



INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

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Item 3.4.2 of the Provisional Agenda

**PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS TO REVISE THE IOC OCEANOGRAPHIC DATA
EXCHANGE POLICY**

Summary

The current IOC Oceanographic Data Exchange Policy (<http://www.iode.org/policy>) was adopted by the IOC Assembly in 2003 through [IOC Resolution XXII-6](#) and then was slightly updated in 2019.

Purpose of the document: This document describes the elements that have led to the proposal to establish an IOC inter-sessional working group on the revision of the IOC Oceanographic Data Exchange Policy (2003, 2019).

Financial and administrative implications: There are no financial and administrative implications

The proposed decision referenced Dec. A-31/3.4.2(III) in the Revised Action Paper (document IOC/A-31/AP Rev.), contains the proposed terms of reference of the Intersessional Working Group. The decision also proposes that a revised IOC Oceanographic Data Exchange Policy be submitted to the IOC Assembly at its 32nd Session in 2023.

1. In its recent 2021 meeting, the Management Group of the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange Programme (IODE) made the following decisions on this issue:

- (i) The Group requested the IODE Committee at its 26th session (April 2021) to recommend to the IOC Assembly that a working group on the revision of the IOC data policy be established, composed of representatives of Member States and partner organizations;
- (ii) The Group decided that a pre-Committee working group needed to be established to draft the terms of reference of the data policy working group and provide draft input for the relevant draft decision for discussion at IODE-XXVI.

2. The membership of the pre-committee working group can be found on <http://www.iode.org/iode26>. At its meeting on 17 February 2021, there was agreement that there are enough elements that warrant a revision of the IOC data policy. The result should be an ambitious new IOC data policy that further promotes and supports free and open exchange of data in the framework of IOC activities and programmes. However, concerns were raised to carefully consider what needed to change, taking into account the amount of effort that went into building consensus on the current policy, especially with respect to acknowledging the rights of countries and the non-binding nature of the policy. Suggestions were made to build on other models such as the data policy of WMO that has a main policy with core principles, and modular extensions pertaining to specific data types or applications and products. This way the scope of the policy could be further expanded more easily if needed without opening a debate on the core elements.

3. The group also felt that a longer-term cross-agency group should be established to periodically meet to ensure alignment of policies and scope collective changes. The ultimate goal is to increase global cooperation, improved sharing and uptake of data. It is therefore important that data policies should not hamper, but streamline this within commonly agreed terms (e.g., use of a Creative Commons licence). The IOC data policy, which was developed 20 years ago, will therefore be reviewed to ensure better alignment with data policies at national, regional and international level as well as those from other sectors, and should reflect current international principles, which did not yet exist in 2003.

4. At its 26th session, the IODE Committee agreed with the proposal formulated by the pre-committee working group and adopted [Recommendation IODE-XXVI.6.4: Revision of the IOC Oceanographic Data Exchange Policy \(2003, 2019\)](#)

5. The IODE Committee (cf. report IOC/IODE-XXVI/3s) further noted that the proposed Intersessional Working Group could also share experiences and provide advice to the UN Ocean Decade. Yet, the Group did not feel that proposing a data policy for the Ocean Decade was in its remit mainly because of the broad scope of Decade data types (e.g., socio-economic data) and the variety of the Decade partners and their involvement which extend well beyond the scope of IOC programmes.