



2021 United Nations Decade
2030 of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development

UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

Call for Decade Actions No. 01/2020

for

Decade Programmes and Contributions to Coordination Functions

Launch date: 15 October 2020

Deadline: 15 January 2021

Guidance Note for Applicants

I. Introduction to the Call for Decade Actions

The world is experiencing a revolution in science both in terms of rapid advancement of knowledge and innovation, and in terms of society's recognition of the importance of science to support human health and wellbeing. This latter is particularly true in the context of the current Covid-19 pandemic which has put a spotlight on the need for science to respond quickly to society's emerging priorities.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the [United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development \(2021-2030\)](#) ('the Ocean Decade') to stimulate ocean science and knowledge generation and thus reverse declines in the state of the ocean system while catalysing new opportunities for sustainable ocean uses. The vision of the Ocean Decade is '*the science we need for the ocean we want*'. The Ocean Decade provides a convening framework for scientists and stakeholders from diverse sectors to develop the scientific knowledge and the partnerships needed to accelerate and harness advances in ocean science to achieve a better understanding of the ocean system, and deliver science-based solutions to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

To achieve the Ocean Decade vision, a wide range of partners will implement endorsed Decade Actions in the form of programmes, projects or activities over the next ten years. Proponents of endorsed Decade Actions will have the opportunity to join a highly visible, shared, global effort that builds on decades of achievement in ocean science. There will be opportunities to create new collaborations across disciplines, geographies and generations, as well as opportunities to access new sources of support.

Via this Call for Decade Actions, partners are invited to request endorsement under the Ocean Decade for transformative Decade Actions that contribute to the Ocean Decade vision. This Call for Decade Actions, which is the first of series to be launched as part of the Ocean Decade, focuses specifically on:

- i. large-scale, multi-country, transformative Decade programmes; and

- ii. large-scale contributions of in-kind or financial resources for Decade Actions, or support to the coordination functions of the Ocean Decade through provision of in-kind and/or financial resources, and/or hosting of a Decade Collaborative Centre.

Programmes or contributions that will enhance the sustainability of ocean science, including infrastructure or individual or institutional capacity, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic are welcome in response to this call.

Section II of this Note provides additional details on the scope of the Decade Actions eligible for submission under this Call and provides information on who to contact if you have questions about the eligibility of your proposed Decade Action. As it reviews the requests for endorsement received during the Call for Decade Actions, the IOC Secretariat may contact proponents to discuss the proposal, suggest modifications, or make connections to other parties working on similar issues. As such, interested parties are encouraged to submit their requests as soon as possible.

Interested parties should complete and submit the relevant online [“Request for Endorsement”](#) before 15 January 2021.

Decisions on endorsement under this Call will be made in the first quarter of 2021.

During the preparation of submissions we strongly encourage interested parties to consult and, where possible, collaborate with other institutions and partners working on common issues.

Two virtual sessions are planned to provide interested parties with additional information on the Call for Decade Actions. The first of these sessions will be held on 20 October 2020 and the second on 6 November 2020. Details will be posted on www.oceandecade.org and on the Ocean Decade social media channels.

This first Call for Decade Actions will be followed by further Calls that will be released by the Decade Coordination Unit periodically throughout the Decade for additional programmes and contributions, and other types of Decade Actions.

Please note that initiatives proposed by United Nations entities are subject to a separate process that involves registration of their Decade Actions. Further details on that process can be obtained by contacting the IOC Secretariat at the contact addresses provided at the end of this document.

This Guidance Note provides important background information on the Ocean Decade, as well as information on the endorsement process. It forms part of a suite of documents that are relevant to the Call. Interested parties are strongly encouraged to read all sections of the Note and refer to the [Ocean Decade Implementation Plan](#) (including the accompanying [Summary Report](#)) as well as the [Ocean Decade website](#) for further information including a series of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) that will be updated throughout the process. General inquiries on the Ocean Decade or the endorsement process can be sent to oceandecade@unesco.org.

II. Types of Decade Actions Solicited under the Call for Decade Actions

The current Call for Decade Actions focuses on Decade programmes and Decade contributions to coordination functions:

- **Decade programmes** solicited under this Call will be large-scale initiatives implemented at the global or regional scale and will contribute to the achievement of one or more of the Ocean Decade Challenges. They will be long-term, multi-year, and typically interdisciplinary and multi-

national. They will be made up of component projects, which may or may not be fully or partially defined at the time of endorsement.

