



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

UNESCO – 7 Place de Fontenoy - 75352 Paris Cedex 07 SP, France  
<http://ioc.unesco.org> - contact phone: +33 (0)1 45 68 03 18  
E-mail: [v.ryabinin@unesco.org](mailto:v.ryabinin@unesco.org)

**IOC Circular Letter No 2861**

(Available in English, French, Russian and Spanish)

IOC/VR/JB/AC

15 October 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) – Implementation progress**

This Circular Letter provides an update on progress in the implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, and information on upcoming milestones.

**1. Update on results of Call for Decade Actions No. 1/2020**

Following further analysis of the submissions received to Call for Decade Actions No. 01/2020, a total of 31 programmes, 83 projects, 36 contributions of in-kind or financial resources, and 10 UN-led Decade Actions have been endorsed. Four meetings of the Interim Decade Advisory Board have been held since the beginning of the year to provide advice and recommendations on the endorsement decisions.

Proponents of endorsed Decade programmes have been asked to provide information on resource needs for the first three years of implementation. The purpose of this analysis was to generate information for potential resource providers including Member States, philanthropic foundations and private sector partners in relation to resource needs with the aim of catalysing new resource mobilization for Decade Actions, including those being implemented by the IOC. This analysis indicated that approximately 24% of required in-kind or financial resources for programme implementation over the next three years has already been secured by the programmes; this includes a significant proportion of required coordination needs. While this is reassuring in terms of secured resources, there remains a significant gap in in-kind or financial resources to allow successful implementation of the Decade Actions. The remaining gap represents in the order of USD 2.7 billion, which is required primarily to finance projects and activities being carried out by the programmes. Additional information on the results of this exercise is summarized in Annex 1 to this Circular Letter and I warmly encourage Member States to review this information and identify areas of interest for future national funding priorities that could be discussed in more detail with the IOC Secretariat.

**Chairperson**

Mr Ariel Hernan TROISI  
Technical Secretary  
Navy Hydrographic Service  
Av. Montes de Oca 2124  
C1270ABV Buenos Aires  
ARGENTINA

**Executive Secretary**

Dr Vladimir RYABININ  
Intergovernmental Oceanographic  
Commission — UNESCO  
7 Place de Fontenoy  
75352 Paris Cedex 07 SP  
FRANCE

**Vice-Chairpersons**

Dr Marie-Alexandrine SICRE  
Directrice de Recherche  
Centre national de la recherche scientifique  
(CNRS)  
3 rue Michel Ange  
75016 Paris  
FRANCE

Dr Alexander FROLOV  
Assistant to the President  
National Research Center "Kurchatov Institute"  
Academika Kurchatova pl., 1  
123182 Moscow  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr Frederico Antonio SARAIVA NOGUEIRA  
Navy Captain (Ret) Directorate  
of Hydrography and Navigation  
Rua Barao de Jaceguai S/N  
24048-900 Niterói  
BRAZIL

Dr Srinivasa Kumar TUMMALA  
Director  
Indian National Centre for Ocean  
Information Services (INCOIS)  
Pragathi Nagar (BO), Nizampet (SO)  
Hyderabad 500090  
INDIA

Dr Karim HILMI  
Head of Oceanography Department  
Institut National de Recherche  
Halieutique (INRH)  
02, Boulevard Sidi Abderrahmane  
Ain Diab  
20180 Casablanca  
MOROCCO

Proponents of endorsed Decade Actions are also being asked to register in one or more Communities of Practice. The Communities of Practice, informal networks of Decade Actions, will be convened via the [Global Stakeholder Forum](#) with a view of facilitating synergies and collaboration to meet the Ocean Decade Challenges and for identifying gaps and priority needs to shape future Calls for Decade Actions.

The remaining submissions to Call for Decade Actions No. 01/2020 that have not yet received an endorsement decision include: (i) contribution submissions in the form of Decade Collaborative Centres or grant making facilities which are currently being assessed; and (ii) a series of project level submissions that require further information to be provided by proponents to allow the analysis to be completed.

