

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
Reports of Meetings of Experts and Equivalent Bodies

OBIS Executive Committee (EC-OBIS)

Seventh Session

Online

14 & 23 July 2025

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Executive Summary

The OBIS Executive Committee met online over 2 sessions on the 14th and 23rd July 2025 to provide an update of progress within the Co-ordination Groups, the Secretariat and the wider community.

The Co-chairs of each of the Co-ordination Groups (Node, Products and Data) reported on activities associated with the 2025 workplan along with progress reports from the Secretariat.

During the meeting discussions focussed on the upcoming SG-OBIS-13 meeting in Bogotá and the Datos Vivos/Living Data 2025 Conference, noting budgetary constraints and the desire to ensure a high degree of participation from OBIS Nodes. Approaches to the optimal running for elements of SG-OBIS-13 were debated, with the recommendation that the full Steering Group meeting be in-person only. Maximum contribution would be assured by running the Coordination Group meetings in hybrid format.

The meeting was closed following a review of the current status of the 2025 budget and the identification of key priorities for 2026.

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1. Welcome and adoption of the agenda

Mr Dan Lear (SG-OBIS Co-Chair) welcomed the members of the OBIS Executive to the 7th meeting of the OBIS EC. The meeting was held fully online to maximise participation and was split over two sessions, held on the 14th and 23rd July 2025 respectively.

This meeting presents an opportunity to check progress, assess risk, plan for the upcoming Steering Group (SG) meeting and identify aims for future years workplans.

2. OBIS Secretariat Reporting

2.1. OBIS Staffing and Financial situation

Mr Ward Appeltans (OBIS Programme Manager) reported that we submitted the 2025 OBIS workplan and budget¹ to the IODE Management Committee in December 2024. The workplan and budget was adopted without changes by the IODE Committee at its 28th session in March 2025. In April 2025, UNESCO applied a 30% freeze on all regular programme budgets in anticipation of the results of the United States of America audit, which was due 5 May 2025 (but to date no decision has been made by the US to remain in UNESCO). The US accounts for 22% of the entire UNESCO budget, which obviously has a large impact on the implementation of our programmes. As insurance against the possibility of no contribution from the US in 2025, UNESCO has now blocked around 85% of the OBIS operational budget for 2025 (see table below). This has an impact on the implementation of the OBIS workplan.

	OBIS	Approved (US\$)	After cut (US\$)
OB01	OBIS secretariat travel (IOC Assembly, UNOC etc)	10,000	0
OB02	OBIS travel (SG-OBIS)	17,000	5,000
OB03	Infrastructure costs: long term storage and associated operational costs	10,000	0
OB04	Infrastructure costs: Communication platform subscriptions (e.g. Slack, Miro, Google, Digital Ocean) Licence fee for <100 users.	3,500	3,980
OB05	Infrastructure costs: (JupyterHub Instance for 5 active users at a time with 16GB RAM or for 100 active users with 64GB RAM)	5,000	0
OB06	All-Hands meeting: Funding for member attendance at biannual All Hands meetings (including Living Data & SG-OBIS 2025)	45,000	0
OB07	OBIS Secretariat staff support: OBIS Community Engagement Officer (consultant) - partly covered by unspent funds in 2024	50,000	15,000
OB08	Branding, Communication & outreach	9,500	0
		150,000	23,980

¹ <https://oceanexpert.org/document/35340>

Extra-budgetary funding

The OBIS Secretariat has been successful in raising extra-budgetary funding, mostly through Horizon Europe calls. For 2025, this amounts to US\$ 412,000 of which 25% flows to UNESCO central services as overhead. The majority of the extra-budgetary funds is for salary (contracts) and small amounts for travel to attend project meetings. Regarding overhead funds, the IOC Assembly (resolution A33/3, July 2025²) requested the IOC Executive Secretary to seek an agreement with UNESCO on the recovery of management costs charged to voluntary contributions to the IOC.

Future projects

In June 2025, the OBIS Secretariat signed a contract with the Minderoo Foundation for a second phase of eDNA expeditions-II. This project will run for 3 years (2026-2028).

The Flanders Government (through FUST) also granted OBIS funding for a small-scale activity to undertake a feasibility study “Towards UNESCO Biosphere Observatories: Exploring IOC Systems and Flanders Capacity”. The study will provide recommendations for a potential future “UNESCO Biosphere Observatories for Ocean Ecosystem Sustainability (BiOES)” project.

Project proposals

Several OBIS project proposals are currently under development or pending review:

- Horizon Europe:
 - DTO4Sustain (Biodiversity applications with EU Digital Twin (EDITO))
 - Strict MPAs, blue parks
- OBIS Propagules: planned for second FUST call (Feb 2026)
- BiOES: planned for second FUST call (Feb 2026)
- HotSea (heatwave observation and tracking system for early alerts on marine life impacts): submitted to PNB Paribas, currently on short list.
- eDNA Bioblitz (EU Resilience and Restoration Fund) via Belgium

OBIS Staffing

OBIS Programme Manager: No changes to previous reports, covered by UNESCO Regular Programme.