- **Decade contributions** solicited under this Call could support large-scale Decade Actions or could provide significant in-kind or financial contributions to the coordination functions of the Decade. Contributions to the coordination functions could be either at the central level to support the functioning of the Decade Coordination Unit or at the decentralised level to support programmatic or regional coordination, for example through the hosting of a Decade Collaborative Centre.

Note that *Decade Collaborative Centres* will be hosted by one or more countries or by an international or regional organization engaged in Decade activities in an existing or newly established institution. These Centres will be operated under the responsibility of the host organisation. They will catalyse Decade Actions at the regional or programmatic / thematic level by providing technical, logistical, and financial support for: (i) scientific coordination and planning; (ii) the identification of collaboration opportunities; (iii) communications, awareness raising and stakeholder engagement; and (iv) technical and scientific capacities to support Decade Actions. They will provide advice to the Decade Coordination Unit on requests for endorsement of Decade Actions that fall within their purview. These Centres will also assist the Decade Coordination Unit to track the implementation of endorsed Decade Actions in their respective domain, thus contributing to the overall monitoring and evaluation effort.

Interested parties wishing to submit an initiative in response to this Call for Decade Actions are strongly encouraged to contact the IOC Secretariat (j.barbiere@unesco.org and a.clausen@unesco.org) before submitting their proposals online to discuss the alignment of their initiative with the Call. Interested parties are welcome to send a short summary of the proposed Decade Action to the IOC Secretariat to assist in discussions about eligibility for the call.

There is no restriction on who can apply for endorsement under this Call. Actions can be located in any geography and can address one or more of any of the Ocean Decade Challenges identified in the Implementation Plan. Requests can be for either new or ongoing initiatives and can either be fully funded, or still in the process of securing funding.

Programmes responding to this call are encouraged to address interoperability and to develop and use best practices in their work. Further resources can be found at oceanbestpractices.org. Future Calls for Decade Actions will solicit other types of Decade Actions including ‘**Decade Projects**’, that are discrete and focused undertakings that typically contribute to an identified Decade programme, and ‘**Decade Activities**’ that are one-off standalone initiatives (such as an awareness-raising event, a scientific workshop, a conference, or a training opportunity).

It is expected that Decade Actions, including those submitted under this Call, will be implemented and resourced by partnerships and collaborations of a wide diversity of stakeholders including research institutions, formal or informal scientific collaborations, universities, national and sub-national governments, United Nations entities and intergovernmental organisations, other international and regional organisations, philanthropic and corporate foundations, business and industry, NGOs, educators, community groups, multilateral and bilateral funding agencies, business and industry, and/or individuals (e.g. via citizen science initiatives or crowdfunding).

III. Endorsement Process and Criteria for Decade Actions

The endorsement process will ensure that all Decade Actions, including those submitted under the current Call, are aligned to the Decade vision, that proponents are actively able to collaborate with each other, that the Actions collectively contribute to the priorities of the Ocean Decade, and that the impact of the Ocean Decade can be tracked.

The endorsement process involves the governance and coordination structures of the Ocean Decade including: the Decade Advisory Board – a multi-stakeholder advisory group to the IOC Governing Bodies; the Decade Coordination Unit – a centralised coordination structure located within the IOC Secretariat; and where relevant, regional or programmatic decentralised coordination structures. The [Implementation Plan](#) provides a detailed description of these structures.

The endorsement process that will apply to the Decade Actions solicited under this Call is as follows:

- **For Decade Programmes:** The Decade Advisory Board will review and make recommendations on endorsement. As part of its regular reporting to the IOC Governing Bodies, the Decade Coordination Unit will provide information on the recommendations for endorsement developed by the Decade Advisory Board.
- **For Decade Contributions:** The Decade Advisory Board will review and make recommendations on endorsement of Decade Collaborative Centres. As part of its regular reporting to the IOC Governing Bodies, the Decade Coordination Unit will provide information on the recommendations for endorsement developed by the Decade Advisory Board. The Decade Coordination Unit will review and decide requests for endorsement of other Decade Contributions in consultation with any relevant decentralised coordination structures or any relevant Decade endorsed programme.

