



INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION  
COMMISSION OCÉANOGRAPHIQUE INTERGOUVERNEMENTALE  
COMISIÓN OCEANOGRÁFICA INTERGUBERNAMENTAL  
МЕЖПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВЕННАЯ ОКЕАНОГРАФИЧЕСКАЯ КОМИССИЯ

اللجنة الدولية الحكومية لعلوم المحيطات

政府间海洋学委员会

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**IOC Circular Letter No 2840**

(Available in English French, Russian and Spanish)

IOC/VR/JB/ic

9 April 2021

To : Official National Coordinating Bodies for liaison with the IOC (IOC Member States)

cc. : Permanent Delegates/Observers Missions to UNESCO and  
National Commissions for UNESCO of IOC Member States  
Chair and Vice-Chairpersons of IOC  
Officers of Major Subsidiary Bodies of IOC

**Subject: United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development  
(2021–2030) – Update**

This Circular Letter is to inform you of the progress of the implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (the Ocean Decade) that commenced on 1 January 2021. Specifically, it provides updates on the Call for Decade Actions No. 01/2020, requests inputs to a survey on Member States' intentions to establish National Decade Committees, provides information on upcoming engagement opportunities for Member States, and requests support for the Decade Coordination Unit.

**Update on Call for Decade Actions No. 01/2020**

The Call for Decade Actions No. 01/2020 was open from 15 October 2020 to 15 January 2021 and focused on global and major regional Decade programmes and in-kind or financial contributions to the Decade. 215 programme submissions and 27 contribution submissions were received in response to the Call. There was high diversity in the geographical coverage of submissions with all ocean basins covered. Submissions were received from partners in 53 countries, with eight programme submissions from partners in Small Island Developing States and 16 from partners in Africa. There was high diversity in the themes addressed by submissions with all the Ocean Decade Challenges addressed. Challenges related to multiple stressors on ecosystems, the ocean-climate nexus and sustainable ocean economy were the most frequently addressed with capacity development a common cross-cutting theme. Research institutes, governments, non-governmental organisations, and private sector were the main partner groups that made submissions.

The IOC Secretariat has prepared a preliminary analysis of submissions for the first meeting of the Interim Decade Advisory Board scheduled from 6 to 8 April 2021. The initial analysis has identified a number of thematic or geographical clusters of programmes with potentially strong synergies.

Further dialogue will be carried out with partners to explore mechanisms for coordination and collaboration within these clusters. At the Interim Decade Advisory Board meeting the following

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categories of potential Decade Actions were presented for review and recommendations: (i) programmes that are potentially ready for endorsement; (ii) contributions that are potentially ready for endorsement; and (iii) a pipeline of programmes that require further discussion or evolution prior to be presented to future meetings of the Board for consideration.

### **Survey of Member States in relation to National Decade Committees**

The establishment of National Decade Committees is encouraged throughout the Ocean Decade as a means of engaging national stakeholders and facilitating national contributions to the Decade. A list of already established National Decade Committees can be consulted on the Ocean Decade website (<https://www.oceandecade.org/resource/139/Regional-initiatives-and-National-Decade-Committees>). A number of Member States are in the process of establishing committees.

The IOC Secretariat has developed an online survey to collect information from Member States on their progress in establishing National Decade Committees or their plans to do so in the future. The results of the survey will inform development of operational guidelines on the establishment and activities of these committees and ensure that the most-up-to-date information about existing National Decade Committees and their activities is posted on the Ocean Decade website.

Let me kindly ask that all Member States complete the survey no later than 25 April 2021 using the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/nationaldecadecommittee>

The Secretariat will coordinate a more structured engagement with National Decade Committees in the upcoming months and facilitate linkages between these groups.

In order to provide a platform for National Decade Committees as well as regional taskforces and planning groups to share experiences and knowledge and to encourage creation of synergies amongst different initiatives, the Secretariat will organize a virtual event on the 22 April 2021. A “Save the Date” for this event will be circulated shortly.

### **Engagement Opportunities for Member States**

In addition to establishing and supporting National Decade Committees, Member States are warmly encouraged to take one or more of the following actions to engage in the Ocean Decade.

Following the launch of the Ocean Decade Alliance at the ‘Brave New Ocean’ event on 3 February 2021 that attracted over 15,000 viewers, Member States are encouraged to contact the Secretariat to express interest in becoming members of the Decade Alliance. Operational meetings of Alliance members will commence in coming months and will lead to the development of a charter for the functioning of this network.

