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Item 4.3 of the Provisional Agenda

**DRAFT IOC-WIDE STRATEGY ON SUSTAINABLE OCEAN PLANNING
AND MANAGEMENT (2024–2030)**

Summary

By IOC Decision A-32/Dec.4.7, the Assembly at its 32nd session took note of the scope and process for developing the IOC-wide Strategy on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management for the period 2024–2030 through document [IOC/A-32/4.7.Doc\(1\)](#), and requested the Secretariat to collect input from Member States, IOC programmes and technical bodies, and other relevant stakeholders, and to present a revised document to the IOC Executive Council at its 57th session.

The present document elaborated on the basis of document IOC/A-32/4.7.Doc(1), was further enriched by soliciting inputs through IOC Circular Letter [2968](#) and a survey which was developed and rolled out to better understand the existing landscape in terms of sustainable ocean planning and management and identify needs of stakeholders in terms of technical and scientific support. Inputs received are synthesized in document IOC/INF-1537 and its addendum.

Two online consultation meetings were organized in May 2024 to collect additional comments from IOC Member States on the present document. The Strategy foresees the establishment of an IOC Working Group on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management to guide its implementation.

The proposed decision is referenced as EC-57/Dec.4.3 in the Action Paper for the session (document IOC/EC-57/AP Prov.Rev.).

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I. Introduction

1. The ocean is fundamental to both the global economy and the health of our planet. This relationship underscores the imperative role that sustainable ocean planning and management must play in adapting to the dynamic nature of climate change, ensuring the vitality of ecological, social and economic systems in the future. The integration of sustainable ocean planning and management approaches into policy and decision-making processes not only support the ocean's vital functions but also enhance future economic viability.

2. The recognition of the importance of an integrated approach to ocean management is reflected in various international commitments, both within and outside IOC, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (especially Goal 14), the agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. (BBNJ), the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (Ocean Decade), United Nations Framework Convention of Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement, the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (Ocean Panel), and the *UN Ocean Conference Lisbon Declaration*. As international obligations related to ocean management become more science-dependent, IOC is well-placed to leverage its global leadership and position to help nations meet their commitments by bringing to bear the powerful scientific, data and technical expertise of the organisation. This role is further underscored by IOC's foundational mandate as described in IOC Statutes, Article 2.1.

'To promote international cooperation and to coordinate programmes in research, services and capacity-building, in order to learn more about the nature and resources of the ocean and coastal areas and to apply that knowledge for the improvement of management, sustainable development, the protection of the marine environment, and the decision-making processes of its Member States.'

3. In September 2021, UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service published *The Evaluation of the Strategic Positioning of IOC-UNESCO* ([the Evaluation](#)). The Evaluation included a set of six recommendations and suggested actions. It highlighted the increasing importance of IOC to the sustainable management of the ocean and the central role the organisation should undertake.

'...[With] Agenda 2030, IOC-UNESCO's role only increases in importance. The Decade is thus an opportunity for IOC-UNESCO to reaffirm its global leading position and relevance to the members of UN Oceans, to policy makers and to the world at large in helping to bring about more sustainable management of the ocean.'

4. The IOC-wide Strategy on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management for 2024–2030 (the Strategy) also aligns with the existing high-level objectives and functions of IOC ([Figure 1](#)). Both the existing high-level objectives and functions of IOC interconnect within the Strategy to enable a comprehensive and efficient approach to sustainable ocean planning and management supported by the best scientific information. This alignment ensures that the Strategy harnesses the IOC's existing strengths while amplifying its overall impact and extending its global reach.

High-Level Objectives	<p>Healthy ocean and sustained ocean ecosystem services;</p> <p>Effective warning systems and preparedness for tsunamis and other ocean-related hazards;</p> <p>Resilience to climate change and contribution to its mitigation;</p> <p>Scientifically founded services for the sustainable ocean economy;</p> <p>Foresight on emerging ocean science issues.</p>
Functions	<p>Ocean research: Foster research to strengthen knowledge of ocean and coastal processes and human impacts upon them</p> <p>Observing system/data management: Maintain, strengthen and integrate global ocean observing, data, prediction and information systems</p> <p>Early warning and services: Develop early warning systems, services, and preparedness for risks of tsunamis and ocean-related hazards</p> <p>Assessment and Information for policy: Support assessment and provision of information through the science-policy interface</p> <p>Sustainable management and governance: Enhance ocean governance through a shared knowledge base and improved regional cooperation</p> <p>Capacity Development: Develop the institutional capacity in all of the functions above, as a cross-cutting function</p>

Figure 1. High-level Objectives and Functions of the IOC ([IOC Medium-term Strategy 2022–2029](#))

5. Further, a significant task of the IOC is to assist and enable the implementation of the Ocean Decade. The seven Ocean Decade outcomes (below) underscore the necessity of a comprehensive ocean planning and management strategy to attain these objectives.

