



INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

Thirty-third Session of the Assembly
UNESCO, Paris, 25 June–3 July 2025

Items 5.3 and 5.4 of the Provisional Agenda

**ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO THE IOS EVALUATION
OF THE IOC STRATEGIC POSITIONING
UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION**

Summary

In line with IOC Resolution EC-57/2 (2024), this document provides an updated proposal of the summary of actions in response to 2021 UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service Evaluation of the IOC Strategic Positioning for Member States' consideration.

Decision proposed: the draft decision is referenced as Dec. IOC-33/5.2 in the Provisional Action Paper (document IOC-33/AP). The decision will be reflected in the Draft Resolution that the Financial Committee will be submitting to the Assembly for adoption under item 5.4 in accordance with paragraph 15 of the Draft Revised Guidelines for the Preparation and Consideration of Draft Resolutions ([IOC/INF-1315](#)).

1. In September 2021, UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service published *The Evaluation of the Strategic Positioning of IOC-UNESCO*—[IOS/EVS/PI/197](#) (the Evaluation). The Evaluation included a set of six recommendations and suggested actions. Its key findings and the management response were presented to the UNESCO Executive Board at its 212th session ([212 EX/9](#)).
2. The first Draft Action Plan was presented to the IOC Executive Council at its 55th session in June 2022 as document [IOC/EC-55/3.2Doc\(1\)](#). Following the positive review by the IOC Executive Council and consultation of Member States through IOC Circular Letter [2912](#), the Action Plan (IOC/A-32/6.3.Doc(1)) was reviewed by the IOC Assembly at its 32nd session in June 2023. Through IOC Resolution A-32/4, the Assembly requested the IOC Executive Secretary to '*move forward with its implementation considering the IOC's evolving situation, including the resources available, proposing adjustments accordingly and reporting on progress both to IOC and UNESCO Governing Bodies*'. The IOC Executive Council at its 57th session examined document [IOC/EC-57/5.2.Doc\(1\)](#) and decided that '*although some actions have been implemented and work is in progress on others,*

a number of strategic actions will require further reflection and discussion with Member States as part of the new phase of the 'IOC and the Future of the Ocean' consultation'.

3. In line with [IOC Resolution EC-57/2](#), this document provides an updated proposal of the summary of actions for Member States' consideration in a tabular form (in bold). Actions requiring further work will continue to be discussed and reported on in the context of the **'IOC and the Future of the Ocean' consultation'**.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS & UPDATES ON PROGRESS

	Actions Planned	Progress as of April 2025	Responsible Unit(s)	Estimated Date for Completion
Recommendation 1: By September 2022 – Follow up on the request of the IOC-UNESCO 30th Assembly by estimating the necessary resources and accelerating the application of provisions of Article 10.4 of the IOC-UNESCO Statutes to effectively operate the IOC at an “optimal” level, as well as to determine the most appropriate organizational setting in view of IOC’s envisaged global role in science-based ocean management and leading the UN Ocean Decade.	1.1 Obtain professional legal advice on the implications of utilizing Article 10.4 of the IOC Statutes to attract additional funding to the Commission to ensure effective and continuing delivery of its global and regional programmes, including the Ocean Decade;	1.1 In line with the decision of the IOC Executive Council at its 55 th session requesting the Executive Secretary to prepare ‘an estimate of the budget, including the needs in human resources, necessary to sustainably deliver IOC’s core programmes and to expand its activities in response to increasing demands of Member States and other stakeholders’ (reference Resolution IOC-XXX-3 and Resolution EC-55/2) was implemented through Circular Letter 2912. Given the strategic programmatic scope and the mid- to long-term ambition of the proposal, it requires further discussion by Member States and will be part of the broad consultative process ‘IOC and the Future of the Ocean’.	IOC ES in consultation with BSP and LA	Q4 2025 – document for the IFAG discussion and EC-59
	1.2 In cooperation with the UNESCO Bureau for Strategic Planning (BSP), set up a Structured Financing Dialogue with a view to attracting new donors. To aid with this, identify a small group of Member States, perhaps current main contributors, that could serve as advocates and lead peer-to-peer resource mobilization and engagement conversations;	1.2 Last session of UNESCO Structured Financing Dialogue took place in June 2024. IOC will continue to participate as needed. Longer-term, IOC resource mobilisation and communication strategy to support the Medium-Term Strategy implementation will also be developed as part of the ‘IOC & the Future of the Ocean’ consultation process.	IOC ES, in consultation with BSP & IOC Officers	Completed.
	1.3 Explore options for convening a High-Level Forum of decision-making, on a quadrennial basis, possibly in connection with the IOC Assembly;	To be postponed pending the initiation and outcomes of the Member States consultation on ‘the IOC and the future of the ocean’, which will identify knowledge gaps and adequacy of science inclusion within multilateral ocean frameworks, to be implemented from June 2024-June2027	IOC ES and DC	Q2 2027 (A-34)
	1.4. Develop strategic messaging around an IOC-wide guiding framework of Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management and strongly position this framework within the Ocean Decade.	EC-57 provided inputs to the Draft Strategy on SOPM, which identifies strategic objectives and messages, and decided to establish an intersessional Working Group to finalise the Strategy and related Implementation Plan. The Working	IOC ES and DC	Completed

