkedIn group will be set up to facilitate communication between GOOS and NFPs.
- GOOS to explore the possibility of organizing the capacity building activities for developing countries through IOC training centers.

IV. Developing the Role - GOOS and NFP

Emma Heslop, GOOS Programme Specialist, presented the timeline in developing NFP's role, the importance given to the NFP agreed by GOOS Steering Committee ([updated GOOS NFP ToR](#) at the SC-12), the three phase strategy (3 years plan) to structure the role of the NFP, opportunity between GRAs and NFP, and the several ways GOOS can help ([presentation link](#)). A quick poll was conducted to collect the feedback of Member states on the potential connections of NFP, the way GOOS can assist NFPs, national policy on data sharing, and confidence of NFP in representing GOOS at national level.


Poll results showed that:

- NFPs have a very strong linkage to government departments with interests in ocean issues, followed by connections to IOC Official Liaison, and lesser connection to the marine industry and UNEP Focal Point.
- On whether the nation has a national policy on data sharing, the result is almost equally divided. However it's understood that few member states are yet to start ocean observation.
- The majority of NFPs desire enhanced visibility of GOOS at the national level, followed by the provision of sponsors and network focal point contacts by GOOS.
- Most NFPs are reasonably confident and very confident to represent GOOS at national level.

DISCUSSION:

Establishment of National Committees/Hubs

Several NFPs highlighted the lack of a national coordination or structure for ocean observing activities in their respective countries. The need for such coordination was emphasized to effectively engage with various domestic departments and stakeholders in



the ocean observing domain. The varying maturity levels of ocean observing capabilities across different nations further underscored the importance of establishing national committees/hubs to streamline and enhance coordinated ocean observing efforts at the national level.

The discussion also emphasized the need to prioritize the multifaceted tasks outlined in the NFP ToRs and align national priorities with the overarching goals of GOOS. Raising visibility of ocean observing and the role of NFPs was identified as a key strategy. Additionally, the collection of success stories from countries with established national committees was proposed to serve as a valuable learning resource for other nations.

Connecting to GOOS as a Nation or Region

NFPs inquired about mechanisms for cooperation within regional GOOS entities, such as EuroGOOS. GOOS acknowledged the diverse needs of different regions and emphasized the need for tailored approaches to regional collaboration. The importance of clear messaging and terminology surrounding ocean observing was also discussed to better connect with users from various sectors, such as fisheries and environment. Additionally, an NFP from Africa underscored the urgent need for coordinated ocean observing efforts along the African coast. In line with UNESCO mandate and IOC Decisions, GOOS will strengthen GOOS Africa engagement and aims to develop capacity with African NFPs.

Data management

GOOS's ongoing work on EOVs, Ocean Best Practices, and the development of BioEco data portal was highlighted. The availability of effective communication tools, such as Report Card communication messaging, and GOOS's collaboration with colleagues on the UN Ocean Decade and its decision-making implications were also mentioned. GOOS expressed its commitment to promoting national investment in ocean observing and encouraging FAIR data and metadata practices.

Resulting action

Establishing national committee/hub

NFPs are encouraged to promote the establishment of high-level national committees/structure on ocean observing, and to strengthen, develop contact and communications with stakeholders, institutions, and organizations at national/regional level.

Resulting action

NFP's connection to GRAs

GOOS to extend support to NFPs to engage with GRAs and regional activities.


V. Next steps and way forward

The session wrapped up the forum discussion and presented the way forward ([presentation link](#)). Joanna Post, GOOS Director, delivered the closing remarks, emphasizing the significance of this first GOOS NFP Forum as a platform for mutual learning, exchanging perspectives, and exploring strategies to strengthen collaboration between GOOS and nations. She highlighted the win-win nature of this partnership, benefiting both the nations and GOOS. GOOS, as an integrated global system, stands ready to support all nations and work with NFPs so as to build the observation system to provide data and information that meets societal needs related to forecasting, ocean health, and climate. She emphasized the importance of ocean observation in the context of the Paris Agreement and the urgent need for ocean action. The role of NFPs and GOOS is crucial in making the ocean safe for future generations' well-being and prosperity. She stressed the need to enhance visibility through the relationship between GOOS and NFPs, striving for a truly global, transparent, and communication-rich approach. This visibility will be extended to member states, negotiators, governments, and processes at national, regional, and international levels, fostering advocacy for oceans and building understanding.

