Terms of Reference of the IOC OceanTeacher Global Academy (OTGA)

Objectives

The objectives of OTGA are to:

1. Develop, in collaboration with programmes across the IOC, a comprehensive capacity development platform to deliver customized training for equitable capacity related to ocean research, observations and services;

2. Create and facilitate open and free access to new knowledge, learning resources, and training opportunities to support the needs and priorities of IOC Programmes, IOC Regional Subsidiary Bodies, IOC Member States, and beyond when needed;

3. Coordinate, guide, and empower a global network of centres, partners, experts, and learners, through training and community building; and

4. Promote the wide use of international standards and best practices in knowledge-sharing and training for ocean sciences.

Core action

To achieve its objectives, this OTGA provides:

- Coordination of a global network of training centres, partners, experts, and learners, including mechanisms for collaboration and sharing of technical expertise;

- Maintain a customized Learning Management System, with a shared e-Learning Platform;

- Planning, development, and delivery of training courses and other knowledge-sharing activities, including the creation of learning resources and training materials, in multiple languages and knowledge systems, and facilitation of professional exchange;

- Guidance on learning services procedures, standards, and best practices; and

- Enhanced and innovative opportunities for individual upskilling and institutional capacity development.

Governance

OTGA includes the following groups of institutions or individuals:

- **Secretariat** is the central coordination team for OTGA and representation within IOC. It is hosted by the IOC Project Office for IODE in Oostende, Belgium, comprising human resources and infrastructure essential for the successful implementation of the training programme. OTGA Secretariat provides direct support to all members of OTGA. OTGA Secretariat coordinates and manages OTGA and its learning service activities, and is responsible (or co-responsible, when applicable) for: monitoring standards and procedures for quality assurance; supporting the development of courses and materials; hosting the e-Learning Platform; internal and external communication and outreach; administrative and financial coordination; documenting, assessing, and reporting; international liaison and partnership coordination; strategic planning and risk management; promoting and representing the programme in meetings and forums; other designated tasks. OTGA Secretariat staff includes IODE Training Coordinator, Administrative Officers, e-Learning Expert, IT Manager, and others. Note that these positions may change.

- **Co-chairs** are the central representatives of the training centres within OTGA, appointed from the Regional and Specialized Training Centres and/or Affiliated Partners during OTGA Steering Group (OTGA-SG) Meetings, with 2-year terms. OTGA Co-chairs assist OTGA Secretariat on high-level decisions and management of the training programme, and are expected to: support representation and reporting during IOC sessions; advise on standards, procedures, planning, monitoring, and assessment of its activities; assist in promoting OTGA in meetings and forums; and engage in other associated activities upon demand.
- **Regional Training Centres (RTCs) and Specialized Training Centres (STCs)** are institutions or coordinated groups of institutions that undertake delivery of training on a broad range of topics or targeted specialized training in ocean science that contribute to the high-level objectives of the IOC. RTCs and STCs are nominated by IOC Member States and undergo an official selection process. They provide the institutional backbone for the training activities. As hosting organizations, they ensure the human and financial resources and facilities to design and deliver targeted learning services, responding to the regional training needs of the IOC Programmes, IOC Regions, and IOC Member States. Each RTC and STCs contact point, Coordinator, is responsible for managing its training activities, including representing the RTC/STC in designated meetings, proposing new courses, providing workplans, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting according to OTGA guidelines. An RTC or STC shares responsibilities with OTGA Secretariat whenever the need is identified and agreed.
- **Affiliated Partner** is a national or international organization that collaborates with OTGA in training activities, other than IOC Programmes, IOC Sections, IOC Regional Subsidiary Bodies, and OTGA Regional and Specialized Training Centres. Affiliated partners can contribute with expertise, infrastructure, funding, learning frameworks, and others, upon invitation by OTGA Secretariat, an RTC or STC, or external demand. Affiliated Partners collaborate with OTGA training activities to expand global awareness of learning opportunities, increase learning content offers, develop new cross-cutting learning services, and improve quality standards. Partners are connected to specific training courses or activities. When leading a course, partnering organizations and their individuals must comply with the same rules as for RTCs and STCs.
- **Course Coordinator** is the leading person and focal point during a training course for OTGA. Course Coordinators lead the development and delivery of courses in close coordination with OTGA Secretariat, being responsible for: detailing all the information about the proposed trainings and learning approaches; identifying and liaising with Facilitators; coordinating and assisting the development of training materials, including appointing roles within their team; responding to queries and demands of learners, experts, and Secretariat; and assisting on quality assurance and best practices based on OTGA guidelines.
- **Facilitators** are the personnel assisting in the planning, delivery, and development of a course, including groups such as:
  - **Instructors** are subject experts leading the content development and knowledge sharing. Instructors shall create the content and provide guidance for the development of learning resources and activities, in accordance with OTGA formats and templates within its online LMS (e-Learning Platform) used for all courses.

Content shall be provided in a timely manner to allow delivery of the training with the best standards and procedures. Instructors are expected to: attest their own competency and subject expertise; respect Copyright and knowledge-sharing licenses; strictly follow OTGA guidelines and UNESCO code of conduct and regulations when preparing and delivering classes.

   o **Staff** are any other personnel involved in the training activities. Staff members are designated by Course Coordinators to assist in the training activities on demand and must follow the same procedures and guidelines detailed for the other members.