² Decisions and Resolutions adopted by the IOC Assembly at its 33rd session, 25 June-3 July 2025, UNESCO: <https://oceanexpert.org/document/36863>

OBIS Technical and Scientific Coordinator: As a response to the request from Member States at the 32nd IOC Assembly (June 2023), a second regular programme post for OBIS (P-3, OBIS Technical and Scientific Coordinator) was created as part of the 42C/5 (2024-2025 UNESCO programme and budget). However, the UNESCO Director General (DG) did not appoint the recommended candidate and the position still remains unfilled. The position is now frozen for recruitment, as is the case for most UNESCO posts. At IODE-28, the IODE Committee regretted the DG's decision and the Member States at the 33rd IOC Assembly (Resolution A33/3, July 2025³) emphasized the importance of ensuring the recruitment of technically competent staff suited for interaction with expert communities in Member States for IOC programmatic execution and urged the DG of UNESCO to delegate the authority to the IOC Executive Secretary to manage recruitments and select staff for IOC. The Member States also requested the IOC Executive Secretary, in consultation with the IOC Intersessional Financial Advisory Group (IFAG), to explore options to maintain and optimise the 43 C/5, **with the number and level of positions foreseen in the 42 C/5 as the minimal baseline**, in finalising the IOC proposal for the 43 C/5 budgetary scenario(s) to be presented to the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference. If this request is followed, it would mean that the OBIS P-3 post should remain and not be abolished. IOC management is currently investigating whether IOC can recover some of the cost savings for not filling the P-3 position.

The OBIS data manager role is currently covered by Member State voluntary contributions to IOC until 31 Dec 2025. Mr Pieter Provoost, as incumbent, also fulfils the OBIS Secretariat support function to the OBIS Data Coordination Group.

The large amount of OBIS extra-budgetary funding provides important resources to support the OBIS community in the absence of regular funds, however does not replace regular programme funds for implementing core activities, and there is a risk that projects can take away OBIS Secretariat attention from core activities. This is especially the case given that the OBIS Programme Manager needs to supervise and perform administrative tasks for many of the projects. In addition, the OBIS Programme Manager is currently asked to support the officer in charge as acting head of the IODE Project Office and the IODE programme, since the retirement of Mr Peter Pissierssens on 31 May 2025. The OBIS Programme Manager is also the IOC scientific and technical focal point for multilateral agreements such as CBD and BBNJ.

The recruitment of an **OBIS Community Engagement Officer** (consultant, with regular programme funds) released some of the workload of the programme officer, especially concerning communication and outreach. This position is also critical to support the OBIS Nodes Coordination Group (NCG). This position is currently covered until 31 December 2025 and extension depends on the financial allocation for the next biennium (43C/5). eDNA Expeditions-II foresees funding for a 50% Communication Officer, and could potentially be used to match funds from the regular programme.

Project based staff

³ Decisions and Resolutions adopted by the IOC Assembly at its 33rd session, 25 June-3 July 2025, UNESCO: <https://oceanexpert.org/document/36863>

OBIS Project Officer (Species Distribution Modeler). This Project Appointment (P-2) position is currently covered by the Horizons Europe funded MPA Europe project which runs until 30 April 2026. This post also supports the OBIS Product Coordination Group (PCG). As this is a critical post to support OBIS in the data application priority area, we are actively seeking funding to extend this position (cfr project proposals: DTO4Sustain, HotSea, OBIS Propagules, BiOES).

OBIS Project Officer (Capacity Development). This consultancy position is currently covered by the Horizons Europe funded BioEcoOcean project which runs until 31 Jan 2028. This post also supports OBIS training activities including maintenance of the OBIS manual, OBIS how-to videos, OTGA/OBIS certification training course and OBIS Vocab Team.

OBIS Project Officer (Stakeholder Engagement). This consultancy position (75%) is currently covered by the Horizons Europe funded MARCO-BOLO project which runs until 30 Nov 2026. This position is currently entirely focused on supporting the EU project with its Community of Practice and Knowledge Transfer deliverables.

OBIS Project Officer (Data). This consultancy position is currently covered by the Horizons Europe funded MARCO-BOLO project and supports the OBIS helpdesk, managing marine network datasets from GBIF and EOY data management activities.

OBIS Project Officers (eDNA). Currently two consultancy positions are covered by Horizons Europe funding from the DTO-BioFlow (end date 28 Feb 2027), eDNAquaPlan (end date 31 Aug 2026) and MARCO-BOLO projects. These positions ensure OBIS is well placed and recognized as playing a critical role in eDNA pipelines (from sampling, to data processing and analysis and repository and publication).

Future positions:

From 2026, eDNA Expeditions-II (a 3 year Minderoo Foundation funded project) will allow us to recruit 2 full-time eDNA Scientists, 1 (50%) Bioinformatician and 1 (50%) Communication Officer. To prepare for the BiOES proposal, we have also secured funding to cover a consultant (5 months) to do a feasibility study and provide recommendations for a larger Flanders funded BiOES project.