1. A clean ocean where sources of pollution are identified, reduced or removed;
2. A healthy and resilient ocean where marine ecosystems are understood and managed;
3. A productive ocean supporting sustainable food supply and a sustainable ocean economy;
4. A predicted ocean where society understands and can respond to changing ocean conditions;
5. A safe ocean where life and livelihoods are protected from ocean-related hazards;
6. An accessible ocean with open and equitable access to data, information and technology, and innovation;
7. An inspiring and engaging ocean where society understands and values the ocean in relation to human wellbeing and sustainable development.

6. Given these commitments and in line with the objectives of the IOC, the adoption of the Strategy is both timely and imperative. The Strategy will continue to uphold the core values of the IOC, with science and research serving as the foundation upon which policy and decision-making processes are built. It will build upon the rich legacy of the IOC, which already has a history of implementing key principles of sustainable ocean planning and management. The Strategy will also

enable IOC to contribute more systematically to the emerging Decade Programme on Sustainable Ocean Planning launched at the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona.

7. To achieve this, the functions of the Strategy will continue to be deeply intertwined with and expand upon existing and ongoing IOC programmes. This will include programmes and projects such as MSPglobal, the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) and the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE), and several initiatives under ocean science and Tsunami programmes. The Strategy will serve as a guiding framework for IOC's work across its various programmes (see [Table 2](#) for the potential contribution of IOC programmes to the strategic objectives), facilitating future observations, data collection and management, early warning services, assessments, and the development of innovative tools, knowledge products, and capacity development initiatives tailored to the need of the sustainable ocean planning community.

8. By marrying existing scientific knowledge with management practices, the Strategy seeks to bridge the gap, ensuring that the IOC's scientific efforts translate into tangible solutions for the sustainable management of our ocean. The Strategy, therefore, represents a holistic approach, in which the tools and initiatives will empower Member States and stakeholders with the scientific insights and practical resources needed to tackle the complex challenges of ocean management effectively.

9. The Strategy addresses the diverse and interconnected drivers at the global, regional, and national levels. As a trusted agency in this space, IOC can facilitate a cohesive and coordinated approach to help Member States in achieving their sustainable development goals, promoting the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, and fostering effective ocean governance.

10. The IOC in leveraging its knowledge and expertise with the support of Member States, can achieve the following objectives under this Strategy:

- (i) Increased integration and mainstreaming of sustainable ocean planning and management approaches;
- (ii) Improved observation, data, data frameworks¹ and knowledge management for ecosystem-based management and sectoral applications;
- (iii) Strengthened cross-sectoral and transboundary coordination;
- (iv) Expanded capacity development.

Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management in the IOC

11. The ocean economy is inherently intricate, involving diverse users engaged in various activities, often with potential conflicts among themselves or with the environment. A sustainable ocean economy emerges when these economic activities are integrated with the sustainable management of ocean ecosystems, aligning with their long-term capacity to support these activities while enhancing resilience, health, and well-being². To effectively govern and manage this complexity, an integrated, transboundary, and cross-sectoral approach that acknowledges the interdependence of different ocean uses and their impacts on a well-functioning and healthy ocean is needed.

12. Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management is a strategic approach aimed at ensuring the long-term health and productivity of marine environments while fostering economic growth, social

¹ 'Data framework refers to an organised approach to managing and handling data throughout its lifecycle, including the collection, storage, processing, analysis, and dissemination of data. It includes data management tools such as guidelines and policies.

² United Nations Economist Network, "New Economics for Sustainable Development: Sustainable Ocean Economy" (2023)

benefits and climate resilience. It involves incorporating and advancing IOC's work in various approaches and scales, such as Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM), Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (SOP), and Large Marine Ecosystems (LME). Achieving this equilibrium necessitates robust planning and management, supported by ocean observations, specialised data products, scientific assessments, and monitoring of ecosystem health and economic development. Knowledge-based ocean management approaches, such as marine spatial planning, coastal zone management, marine protected areas, and large marine ecosystem management, play pivotal roles in defining objectives, operational plans, safe boundaries, and guidelines for ocean activities, reducing conflicts among multiple ocean uses.