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		Group met once in person and twice online in 2025. The resulting Draft IOC wide Strategy document is put forward to the 33 rd IOC Assembly for consideration. Draft Terms of Reference for a Working Group on SOPM, post-assembly are also put forward to guide the implementation of the Strategy for 2025–2030, and address any need for updates in relation to the IOC and Future consultation process, as it relates to SOPM. The IOC SOPM Strategy outputs are being reflected as part of the implementation plan of the Decade Sustainable Ocean Planning Programme (SOP) launched at the Barcelona Conference, for which an interim advisory committee has been established to further advance the development of the structural elements of the programme.		
Recommendation 2: By June 2022 – Develop in partnership with other agencies a Results Framework for the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, clearly identifying the objectives, intermediate objectives, indicators, and indicative owners across the UN System and wider in order to monitor and evaluate progress against the Decade's objectives.	2.1 Commence rollout of the first iteration of the Results Framework for the Ocean Decade at the latest by mid-2022. The Results Framework should comprise a minimum outcomes, intermediate outcomes, outputs, baselines, and indicative owners;	Full rollout completed in January 2023.	IOC ES and DCU	Completed
	2.2 Set in place a process for collectively developing with UN-Oceans partners and all relevant stakeholders' strategic ambitions and targets across the 10 Ocean Decade Challenges and progressively integrate these into the Results Framework for the Ocean Decade;	Mid-term evaluation process recommendations on MEL addressing this issue will be implemented and reported on to IOC Governing Bodies.	IOC ES and DCU	Q2 2025, report to EC-59
	2.3 Operationalise the review mechanisms envisaged in the Implementation Plan for the Ocean Decade, including the series of international and regional Ocean Decade Conferences every three years which will provide the platform for stocktaking and adaptive management of Decade priorities.	Achieved. 2024 Ocean Decade Conference confirmed for April 2024 to be hosted by Spain. Monitoring & Evaluation Framework rollout completed. Vision 2030 process operationalized.	IOC ES and DCU	Completed

