



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/VR/EH/FC/RV
2 March 2023

To : Official National Coordinating Bodies for liaison with the IOC

Cc : Permanent Delegations to UNESCO of IOC Member States
National Commissions for UNESCO in IOC Member States
IOC Officers
GOOS National Focal Points
Chairs of GOOS Steering Committee

Subject: Updated Terms of Reference for Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) National Focal Points (NFP)

Action required:

- (i) Provide feedback on the updated GOOS NFP Terms of Reference, no later than 22 March 2023
- (ii) Review the current GOOS National Focal Points, and update or nominate your focal point as needed, preferably by 22 March 2023

In June 2017, with [Circular Letter, 2666](#), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) requested the designation or update of National Contact Points for all IOC-governed ocean observations and services programmes, including the GOOS National Focal Points (NFP). The launch of the [2030 Global Ocean Observing System Strategy](#) in 2019 prompted the GOOS Steering Committee (GSC) to consider the role of the GOOS National Focal Points. In response to a request from the Steering Committee at its Ninth Session (GOOS SG-9), a Task Team was created to update the Terms of Reference of the [GOOS National Focal Points](#).

The Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) supports, builds on, and adds value to national and regional sustained ocean observing efforts, and provides a global framework to ensure that the many significant national ocean observing systems deliver the information needed by society for climate, weather and hazard warnings, ocean health and management, and the blue economy.

The role of National Focal Points is essential in promoting the work of GOOS at the national level and ensuring that sustained ocean observing system needs and gaps are addressed. GOOS National Focal Points facilitate communication between GOOS, national organizations, and individuals in Member States' sustainable ocean observing systems. In recognition of the importance of the National Focal Point role in the development of a fit-for-purpose, integrated global ocean

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observing system, the GOOS Steering Committee requested an update to the Terms of Reference, to help GOOS better serve Member States' ocean observing activities and help Member States contribute to the implementation of a sustained global ocean observing system. The resulting updated draft Terms of Reference reflect the importance of the National Focal Point role in the implementation of the GOOS 2030 Strategy.

The Secretariat would appreciate receiving your comments on the attached updated draft GOOS National Focal Point Terms of Reference (to r.venkatesan@unesco.org) no later than 22 March 2023.

Following this feedback, the updated GOOS National Focal Point Terms of Reference will be tabled at the Twelfth Session of the GOOS Steering Committee in April 2023 in view of their adoption.

Please refer to the [current list of GOOS NFP](#) and update or name your National Focal Point using the attached Nomination Form. GOOS National Focal Points can be updated at any time; however we would appreciate receiving current updates or nominations by **22 March 2023** to facilitate planning for the first GOOS National Focal Point Forum, anticipated as an online meeting in 2023.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation I remain,

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

Vladimir Ryabinin
Executive Secretary

Enclosures (2): 1/ Draft GOOS National Focal Point Description and Terms of Reference
2/ GOOS National Focal Point Nomination Form

1/ GOOS National Focal Points

Description

The Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) National Focal Point will be a focal point for communication between GOOS and the national organisations and individuals involved in your Member State's sustained ocean observing system infrastructure. The overarching objective of the GOOS National Focal Points will be to promote and support nationally and regionally coordinated strategies for the implementation of a sustained *global ocean observing system that delivers the essential information needed for our sustainable development, safety, wellbeing and prosperity.*

The GOOS National Focal Points will promote and support the work of GOOS at the national level through the implementation of a Global Ocean Observing System and publicising opportunities for engagement with GOOS activities within the national context. It is important for GOOS National Focal Points to foster connections at a national level between elements involved in ocean observing, government stakeholders and the beneficiaries of ocean information, towards achieving GOOS strategic goals. It will also be important to foster connections with national data, modelling, and ocean assessment activities, to support the delivery of ocean information to key national users. In addition, liaison with the focal points of GOOS's sponsors, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the International Science Council (ISC) would be useful.

It is the role of the GOOS National Focal Points to ensure that national needs and gaps related to sustained ocean observing systems are brought to the attention of GOOS Core Team¹; and to report to GOOS on national plans, implementation status, and response to GOOS international priorities.

Where a national ocean observing system exists, the National Focal Point will liaise with or be from this system. Where multiple national systems exist, GOOS suggests that the National Focal Points advocate for a national ocean observing committee or hub, if one does not already exist, to support the potentially broad range of activities and connections.

The GOOS National Focal Points will advocate for sustained national ocean observing system activities that contribute to the GOOS.