13. The influence of IOC's work in delivering fit-for-purpose knowledge for shaping policy frameworks and achieving sustainable outcomes is evident. Over the past three decades, IOC has made significant strides in sustainable ocean planning and management, a core component of its mission to achieve the '*Ocean We Need for the Future We Want*'. Notably, in 2009, IOC developed the first international guidelines on Marine Spatial Planning, integrating spatial components, ecosystem-based approaches, and participative processes into marine policies. This has played a pivotal role in driving the global adoption of marine spatial plans, with 126 countries/territories engaged in Marine Spatial Planning initiatives by the end of 2023³.

14. An overarching Strategy on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management will act as a unifying framework that ensures the coordinated advancement of existing IOC programmes and projects, building on the [IOC Integrated Coastal Area Management \(ICAM\) Strategy](#), approved by Member States in 2015. The Strategy enhances collective capacities to address emerging ocean concerns through ecosystem-based management tools, promotes climate change adaptation, resilience to ocean hazards, and strengthens knowledge supporting management actions on coastal and marine ecosystems. The IOC's ongoing efforts in ocean research and knowledge contribute to the Strategy by establishing a knowledge foundation that supports informed decision-making in ocean management, building on IOC's efforts in ecosystem science, including multiple ocean stressors, and integrated assessment products. Additionally, by leveraging the established strengths of IOC through initiatives like the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS) and Ocean Data and Information System (ODIS), the Strategy aims to enhance data accessibility, quality, and availability, with a focused effort on modelling and identifying relevant ocean prediction products, thereby providing decision-makers and stakeholders with comprehensive and reliable information. Ultimately, this unified approach aims to enhance collaboration among stakeholders, facilitate evidence-based decision-making, and promote agreed practices or methodologies, furthering IOC's commitment to coastal resilience, decision-support tools, and data-driven solutions.

15. The Strategy for Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management will empower IOC to extend its influence beyond existing programmes and projects, transcending the boundaries of current efforts to contribute meaningfully to broader ocean economy discussions. This strategic extension aims to bolster policy influence, increase the engagement of economic and policy-making stakeholders, facilitate transboundary and cross-sectoral planning and further enhance existing efforts to harmonise data held by various institutions, countries, and partners into a unified framework that promotes the different approaches related to sustainable ocean planning and management. By aligning with, and supporting, existing frameworks, such as sustainable ocean plans, sustainable ocean economy roadmaps, national ocean accounting, and natural capital assessments, the Strategy seeks to amplify IOC's relevance and drive positive change on a global scale.

16. Furthermore, the Strategy capitalises on the regional expertise and insights provided by the four IOC Sub-Commissions (IOCARIBE, IOCAFRICA, WESTPAC, and IOCINDIO), which are instrumental in identifying the localised ocean planning and management needs and regional specificities. This allows the Strategy to be responsive and tailored, ensuring that regional

³ IOC-UNESCO, *Second edition of the IOC State of the Ocean Report (StOR)* (2024)

characteristics and challenges are addressed effectively and that the implementation of sustainable ocean planning and management is adapted to fit the unique contexts of different regions. Finally, IOC will be able to leverage the expertise of the UNESCO in other areas (e.g., biodiversity conservation, indigenous and local knowledge systems, hydrology, etc.) to implement its strategy and offer a unique inter-disciplinary approach to ocean management within the UN⁴.

17. Through the implementation of the Strategy, Member States can receive guidance and technical assistance, harmonising their national policies with global and regional frameworks and global good practices. This collaborative approach fosters capacity development and knowledge exchange, ultimately elevating the implementation of sustainable ocean planning and management practices.

18. Building upon its unique mandate to foster international cooperation in ocean science, observation, and capacity development, IOC is well-positioned to realize the objectives within this Strategy. The organisation's specialised knowledge enables it to offer critical technical support and evidence-based scientific guidance for the development of marine policies geared toward sustainable ocean planning and management. This, in turn, facilitates the seamless integration of scientific principles and good practices into decision-making processes.