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Recommendation 3: By June 2022 – Determine how UNESCO can support the Decade	3.1 Develop clear, targeted messaging to different donor groups on the benefits and means of investing in the Ocean Decade.	The Ocean Decade mid-term evaluation process presented to the 33rd session of the IOC Assembly with additional specific recommendations on donor engagement. Progress will be reported to Governing Bodies throughout the Decade.	DCU in consultation with the IOC Management Team	Completed
	3.2 Further assess resource needs for IOC programmes and structures to support effectively the implementation of the Decade (beyond the Decade Coordination functions assumed by the Decade Coordination Unit (DCU));	Budget and resource needs estimates prepared and maintained up-to-date for Decade Coordination Offices hosted by IOC including data sharing, ocean observations, Ocean Literacy, Africa and Tropical Americas and Caribbean region. Active resource mobilisation to support these structures. Progress to be reported to IOC Governing Bodies	IOC ES in consultation with the IOC Management Team	Completed
	3.3 Building on decision 29 of the 214th UNESCO Executive Board work with other UNESCO sectors to make the Ocean a transversal priority theme and position the Ocean Decade as the primary vehicle through which Member States can support it.	Achieved. The first report on the highlights of intersectoral cooperation under the framework of the Ocean Decade, was presented to the UNESCO Executive Board as document 217 EX/4.I.B. To be repeated biannually and referenced for IOC Governing Bodies under the statutory reports agenda items.	IOC ES and DCU	Completed
	<u>UN-wide supporting actions:</u> 3.4. Develop a clear and structured ‘ask’ for financial or in-kind resources for partners’ support to the DCU;	DCU budget needs estimates prepared and maintained up to date.	DCU	Completed
	3.5. Undertake a detailed mapping and analysis of the activities and interests of UN-Oceans partners to identify existing or potential Decade-related initiatives, identify gaps and make recommendations for stronger engagement and resource provision;	The results of the mid-term evaluation process include specific recommendations related to engagement of UN agencies. Progress to be reported to IOC Governing Bodies.	DCU	Completed
	3.6. Encourage UN partners to establish and resource Decade Coordination Offices to lead coordination around regional or thematic priorities	Ongoing. Call for Decade Actions No. 07/2024 includes solicitation for DCOs and DCCs to fill critical thematic and geographic gaps. Work will continue throughout the Decade, building on the recommendations	DCU	Completed

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		of the mid-term evaluation and with progress reports to IOC Governing Bodies		
	3.7. Ensure that financial or in-kind support to the DCU is a prerequisite to membership of the Ocean Decade Alliance	Review process for existing members of the Ocean Decade Alliance is underway on a rolling basis with identification of new contributions of financial or in-kind resources. Will continue throughout the review and admission process, and reported to IOC Governing Bodies	DCU ES and IOC Management Team	Completed
Recommendation 4: By June 2024 – Consider options for further exploiting IOC-UNESCO's data and knowledge base	4.1 Institute a working group across the Commission's Sections in order to develop a list of socio-economic indicators – e.g. for use in the State of the Ocean Report. If necessary, expand the working group to involve other actors such as the UN-Oceans agencies;	Underway: Development of an initial set of ocean indicators by a working group comprised of the GOOS expert panels, IOC sections and partner agencies. The GOSR editorial board is further refining both quantitative and qualitative indicators/indices for economic components of ocean science and education. Formulation of 2026 <i>State of the Ocean Report</i> advisory board under way (ref. IOC Circular Letter 3032) with work to commence on an outline, including consideration of potential indicators in May 2025.	ES and IOC Management Team	Q3 2025
	4.2 Develop processes for streamlining and facilitating the Commission's data pipeline so it can support the development of indicators proposed above;	Underway: Proposal for IOC Data Architecture submitted to the 33rd session of the IOC Assembly and planning for supporting SDG data collection related to ocean acidification (indicator 14.3.1) in progress	ES and IOC Management Team	Q3 2025
	4.3 Accelerate the development of the Ocean Data and Information System (ODIS) and its contribution to the UN Ocean Decade	A Programme called “An Ocean Data and Information System supporting the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development” (OceanData-2030) has been registered with the UN Decade for Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Work will continue, with regular updates on progress to IOC Governing Bodies	Head IOC/OST and IOC Management Team	Completed