An after meeting questionnaire was designed to collect feedback on the following aspects:

- Preferred meeting frequently for the GOOS NFP Forum
- Overall usefulness of this First GOOS NFP meeting
- Topics desired for future meeting agenda

NFPs expressed the potential for linking GOOS NFP national committees with UN Decade national committees, considering the relatively small size of the ocean community. The meeting recognized the opportunity for NFPs to connect during the UN Decade Conference in Barcelona in 2024. Several GOOS-related satellite events are planned, including the Caribbean Islands UN Decade Conference, GOOS Ocean Decade Programmes: Co-design and CoastPredict, Industry Dialogues, and the National Committee of Ocean Observation in Spain.



The meeting concluded with gratitude to all NFPs for their support of the first GOOS NFP Forum. This gathering facilitated mutual understanding, and GOOS looks forward to continued interaction with NFPs to achieve the goal of sustained global ocean observation for societal benefit.

Resulting action

Opportunity around UN Ocean Decade Conference 2024

NFPs to explore the potential opportunities to build connections during the upcoming UN Ocean Decade Conference to be held in April 2024 Barcelona, Spain.

Next meeting

On the basis of the post-forum questionnaire result, NFPs preferred to have an annual NFP meeting. The next GOOS NFP Forum will be organized in October 2024 in virtual mode.

Annex 1. List of Participants

#	Name	Member State	Role
1	Michelle Heupel	Australia	NFP
2	Md. Azizur Rahman	Bangladesh	NFP
3	Sébastien Legrand	Belgium	NFP
4	Georges DEGBE	Benin	NFP
5	Cesar Borba	Brazil	NFP
6	Atanas Palazov	Bulgaria	NFP
7	Matias Sifon	Chile	NFP
8	Juan L. Moreno	Colombia	NFP
9	Angora Aman	Cote d'Ivoire	NFP
10	Ivica Vilbic	Croatia	NFP
11	Daniel Hayes	Cyprus	NFP
12	Steffen M Olsen	Denmark	NFP
13	Pritha Tutasi	Ecuador	NFP
14	Amr Zakaria Hamouda	Egypt	NFP
15	Taavi Liblik	Estonia	NFP
16	Laura Tuomi	Finland	NFP
17	Pierre-Yves Le Traon	France	NFP
18	Manfred Zeiler	Germany	NFP
19	Peter Busumprah	Ghana	NFP
20	Solveig Olafsdottir	Iceland	NFP
21	Pattabhi Rama Rao	India	NFP
22	Nelly Riama	Indonesia	NFP
23	Caroline Cusack	Ireland	NFP
24	Rosalia Santoleri	Italy	NFP

#	Name	Member State	Role
25	Katsumasa YAGI	Japan	NFP
26	Amon Kimeli	Kenya	NFP
27	Faiza Al-Yamani	Kuwait	NFP
28	Abdulhamid Swedan	Libya	NFP
29	RABARY Andriantsilavo	Madagascar	NFP
30	Rezah Badal	Mauritius	NFP
31	Octavio Gomez	Mexico	NFP
32	Karim Hilmi	Morocco	NFP
33	Kees Borst	Netherlands	NFP
34	Adesina Adegbie	Nigeria	NFP
35	Henning Wehde	Norway	NFP
36	Agnieszka Beszczynska-Möller	Poland	NFP
37	Miguel Santos	Portugal	NFP
38	Leonid Ostroumov	Russia	NFP
39	Adam Shindo	Seychelles	NFP
40	Tarron Lamont	South Africa	NFP
41	Sungsan Park	Republic of Korea	NFP
25	Katsumasa YAGI	Japan	NFP
26	Amon Kimeli	Kenya	NFP
27	Faiza Al-Yamani	Kuwait	NFP
28	Abdulhamid Swedan	Libya	NFP
29	RABARY Andriantsilavo	Madagascar	NFP
30	Rezah Badal	Mauritius	NFP
31	Octavio Gomez	Mexico	NFP

Annex 1. List of Participants

#	Name	Member State	Role
42	Manuel Ruiz Villarreal	Spain	NFP
43	Patrick Gorringe	Sweden	NFP
44	Jean-Paul Dodin	Scycellus	NFP
45	Li-Sha Lim	Singapore	NFP
46	Chalermrat Sangmanee	Thailand	NFP
47	Pessièzoum ADJOUSI	Togo	NFP
48	Nikia Gooding	Trinidad and Tobago	NFP
49	Laura Lorenzoni	U.S.A	NFP
50	Katy Hill	United Kingdom	NFP
51	Viktor Komorin	Ukraine	NFP
52	Jose Domínguez	Uruguay	NFP
53	Queenie LAM	Hong Kong-China	Obs
54	Camila Almario	Colombia	Obs
55	Julio Castro	Chile	Obs
56	Alejandro de la Maza	Chile	Obs
57	Rounak Thakur	India	Obs
58	Iyan Turyana	Indonesia	Obs
59	Michael A. Purwoadi	Indonesia	Obs
60	Wahyu Pandoe	Indonesia	Obs