2.2. OBIS Technical Developments

Mr Pieter Provoost (OBIS data manager) reported on technical developments for OBIS (presentation⁴). A new version of the OBIS website is ready to be deployed. In terms of functionality this version is not very different from the current one, but the styling has been refreshed and the codebase has been simplified which will make future updates easier to implement. Part of the new website is a redeveloped search page, which offers faster and more accurate dataset search results. More fields are included in the search, and support for boolean operators has been added.

⁴ <https://oceanexpert.org/document/36879>

Dataset tags have been implemented, and search on tags is now possible for both datasets and occurrences. This will allow OBIS to create filters for dataset categories (eDNA, tracking, citizen science), Essential Ocean Variables (EOVs), BBNJ SBIs, etc. Free text search has been added to the occurrence API endpoint. This, for example, allows searching on identifiers.

OBIS is now part of the AWS Open Data sponsorship program and egress of data is cost-free for OBIS: <https://registry.opendata.aws/obis/>.

A prototype DOI registration feature has been implemented. This allows creators of derived datasets or data products to register a DOI pointing to all upstream datasets in the DOI metadata. A DOI is registered by submitting all dataset identifiers that are part of the subset used to create the data product (see demo⁵).

Work on the new GOOS BioEco portal and support for the upcoming Darwin Core Data Package is ongoing but still at the early stages.

2.3. OBIS Communication and Outreach

Mr Laurent Chmiel (OBIS Community Engagement Officer) introduced this agenda item (presentation⁶). Mr Chmiel presented an overview of the 2025 OBIS communication strategy⁷, which is structured around four key objectives: (i) enhancing OBIS visibility and credibility as both a provider and a community; (ii) expanding data contributions to OBIS; (iii) securing sustainable funding; and (iv) attracting strategic collaborations.

These objectives aim to achieve three main outcomes: (i) OBIS is perceived as a trustworthy source of marine biodiversity data, (ii) OBIS is recognized for fostering strong stakeholder relationships, and (iii) OBIS is viewed as an infrastructure with real-world impact.

Key elements of the strategy include adopting a consistent tone of voice, updating the visual identity, and focusing on human stories behind the data. Mr Chmiel emphasized the need to strengthen social media engagement beyond simple posting, particularly on LinkedIn, where most of OBIS's audience and reach currently reside. He also underlined the importance of producing more storytelling content, especially on Instagram, where OBIS's presence remains limited.

Mr Chmiel presented recent communication performance metrics, noting that the OBIS website recorded 473K sessions and 1.2M event counts between October 24 and July 25, reflecting sustained visibility. On social media, LinkedIn remains the leading platform with 2,741 followers (up from 2,007 in February 2025), while X showed stable activity with 2,519 followers (2,454 in February). Engagement on Instagram (202) and Bluesky (138) was modest, while Discourse (35) and Mastodon (9) show a lot of growth potential. These last two platforms might allow for more granular interaction with key stakeholders (see

⁵

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PM04Z_g-asigWG8ZMTSBLaPMIfL2V8ms/view?usp=sharing

⁶ <https://oceanexpert.org/document/36880>

⁷ <https://oceanexpert.org/document/36972>

Communication strategy). These figures demonstrate strong and sustained engagement on established platforms (website and LinkedIn), while highlighting opportunities to expand OBIS's presence on other channels, especially towards the general public.

Mr Chmiel highlighted the stalled status of the brand strategy, aiming for completion by mid-August, and stressed the necessity of better enforcing it. Mr Dan Lear suggested considering the most effective approach to increase uptake of the strategy by OBIS Nodes. Mr Lear expressed interest in supporting this effort at a later time.

2.4. OBIS Vocabulary Infrastructure Project Team

Dr Elizabeth Lawrence (OBIS CD officer) reported on the progress of the Vocabulary Infrastructure Project Team. The team has met monthly, with 11 meetings since May 2024. In 2025 the team had two new members from outside the OBIS community join: Dr Cecilie Svenningsen (GBIF) and Ms Laura Slaughter (SINTEF Digital and the DTO-BioFlow Horizon Europe project).

The OBIS vocab team completed the outstanding tasks, including finalizing the OBIS How-To YouTube series on using controlled vocabulary⁸. Three other tasks were discussed but require revisiting:

1. **Improving the vocabulary decision tree** by either providing a slimmed down version or an interactive version.
2. **Producing a vocabulary template** to assist node managers in assigning vocabulary codes from data providers. Ms Danielle Wright (BODC) demonstrated a data submission tool with built-in vocabulary search, however we were cautioned that the tool's code may not be open access. The discussion has not yet been revisited.
3. **List of commonly used measurementTypes with suggested measureTypeIDs** - concerns were raised about maintaining a static list, and the increased risk that users would incorrectly select vocabulary terms. The team identified a strong need for increased capacity around vocabulary use, e.g., by organizing vocabulary workshops.
 - a. As an alternative to a static list, and rather than creating a new tool potentially from scratch, the team is monitoring progress on the **Semantic Analyzer** (<https://semantics.bodc.ac.uk/>) being developed within the BlueCloud project which EMODnet Biology and BODC are involved in.
 - b. Work on a **document explaining vocabulary choices** was also paused, though adding written guidance to the OBIS Manual would be simple, given the logic already discussed in the vocabulary YouTube video.