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	4.4 Seek funding to prepare the first State of the Ocean Report by the 32nd session of the Assembly in 2023.		ES and IOC Management Team	Completed
Recommendation 5: By June 2022 – Explore means of attracting additional senior policy engagement in the work of IOC-UNESCO	5.1 Implement a mapping exercise with key national and regional organizations across diverse sectors with a role in policymaking to identify priority entry points for reinforced engagement via the Ocean Decade and IOC's programmatic work;	To be carried out as part of Phase 2 of the 'IOC and Future of the Ocean' consultation process.	ES and IOC Management Team	Q2 2026 with results presented to EC-59.
	5.2 Effect a step change in communications effectiveness beginning with developing an IOC Communication Strategy with assistance from a communications expert. The process should be participatory and include members of the Senior Management Team in order to agree upon the Commission's vision statement, and priority communications themes, audiences, and channels, respecting the fact that IOC is a component of UNESCO;	The IOC Communications Strategy will be developed as a complement to the Medium-Term Strategy Implementation Plan, which is being developed by the IOC Secretariat, and which is also being informed by the 'IOC and Future of the Ocean' consultation process'. The communications strategy will be developed via a participatory process that involves interviews with stakeholders, including members of the Senior Management Team to identify priority communications themes, audiences, and channels.	ES and IOC Management Team	Q2 2026 – IOC Communication strategy to be presented at EC-59
	5.3 Produce an annual or bi-annual bulletin on the Commission's "Top Outcomes" which highlights its major achievements and demonstrates its continued value;	A proposal for an annual/bi-annual bulletin is currently being developed by the IOC Communications Team and will be submitted to the senior management and for consideration within the framework of the new IOC communication strategy to be developed in 2025.	ES and IOC Communications Team	Q3 2025
	5.4. Clarify IOC's Logo Policy to ensure that the Commission has a consistent brand;	This process has been partially completed by means of IOC applying throughout its programmes, regional bodies and various projects the UNESCO Brand Guidelines, approved by the UNESCO Executive Board and General Conference. The unified UNESCO policy establishes a specific logo for IOC/UNESCO (necessary to reinforce the Commission's brand among its core	ES and IOC Communications Team	Q3 2025

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		communities and Member States) that is nevertheless completely in coherence with the overarching UNESCO brand guidelines, colour palette and logo use policy. The policy applies to print and digital documents; social media; programme and projects' communication; partnerships; and for branding around specific events. The logo policy documents can be requested by Member States directly from UNESCO/CPE. The next step will be to develop and implement guidelines for the branding of IOC programmes, subsidiary bodies, and projects in accordance with the overall logo policy,		
Recommendation 6: By June 2022 – Assume a leadership role in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment in marine science, supporting its existing data efforts such as the Global Ocean Science Report with dedicated action	6.1 Request the advice of the UNESCO Division for Gender Equality to develop Gender Guidelines for IOC expert committees and other bodies, as applicable.	Document INF-1547 presented to the Assembly under this agenda item	IOC Gender Focal Point and EO	Completed
	6.2 Continue to encourage IOC Member States to ensure gender equality in their delegations to IOC governing bodies. Provide statistics after each session to monitor progress.	Considered as closed by the 32nd session of the Assembly.	ES, IOC Gender Focal Point and EO	Completed
	6.3 Institute a working group (to include gender experts from the Commission's UN-Oceans counterparts as well as UNESCO), to develop a roadmap through which gender equality can be better mainstreamed throughout the Ocean Decade;	Ocean Decade Gender Working Group has been established and started its work to develop an Ocean Decade gender roadmap on basis of priority outcomes of Vision 2030 process. Progress to be reported to IOC Governing Bodies.	DCU and IOC Gender Focal Point	Completed
	6.4. Scope out partners that may be interested in supporting a Women in Ocean Science Award, including through UN Global Compact;	Secretariat's proposal is to consider this recommendation as completed in the context of this Action Plan. The issue of the best way to mainstream GE will be covered by the Decade GE Roadmap and reported on to the IOC Governing Bodies in that context.		Completed
	6.5. Work with HR experts to target qualified female candidates for senior management positions within the Commission and to improve geographical distribution.	Implemented with two recently hired senior positions.	ES and EO	Completed

