



Ocean Data and Information System (ODIS) Operations Group

Meeting 1

Final Report

23 September 2025

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1. Introduction

Following the recent decisions at IODE-28 (March 2025) and the IOC Assembly (June 2025), ODIS has established an Operations Group to expand the technical coordination and decision-making processes (currently performed by personnel in OIH WP2) to members from every ODIS Node. This group will identify regional priorities, challenges, and opportunities, and inform ODIS technical strategy as outlined in the Terms of Reference.

In early August 2025, each active ODIS node was invited to nominate a representative to the Operations Group. Out of 47 nodes, 32 were able to nominate an official representative, but all 47 nodes were invited to attend the first meeting.

The first meeting of the ODIS Operations group was held on 23 September 2025. This first meeting was held across two identical sessions, and recorded for those unable to attend.
Slot 1: 4AM-5AM UTC | Slot 2: 1PM-2PM UTC

The main purpose of the meeting was:

1. The selection of a chair and co-chair for the Operations Group
2. Discussion of some essential steps for all Node representatives (e.g. updating OceanExpert and ODISCat records, establishing communication approach)
3. Review and Q&A over the Group's Terms of Reference.

OE event link: <https://oceanexpert.org/event/4876>

2. Opening of the meeting

Lucy Scott (ODIS Programme coordinator) welcomed the participants to the meeting, and shared the agenda on screen. She clarified the objectives of the meeting and shared the agenda. Pier Luigi Buttigieg (ODIS Chair) further clarified the mandate of the Group.

3. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with no changes.

4. Proceedings

4.1 Terms of Reference

Tasks

The main tasks of ODIS-Ops will be:

1. To ensure the uninterrupted operation of ODIS Nodes by remedying issues identified by the ODIS-SG, ODIS Secretariat or by other ODIS Partners.
2. To promote broader and deeper interoperability between all ODIS Nodes, beginning at metadata / asset catalogues, and progressing to subject data, services, and other capacities as identified;
3. To guide the ODIS Nodes, and ODIS as a whole, in fulfilling the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development's Data and Information Strategy and its Implementation Plan, and - more broadly - addressing its Challenges;
4. To hold monthly meetings (online) not exceeding 60 minutes, distributed across time zones of the Group's members;^[3]
5. To contribute to, or produce status briefings on, the state of the ODIS Federation (i.e. the collection of ODIS partner organisations) as a whole, and of individual ODIS Nodes, detailing any issues limiting data and information exchange, as well as any opportunities to enhance it;
6. To identify and work to resolve any issues relating to data and information exchange and cross-Federation interoperability, by posting and pursuing issues on the ODIS-Arch GitHub repository or another appropriate repository;
7. To make all members of ODIS-Ops aware of regionally, nationally, or locally specific requirements, regulations, or legal frameworks regarding data access and/or exchange which may affect the operations of the ODIS Federation;
8. To identify and describe opportunities for ODIS to provide utility to (potential) user groups and other;
9. To review and regulate the addition, suspension, or removal^[4] of ODIS Nodes to/from the Federation;
10. To report operational affairs to the ODIS Chair, SG-ODIS and ODIS Secretariat, and consult these for strategic and programmatic guidance.

Membership

Membership of ODIS-Ops shall initially include:

- ODIS Chair or Co-Chairs
- ODIS Programme Manager (ODIS Secretariat)
- One technical expert which has been selected by each ODIS Partner operating at least one ODIS Node;
- External experts - in advisory roles - in areas relevant to the activities of the Group;
- Representatives of other IODE programme components and/or IODE programme activities or IODE Projects
- Other, ad hoc members, as agreed by the regular membership

Membership will be for a period of one year (renewable).

4.2 Core method of working

1. Creation of Github repository
 - a. Do we need a dedicated one? Or would a project board in odis-arch suffice?
 - b. The repository is where issues identified by the Ops Group will be lodged and addressed, and progress tracked on a project board. Triage and priorities will be performed by the Ops Group Chairs.
 - c. Chosen issues and progress to be reported as detailed in the ToR.
2. Population and continuous update of the [ODIS-Ops Ocean Expert](#) group

All members to create or update Ocean Expert Accounts
All members to be added to OE ODIS-Ops Group
3. Continuous update of ODISCat entries for all Nodes

Ensure all ODISCat entries are up to date, with a responsible party that either 1) is or 2) works closely with the Ops Group representative
4. Expand and populate ODISCat fields (e.g. metadata standards used, data import/export information) - request new fields from the ODISCat admins according to Ops Group needs and wishes
5. External communications
 - a. Nodes to prepare press releases about their specific capacities, objectives, and role in the ocean digital ecosystem, for their channels (websites, social media, etc) and IODE channels
 - b. ODIS-Ops-wide achievements to be communicated via external channels following review from IOC staff

4.3 Initial Actions

- Preparing for metadata completeness scoring
- Defining minimal and extended metadata completeness per Type
- SHACL validation and display of results (on OIH etc)
- Managing metadata nodes in the ODIS Graph
- Be aware that *all* JSON-LD nodes in a record are considered instances of their type.
 - Ensure minimal completeness of internal JSON-LD nodes or
 - Use the `@id` JSON keyword with a value equal to the URL of the complete JSON-LD for the internal Type
- Licensing and usage restrictions have to be clear in metadata
- All relevant resource Types (mostly CreativeWorks) must have a `license` for re-use, and `usageInfo` to communicate constraints

4.4 Formalising ODIS Node relationships

IODE-28: The Committee invited existing and new ODIS partner organizations to join the IODE network as IODE Associated Data Units (ADUs) to share their own expertise with, as well as benefit from the expertise within the IODE network. This is not an action needed from Ops Group specifically, but more a message / notification sent from IODE 28 to all ODIS nodes

Nodes are to discuss applying for ADU status with their organisational leadership.