II. Vision and Objectives

19. The vision of the IOC Strategy for Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management is to achieve:

'A comprehensive framework for delivering knowledge and capacities for sustainable ocean planning and management needs of IOC Member States.'

20. The Strategy outlines the principles for implementing effective ocean ecosystem planning and management practices and their corresponding frameworks to ensure informed decision-making. It collectively guides IOC programmes and projects in a coordinated way and based on agreed practices to enable integrated ocean management, planning and decision-making. It aligns with the IOC Medium-Term Strategy 2022–2029 and its associated functions. Additionally, the Strategy takes into consideration the strategic plans and outcomes of existing programmes, including the IOC Strategy for ICAM (2015), the IOC Strategic Plan for Ocean Data and Information Management (2023–2029), the Global Ocean Observing System 2030 Strategy, and the IOC Capacity Development Strategy (2023–2030). This alignment underscores the overarching purpose of the IOC as described in Article 2 of the Statutes mentioned earlier.

21. The strategic objectives of the Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management Strategy are:

(i) Increased integration and mainstreaming of ocean planning and management

Develop a common vision of a coherent multi-scale ocean planning and management framework supported by the best available science, adaptable to varying context and priorities, and incorporating existing concepts, tools, best practices and programmes such as Integrated Coastal Area Management and Marine Spatial Planning, for integration into national context.

(ii) Improved observations, data, data frameworks and knowledge management for ecosystem-based management and sectoral applications

⁴ The strategy will be implemented in line with international law including United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

Enhance data quality, accessibility, and usability by adhering to agreed practices or methodologies, such as the IOC Data Policy and Terms of Use (2023) and FAIR⁵ Principles. Provide tailored data access for diverse users through supporting tools, like the Ocean Data and Information Systems (ODIS), and support data-driven decision making into ecosystem-based management and sectoral applications.

(iii) Strengthened cross-sectoral and transboundary coordination

Facilitate more robust cross-sectoral integration⁶ and transboundary collaboration⁷ in ocean planning by promoting cooperation and dialogue among the various sectors and actors involved in ocean governance. Additionally, support the development of guidelines and frameworks for integrating diverse sectoral and stakeholder interests and priorities, ensuring a well-balanced approach to sustainable ocean planning and management, while fostering cooperation.

(iv) Expanded capacity development

Enhance stakeholder capabilities through comprehensive training programmes, workshops, information materials and ongoing education, tailored to meet the needs of diverse users and widely distributed through platforms such as Ocean CD-Hub. Establish knowledge exchange platforms to effectively disseminate best practices and innovations, promoting a global community of practice that enables continuous improvement and adaptation of ocean management strategies. Additionally, engage with Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOP) to foster hands-on learning and leadership in ocean governance and science.

III. Outcomes and Activities

22. To effectively achieve the strategic objectives outlined in the Strategy on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (2024–2030), specific outcomes have been identified, each supported by key activities (non-exhaustive) designed to serve as actionable steps towards meaningful progress. Building on the strengths of the IOC, the outcomes and activities are closely linked to existing programmes and projects, and will be strategically aligned to contribute to Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management by ensuring efforts are not isolated and are part of a coherent and integrated effort. The [following examples](#) illustrate essential components for achieving these strategic objectives, representing a subset of the broader range of initiatives. For a comprehensive list of activities needed to achieve these outcomes, refer to [Table 1](#).

1. *Strengthened ocean planning and management policy approaches supported by science-based tools and evidence*

The Strategy aims to bolster marine policies by leveraging the extensive scientific expertise within IOC programme areas and facilitates the exchange of knowledge and experiences across nations. Further strategic definition of the scientific research priorities that are needed for a sustainable ocean planning and management will be pursued. The Strategy will focus on developing global guidance and standards for ocean planning and management, drawing on insights and data generated by these programmes, but also looking at emerging scientific findings that needs to be considered in policymaking, ocean management processes and tools. The Strategy also supports the collaborative creation of tools that seamlessly integrate

⁵ FAIR: findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability. Wilkinson, M., Dumontier, M., Aalbersberg, I. et al. (2016)

⁶ The coordination and alignment of activities and policies across different industry sectors, such as fisheries, shipping, and tourism, to achieve a unified approach to ocean planning.