Finally, the team had an in-depth discussion on how to model P01 vocabulary codes when measurements involve sub-components (e.g., shell length of a mollusc, chemical concentrations of multiple tissues from an organism). After considering the use of parentMeasurementID, ensuring alignment with the I-ADOPT standard, and comparing the DwC-Archive and DwC-Data Package formats, the team decided to maintain the current approach of including sub-components in the P01 term (e.g. "length of biological entity

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIgUwSvpCFS4hADB7SIf44V1KJauEU6UI>

specified elsewhere [sub-component: shell]). However, the team noted that DwC-DP will be better suited in the future to allow the use of separate vocabulary codes, while maintaining the relationship between them (e.g. “length of biological entity specified elsewhere” + “sub-component of biological entity specified elsewhere”).

3. Product Coordination Group (PCG) Reporting & Discussion

Dr Stephen Formel and Mr Jonathan Pye, as PCG Co-Chairs, introduced this agenda item and presented a report on the activities of the PCG.

The membership of the PCG is currently composed of:

- Co-Chairs:
 - Dr Stephen Formel (OBIS Secretariat) sk.formel@unesco.org
 - Mr Jonathan Pye (OTN) jonathan.pye@dal.ca
- Secretariat support:
 - Dr Silas Principe s.principe@unesco.org
- Full member list: <https://oceanexpert.org/group/503>

3.1 PCG Workplan Progress Report

The prioritized activities from the 2025 Workplan are in the process, and on track for delivery. Among these, the delivery of a Products Catalogue has a developmental version set to be delivered in October 2025, informing an eventual operational catalogue as part of the OBIS technical ecosystem.

The OBIS community, as well as some representations from wider biodiversity science areas, were consulted in an effort to design a minimum metadata standard for data products that has the potential to align to the wider IOC data architecture, as well as a provenance and citation strategy that preserved the source datasets’ provenance along the value chain. The adoption of this minimum standard will be an activity of the upcoming OBIS 2026 Workplan.

As the core function of an OBIS Products Catalogue being to improve the discoverability and mobility of data products produced by the OBIS community, the PCG is soliciting from the community suitable examples of data products they are creating and curating on an ongoing basis. Proposals for generating a global baseline species distribution model, indexes of pre-existing polar model output, and other established public model output have been shared by members of the PCG for inclusion in the OBIS Products Catalogue.

The funding challenges outlined earlier in this meeting have the potential to put some of the proposed PCG activities at risk, notably the lack of a processing service like JupyterHub would require a change in strategy for supporting the community in processing and publishing active data products underpinned by OBIS-held data.

3.2 PCG Next steps

The following next steps were identified by the PCG:

- Determine which high-priority components of the 2025 Workplan are feasible in the new funding reality.
- Publish meeting minutes in more highly-visible ways and schedule PCG meetings for 2025-2026.
- Finalize the catalogue design and contribution requirements, deploy a developmental Catalogue, in order to establish an operational Products Catalogue and associated workflows for contribution.
- In 2026-2027 intend to more tightly scope the work of the PCG to accommodate the limited capacity of the volunteer community.

4. Data Coordination Group (DCG) Reporting & Discussion

Mr Ruben Perez and Mr Victor Chocho, as DCG Co-Chairs, introduced this agenda item and presented a report on the activities of the DCG

The membership of the DCG is currently:

- Co-Chairs:
 - Mr Ruben Perez (EurOBIS) ruben.perez@vliz.be
 - Mr Victor Chocho (OBIS Ecuador) victor.chocho@ambiente.gob.ec
- Secretariat support:
 - Mr Pieter Provoost p.provoost@unesco.org
- Ad interim Co-Chairs:
 - Ms Katherine Tattersall (OBIS Australia) katherine.tattersall@csiro.au
 - Mr Dan Lear (OBIS-UK) dble@mba.ac.uk
- Full member list: <https://oceanexpert.org/group/538>

4.1 DCG Workplan Progress Report

Progress on the DCG workplan deliverables has been maintained through 2025. The DCG has approached deliverables as focused work packages which are led by self-nominated DCG members and who report back to the larger group. The planned activities are focused currently on information structure and baselining. In this regard, surveys on (i) OBIS Nodes engagement with relevant external organisations and (ii) Nodes long-term archiving of data are being developed to review the current networks and existing practices on these topics.

In addition, a connection with Dr Ana Lara-Lopez, the GOOS BioEco Project Officer, has been established to survey the GOOS BioEco community and gather existing EOVS data schemas. These data schemas are based on EOVS specifications and will be used by the OBIS DCG to create transformation-to-DarwinCore guidelines and scripts. This will support the publication of EOVS data by OBIS nodes. It was recommended that a network update

presentation by a number of OBIS community members engaged in OBIS-GOOS EOVS work would be valuable. In addition, a shared document to consolidate relevant information and contacts as an OBIS resource was recommended.

