



IOCARIBE – GEO BLUE PLANET MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

April 2025
Updates for UNESCO/IOCARIBE

GEO Blue Planet is a GEO initiative that uses ocean and coastal observations to inform sustainable policy and decision-making. It operates as an open, global network of experts and stakeholders. GEO Blue Planet invites IOCARIBE to become a Partner Organisation and formalise their long-lasting partnership through non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support collaboration and shared objectives.

General Description

GEO Blue Planet is an initiative of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) that focuses on the use of ocean and coastal observations to inform policy and decision-making. **GEO Blue Planet** is an open community, functioning as a global network of ocean and coastal researchers, social scientists, and end-user representatives from global and regional organisations, NGOs, national institutions, universities, government agencies, and the private sector.

Our team of contributing experts has a proven ability to bridge the gap between data and decision-makers to provide useable information that aids in making **informed decisions and policies in the pursuit of sustainable development**. We work with stakeholders to understand their information needs, connect them with available data and products, support the development of tools, and work with them to strengthen their capacity to make informed decisions.

Activities are selected based on identified needs within our thematic areas of action. Current activities undertaken by our Working Groups (WGs) support and contribute to the UN Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development. WG members from all stakeholders' groups implement activities based on voluntary contribution. Active WGs currently include Fisheries, Climate Policy, Sargassum, Marine Litter, Eutrophication and Inclusivity.

GEO Blue Planet and IOCARIBE

In recognition of their long-lasting partnership, GEO Blue Planet is inviting IOCARIBE to join as a Partner Organisation in its new governance structure (detailed below).

Partner Organizations are given the opportunity to provide guidance on aligning GEO Blue Planet activities with global priorities, connect with stakeholders, and support resource mobilization. They contribute to promoting GEO Blue Planet's mission, reviewing implementation, guiding activities, identifying new stakeholders, and coordinating with relevant initiatives outside of GEO Blue Planet.

Partner Organisations are given an ex-officio seat in the Advisory Group and thus membership in the Steering Committee. Only the Steering Committee meet, quarterly.

Partner Organisations and GEO Blue Planet usually co-sign a Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) to detail the mutual goals, intentions, or collaborations. MoUs are formal, non-binding agreements.

Governance Structure

The **governance structure of GEO Blue Planet** consists of bodies responsible for governing, advising and activity operation. In 2025, GEO Blue Planet is updating its governance structure emphasizing a more streamlined and collaborative framework to enhance **coordination and strategic decision-making**.

An overview of GEO Blue Planet's governance bodies is provided below.

- The **Advisory Group** represents the GEO Blue Planet Partner Organizations identified by MoUs. This body provides high-level insight and serves in an ex officio capacity.
- The **Work Programme** includes all WGs and is the operational arm of GEO Blue Planet, implementing its priorities. The **Work Programme Committee** is formed by the WGs co-chairs.
- The **Secretariat** is responsible for managing the daily operations and activities of GEO Blue Planet. It includes distributed offices staff and an executive director.

These bodies are represented in committees meeting regularly to advance GEO Blue Planet strategy and implementation.

- The **Steering Committee** comprises the **Advisory Group, Work Programme Committee**, and **Secretariat**. This body is responsible for providing scientific and technical guidance on GEO Blue Planet's activities.
- The **Executive Committee** is the main decision-making body for GEO Blue Planet. It is composed of representatives of the **Steering Committee** and thus includes the Work Programme Committee co-chairs, the Advisory Group co-chairs and the Secretariat Executive Director.

This updated governance model will foster cross-functional collaboration, timely feedback, and inclusivity of regional and thematic expertise, while ensuring that decision-making is informed by both scientific insight and stakeholder needs.