⁷ The cooperation between neighbouring countries or regions to manage shared marine environments and resources. It is essential for addressing issues that span national borders, such as migratory marine species protection.

scientific findings and recommendations into planning processes. This ensures that evidence-based decision-making informs the management of ocean resources and ecosystems. Documenting the environmental, and socio-economic benefits of sustainable ocean planning and management across nations will be pursued.

Activity: Development of guidelines and planning assistance

To support this outcome, the creation and dissemination of comprehensive guidelines and practices for ocean planning and management would be initiated. Technical support and planning assistance would be provided to help Member States incorporate these standards into their governance frameworks. This initiative is designed to embed sustainable ocean planning and management practices at all levels of governance, laying a strong foundation for policy development and promoting a unified approach to sustainable ocean use and conservation.

2. Enhanced ocean observation and data-sharing to enable planning and policy processes

The Strategy will aim to enhance the availability and accessibility of relevant and necessary scientific and ocean observation data by facilitating exchange and coordination across the data and ocean management communities, including with the private sector. Leveraging the collective data infrastructure developed by IOC programmes, such as Ocean Data and Information System (ODIS), aims to provide comprehensive, real-time data on oceanographic, ecological, socio-cultural, and economic aspects. The Strategy will address observation gaps and needs, advocating for federated and distributed data systems, open data initiatives, and the standardisation of ocean observation variables to ensure the data is fit-for-purpose and supports informed decision-making.

Activity: Observation, Data collection and management

A cornerstone of the strategy, this activity is characterised by the tactical enhancement of observation, data collection, and management practices through the incorporation of innovative tools and technologies. This includes a commitment to refining data collection methods and developing systems for robust data sharing. Specific training initiatives would be implemented to equip decision-makers and stakeholders with the skills necessary to effectively use these tools for monitoring, evaluation, and informed decision-making, thereby underpinning sustainable ocean management.

3. Elevated cross-sector and transboundary collaboration

Recognising the interconnected nature of ocean challenges, the Strategy promotes inclusive approaches to cross-sector and transboundary collaboration and coordination. Building on the collaborative foundations of existing IOC programmes and initiatives like the Ocean Decade, it fosters partnerships with diverse right-holders and stakeholders, including sectors like energy, tourism, shipping, and fisheries. The Strategy facilitates dialogue and integrated planning to help identify synergies, trade-offs, and win-win solutions for sustainable ocean management.

Activity: Collaboration and stakeholder engagement

To support this outcome, the establishment of a robust collaborative framework that involves diverse groups, including indigenous peoples and local communities, in the ocean planning process would occur. Networks would be strengthened, and communication strategies enhanced to foster international collaboration and multi-stakeholder engagement. Guidance for the establishment of platforms for inclusive dialogue and sharing best practices on co-management would be developed to incorporate indigenous and local knowledge, promoting

a culturally sensitive approach to ocean governance and further enriching cross-sector and transboundary collaborations.

4. *Increased knowledge/capacity of Stakeholders*

The Strategy seeks to intensify capacity development efforts across all aspects of sustainable ocean planning and management, closely aligned with the IOC's comprehensive Capacity Development Strategy. It will leverage and expand upon the existing efforts of IOC programmes and initiatives, focusing on actions necessary to address the six key outputs of the Capacity Development Strategy. These priorities include developing human resources, enhancing access to physical infrastructure, strengthening global and regional mechanisms, promoting the development of ocean research policies, increasing visibility and awareness, and boosting sustained resource mobilization. This is aimed at empowering decision-makers, policymakers, right-holders, and stakeholders with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective ecosystem-based management and area-based planning.

Activity: Capacity development

To support this, a targeted capacity development programme is implemented by the Strategy, featuring workshops and seminars tailored to user needs, including training in data quality control and analysis, supported by programmes like Ocean CD-Hub and OceanTeacher Global Academy. Additional support involves the integration of ocean planning into national development plans and the facilitation of knowledge exchange platforms. This approach ensures the alignment of national policies with international best practices, thereby enabling informed decision-making and successful policy implementation. Capacity development activities will be coordinated closely with the Capacity Development Coordination Hub under the IOC Capacity Development Strategy to identify the needs of Member States and users for capacity enhancement support related to sustainable ocean planning and management.