Another objective of the DCG for 2025 is to integrate OBIS metadata within the ODIS data architecture. This has been partially achieved, with OBIS core metadata already flowing to ODIS. However, improvements to the metadata flow can and will be made by also integrating other relevant fields such as taxonomic coverage, EOVS labels or keyword tags, enhancing metadata richness. Furthermore, the DCG is exploring how to integrate into ODIS metadata relating to other OBIS assets such as data products, services or software.

One core function of the DCG is to identify and propose solutions to bring new data into the OBIS data ecosystem. In that regard, the OBIS DCG has been collaborating with Miwa Takahashi, lead of the FAIR checklist work, to help integrate FAIR terms into the DNA-derived data extension to DarwinCore. Since this effort is ongoing, the initial DNA related deliverable to update the OBIS-GBIF DNA derived data guidelines has been reassessed and modified. The replacement deliverable focuses on updating the OBIS manual DNA data guidelines and on internal capacity development on the topic. Two webinars on the GBIF Metabarcoding Data Toolkit were held to increase OBIS network technical knowledge in this regard.

Special attention has been paid to the Darwin Core Data Package (DWC-DP) developments. The DCG has thoroughly explored the data model and contributed to its development and scope by adding use cases and engaging in the discussions. An online Q/A session was organised with John Wiecek, first author of the DWC-A standard, and several members of the GBIF Secretariat to ask questions and discuss the implementation of the DWC-DP within GBIF and OBIS workflows.

4.2 DCG Next steps

- Finalise the current deliverables by the end of 2025
- Publish minutes of all DCG meetings
- Review and develop future objectives and a workplan for 2026

5. Nodes Coordination Group (NCG) Reporting & Discussion

Ms Maria Cornthwaite, as NCG Co-Chair, introduced this agenda item and presented a report on the activities of the NCG. The presentation is available here⁹.

The membership of NCG is currently

- Co-Chairs:

⁹ <https://oceanexpert.org/document/36881>

- Ms Maria Cornthwaite (OBIS Canada) maria.cornthwaite@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
- Mr John Nicholls (OBIS OPI) john.nicholls@tcd.ie
- Secretariat support:
 - Mr Laurent Chmiel l.chmiel@unesco.org
- Full member list: <https://oceanexpert.org/group/386>

5.1 NCG Workplan Progress Report

Ms Maria Cornthwaite, NCG Co-Chair, shared updates on the Node Coordination Group's activities and reported that progress on the NCG activities and deliverables has been constant throughout 2025.

NCG activities

Group logistics and communications

The logistics and communications requested actions can be gathered into three categories: well advanced, ongoing, and started. The "bi-monthly meetings scheduling", "interactions with other CGs" and the "introduction of Flash talks" have been well advanced. The NCG has held five dual-session meetings, with notable attendance (42 participants on average across five meetings and 10 sessions between November 2024 and July 2025).

The delivery items "Identify possible mentoring possibilities where individual Nodes may be supported by more experienced Nodes" and "Receive feedback from PCG and DCG regarding developments to assist in identifying training and mentoring needs of Nodes" are ongoing, with the Node-Node Support Programme framework presented at the 5th NCG meeting. The last two delivery items—"Identify and implement optimum contact methods" and "Identify and endeavour to engage with non-responsive Nodes"—have started, using a one-to-one approach to engage efficiently.

Training

Some of the NCG training requested actions were merged with the previous category, such as the items "Identify the needs of the Nodes and signpost them to the appropriate resources" and "Identify any new and appropriate mentoring that may be necessary (with assistance and engagement from the Product Coordination Group and Data Coordination Group)". The requested actions "Identify and encourage certification of all Node Managers and any relevant representatives of a Node" and "Share with OBIS Secretariat/OceanTeacher/etc. Members who may guide and/or direct engagement", are ongoing.

Support for Nodes

The "Engage with and assist Nodes who have not produced data for a while" and "Address issues and concerns around funding for Nodes" requested actions have not been addressed yet. "Identify any specific issues/ideas that Nodes may present" has been partially started and should be developed.

NCG Deliverables

Deliverable 1.1: "Build an NCG Wiki and make it accessible to Nodes"

This deliverable has been started through the establishment of a Discourse board¹⁰.

However, a lift-up mechanism that would allow saving, summarizing and highlighting relevant discussions and solutions to issues from the Discourse board to a wiki or an FAQ has not yet been implemented.

Deliverable 1.2: "Progress reporting and engagement representation at EC meetings and SG meetings"

This deliverable is underway.

Deliverable 2.1: "Create and distribute a Flash Talk template to be used by the Nodes by November 2025"

This deliverable has been completed, with a good uptake from the community.

Deliverable 2.2: "Create an interactive issue-reporting platform where Nodes can pose questions, suggest ideas, and report issues to be addressed either during NCG meetings or in the Wiki"

This deliverable has been completed with the OBIS Discourse platform, with the limitations raised within Deliverable 1.1.