¹ The Core Team consists of 7 GOOS components: 3 GOOS Expert Panels (Ocean Observing Physics and Climate Panel (OOPC), Biogeochemistry Panel (IOCCP), and the BioEco Panel), the GOOS Observation Coordination Group (OCG), Regional Alliances (GRAs), the Expert Team for Operational Ocean Forecasting (ETOOFS), all supported by the GOOS Office which has its HQ in Paris. The GOOS Steering Committee provides oversight. www.goosocean.org

Terms of Reference

The specific responsibilities of the GOOS National Focal Points are to:

1. Work at national levels towards implementation of the GOOS strategic goals², and support the alignment of national activities in broader international and regional ocean observing activities, assuring synergy and increasing efficiency
2. Develop a **national hub** for the coordination of integrated ocean observing across disciplines and sectors, possibly through establishing a GOOS national committee (see Annex 1). Connection with the following would be appropriate:
 - a. Representatives of national ocean observing programmes or systems, across open ocean, coastal, physical, biogeochemical, and biological realms
 - b. National representatives of GOOS ocean observing networks
 - c. National representatives of GOOS Regional Alliances (GRAs), where relevant
 - d. National representatives of GOOS sponsors: the IOC, the WMO, UNEP and the ISC, if designated at a national level
 - e. National ocean data, modelling, and ocean assessment activities, including national representatives of the International Oceanographic Data Exchange (IODE)
 - f. Government departments with an interest in ocean issues
 - g. Representatives from national marine industry/blue economy, with an interest in services derived from ocean observing and forecasting
3. Advocate for national investment in sustained ocean observing systems
4. Promote nationally and/or regionally coordinated strategies and implementation for a sustained ocean observing system delivering the needed information to users.
5. Promote the work of GOOS at the national level:
 - a. Strengthen and develop communications with national and regional stakeholders,
 - b. Promote GOOS plans and documents where relevant,
 - c. Publicize opportunities for engagement with the GOOS Core Team and actions
 - d. Promote national FAIR³ ocean data practices, in collaboration with IODE national representatives and national data structures
 - e. Encourage timely delivery of quality metadata, adhering to international best practices or standards, and in support of global ocean observing system implementation and tracking
 - f. Maintain contact with relevant national committees such as for Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) and the Ocean Decade⁴, if designated at a national level

² www.goosocean.org/2030Strategy

³ FAIR Data Principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable), published in Scientific Data in 2016 are a set of guiding principles proposed by a consortium of scientists and organizations to support the reusability of digital assets

⁴ United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

6. Ensure that national needs, capability, and gaps related to sustained ocean observing systems are brought to the attention of GOOS, and work with GOOS towards developing a regular reporting to the IOC on the status and future plans of national ocean observing system activities that contribute to GOOS, leveraging any existing reporting.
7. Participate in GOOS organised meetings for the National Focal Points.

GOOS support to the National Focal Points

To support the GOOS National Focal Points in undertaking their work GOOS will:

- Promote and highlight the importance of the GOOS National Focal Point role through communications and advocacy
- Create a Forum for exchange with GOOS and other National Focal Points
- Promote relevant GOOS activities and capacity building programmes to the National Focal Points
- Provide visibility of national contributions to GOOS, and work towards developing regular reporting to the IOC on the status and plans for sustained national ocean observing systems
- Communicate regularly with National Focal Points and provide materials to support their work
- Report annually to the National Focal Points on status of the global ocean observing system
- Use feedback on national needs and gaps to develop a synthesis for GOOS action

Benefits of GOOS National Focal Point Role

The benefits of the National Focal Point role in supporting sustained ocean observing and delivering to national needs and the global ocean observing system are outlined below:

To Member States:

- A locus to strengthen the communication and planning for a national ocean observing system that is fit-for-purpose, integrated and sustained
- Increase opportunities for national activities to align nationally, regionally, and globally, lowering cost, increasing efficiency, and the overall effectiveness of the global system, benefiting all nations
- Provide visibility of the national ocean observing contribution in a global context, through reporting to GOOS or through news on major actions to bring awareness of work at national level
- An identified pathway to communicate with GOOS around national needs

To GOOS:

- Identified national advocates to demonstrate the economic and socioeconomic value of sustained ocean observations, and to support long term funding mechanisms at national levels
- Strengthen national and global ocean observing systems through learning and sharing with other GOOS National Focal Points

- Strengthen and streamline global ocean observing through alignment of priorities at national levels between GOOS, the IOC, the WMO, and other structures
- Communicate with GOOS around national needs, in support of a fit for purpose and responsive ocean observing system
- Increase ocean observing system efficiency and scope through regional cooperation around projects or shared resources, leading to cost saving and/or opportunities to build capability

Annex 1: Guidance for National Hub / Committee

Different configurations for ocean observing exist at a national level; this annex is provided to support discussion on the optimal approach for each nation to develop and sustain its national ocean observing coordination, in line with GOOS.