## 2. IOC-led Decade Actions and Support Needs

In accordance with [IOC Resolution A-31/1](#) of the IOC Assembly at its 31<sup>st</sup> session, IOC is leading several endorsed Decade Actions and is actively preparing several others for registration as endorsed Actions in the near future. These include Actions related to observations and forecasting, data, ocean literacy and tsunami preparedness. These IOC-led Decade Actions form cornerstones of the Decade structure and I warmly encourage Member States to support their implementation via staff secondments, in-kind or financial resources or via catalysis of new partnerships.

In alignment with the objectives for IOC engagement in the Decade that were described in [IOC-INF/1416](#) to the 31<sup>st</sup> IOC Assembly, there is a strong opportunity for IOC programmes which are leading endorsed or soon to be registered Actions to play a lead role in the facilitation of the relevant thematic Communities of Practice that are being established within the Decade as a key mechanism to facilitate coordination and synergies between endorsed Decade Actions. Similarly, there is a clear opportunity for regional subsidiary bodies of IOC to play a regional coordination role.

Taking on such a role, which would leverage IOC global and regional programmes and regional bodies, would require additional financial or in-kind resources, and could take the form of the establishment of a Decade Coordination Office or Decade Collaborative Centre, or via the mobilization of staff time for coordination. I thank the Government of Thailand who has offered support to strengthen the capacity of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC) to play the role of regional coordination, and I call upon other Member States to consider making resources available for regional coordination via IOC regional subsidiary bodies, or for thematic coordination in relation to observations and forecasting, data, ocean literacy and tsunami preparedness via IOC programmes.

## 3. Launch of Call for Decade Actions No. 2/2021

The second Call for Decade Actions No. 02/2021 will be opened on 15 October 2021. It includes two co-branded and co-developed funding initiatives for Decade projects as described below. This Call will solicit requests for endorsement of the following types of Decade Actions:

- (i) **Ocean Decade Programmes:** Call for Decade Actions No. 02/2021 will prioritise programmes that contribute to Ocean Decade Challenge 1 – Marine Pollution, Challenge 2 – Multiple stressors on ecosystems, or Challenge 5 – Ocean-climate nexus. This includes regional programmes with a focus on one or more of these Challenges. The deadline for full submissions is 31 January 2022. Programmes that contribute primarily to other Ocean Decade Challenges can complete an Expression of Interest form to allow guidance to be provided on their suitability for the current Call for Decade Actions. The deadline for Expressions of Interest is 15 November 2021.
- (ii) **Ocean Decade Projects:** At the project level the Call is soliciting initiatives that respond to one of the following:

- Potentially forming part of one of the 23 endorsed Decade Programmes that have elected to participate in the Call for Decade Actions. The deadline for submissions is 31 January 2022.
  - Submission to the joint Ocean Decade – [AXA Research Fund “Towards more resilient coastal livelihoods”](#). This part of the Call will fund up to 12 projects for early career researchers focused on coastal resilience. The deadline for submission is 8 November 2021 under this part of the Call for Decade Actions.
  - Submission to the joint Ocean Decade – MeerWissen Initiative [Call for Proposals](#) for African-German marine research partnerships on “**Nature-based Solutions in Africa**”. This part of the Call will fund research projects implemented jointly by German and African partners focusing on nature-based solutions to climate change in Africa. The deadline is 31 December 2021 for proposals under this part of the Call for Decade Actions.
- (iii) **Ocean Decade Contributions** of in-kind or financial resources to support Ocean Decade coordination or Action costs. Detailed information on different support mechanisms, as well as the resource needs of existing endorsed Decade Actions can be obtained by contacting the Decade Coordination Unit. There is no deadline for the submission of contributions as part of this Call.

Applicants are encouraged to consider how their proposed Decade Actions will enhance the sustainability of ocean science, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. through support to infrastructure or individual or institutional capacity) Additional support will be provided to partners based in Africa or in Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries or Land-Locked Developing Countries to ensure active engagement in the second Call for Decade Actions. Information on the Call including details of submission forms and deadlines can be found on the [Global Stakeholder Forum](#). Two online information sessions will be held for the Call. Please note that no registration is required for these sessions. The times and connection details are as follows:

- 20 October 2021 from 17.00 – 18.30h CEST. [Link to join.](#)
- 21 October 2021 from 8.30h – 10.00h CEST. [Link to join.](#)

I encourage all Member States to share information on the Call for Decade Actions No. 02/2021 widely within their national networks and to encourage diverse actors to submit initiatives for endorsement.