5. *Integration of climate change adaptation, mitigation, coastal resilience and biodiversity conservation in ocean planning processes*

In response to the urgent need to address climate change impacts and marine biodiversity loss, the Strategy proposes efforts to integrate climate change adaptation/mitigation as well as conservation and ecosystem restoration aspects into ocean planning. This will involve coordinating with IOC's climate, biodiversity and coastal hazard-related initiatives to develop tools and guidelines that identify and incorporate resilience measures, generate scientific knowledge on the role of ocean ecosystems in climate issues, such as those related to blue carbon habitats and related service-providing ecosystems. By integrating climate science and projections into planning processes, the Strategy aims to equip countries to effectively manage climate and coastal hazard-related risks and vulnerabilities.

Activity: Development of guidelines and planning assistance

To support this outcome, the development and dissemination of specialised guidelines and planning assistance are specifically outlined by the Strategy. These tools and frameworks, designed to address climate and coastal resilience measures, provide technical support to Member States, helping to integrate these measures into their ocean governance frameworks. This initiative aims to enhance governmental capacity for implementing effective climate and coastal hazard management strategies, promoting practices that are adaptable to changing climatic conditions and ensuring that ocean planning is resilient and responsive to environmental changes.

IV. Implementation

23. The implementation of the IOC Strategy on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (2024–2030) will be co-designed and jointly implemented by the different IOC programmes, in close collaboration with the IOC Member States. As this Strategy encompasses a wide array of ocean planning and management aspects, continuous inputs and updates on progress will be vital from both IOC Member States and programmes.

24. Collaborative partnerships are central to achieving the objectives of the Strategy. The IOC's extensive network of experts and its commitment to global and regional cooperation offer Member States valuable support for capacity development in various aspects of ocean planning and management. The Implementation of the Strategy requires the following:

- (i) **Regional Engagement.** The establishment of Regional Subsidiary Bodies (RSBs), such as IOCARIBE, IOCAFRICA, WESTPAC, and IOCINDIO has been instrumental in facilitating regional cooperation and knowledge sharing within UNESCO-IOC for decades. These bodies primarily foster cooperation at the regional level to address ocean issues common to Member States in each region, in alignment with global programmes. Though at different level of implementation, IOC RSBs are already developing collaborative MSP activities through regional MSP pilot projects and collaborations, which bring together countries and stakeholders within a region to address shared challenges, exchange experiences, and develop coordinated transboundary approaches, crucial to the survival of ocean ecosystems and coastal communities. As the strategy will operate at regional and national levels, engagement across RSBs and other regional ocean-related groupings (e.g., such as the Global Ocean Observing System Regional Alliances, Regional Seas Conventions and LMEs) outside IOC will be required in order to define region-specific priorities and actionable steps, allowing regional autonomy and responsiveness to manage the programme according to local contextual needs.
- (ii) **IOC Programmes.** The Strategy aims to provide comprehensive guidance to IOC programmes and projects, to ensure cohesive alignment in ocean and coastal management and planning efforts. Leveraging existing initiatives, coordination will be enhanced to ensure coherence across projects towards the strategic objectives of the Strategy. This involves tapping into expert advice from established collaborations such as the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP). Efforts will also be made to ensure accessibility of resources and data from all programmes and projects through relevant open-access platforms like the Ocean Literacy Portal, the Ocean Data and Information System (ODIS), the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS) and others. Additionally, the Strategy will drive collaboration and capacity development through initiatives such as the OceanTeacher Global Academy, Ocean CD-Hub, or Early Career Ocean Professional (ECOP) Network.

Furthermore, the Strategy will strengthen existing collaborations, such as the joint actions between IOC and the World Heritage Marine Programme (WHC) of UNESCO, to ensure the protection of WHC marine sites under relevant management plans, as well as with the UNESCO network of marine and coastal Biosphere Reserves. In addition, MSPglobal will play a key role given the established guidelines and good practices for MSP which serve as valuable tools and resources for policymakers. These resources aid in crafting inclusive and adaptable MSP processes, encompassing ecological, social, and economic factors in decision-making. Building upon this existing expertise, the Strategy will extend and adapt these resources to encompass the broader scope of ocean planning and management.

- (iii) **Collaborations with UN and Non-UN Entities.** Building upon existing partnerships, the Strategy will further engage with various UN and non-UN organisations and programmes. These entities include, for instance, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP),

the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the European Commission, and Ocean Action Coalition 2030.

