

TERMS OF REFERENCE WESTERN TROPICAL ATLANTIC UN DECADE REGIONAL PLANNING GROUP

Introduction:

As part of the Preparatory Process of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development ([2021-2030](#)) a virtual meeting for the Western Tropical Atlantic¹ (WTA-Ocean Decade) was held on April 28-29, 2020. This meeting was coordinated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission's (IOC of UNESCO) Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions - IOCARIBE Secretariat. It was hosted by UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico) and co-organized by the Government of Mexico with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) as coordinating body for The Decade and the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention (UN Environment). Over 600 scientists, policymakers, programme managers, and government officials, representatives from tourism and maritime sectors, private enterprises, non-governmental organizations, and communicators engaged before and during the meeting. Regional priorities were established and new and expanded stakeholders and partnerships were identified through the WTA questionnaires, presentations and messaging. IOCARIBE and the WTA Steering Committee seek to maintain momentum and coordinate the follow-up including establishment of a formal regional coordination process.

Purpose: Elements of the Terms of Reference (TOR): Functions of the Planning Group

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission's Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions - IOCARIBE has the overall responsibility for formulation of policy, principles and strategy, and for planning and coordination of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development ([2021-2030](#)) in the Western Tropical Atlantic region.

¹ [1] Countries, Associated States and Territories of the Western Tropical Atlantic (IOCARIBE Member States): Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curacao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, The Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States of America, Venezuela.

Anguilla (United Kingdom), Bermuda (United Kingdom), British Virgin Islands (United Kingdom), Cayman Islands (United Kingdom), French Guiana (France), Guadeloupe (France), Montserrat (United Kingdom), Martinique (France), Bonaire, Saint Eustatius, Saba (Special Municipalities of the Netherlands), Saint Barthelemy (France), Saint Martin (France), Turks and Caicos (United Kingdom), United States Virgin Islands (United States of America).

As Authorized by Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE.XV.2 May 2019 for the UN Decade in the Region, the IOCARIBE Secretary, in consultation with the IOCARIBE Officers and members of the WTA Steering Committee, agrees to establish a Planning Group (WAT PG) for the UN Decade of Ocean Science to advance and coordinate strategic partnerships and actions for Western Tropical Atlantic engagement in the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)

1. The Planning Group will:
 - 1.1. Advance and coordinate Strategic Partnerships and Actions.
 - 1.2. Advise IOCARIBE and the IOC of UNESCO and its Governing Bodies on the WTA preparatory process for the UN Decade of Ocean Science.
 - 1.3. Continue socialization / communication on the UN Decade in/for the WTA region with existing networks, institutions, experts and stakeholders.
 - 1.4. Establish Working Groups (WGs) clustered around the seven societal outcomes and the cross-cutting issues identified in the Implementation Plan.
 - 1.5. Identify opportunities, jointly with WGs, for integrated regional programmes, projects, and activities as well as for engagement and support at the global, regional and national scales to advance the seven societal outcomes and the cross-cutting issues identified in the Implementation Plan and in the WTA Regional Workshop.
 - 1.6. Define an action plan and timetable, including the planning of a regional Ocean Decade launch event in 2021 and mobilize financial resources and involvement of potential funding leaders secure renewed funding

2. Governance
 - 2.1. Appointment of Members: The IOCARIBE Chairman will appoint core Members of the Planning Group, in consultation with the IOCARIBE officers and the Steering Committee of the WTA workshop.
 - 2.2. Members will be identified from among the: EPG members from the region, Early Career Ocean Professionals, leaders of the WTA Workshop WGs and capacity development, private sector/philanthropic community, and members of UN agencies and other appropriate partners. Consideration shall be given to expertise, regional connectivity, regional representation, gender, youth, and indigenous communities.
 - 2.3. The IOC of UNESCO Chairperson, IOCARIBE Secretary and UNEP Representative will serve as ex-officio members.

- 2.4. Selection of Chair: The Chair of the Planning Group will be appointed by the IOCARIBE Chairman, after consultation with the IOCARIBE officers and the Steering Committee of the WTA workshop.
 - 2.5. The Chair may appoint Working Group leads and members to those groups focused on the seven societal outcome themes (Refer to Implementation Plan) and cross cutting themes (Refer to SAP and IP) e.g., capacity development, in consultation with the Steering Committee of the WTA workshop.
 - 2.6. The Chair may invite additional relevant experts to participate in meetings; the Working Group leads may also invite non-Planning Group experts to participate in their meetings and work
 - 2.7. Decision making process: Planning Group shall operate by consensus
 - 2.8. Secretariat Support: IOCARIBE Secretariat will provide Secretariat support to the Planning Group.
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3. Language: English will be the primary working language with accommodations for Spanish and French when staffing/financing permit.
 4. Meetings: Virtual meetings will be monthly or more frequently as needed.
 5. Calendar of Work: The Planning Group will establish its own calendar of work coordinated with the UN Decade Global Agenda and regional meetings.
 6. Duration of the WTA Regional Planning Group: The term will be two years or until the regional UN Decade of Ocean Science coordination mechanism is established.
 7. Reports: Meeting reports and minutes will be submitted by all WGs and the Planning Group to the IOCARIBE Secretariat and the IOCARIBE Chairperson and Secretary will provide the appropriate reports and information to the IOC and Member Governments.
 8. Communication: The Planning Group should develop targeted communications opportunities addressing the Decade Outcome seven themes and cross cutting elements.

BACKGROUND

Outcomes of future UN Decade of Ocean Science Workshops in the WTA region

The regional workshops will review knowledge gaps, identify priority areas and needs in capacity development, and catalyze development of potential projects / programmes under the UN Decade of Ocean Science.

The following expected Outputs are envisaged:

- ▶ Identification of knowledge gaps and list of the regional scientific priorities and needs vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda requirements and the seven societal outcomes and the cross-cutting issues identified in the Implementation Plan;
- ▶ List of existing and potential regional partnerships/networks/initiatives in the thematic and cross cutting areas
- ▶ Priorities and needs in capacity development, ocean literacy / training, transfer of ocean / marine technology and infrastructure;
- ▶ Prioritized list of actions identified;
- ▶ Identification of interested partners clustered around the seven societal outcomes and the cross-cutting issues identified in the Implementation Plan /potential actions to be developed during the UN Decade of Ocean Science;
- ▶ Follow-up arrangements (timeline for the development of individual partnerships/initiatives; responsibilities of various partners, identification of potential resources, identification of experts, communication/reporting mechanisms);
- ▶ An informed group of stakeholders who are committed to the transformational change in the ocean science required for the ocean we want and need.