5.2 NCG Next steps

Ms Cornthwaite described five recently initiated / upcoming actions planned and in process by the NCG between August and October 2025:

1. The creation of the OBIS Pulse newsletter as a response to community feedback and as a new platform of exchange between Nodes;
2. The proposition for a Nodes-to-Nodes support programme framework to tackle skill and knowledge gaps among Nodes and increase capacity within OBIS that could start its initial phase in September 2025;
3. Renew the efforts of the NCG to reach out to Nodes that may currently have lower levels of engagement or data contributions, to offer additional support and foster stronger participation;
4. The NCG is aiming to translate OBIS content into Spanish to enhance engagement and increase knowledge mobilization for Spanish-speaking Community members;
5. Finally, the potential of the "Transformative Alignment Initiative" proposed by the Ocean Decade Coordination Office for Ocean Observing as a potential capacity development multiplier for the OBIS Community.

¹⁰ <https://obis.discourse.group/>

6. OBIS Meetings and events

6.1 SG-OBIS-13

SG-OBIS-13 Logistics

SG-OBIS-13 and associated Coordination Group meetings will be held on 25-27 October 2025 immediately following the Living Data 2025 conference in Bogotá, Colombia.

Ms Martha Vides discussed the selection of Hotel Macao Colombia as the venue for the upcoming meeting, highlighting its convenience and the facilities available. Ms Vides noted that administrative issues are still being addressed and that a logistics coordinator will assist with arrangements, including meals and transportation. Ms Vides also expressed her willingness to explore additional venue options, such as the Bogotá Botanical Gardens, if feasible.

Included in SG-OBIS-13 will be meetings of the Nodes, Products and Data Coordination Groups. The Nodes Coordination Group will take place on the 25th, Products and Data Coordination Group Meetings on the 26th and SG-OBIS-13 on the 27th October.

Invitation letters have been sent to all nodes with a deadline of 17th July 2025 for a response.

The **OBIS Executive Committee thanked INVEMAR/OBIS Colombia** for their financial and logistical support of the event.

There is a need to convene the Intersessional Working Group on Steering Group composition (IWG-SG)¹¹ to ensure we have appropriate representation in Bogota for SG-OBIS-13.

The EC discussed the feasibility, benefits and challenges of attempting a hybrid SG meeting. Recognising the financial challenges faced by all OBIS Nodes, particularly as OBIS is unable to support Node travel to the meeting this year, a hybrid meeting would increase the opportunity for wider participation. However hybrid meetings require a much greater degree of coordination in preparation and greater discipline within the meeting, especially given the reduced time available for the full SG meeting (planned to be one day only, following CG meetings across two days). If held as a hybrid meeting, it would be essential to ensure all participants, both online and in-person are able to contribute clearly and concisely and are enabled to participate fully. The EC proposed that if a hybrid SG meeting is deemed necessary:

- Some parts of the meeting may be held as full-hybrid (e.g. adoption of resolutions), but that some parts of the meeting may not be hybrid

¹¹ <https://oceanexpert.org/group/539>

- There be a "liaison agent" in the physical meeting room and logged into the virtual environment who is responsible for liaising with people online (e.g. raising questions, submitting interventions)
- Online participants are made aware in advance that there may be somewhat restricted opportunity for full participation in discussion, depending on what facilities are available in the meeting room.

The OBIS Executive Committee proposed that the Nodes, Products and Coordination Group meetings would be held as hybrid meetings, if local facilities allow, and the Coordination Groups would be used to ensure all OBIS Nodes have the opportunity to contribute to the Steering Group through structured feedback and formalised Node reporting.

The Coordination Group Co-Chairs agreed to review previous workplan items, and suggested priorities from EC-OBIS-6 and SG-OBIS-12 in preparation for detailed discussions and workplan setting activities at SG-OBIS-13 in Bogotá.

SG-OBIS-13 Agenda setting

The following high-level agenda is proposed for SG-OBIS-13 and associated Co-ordination Group meetings:

Saturday 25th October 2025

OBIS NCG Meeting (7 hours)

- Nodes reporting (10 min per node, with up to 5 slides maximum which will be included in the report as an appendix)
 - Laurent Chmiel to prepare a template with prompts/topics
- GBIF partnerships, including DwC-DP (with reporting for SG about implications for nodes)
- Regional OBIS networks, Capacity development activities, joint projects
- Needs assessment, recommendations for DCG, PCG and SG

Sunday 26th October 2025 (AM)

OBIS DCG Meeting (3.5 hours)

- Outcomes from this year's meetings
 - Deliverables/KPIs
 - EOVS schemas
 - eDNA extension
 - Long-term data archiving
- Operationalising these successes
 - Including in OBIS manual
- Horizon scanning for next year
 - Data Laundry sessions delivered via NCG meetings
 - DwC-DP indexation

Sunday 26th October 2025 (PM)

OBIS PCG Meeting (3.5 hours)