- (iv) **Collaboration with External Actors.** Collaboration with IGOs and NGOs will bring expertise in advocacy, community engagement, and indigenous and local knowledge for more inclusive and socially equitable ocean planning. Simultaneously, engagement with academic institutions will drive scientific progress, foster evidence-based decision-making, and provide training for future ocean planning practitioners. In addition, partnering with the private sector will leverage resources, innovation, and industry expertise to enhance the effectiveness of ocean planning initiatives, as well as secure their compliance, which is key to the overall success. Moreover, collaboration with communication outlets will help raise awareness, promote public engagement, and communicate the importance of sustainable ocean planning and management. These partnerships will catalyse research, innovation, and knowledge exchange, leading to cutting-edge tools and methodologies for effective ocean planning implementation.
- (v) **Ocean decade.** A significant task of the IOC is to assist and enable the implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (Ocean Decade). The emerging Decade Programme on Sustainable Ocean Planning, launched at the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona, complements the IOC-wide Strategy on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (2024–2030) by providing a supportive tool to enable and operationalise national strategies in sustainable ocean planning and management. The Programme's co-designed and co-delivered actions will ensure that projects address critical gaps for Member States in science, knowledge, and capacity development. Additionally, its iterative approach allows for the adaptation and refinement of priorities to meet emerging challenges. These synergies are essential for achieving the objectives of the IOC-wide Strategy, fostering integrated, adaptive, and resilient ocean management practices that enhance global and regional cooperation and contribute to the long-term sustainability and equity of ocean economies.

Guidance mechanism

25. To guide the effective implementation of this Strategy, an IOC Working Group for Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management will be established. This group will be responsible for monitoring and guiding the activities related to ocean planning and management across all IOC programmes, in addition to undertaking new endeavours as requested by IOC governing bodies. It will also play a pivotal role in the development and execution of the Strategy. An implementation plan will be formulated and regularly updated to align with evolving tools and international scientific frameworks.

26. To ensure efficiency, the working group will consist of a representative team that can bring on board additional expertise when necessary and appropriate. Membership will be composed of representatives from IOC Regional Subsidiary Bodies, as well as representatives designated by the governing bodies of each IOC programme (where applicable), as well as experts nominated by IOC Member States responding to a call by circular letter. Subject to further discussion, designated co-chairpersons will be elected on a rotating basis.

27. The working group will meet twice a year to first guide the development of an implementation strategy, and to monitor and update the implementation of the Strategy, addressing specific programme-related issues regarding sustainable ocean planning and management, as well as emerging issues. Member States will receive updates for comments once per biennium, throughout the duration of the Strategy, corresponding to the calendar of Assembly sessions through a standing agenda item. Additionally, the working group will provide guidance to be integrated into the UNESCO and IOC Medium-Term Strategy processes to be initiated in 2027. These meetings will ensure

continuous oversight and refinement of the Strategy, fostering its effectiveness and adaptability to evolving challenges and opportunities.

Table 1. *Activities aligned with advancing the Strategic Objectives*

Activities	IOC Efforts	Examples
Capacity Development	OceanTeacher Global Academy, Ocean CD-Hub, OceanExpert, Ocean Literacy Portal Early Career Ocean Professional Network	Conduct workshops to share expertise between Member States and communities of practice.
		Organise capacity development programmes including training courses on ocean planning and management.
		Train data collectors and managers in all aspects of data collection and data management.
		Provide training on deriving knowledge from data.
		Provide technical support to Member States wishing to integrate ocean planning into national and regional development plans.
		Offer platforms for knowledge exchange on aligning national policies with agreed good practices or methodologies and existing global assessment processes in ocean management.
Collaboration and Communication	Regional Subsidiary Bodies, Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection, OceanOPS	Provide targeted and context-specific support through the provision of specialised knowledge and expertise to decision-makers and managers.
		Promote the exchange of experiences and lessons learned from pilot projects in sustainable ocean planning and management practices among Member States.
		Convene cross-sectoral and transboundary working groups or committees to address common challenges and opportunities.
		Organise joint projects and initiatives that promote sustainable ocean planning and management across sectors.
		Provide communication support to member countries and develop communication strategies.
		Establish (or promote existing) mechanisms to enable engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities in decision-making processes.
		Establish mechanisms for ongoing cross-sectoral and transboundary coordination and communication.
		Establish multi-stakeholder platforms and engagement frameworks.
		Leverage networks, technical capabilities, and expertise in ocean science-policy-society interface and MSP.
		Promote dialogue and exchange of good practices among Member States on adopting and implementing global guidelines and standards for ocean planning and