#	Name	Member State	Role
61	Naomi-Krauzig	Italy	Obs
62	Katsunari SATO	Japan	Obs
63	Aldo Drago	Malta	Obs
64	Prithviraj Booneedy	Mauritius	Obs
65	Joao Vitorino	Portugal	Obs
66	Daniela Turk	Slovenia	Obs
67	CN Alejandro CHUCARRO	Uruguay	Obs
68	Alfi Rusdiansyah		Obs
69	David Legler	USA	OCG
70	Ann-Christine Zinkann	USA	OCG
71	Toste Tanhua	Germany	GOOS SC
72	Joanna Post	IOC/GOOS	Sec
73	Emma Heslop	IOC	Sec
74	R. Venkatesan	IOC	Sec
75	Ting Yu	IOC	Sec
76	Laura Stukonyte	IOC	Sec
77	Emily Smith	IOC	Sec

Note:

NFP: National Focal Point
 GOOS SC: GOOS Steering Committee
 Obs: Observer
 OCG: Observations Coordination Group
 Sec: Secretariat

Annex 2. Summary of Five NFP presentations

Belgium


The Belgian Ocean Observation System is involved with a full value chain and this presentation was very informative and unique in its interaction with Industry on usage of ocean data. It gave an overview of Belgium's maritime activities, Belgian blue economy, Fisheries, and Maritime trade. To support all these activities at national level, ocean observing system was developed with GOOS value chain. Four governmental agencies are involved and an operational network is in place with platforms, buoys, research vessels, fishing vessels and fully automated systems. Belgium has regional collaboration in Europe OSPAR EuroGOOS EOOS Eurosea etc. EOOS has developed a framework and there is a good connection and coordination with GOOS. R&D projects are undertaken at the national and regional level and has good connections with industry. However, Belgium requires very effective connection with GOOS. Belgium does not have a national committee and would be formed in the future and linkage with national decade committee and industry linkages and priority for the next three years will be developed and require support from GOOS, need for wider circulation of NFP ToR clearly stating objectives and expectations from the national committees and can be included for discussion in IOC Assembly and agree on reporting and communication materials.

Poland

An overview of ocean observation activities and challenges in Poland was presented by NFP. Poland's ocean observations have diversified activities from the Baltic Sea to sustained arctic observation. The observation is based on ship-borne data collection, which is used for environmental and fisheries applications. Also working with satellite data products and associated with regional bodies EuroGOOS, EOOS. Main focus is on monitoring the Baltic marine environment. Poland does not have an integrated ocean observing system but there are ocean observational sites. Poland does not have a national committee and requires support from GOOS to develop an integrated national system. Also, the lack of a dedicated national ocean observation programme needs to be addressed.

Argentina

The national ocean observing program consists of Pampa Azul under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Argentine Marine Observation Network, XBT transects, tide gauge network, landers, buoys, Argo floats and Antarctic programs. The



major challenges include restarting of the several observation programs that were halted during the pandemic and capacity building. Systematic efforts are in place for the sustenance of the ocean observation network and development of data products in the value chain and active involvement in GOOS Regional Alliances OCEATLAN was explained.

Indonesia

Indonesia being an archipelago nation has been very active and has developed ocean observation systems and expertise and facilities. The observation network consists of HF radar, marine AWS, vessel AWS, deep water floats, shallow water floats, drifters and cabled tsunameter observatory. They also organized awareness programmes for fishermen. She highlighted the need to have regular and structured communication between GOOS Partners, Ocean Decade and for establishing a National Structure - Committee.

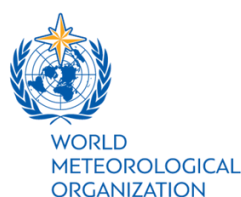
South Africa

South Africa has established a variety of ocean observation systems for biological chemical EOVS and has many international collaborations, involved in capacity development and UN Decade projects. Being strategically located near the confluence of the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, a significant research focus pertains to the water mass transport between the two oceans. Transects such as SAMBA transect, GoodHope Transect and CrossRoads transect use a wide array of instruments, moorings and ship surveys to meet this end. The data and derived parameters are made available publicly. The products such as Location of the Agulhas Current's Core and Edges (LACCE) have been used extensively by the general public and shipping industry. NFP highlighted that ocean observation systems in South Africa benefited from international collaborations, but they were often limited to specific projects. The need for a structured international collaborations and National committee is also put forward. Sustained funding for a long term ocean observation network is currently not available in South Africa. The GOOS could assist the program by interventions at national and regional level to ensure funding for long-term monitoring and to increase the visibility of the programs.

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