- Introduction and statement of purpose
 - Recap of ToR,
 - current work plan status and
 - State of deliverables
- Detailed project presentations
 - CKAN OBIS data products catalogue
 - Metadata schema candidate
 - Selected data product candidates
 - Creation of a standard Data Products workflow
 - Applications of these data products
- Future priorities for the PCG
 - Feedback from OBIS community

Monday 27th October 2025

OBIS-SG Meeting (7 hours)

- SG Co-Chair reports on the status of the OBIS network
 - new nodes
 - current partnerships including MBON, others
 - GBIF collaboration
 - OBCaD (Ocean Biodiversity Curriculum and Capacity Development) project
 - Regional inter-Node Cooperation activities
- SG Co-Chair reports on IOC-OBIS interactions and engagement
 - Decade Transformational Alignment Initiative
 - ODIS
 - OTGA
 - GOOS
- Secretariat reports on OBIS projects
- CG Co-Chair reports on workplans developed by CGs
- SG Co-Chairs to seek SG endorsement of CG workplans
- SG endorsement of the OBIS 2026 workplan
- Proposed request of OBIS 2026 budget from IODE

6.2 Datos Vivos/Living Data 2025

Ms Katherine Tattersall introduced this agenda item. As a Co-hosting organisation of the Living Data 2025 conference alongside GBIF, TDWG and GEOBON, it is important that the OBIS community is both well represented and visible at the event. There are currently more than 10 sessions where OBIS has a session organiser/chair role. In addition, OBIS will have a presence in the exhibition space at the conference co-host booth and also at a booth promoting the OBIS-Minderoo eDNA Expeditions activities.

Many OBIS community members have also submitted presentations to the conference, and it will be a valuable opportunity to meet with, learn from, and exchange ideas with our counterparts in other leading global biodiversity data organisations. The EC expects that the benefit of conference participation to OBIS Node representatives will be very high, and welcomes the opportunity for face-to-face meetings and discussions with many teams and working group members that we interact with regularly.

All OBIS Nodes are encouraged to participate in Datos Vivos/Living Data either through in-person attendance or through online registration for virtual attendance.

7. OBIS Workplan and Budget 2025

7.1 OBIS 2025 Budget

	Activity	IODE RP requested (base scenario)	IODE RP requested (extra scenario)	Covered by other funds (in-kind from co-chairs, projects and RP funds)	IODE plus external funding (preferred scenario)
PCG	Online meetings and coordination: In-kind (12 hrs/month)	\$0	\$0	\$72,000	\$72,000
	Infrastructure costs: (JupyterHub Instance for 5 active users at a time with 16GB RAM or for 100 active users with 64GB RAM)	\$5,000	\$5,000		\$8,400
	PCG workshops: One face-to-face meeting for the PCG (none yet unless extra budget)	\$0	\$0		\$30,000
	OBIS Secretariat staff support: UX Consultant (none unless extra budget)	\$0	\$0		\$30,000
DCG	Online meetings and coordination: In-kind (12 hrs/month)	\$0	\$0	\$72,000	\$72,000
	DCG workshops: One face-to-face meeting for the DCG (none yet unless extra budget)	\$0	\$0		\$30,000
	OBIS Secretariat staff support: IODE QMF and CoreTrustSeal Accreditation Consultant	\$0	\$0		\$30,000

	(none yet unless extra budget)				
	Infrastructure costs: long term storage and associated operational costs	\$10,000	\$10,000		\$10,000
	Training Workshop: In-kind (16 hrs/month)	\$0	\$0		\$48,000
NCG	Online meetings and coordination: In-kind (12 hrs/month)	\$0	\$0	\$72,000	\$72,000
	All-Hands meeting: Funding for member attendance at biannual All Hands meetings (including Living Data & SG-OBIS 2025) - inc retained from previous year	\$40,000	\$45,000		\$50,000
	Infrastructure costs: Communication platform subscriptions (e.g. Slack, Miro, other preferred tools?) Licence fee for <100 users.	\$2,000	\$2,000		\$2,000
	Regional face-to-face NCG meetings (room and catering) 2-3 per year (none yet unless extra budget)				\$50,000
SG	SG-OBIS-13 venue and secretariat travel	\$15,000	\$17,000		\$40,000
	SG-OBIS Co-Chairs (20 hrs/month)			\$120,000	\$120,000
SEC	Notion subscription	\$1,500	\$1,500		\$1,500
	Staff travel, IOC Assembly June 2025 etc	\$2,000	\$10,000		\$15,000
	Branding, Communication & outreach	\$4,500	\$9,500		\$10,000
	OBIS Secretariat Staff: Programme Manager (Fixed Term)			\$190,000	\$190,000
	OBIS Secretariat Staff: OBIS Technical and Scientific Coordinator			\$190,000	\$190,000