● **Learner** is an individual participating in a course for the purpose of acquiring knowledge and skills through experience, practice, study, or instruction. Learners shall independently conduct their learning experience, following the instructions announced within each course, accessing the resources provided, and respecting procedures and deadlines.

Procedures

All training shall follow OTGA Course Management Guidelines and comply with IOC rules and regulations. Additional guidelines can be created and implemented for other training activities.

Membership

Formal membership to OTGA is required for RTCs and STCs, which shall ensure the human and financial resources and facilities to satisfy the following:

   ● Identify learning needs
   ● Design learning services
   ● Deliver learning services (online, face-to-face, and blended)
   ● Administer and manage the learning services

The RTC or STC must have adequate training facilities and competent instructors.

The RTC or STC must be able to respond to the training needs of the IOC Programmes, IOC Regions, and IOC Member States, including the design and delivery of training that contributes to meeting these learning needs using competent instructors and an environment that is conducive to learning. The establishment and maintenance of the RTC or STC is the responsibility of the host institution, although co-funding of learning services resources is possible.

Membership of a new RTC or STC can be requested to OTGA Secretariat by any national or international institution through its IOC Focal Points at any time. RTCs are limited to a number of one per IOC Member State and can only be requested once an RTC is no longer present in that country. STCs are limited to one per scope/theme aligned with IOC Mandate and its related activities.

Membership of RTC or STC shall be revised and renewed every 5 years, counting from 2026, following similar procedures and requests for information as described in [IOC Circular Letter No](#)

[2795/2020](). RTCs and STCs will be invited to resubmit documentation, and a complementary open call can be issued to fill out regional gaps or needs.

Membership evaluation and approval shall be carried out by OTGA Secretariat, in consultation with other IOC experts.

Membership can be terminated upon request of the RTC or STC followed by a justification and letter of approval of the IOC Focal Point of the host country, or by OTGA Secretariat in case of persistent multiple-year inactivity or failure to comply with these Terms of Reference or related guidelines.

Terms of Reference of the Steering Group for the IOC OceanTeacher Global Academy (OTGA-SG)

1. In coordination with the OTGA Secretariat, provide expert advice on the relevance and appropriateness of a set of strategic priorities that deliver into the IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023-2030 and IOC Medium Term Strategy 2022-2029;
2. Review and provide expert guidance on high-level work plans for the OTGA, proposed by the OTGA Secretariat;
3. Contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of OTGA training activities, within the context of monitoring and evaluation activities of the IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023-2030 implementation plan, including advising on improvements and updates of procedures and standards of the Learning Management System;
4. Advise the OTGA Secretariat on relevant developments in global, regional, national, or sectoral training activities or capacity development initiatives that may impact OTGA operations;
5. Implement coordinated action to support the maintenance of IOC-recognised training activities within the context of the IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023-2030, including engaging in collaborative initiatives and resource mobilization; and
6. Contribute to regular meetings in support of IOC capacity development operations and community building, including facilitators' meetings and alumni symposia.

Membership: The Steering Group will be composed, *inter alia*, of:
- A Chair or co-Chairs of the Steering Group
- Representatives from IOC Programmes, including OTGA and Capacity Development and IOC Regional Sub-Commissions
- RTC Coordinators
- STC Coordinators

Where appropriate and relevant, representatives of affiliated partners, facilitators and the alumni may also be invited to contribute to the activities of the steering group.

Membership will be for a period of 2 years, following IOC rules and procedures.

Co-chairs will be elected from the membership of the steering group at the start of each 2-year period.

The OTGA-SG will meet formally once a year, during which OTGA programmatic activities, the Learning Management System, the activities of the RTCs and STCs will be reviewed and discussed within the context of progressing the strategic priorities of the OTGA and objectives of the IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023-2030 and IOC Medium Term Strategy 2022-2029. Additional inter-sessional meetings may be held if and when required.

List of IOC OceanTeacher Global Academy Regional and Specialized Training Centres (RTCs and STCs) in 2025
<mark>[to be re-confirmed after renewals/applications]</mark>

OTGA Regional and Specialized Training Centres are:

RTC/STC	Name organisation
STC-Argentina	Escuela de Ciencias del Mar
RTC-Belgium	UNESCO/IOC Project Office for IODE
RTC-China	National Marine Data and Information Service (NMDIS) and National Center of Ocean Standards and Metrology (NCOSM)
RTC-Colombia	Marine and Coastal Research Institute in Colombia (INVEMAR)
RTC-Ecuador	Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral (ESPOL)
RTC-Pacific	Pacific Community (SPC)
RTC-Ghana	Department of Marine and Fisheries Sciences (DMFS), University of Ghana
RTC-India	International Training Centre for Operational Oceanography (ITCOOcean)
STC-Indonesia	Indonesia Agency for Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics (BMKG)
RTC-Kenya	Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI)
RTC-Malaysia	Institute of Oceanography and Environment (INOS), Universiti Malaysia Terengganu
RTC-Mozambique	Centre for Marine Research and Technology (UEM)
STC-Norway	University of Bergen
RTC-Portugal	Consortium of Portuguese Institutions, coordination hosted at Universidade de Aveiro
RTC-Cono Sur	University of Uruguay (UdelaR)/University of Santa Catarina (UFSC)
STC ITIC	International Tsunami Information Center (ITIC)
STC-HAB	IOC Science and Communication Centre on Harmful Algae at University of Copenhagen