All parties who have submitted a request for endorsement will be advised of the results

A series of endorsement criteria will apply to all Decade Actions, including to those submitted under this Call. Proponents will need to demonstrate how they contribute to meeting those criteria that are relevant to their proposed Decade Action as part of their request for endorsement. These criteria will ensure that Decade Actions contribute to a common vision and priorities, and respect the underlying principles of the Ocean Decade in terms of inclusivity, diversity, solutions focused action and partnerships. The endorsement criteria are as follows:

- i. Contribute to fulfilling the Ocean Decade Challenges and to achieving the Decade objectives and the associated sub-objectives.
- ii. Accelerate the generation or use of knowledge and understanding of the ocean, with a specific focus on knowledge that will contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and complementary policy frameworks and initiatives.
- iii. Are co-designed or co-delivered by knowledge generators and users, and thus facilitate the uptake of science and ocean knowledge for policy, decision making, management and/or innovation.
- iv. Ensure that all data and resulting knowledge are provided in an open access, shared, discoverable manner in accordance with the relevant provisions of UNCLOS, and are appropriately deposited in recognized data repositories consistent with the IOC Oceanographic Data Exchange Policy¹ or the relevant UN subordinate body data policy.

¹ Refer https://www.iode.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=51:ioc-oceanographic-data-exchange-policy&catid=24&Itemid=100040

- v. Strengthen existing or create new partnerships across nations and/or between diverse ocean actors, including users of ocean science.
- vi. Contribute toward capacity development, including, but not limited to, beneficiaries in Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries, and Land-locked Developing Countries.
- vii. Overcome barriers to diversity and equity, including gender, generational, and geographic diversity.
- viii. Collaborate with and engage local and indigenous knowledge holders.

IV. Benefits and Commitments of Endorsed Decade Actions

Following endorsement of an initiative as a Decade Action, it will be registered on the Ocean Decade website. Proponents of endorsed Decade Actions will be able to use the Ocean Decade logo in their communications and awareness raising activities in accordance with Decade Brand Guidelines. The Decade Coordination Unit will carry out joint communications efforts with proponents of Decade Actions. ***Actions endorsed under the current Call will be showcased in a range of events and communications campaigns that are being organised as part of the launch of the Decade in 2021.***

Proponents will become members of the Ocean Decade Global Stakeholder Forum that will provide a convening and exchange mechanism via virtual and physical elements and which is expected to be operational in the second half of 2021. The Forum will include an online interactive platform for all proponents of Decade Actions, as well other Decade stakeholders. It will allow members to post collaboration ideas and opportunities, create links between generators and users of ocean science, seek partners for Decade programmes or projects, hold virtual meetings or webinars, and use visibility and communications tools to raise awareness regarding their activities.

The Decade Coordination Unit and decentralised coordination structures will use the Forum to create communities of practice around the Ocean Decade Challenges and promote exchange and cooperation between stakeholders with common interests. This will involve initiatives to stimulate discussion, generate ideas, and virtually convene interested parties for co-design and collaboration. Members of the Global Stakeholder Forum will also be able to engage with the Decade Advisory Board via the virtual platform, for example in response to requests for inputs to Decade review processes, or calls for nominations for experts in working groups.

Members of the Global Stakeholder Forum will meet through a regular hybrid virtual / in-person Decade international and regional conference series that will be organised to convene stakeholders, share information on progress towards the Decade vision, and catalyse new initiatives and partnerships.

Proponents of Decade Actions will also benefit in terms of resource mobilisation and funding. In many cases, proponents of Decade Actions will take the lead in securing their own resources: in these cases, the endorsement of an initiative as a Decade Action will increase its attractiveness to funders and resource providers that are supportive of the Decade. There will also be funding and support opportunities that are exclusively available to Decade Actions and for which the Decade Coordination Unit will play a coordination role between proponents of Decade Actions and potential resource providers.

Once endorsed, Proponents of Decade Actions will be asked to provide simple annual reporting on the progress of their Action via an online template that will be provided by the Decade Coordination Unit. This annual reporting will be used to track progress towards the Decade vision. Further information on the structure and content of this reporting will be available in the first quarter of 2021.