#### 4. Other updates

Other important updates are as follows:

- a. **Launch of new Ocean Decade website and Global Stakeholder Forum:** The Ocean Decade website ([oceandecade.org](https://oceandecade.org)) which was initially developed for the preparatory phase of the Decade has been replaced by a new website which is more tailored to the implementation phase. The new website incorporates significantly improved functionality and incorporates the [Global Stakeholder Forum](#), an online community platform that will have dedicated spaces and tools for Decade stakeholders to exchange and collaborate. Member States are encouraged to visit the new website and register on the Global Stakeholder Forum via this [link](#). I would also like to warmly thank Japan, Canada, Norway and the Republic of Korea for their support in the development of the website and Global Stakeholder Forum.
- b. **Update on National Decade Committees:** To date, [23 National Decade Committees](#) have been established and are key parts of the Ocean Decade stakeholder ecosystem. I am aware of at least 14 other Committees that are being established and I encourage you to keep the Decade Coordination Unit informed of your plans to establish new Committees. National Decade Committees will have dedicated space on the Global Stakeholder Forum to interact within and across countries. I would also like to warmly encourage existing National Decade

Committees to reach out to partner countries, especially in Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries, and provide technical or financial support for the creation of new Committees in those countries.

- c. **Update on selection process for members of Decade Advisory Board:** Over 260 applications were received for membership of the Decade Advisory Board. The selection committee comprising the IOC Chair and IOC Officers will meet in October and November to select the 15 expert members of the Board. An announcement is expected in late November 2021, with the first meeting to be convened in December 2021 or January 2022.
- d. **Ocean Decade Conference Series:** Regional kick-off conferences are planned as part of the Ocean Decade Conference Series in the Western Pacific (25–26 November 2021) and Africa (13–15 December 2021). I thank Thailand and Egypt respectively for their hosting of these conferences. In early 2022, I plan to launch a call for Expressions of Interest to host the Second International Ocean Decade Conference in 2023 or 2024.
- e. **Ocean Decade Laboratories:** The series of Ocean Decade Laboratories hosted by Germany is continuing until May 2022 with the aim of catalysing new Decade Actions and partnerships. The remaining Laboratories will focus on outcomes related to a Clean Ocean, Safe Ocean, Accessible Ocean, Healthy and Resilient Ocean and a Productive Ocean. I encourage you to engage in these Laboratories for example through [the hosting of satellite activities](#).

I would like to reiterate that the success of the Decade will depend on the strong and coordinated engagement of all Member States. I therefore hope that all Member States can continue to actively engage in and support the implementation of the Ocean Decade.

With the assurances of my highest consideration, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

*[signed]*

Vladimir Ryabinin  
Executive Secretary

Annex: Overview of Results of Resource Needs Assessment  
for Endorsed Programmes (August 2021)

**Annex 1: Overview of Results of Resource Needs Assessment for Endorsed Programmes (August 2021)**

Theme	Gap in Action Costs (million USD)	Gap in Coordination Costs (million USD)	Gap in Project Costs (million USD)	Total Gap (million USD)
Coastal resilience	0.6	1.1	1.3	2.9
Cultural Values & Ocean Literacy	1.3	1.1	2.2	4.6
Deep Sea & Mesopelagic	1.4	1	3.6	6
Fisheries	3	0.9	0.6	4.5
Multiple Ocean Stressors	8.8	2.5	11	22.3
Network and Cross-Cutting Programmes	5.4	5	15.4	25.9
Observations, Prediction, Modelling, Mapping	375.6	11.2	2 244	2 631
Regional programmes	0	0.9	1.3	2.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>2 280</b>	<b>2 700</b>

N.B. Information for individual programmes or geographies can be obtained from the IOC Secretariat.