Activities	IOC Efforts	Examples
		<p>management.</p> <p>Promote the alignment between existing approaches, such as sustainable ocean plans, ocean economy roadmaps, national ocean accounting through communication campaigns and advocacy efforts</p>
<p>Observation, Data Collection and Management</p>	<p>Global Ocean Observing System, CoastPredict, Ocean Decade Corporate Data Group, Global Climate Observing System, Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network, International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange, Ocean Biodiversity Information System, IOC Ocean Data and Information System</p>	<p>Encourage Member States to support the development of implementation plans for ocean observation for delivery of the Strategy.</p> <p>Encourage Member States to adopt advanced data collection methods and technologies that enhance the accuracy, efficiency, and scope of environmental, social, and economic data collection.</p> <p>Facilitate the sharing of good practices and methodologies for establishing data systems for ocean-related data and knowledge among Member States.</p> <p>Promote open data initiatives and standardisation of essential ocean variables across existing programmes.</p> <p>Advocate and promote recommended methods, guidelines, and manuals for collecting ocean-related data.</p> <p>Focus research, related data collection and management on specific knowledge gaps such as ecosystem dynamics, threat assessments, and natural capital accounting.</p> <p>Encourage transdisciplinary research, related data collection and management, to foster innovative solutions and a comprehensive understanding of ocean management.</p> <p>Develop and use advanced modelling and forecasting techniques to support decision-making in ocean management.</p>
<p>Financial Support and Advocacy</p>	<p>Ocean Decade MSPglobal</p>	<p>Coordinate discussions and knowledge-sharing sessions on strategies for securing funding for aspects of sustainable ocean planning and management.</p> <p>Develop a mechanism to connect ocean planning and management initiatives with potential philanthropic donors, enhancing funding opportunities and resource mobilisation.</p>
<p>Development of Guidelines and Planning Assistance</p>	<p>MSPglobal International Ocean Carbon Coordination Project Ocean Science programmes</p>	<p>Develop tools and guidelines for integrating climate resilience and conservation measures into ocean planning.</p> <p>Develop and publish regular reports and assessments on sustainable ocean planning and management good practices and guidance.</p> <p>Facilitate the development of global guidelines and standards for ocean planning and management.</p> <p>Support Member States to facilitate the integration of ocean planning and management principles effectively.</p>

Activities	IOC Efforts	Examples
		Support Member States to co-develop comprehensive roadmaps to guide the development and implementation of approaches related to sustainable ocean planning and management.
		Identification of emerging scientific evidence for integration into SOP processes/tools.

Table 2. Potential Contribution of IOC Programmes to Strategic Objectives (where a contribution or synergy exists cell is highlighted in green)

IOC Programmes	Strategic Objectives			
	Increased integration and mainstreaming of sustainable ocean planning and management approaches	Improved observation, data, data frameworks and knowledge management for ecosystem-based management and sectoral applications	Strengthened cross-sectoral and transboundary coordination	Expanded capacity development
The Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS)				
Data and Information - The International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE)				
Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS)				
The General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) /Seabed 2030				
Joint WMO-IOC Centre for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology in situ Observations Programmes Support (OceanOPS)				
The Global Sea Level Observing System (GLOSS)				
Harmful Algal Bloom Programme and related work on nutrients/coastal eutrophication/deoxygenation				
Global Tsunami Early Warning and Mitigation Programme				
Tsunami Ready Programme				
State of the Ocean Report				
Global Ocean Science Report				
Contribution to the World Ocean Assessment				
Assessment of SDG 14 targets				
GESAMP assessments				

IOC Programmes	Strategic Objectives			
	Increased integration and mainstreaming of sustainable ocean planning and management approaches	Improved observation, data, data frameworks and knowledge management for ecosystem-based management and sectoral applications	Strengthened cross-sectoral and transboundary coordination	Expanded capacity development
Joint IOC & DG MARE Marine Spatial Planning Global Programme (MSPglobal)				
GEF International Water: LEARN products				
OceanTeacher Global Academy and other IOC Capacity development services/facilities (e.g. Ocean CD-Hub, etc.)				
Ocean Literacy programme				
UNESCO Category 2 Centres				
Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs) network				