	(Fixed Term)				
	OBIS Secretariat Staff: OBIS CD officer (Consultant)			\$66,000	\$120,000
	OBIS Secretariat staff support (PCG): Researcher (PA P-2)	\$0	\$0	\$120,000	\$150,000
	OBIS Secretariat staff support: OBIS Data Manager (PA-P3)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$150,000
	OBIS Secretariat staff support: OBIS Community Engagement Officer (consultant)	\$40,000	\$50,000	\$10,000	\$150,000
	OBIS Secretariat Staff: associate project officer - eDNA (PA P-2)			\$120,000	\$120,000
	OBIS Secretariat Staff: eDNA science officer (consultant)			\$60,000	\$120,000
Total		\$120,000	\$150,000	\$1,092,000	\$1,880,900

7.2 OBIS 2026 Budget

The EC-OBIS discussed expenditure in 2025 and upcoming projected cost for workplans, meetings and other expenses for 2026. EC assessment of priorities for the 2026 budget included:

- Resourcing for the OBIS Community Engagement Officer position
- Reserving funds for travel support for OBIS Nodes for the SG meeting in Bruges, November 2026, back-to-back with the World Conference on Marine Biodiversity.

7.3 OBIS 2026 Workplan

A detailed OBIS workplan for 2026 will be developed and adopted during the CG and SG meetings in October 2025. Good preparatory work for those meetings will be key to successfully delivering a forward-looking, considered, strategic and integrated workplan that maximises impact and benefit to OBIS Nodes, IODE and IOC, and makes best use of the resources available to OBIS. The workplan will then be submitted to IODE for approval.

The SG-OBIS-14 meeting will be held in Belgium in 2026. OBIS has submitted a request for meeting rooms for the SG and associated meetings to be held back to back with the World

Conference on Marine Biodiversity (<https://www.wcmb2026.org/about>) in Bruges in November 2026, hosted by VLIZ. The response to our request has been positive.

8. Adoption of the Report and Closure of the Meeting

The second online session of EC-OBIS-7 was closed by Ms Katherine Tattersall at 17:14 CEST on the 23rd of July 2025.

Annex 1: EC-OBIS-7 Participants list

Mr. Ward APPELTANS (11770)
Programme manager OBIS
Ocean Biodiversity Information System
UNESCO / IOC Project Office for IODE
InnovOcean Campus Jacobsenstraat 1 8400 Oostende Belgium

Laurent CHMIEL (72350)
Community Engagement Officer
Ocean Biodiversity Information System
UNESCO / IOC Project Office for IODE
InnovOcean Campus Jacobsenstraat 1 8400 Oostende Belgium

Mr. Victor CHOCHO (59824)
Biologist
Biodiversidad
Ministerio del Ambiente, Agua y Transición Ecológica
Madrid y Andalucía 170525 Quito Ecuador

Maria CORNTHWAITE (44111)
Biologist, Data Manager
Pacific Biological Station (DFO – PBS), Fisheries and Oceans Canada
3190 Hammond Bay Rd. Nanaimo BC V9T 6N7 Canada

John NICHOLLS (27029)
Researcher - Maritime Historian
4-OCEANS Project - Trinity Centre for Environmental Humanities
Trinity College Dublin
College Green
Dublin, Ireland

Dr. Stephen FORMEL (54167)
Biologist
Ocean Biodiversity Information System
UNESCO / IOC Project Office for IODE
Formel Data Services 201 Rue Beauregard Suite 202 Lafayette, Louisiana, 70508 United States

Dr Elizabeth LAWRENCE (50997)
OBIS training officer
Ocean Biodiversity Information System
UNESCO / IOC Project Office for IODE
InnovOcean Campus Jacobsenstraat 1 8400 Oostende Belgium

Mr Dan LEAR (23316)

Head of Data, Information and Technology
The Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom
The LaboratoryCitadel Hill Plymouth PL1 2PB United Kingdom

Mr Ruben PEREZ PEREZ (37533)
Science Officer
Data Centre
Vlaams Instituut voor de Zee/Flanders Marine Institute
InnovOcean Campus Jacobsenstraat 1 8400 Oostende Belgium

Mr. Pieter PROVOOST (26192)
OBIS Data Manager
Ocean Biodiversity Information System
UNESCO / IOC Project Office for IODE
InnovOcean Campus Jacobsenstraat 1 8400 Oostende Belgium

Mr. Jonathan PYE (31190)
Director of Data Operations
Ocean Tracking Network
Steele Ocean Sciences Building - Dalhousie University Halifax Nova Scotia B3H4R2
Canada

Katherine TATTERSALL (35925)
Data Architect
Information and Data Centre
CSIRO National Collections and Marine Infrastructure
PO Box 1538 Hobart TAS 7001 Australia

Ms Martha VIDES CASADO (22542)
Jefe Línea de Investigación ITE-BEM
Biodiversidad y Ecosistemas Marinos
Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras José Benito Vives de Andreis
Calle 25 No. 2-55, Playa Salguero, Rodadero Santa Marta D.T.C.H., Magdalena, - Colombia

Mr. Silas PRINCIPE (40122)
OBIS Assistant Researcher
Ocean Biodiversity Information System
UNESCO / IOC Project Office for IODE
InnovOcean Campus Jacobsenstraat 1 8400 Oostende Belgium