



UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

Endorsement Request for Ocean Decade Activities

Guidance Note for Applicants

May 2025

I. Introduction to the Ocean Decade and Decade Activities

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the [United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development \(2021-2030\)](#) ('the Ocean Decade') to stimulate ocean science and knowledge generation and thus reverse declines in the state of the ocean system while catalysing new opportunities for sustainable ocean uses. The vision of the Ocean Decade is 'the science we need for the ocean we want'. The Ocean Decade provides a convening framework for scientists and stakeholders from diverse actors to develop the scientific knowledge and the partnerships needed to accelerate and harness advances in ocean science to achieve a better understanding of the ocean system and deliver science-based solutions to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

To achieve the Ocean Decade vision, a wide range of partners will implement endorsed Decade Actions in the form of programmes, projects or activities by 2030. Proponents of endorsed Decade Actions will have the opportunity to join a highly visible, shared, global effort that builds on decades of achievement in ocean science.

Decade Activities are critical components of the Ocean Decade. They are defined in the [Implementation Plan](#) as "a one-off, standalone initiative (such as an awareness-raising event, scientific workshop or thematic training opportunity). It enables a programme or project or directly contributes to an [Ocean Decade Challenge](#)". As shorter, often highly accessible initiatives, they demonstrate important elements of transformational ocean science for sustainable development in action. The endorsement process allows diverse partners around the world to have recognition and visibility of their contribution to the Ocean Decade.

While Decade Activities are subject to a faster, more streamlined application and endorsement process, they are still able to use the logo and benefit from publicity through Ocean Decade channels.

Activities have a reporting requirement via a simple post-Activity report form. **For recurring Activities that last more than a year in length, a renewal application is required.**

Please note that the Ocean Decade is not a funding mechanism and cannot provide financial support to endorsed Decade Activities. However, availability permitting, members of the Decade Coordination Unit can at times attend or speak at Activities if the request is made far enough in advance. In addition, the Decade Coordination Unit can help promote Activities via the Ocean Decade communications channels. If you are looking for speakers who meet certain criteria, the Decade Coordination Unit may also be able to help identify individuals. We recommend emailing us prior to submitting your Activity request if you would like assistance securing speakers, as we cannot respond to every request via the submission form. In addition,

we encourage the lead contact and relevant colleagues to engage with the Ocean Decade communications team to see how you can make the most out of the endorsement.

II. Types of Submissions

Your submission should fall into one of the two categories below:

- a) New Activity Submission: a new proposal that hasn't been endorsed in the past by the Ocean Decade for a one-off iteration of your proposed Activity;
- b) Renewal Endorsement Submission: only applicable for new editions of Activities that have already been endorsed in the past by the Ocean Decade and would like to continue using the logo for an additional year.
 - Renewals should be done for each year of the Activity, not all years combined;
 - Proponents need to have a report submitted of the past editions of the Activity before submitting a renewal application.

III. Types of Decade Activities

Decade Activities usually fall into one of the categories below:

- a) Events ('events', which usually last up to a month; will be featured in the "Events & Activities" section of the Ocean Decade website). For example:
 - Congress / Symposium / Conference
 - Workshop / Course / Summer school / Training program
 - Webinar / Lecture / Seminar
 - Exhibition (artistic or scientific)
- b) Calls (recruitment of submissions, with a closing deadline, will be featured in the "Events & Activities" section of the Ocean Decade website):
 - Competition
 - Submissions for exhibitions
- c) Published productions or publications (a work that is published either virtually or physically*; will be featured in the "Publications" or "Events & Activities" sections of the Ocean Decade website):
 - Audiovisual production (video, etc.)
 - Podcast
 - Academic articles, policy reports, books, etc.
 - Website
 - Communications campaign

** End dates for this category of Decade Activity typically correspond to the conclusion of promotional activities; the overall period **should not exceed one year**.*

IMPORTANT NOTE: In case your proposal does not fall into any of the categories above, you are able to provide a written description of the work marked as "Other", which will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

IV. Eligibility to submit a Decade Activity

Any individual or organisation may submit an Activity (research, private sector education, etc.). You are eligible to submit a Decade Activity for endorsement if:

- Your Activity falls into one of the categories described in Section III, or you are able to clearly demonstrate its relevance in the ‘Other’ category;
- The duration of your proposed Activity is maximum one year.
- If your proposal is a recurring Activity (e.g. taking place once a year for multiple years), please submit the first edition and then, if endorsed, please submit a renewal request for every year of your Activity;
- Your Activity’s ambition and outline are aligned. This is particularly important with regards to number and diversity of audience members;
- Your Activity has a clear link to ocean science;
- Your proposal is aligned with the Ocean Decade Endorsement Criteria (see below in Section VI).

IMPORTANT NOTE: If your proposal doesn’t meet the eligibility criteria outlined above, please consider submitting it via the Calls for Decade Actions, which are solicited twice per year. See the FAQ at the end of this Guidance Note for more information.

V. Endorsement Process for Decade Activities

- After completing your submission, your proposal will be forwarded to members of the Decade Coordination Unit for assessment.
- If your organisation is a private entity, or is entirely or predominantly funded by private entities, then a preliminary due-diligence analysis by the Decade Coordination Unit is also required and we may contact you for additional information.
- You will be notified of the endorsement outcome to the email address you provided in your submission.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This process happens on a weekly basis, but delays might occur. Please ensure to submit your proposal at least 6 weeks prior to the Activity’s start date to ensure that you receive a response in time.