Member States can express interest to host a Decade Coordination Office or Decade Collaborative Centre. These decentralized coordination structures will be important elements of the overall governance and coordination framework for the Decade and will allow translation of global priorities to the regional and national levels.

Member States can request endorsement of their Decade Activities, for example in the form of events, trainings, conferences, publications, workshops or exhibitions via this form: <https://oceandecade.com/resource/141/Request-endorsement-of-your-Ocean-Decade-Activity-here>

A series of virtual ‘Ocean Decade Laboratories’ will be held between July 2021 and May 2022 as part of re-structured First International Ocean Decade Conference hosted by Germany. These Laboratories will provide interactive opportunities for initiation of Decade Actions and partnerships. Further details on the timing and modalities of participation in these events will be provided shortly.

## **Request for support for the establishment of Decade Coordination Unit and IOC contributions to the Decade**

There is an urgent need for additional resources to ensure that the Secretariat can continue to effectively coordinate the Decade. This is particularly critical in the first year of implementation during the transition from the preparation to the implementation phase of the Decade. The Decade Coordination Unit will be located in the IOC Secretariat and will require a full complement of professional staff to allow it to fulfil the ambitious role described in the Implementation Plan. A description of the minimum additional staff required within the Unit is appended to this Circular Letter. The Secretariat urgently requests support from Member States for resources in the form of extrabudgetary resources or seconded staff to fill these positions and build out the Decade Coordination Unit.

Endorsement of a number of IOC programmatic contributions is foreseen at the level of Decade Programme, initially in the areas of ocean science, ocean observation, ocean data and information, and tsunami early warning and preparedness. All these initiatives will also require additional extra-budgetary support to achieve their transformative ambitions, guide their communities and act as a catalyser of action, particularly around funding proposal development and matchmaking. Specific resource needs will be identified and reported to IOC Member States and other potential funders with a view to solicit voluntary contributions.

Further information on the above issues can be obtained by contacting the IOC Secretariat ([j.barbiere@unesco.org](mailto:j.barbiere@unesco.org) or [a.clausen@unesco.org](mailto:a.clausen@unesco.org)). I thank you in advance for acting on issues outlined in this Circular Letter.

Yours sincerely,

*[signed]*

Vladimir Ryabinin  
Executive Secretary

Enclosures: Outline Staff Profiles for Decade Coordination Unit

## Outline Staff Profiles for Decade Coordination Unit

### Science officer

- Supports development and scoping of Calls for Decade Actions including gap analysis based on monitoring and evaluation data and analysis
- Supports analysis of requests for endorsement including development of draft recommendations for the Decade Advisory Board, and IOC Executive Secretary
- Supports development of annual action plans and resource needs assessments.
- Liaises with Decade Collaborative Centres and Decade Implementing Partners.

*Profile: Strong scientific background in ocean science (complementary discipline to Coordinator) with strong program management experience. 10+ years experience.*

*Equivalent UN level: P3/P4*

### Junior science officer

- Contributes to development and scoping of Calls for Decade Actions including gap analysis based on monitoring and evaluation data and analysis
- Contributes to analysis of requests for endorsement and development of annual action plans and resource needs assessments.
- Reviews and filters requests for endorsement of Decade activities and makes recommendations
- Coordinates organization of meetings of Decade Advisory Board and acts as secretary for Board meetings

*Profile: Junior professional with background in ocean science (complementary discipline to Senior Science Officer) with excellent organizational skills. 3+ years experience.*

*Supervised by: Senior Science Officer*

*Equivalent UN level: P2*

### Data and knowledge management officer

- Develops and maintains an overall vision of data and knowledge management initiatives being carried out under the Decade
- Tracks and monitors progress of data and knowledge management initiatives being carried out under the Decade
- Contributes to the development of tailored Calls for Decade Actions related to data and knowledge management initiatives
- Builds and maintains partnerships with stakeholders working in relation data and knowledge management initiatives
- Facilitates connections between Decade partners working on data and knowledge management initiatives, including facilitation of collaboration and exchange through the Global Stakeholder Forum
- Coordinates organization of meetings of data coordination platform and acts as secretary for meetings
- Liaises with any Decade Collaborative Centre or Decade Implementing Partners focusing on data and knowledge management initiatives