There are two types of centres (<https://iode.org/about/community/>):

IODE National Oceanographic Data Centre (NODC). – These are centres that have been officially designated by an IOC Member State as NODC. While there is usually just one NODC in a country there may be more than one if a country so decides. The mission of a National Oceanographic Data Centre is to provide access and stewardship for the national resource of oceanographic data. This effort requires the gathering, quality control, processing, summarization, dissemination, and preservation of data generated by national and international agencies. **Total number of data centres in the IODE network: 103** – Accredited NODC: **11** (status March 2024)

IODE Associate Data Unit (ADU) – Any national, regional or international project, programme, institution or organization that manages and shares ocean data can be recognized by IODE as an ADU. There is a formal application procedure that interested entities will use and applications are reviewed by the IODE Management Group.

IODE Associate Information Unit (AIU): Now incorporated into ADUs.

Full list: <https://iode.org/about/data-centers/>

Please contact Lucy offline for further information.

4.5 Nomination of co-chairs

Nominations for co-chairs were requested across the two sessions.

Session 1: No nominations

Session 2: Colm Walsh (MEDIN + BODC)

4.6 Further Q&A

Slot 1

DC: Is there any recommended reading or background documents?

PLB: The ODIS Book: <https://book.odis.org/> is our “source of truth”. Issues on the Github tracker can lead to changes here. This group can make suggestions to modify and improve the text – that will be very helpful.

DC: This is well organised. I understand a big part is giving feedback from stakeholders, but also the Nodes get feedback – a nice return value with the metadata scoring. Is the plan to develop tooling to do metadata scoring individually by stakeholder?

PLB: Yes, we have come across FAIR scoring, but one needs criteria to score against. This can sometimes be subjective so our criteria must be transparent.

KO'B: Commented that minimal data specs are very important - key to making sure no clashes with other systems and minimal specs (e.g. GOOS metadata passport). If there are things that ODIS needs, we want to trickle that down to our members.

PLB: yes, we need objective scoring, this is key to multiscore, transparency, reporting up
KO'B: This is real use of ODIS, to help with metadata completeness scoring.

TS: We are hoping to formalise partnerships with other organisations sharing data with us, one thing being done is harvest data from these sources with completely different pathway /

standards, involving translation of fields/properties. It is important to recognise that connected partner systems may not comply with native schema.org standards - what should we do?

PLB: Translating a property is one thing, but the value of a property is another. This group can help with conversions. This can be included in the metadata: Link back to original record, add metadata to ODIS record indicating translation, tooling used, mapping tables, again, an excellent issue to be posted in the repository and the Ops Group to create recommendations for the book.

BP: We are developing a Pacific oceanographic data management system and approach, for better discoverability. How can we work together?

PLB: If there are recommended Pacific minimum standards and guidelines, add this to the book as a regional sub-specification. Link to regional documentation, possibly with a review by the Ops Group – to be discussed by the Ops Group. The link to the documentation (a specific version) can be added to the ODIS Book with a note on which ODIS-Ops group meeting this was approved at and who reviewed it, giving more confidence for those using it.

DC: Out of curiosity, how many members are there?

LS: 47 Node representatives expected, and invited to this meeting. 34 have nominated formal representatives so far.

PLB: Benefits of being part of the Ops noted: influence metadata norms, state regional / national / thematic needs. The size of the group will grow with the federation, but not all Node representatives need be present (e.g. all is running well and they don't need to discuss the activity on the GitHub tracker)

DC: Is a single meeting preferred, or two slots like today?

LS/PLB: Up to Ops Group - often a constraint on availability and resources available for each Node / region. PLB: Note this is also a digital equity question - availability of connection, paid time, etc. Recommend core point of coordination is the GitHub tracker.

Slot 2

NDV: A general question – we have been connected for about two years now and I was wondering if there is some feedback on your experience of the users of ODIScat or ODIS? Are you monitoring usage, citations etc?

PLB: We are monitoring usage and analytics data of the Global Search Hub, but we cannot definitively say how records or datasets are used unless datasets are cited. That is why citation information is so important. As the graph grows, as people share derivative products, that should be included in the metadata – we would like to devolve that to the nodes themselves. We could define a data product for ODIS reports on usage, per partner - requires that Node metadata has stable PIDs for all assets shared, so reuse is detectable across the graph. Recommend opening an issue on this topic in the GitHub repository, so we can create general guidance on this theme in the ODIS Book.

NDV: How does GDPR apply to scientific metadata and is there anything we need to be aware of? This is interesting to us.

PLB: Our assumption is that nodes sharing data have already complied with their local rules. If a Node detects an issue in this regard, they can raise it in an ODIS-Ops meeting or in a GitHub issue for consideration and remedy. Nodes are usually under national jurisdiction.

CW: Regarding minimum requirements of JSON-LD in each node. Would you say that as time progresses, will the bar gradually be raised, will there be an evolution towards a standard?

PLB: A global minimum can be accompanied by regional, national, or thematic/disciplinary minima definitions unambiguously stated in ODIS documentation signed off on by the Ops Group.

4.7 Next meeting

The meeting date and time/s to be determined through the new chair. Meetings are not compulsory, just a check-in opportunity for questions and clarification.

A provisional date of 23 October was suggested by Meeting slot 1, although it was pointed out in Meeting slot 2 that this clashes with Living Data so perhaps a new date should be chosen.

Minutes of future meetings will be captured in rolling minutes:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1b5zAcaA_v0r-WL1cvOh8t5vHdF7EU1aGh0Chy4zba8k/edit?tab=t.0

4.8 Recordings

Recordings were available until 15 October.

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