VI. Ocean Decade Endorsement Criteria

The endorsement criteria are a set of ideals that endorsed Decade Actions are held to and encouraged to progress upon throughout the Ocean Decade. You will be asked to briefly describe how your proposed Activity aligns with the following criteria as they are relevant to your proposal. To be endorsed, you must demonstrate how your proposed Activity:

- i. Contributes to achieving one or more of the following Decade objectives: Objective 1: Identify critical ocean knowledge; Objective 2: Build capacity and generate knowledge; Objective 3: Increase the use of ocean knowledge;
- ii. Accelerates the generation or use of knowledge and understanding of the ocean, with a specific focus on knowledge that will contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and complementary policy frameworks and initiatives;

- iii. Is co-designed and/or co-delivered by knowledge generators and users, and thus facilitates the uptake of science and ocean knowledge for policy, decision-making, management and/or innovation;
- iv. Ensures that all data and resulting knowledge are provided in an open-access, shared, discoverable manner;
- v. Strengthens existing partnerships or creates new partnerships across nations and/or between diverse ocean actors, including users of ocean science;
- vi. Contributes toward capacity development, including, but not limited to, beneficiaries in Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)*;
- vii. Overcomes barriers to diversity and equity, including gender, generational and geographic diversity;
- viii. Collaborates with and engages local and Indigenous knowledge holders.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Your Activity does not necessarily need to address all of the above criteria, but you should be able to clearly explain the ones your Activity does address.

** Please find a list of SIDS [here](#);
Please find a list of LDCs [here](#);
Please find a list of LLDCs [here](#).*

VII. Benefits and Commitments of Endorsed Decade Activities

Decade Activities benefit from endorsement via use of the Ocean Decade logo (in accordance with the guidelines) and publicity via the Ocean Decade social media channels and website.

As an endorsed Decade Activity, you are expected to use the logo in accordance with the [Branding Guidelines](#), publicise your Activity's endorsement, and ensure ongoing alignment with the relevant Ocean Decade endorsement criteria. We will request a report on your Activity no later than one month following its conclusion. If you are submitting a renewal for a recurring Activity, we expect to have received your report for the previous iteration, before endorsing the next.

VIII. Post Endorsement Process

Following a review by the Decade Coordination Unit, Activities that are found to meet the merits of the Ocean Decade will be recommended to be endorsed. The Coordinator of the Ocean Decade will make the final decision.

Should your Activity be endorsed, you will be notified via email from the oceandecade@unesco.org address. Please ensure that this email address is marked as "Not Spam".

The acceptance email will provide the logo files and branding guidelines, information about reporting on your Activity, and instructions to reach out to the Ocean Decade Communications Team with additional information. Please respond promptly with the information requested so that you can make the most of the Ocean Decade publicity through our social media channels ([X/Twitter](#), [X/Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)).

IMPORTANT NOTE: As part of Activity endorsement, our communications team will create an official entry on the Ocean Decade website calendar, when relevant.

For additional information or queries, please contact oceandecade@unesco.org and include “Endorsement Request for Decade Activities” in the subject line.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. I don't know if my proposal can be considered an Activity. What should I do?

If you are unsure about your proposed activity, you can email the Ocean Decade Coordination Team (oceandecade@unesco.org) for assistance.

2. How long should I wait for a response regarding my submission?

We plan to respond to all applicants within 6 weeks of submission, but delays might happen. We request your kind patience and, in the case of any urgency, please contact us through oceandecade@unesco.org.

3. Does my activity need to have all of its budget secured?

Before submitting the application, we expect that most of the required budget is secured or likely to be secured.

4. Can my partners use the logo in their activities?

The logo can only be used under the scope of the Activity that has been formally endorsed. Therefore, if you or partners are planning to promote initiatives that are not considered in the scope of the endorsed Activity, a separate submission will need to be made. If you have any queries on this important issue, please contact us at the address above.

5. Can I resubmit my activity at a later date if it is rejected?

We will endeavour to provide you with enough detailed feedback so that you fully understand the reasons for the rejection. Typically, we find that submissions are weakest in their Activity description, in meeting the endorsement criteria, and in providing enough detail regarding logo use.

If we have minor concerns, we will likely get in touch with you to ask for clarification before making a final decision.

If ultimately, we feel that we cannot endorse your Activity as proposed, you may resubmit a reworked proposal at a later date if time allows given the dates of the Activity you provide.

You would also be welcome to submit a proposal for a different Activity in the future, irrespective of the outcome of prior submissions.

6. Can I submit more than one Activity endorsement request?

Yes, you may submit as many proposals as you wish for the Activities your institution wishes to carry out.

7. What is the difference between an Activity, Project, Programme and Contribution?

Activities and Contributions can be submitted year-round, whereas Programmes and Projects are submitted twice-yearly via the Call for Decade Actions.

Activities are one-off events, webinars, conferences, workshops, publications, and at times, creative outputs such as poster competitions and postal stamps. Activities also include published works, such as publications, that do not have an end date.

Contributions are in-kind or financial contributions to the coordination functions of the Decade or to Decade Actions. This includes Decade Collaborative [Centres](#) and [Decade Implementing Partners](#).

Programmes are large-scale initiatives implemented at the global or regional scale and will contribute to the achievement of one or more of the Ocean Decade Challenges. They will be long-term, multi-year, and typically interdisciplinary and multi-national. They should be comprised of component projects, which may or may not be fully or partially defined at the time of endorsement.

Projects are discrete and focused undertakings. They may be regional, national or subnational and will typically contribute to an identified Ocean Decade Programme. Once endorsed, programmes and projects will be provided with guidance on logo use.

For more information: <https://oceandecade.org/sign-up/>

(This document may be updated according to new Decade Coordination Unit requirements and revised versions will be posted on the [Ocean Expert platform](#))