Where a national ocean observing system exists, the National Focal Point would likely liaise with or be from this system. Where multiple national systems exist, GOOS suggests that the National Focal Point would likely be the leader of the national ocean observing committee, or that they would advocate for the forming of such a national ocean observing committee. For many nations some level of coordination committee is recommended to capture and support the potentially broad range of activities and connections, see Annex 2.

Annex 2: National Focal Point list of potential connections

Connection with the following would be appropriate:

- a. Representatives of national ocean observing programmes or systems, across open ocean, coastal, physical, biogeochemical and biological realms
- b. National representatives of GOOS ocean observing networks, for example the National Focal Points of DBCP, Argo, GLOSS, and SOT.
- c. National representatives of GOOS Regional Alliances (GRAs), where relevant
- d. National representatives of GOOS sponsors the IOC, the WMO, UNEP and the ISC
- e. National ocean data, modelling, and ocean assessment activities, including national representatives of the International Oceanographic Data Exchange (IODE)
- f. National Committees for the Ocean Decade, if designated
- g. Other relevant national committees such as for Global Climate Observing System (GCOS)
- h. Government departments, research institutes, and national forecasting services with an interest in ocean issues and the use of ocean information
- i. Representatives from national marine industry/blue economy, with an interest in services derived from ocean observing and forecasting, e.g., industry associations

2/ GOOS National Focal Point (NFP)

NOMINATION FORM

MEMBER STATE:

GOOS National Focal Point Outline

The overarching objective of the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) National Focal Points is to promote and support nationally and regionally coordinated strategies for the implementation of a sustained *global ocean observing system that delivers the essential information needed for our sustainable development, safety, wellbeing and prosperity*.

The role of the GOOS National Focal Points is to promote and support the implementation of a Global Ocean Observing System through advocating for sustained national ocean observing system activities that contribute to the GOOS, engaging and leading activities to coordinate ocean observing at a national level, and publicising opportunities for engagement with GOOS activities within the national context.

The role will include fostering connections at a national level between elements involved in ocean observing, government stakeholders and the beneficiaries of ocean information, and the national representatives of GOOS sponsor organisations (IOC, WMO, and UNEP), towards achieving national strategic goals for sustained ocean observing, in the context of the GOOS 2030 Strategy⁵. It will also be important to foster connections with national data, modelling/prediction, and ocean assessment activities in order to support the delivery of ocean information to key national users across climate, weather and hazard warnings, and ocean health delivery areas.

The GOOS National Focal Points will also work to ensure that national needs and gaps related to sustained ocean observing systems are brought to the attention of GOOS⁶.

⁵www.goosocean.org/2030Strategy

⁶ GOOS consists of 7 GOOS components: 3 GOOS Expert Panels (Ocean Observing Physics and Climate Panel (OOPC), Biogeochemistry Panel (IOCCP), and the BioEco Panel), the GOOS Observation Coordination Group (OCG), Regional Alliances (GRAs), the Expert Team for Operational Ocean Forecasting (ETOOFS), all supported by the GOOS Office which has its HQ in Paris. The GOOS Steering Committee provides oversight. www.goosocean.org

Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) National Focal Point

Name:

Position:

Institution:

Telephone Number:

Email address:

Postal Address:

Additional comments:

Nomination Submitted by:

Signature:

Position:

Government Department/Agency:

Date:

Nomination Forms duly completed and signed should be sent by 22 March 2023 to the IOC Secretariat by email to goos@unesco.org through one of the following channels:

1. The coordinating body for liaison with the IOC
2. Head of UNESCO National Commission
3. Permanent Delegate to UNESCO

Note: any questions can be addressed to the Acting Head of the Ocean Observation and Services Section, Dr Emma Heslop (e.heslop@unesco.org), with copy to Ms Forest Collins (f.collins@unesco.org) and Dr Ramasamy Venkatesan (r.venkatesan@unesco.org).