*Profile: Experience in design and development of ocean data, information and knowledge management initiatives and good understanding of global and regional actors in this domain. 7+ years experience.*

*Equivalent UN level: P3/4*

### Capacity development [and ocean literacy] officer

- Develops and maintains an overall vision of capacity development and ocean literacy initiatives being carried out under the Decade
- Tracks and monitors progress of capacity development and ocean literacy initiatives being carried out under the Decade
- Contributes to the development of tailored Calls for Decade Actions related to capacity development and ocean literacy initiatives
- Builds and maintains partnerships with stakeholders working on capacity development and ocean literacy initiatives
- Facilitates connections between Decade partners working on capacity development and ocean literacy initiatives, including facilitation of collaboration and exchange through the Global Stakeholder Forum

- Liaises with any Decade Collaborative Centre or Decade Implementing Partners focusing on capacity development and ocean literacy

*Profile: Experience in design and development of ocean related capacity development and ocean literacy initiatives, and good understanding of global and regional actors in this domain. 7+ years experience.*

*Equivalent UN level: P3/4*

#### **Partnerships and resource mobilisation officer**

- Actively identifies and pursues resource mobilisation opportunities for the Decade across diverse stakeholder groups
- Focal point for resource mobilisation and partnerships
- Acts as coordinator and secretary for Ocean Decade Alliance
- Works with colleagues to establish partnership agreements with Decade Collaborative Centre hosts and Decade Implementing Partners
- Coordinates engagement with philanthropic Foundations
- Acts as focal point for regional and national initiatives.
- Works closely with IOC partnerships officer to develop and monitor partnership agreements

*Profile: Experience in partnership development and resource mobilisation with Foundations, governments, industry and UN agencies. 7+ years experience.*

*Equivalent UN level: P3/4*

#### **Monitoring and evaluation officer**

- Accompanies M&E working group to finalise the M&E framework for the Decade and develops procedures, tools and mechanisms to collect information on agreed M&E indicators from decentralized coordination structures and other partners
- Coordinates collection and aggregation of data from decentralized coordination structures and other partners
- Provides capacity development and advice to decentralized coordination structures and other partners on M&E activities
- Contributes to analysis of requests for Decade Action endorsement with a focus on M&E elements
- Facilitates discussion amongst M&E community of practice on Global Stakeholder Forum
- Leads development of annual progress reports
- Scopes and coordinates development of triennial State of the Decade reports
- Coordinates organization of meetings of M&E working group and acts as secretary for meetings

*Profile: Strong M&E skills from conception to operationalisation on M&E frameworks. 5+ years experience.*

*Equivalent UN level: P3*

#### **Communications officer**

- Leads operationalization of Decade communications strategy including updating of strategy when required
- Leads development of content for Ocean Decade communications assets
- Leads planning and organization of Ocean Decade events
- Coordinates organization of meetings of Communications Advisory Group and acts as secretary for meetings
- Builds and maintains partnerships and with collaboration with communications teams in partner agencies
- Works with consultant writers, designers and social media experts as necessary to fulfill communications needs

*Profile: Strong communication and organisational skills, experience in UN system. 5+ years experience.*

*Equivalent UN level: P3*

#### **Stakeholder community manager**

- Actively facilitates use of Global Stakeholder Forum by diverse stakeholder groups including animating and moderating online discussions, responding to requests for assistance, posting relevant materials and facilitating linkages between groups
- Prepares communication and awareness raising materials to increase engagement of stakeholders in the Global Stakeholder Forum

- Work with developer / maintenance agency of the Global Stakeholder Forum online platform to suggest modifications and refinements to optimize its utility for users
- Reviews and filters requests for registration of Decade stakeholder engagement networks and makes recommendations to Communications Officer, Senior Science Officer and Coordinator

*Profile: Online community management experience, experience in online platform design and maintenance. 2+ years experience.*

*Equivalent UN level: P2*

#### **Financial and administrative assistant**

- Maintains up to date information and tracks Unit's overall budget and individual project / grant budgets and advises Coordinator and Senior Science Officer of issues requiring attention and proposed solutions.
- Manages administrative aspects of staffing and human resources.
- Manages contracting and procurement processes.
- Liaises closely with administrative team in IOC and UNESCO to ensure compliance with procedures and policies.

*Profile: Strong administrative and financial management skills in UN system. 5+ years experience.*

*Equivalent UN level: G5*