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INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

Fifty-fifth Session of the Executive Council

UNESCO, Paris, 14–17 June 2022

Item 3.3 of the Provisional Agenda

**PILOT EDITION OF THE 'STATE OF THE OCEAN REPORT' (2022) COMPILED
AND COORDINATED BY IOC-UNESCO**

Summary

Following the approval of the Assembly at its 31st Session to proceed with the production of a pilot edition of the IOC State of the Ocean Report, this document presents the background, objectives, scope of the intended StOR and the preparatory schedule of its pilot edition. The fully developed and formatted edition of the pilot StOR is annexed to this document in English only.

Financial implications: The preparation of StOR will have both personnel and financial implications. As a base for example, in the current biennium, the assigned Regular Programme funds are not sufficient to cover the production of the full StOR by mid-2023. Extra-budgetary resources will be required in the order 15,000 to 25,000 USD as well as continued secondment/loan of staff.

Decision proposed: The Executive Council is invited to consider the draft decision referenced as Dec. EC-55/3.3 in the Provisional Action Paper (IOC/EC-55/AP).

Background

1. In recent years, a renewed focus on the world ocean and appreciation of its crucial role for life on Earth, the global climate, food security, human health and wellbeing, as well as its role in the global economy, have led to an increased demand by decision-makers and society at large for relevant, strategic, current, and easily accessible information on the state of the ocean.
2. At its 53rd session in February 2021, the IOC Executive Council (EC) considered the proposal to prepare a periodic 'IOC State of the Ocean Report (StOR)' as a response to the previously mentioned increased demand for the key information on the state of the ocean (cf [IOC/INF-1393](#)). After the Executive Council, the IOC Secretariat invited Member States through [IOC Circular Letter 2843](#) to express their views on the spatial and temporal scope of the report, focus areas, and style of presentation. In parallel the IOC Secretariat convened an informal expert consultation to further discuss the main features of a possible StOR. The results of the Member States and expert consultation are synthesized in the [IOC/INF-1393 Rev.](#) This document was presented at the 31st session of the IOC Assembly in June 2021 and Member States endorsed the production of a Pilot StOR to be presented to the Executive Council at its 55th session in 2022.

Objectives and Impacts

3. The StOR is intended to present summaries of key changes in the ocean state in terms of its physical, biogeochemical, biological and ecological variables, supplemented by a strategic assessment of developments with regard to integrated ocean management, such as percentage of area covered by observations, area management tools, etc.
4. This pilot edition of the StOR features the results of analysis provided by IOC projects and affiliated programmes. Future editions will present, on an annual basis, the current status of the ocean drawn upon the analysis of scientific data, gathered through IOC activities, through other relevant groups, as well as implementation progress of science-based ocean management.
5. The intended StOR will inform all stakeholders and the general public about the changes and challenges which the ocean is facing. The StOR will provide the basis for policy action, support decisions on research focus areas that ought to be strengthened or developed, and assist in the implementation of stronger science-based governance frameworks at national and global levels by strengthening the science-policy interface.
6. It is expected that the information to be presented in the regular StOR will support actions by multiple stakeholders in the context of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030).

Scope

7. Regarding its initial pilot edition, the StOR is, referring to [IOC/INF-1393 Rev.](#), focusing on the Ocean Decade Challenges and on a limited number of corresponding proxies, for which IOC and affiliated programmes are collecting and developing information and data. The pilot edition of the StOR will be the basis for a full edition of the StOR, which will benefit from contributions from other UN organizations and science networks.
8. The pilot edition of the StOR annexed hereafter is a comprehensive but concise report with the following features:
 - contents is framed around 9 of the 10 UN Ocean Decade Challenges, except Challenge 3 on food from the ocean;
 - each topic in the report is presented in a way that succinctly introduces the issue, highlights its importance, and sets out the current state of knowledge in the field, supported by appropriate figures and graphics;

- it contains an executive summary.

Timeline for the preparation of the Pilot edition of the StOR

Timeline (2022)	Actions
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● General scoping by the IOC Secretariat● Nomination of authors and reviewers
February-March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Gathering inputs from experts
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Completion of the 1st draft of the Pilot edition of the StOR
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Finalization of the report and quality control
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Presentation at the 55th Session of Executive Council