

14th GOOS Steering Committee meeting (SC-14) | 19-21 February 2025 (Paris)

**Background paper**

**Session:**

6. a System implementation at national and regional level

**Agenda item:**

6.1 National Focal Points (NFPs)

**Introduction/Background**

Including links to relevant documents, mandates etc.

GOOS National Focal Points (NFPs) are the focal points for communication between GOOS and the national organisations and individuals involved in the sustained national ocean observing system infrastructure. The [Terms of References](#) of NFPs was updated in 2023 and adopted at SC-12. The current list of NFPs is [here](#).

**Current status**

There are currently 76 countries who have nominated their NFPs, with an unbalanced geographic distribution: Group I (19/24, 79%), Group II (8/14, 57%), Group III (10/30, 33%), Group IV (16/35, 46%) and Group V (23/47, 49%)<sup>1</sup>. The NFP designation rate in Group III is the lowest. Also, the island states and territories in the Pacific do not have any NFPs designated. Also some of the islands are territories rather than a country, so they are not eligible to have an NFP. Furthermore, less than half of the designated NFPs are active and responsive (see table below).

IOC Groups	Member States	GOOS NFPs		Reponses to survey		2 <sup>nd</sup> NFP Forum Participation	
	No. (a)	No. (b)	% (c=b/a)	No. (d)	% (e=d/b)	No. (f)	% (g=f/b)
Group I	24	19	79%	6	32%	13	68%
Group II	14	8	57%	3	38%	3	38%
Group III	30	10	33%	7	70%	6	60%
Group IV	35	16	46%	7	44%	3	19%
Group V	47	23	49%	10	43%	6	26%

<sup>1</sup> See Groupings of IOC Member States via this link: <https://oceanexpert.org/document/3821>

<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>41%</b>
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In discussion with NFPs, an effort was made to provide communications support since the 1<sup>st</sup> NFP Forum in October 2023, including [NFP messaging guide](#), three [use cases](#) and the NFP [LinkedIn group](#).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> NFP online Forum was organized on 24 October 2024 ([report](#)). The forum was focused on two major themes: 1) strengthening the national coordination and support; 2) strengthen the linkage between NFPs with GRAs. During the 2-hour meeting, the GOOS priorities, progress on communication and the new GOOS NFP survey were introduced by GOOS Office staff. NFP reports from France, Chile, Slovenia and Keyna were presented during the forum, while NFP from Indonesia, Madagascar and Nigeria also sent the national updates. Carl Gouldman and Alvaro Scardilli, chair and vice-chair of the GOOS Regional Alliance (GRA) Council, emphasized the importance of GRAs in enhancing coordination and support to the national ocean observing system. Jerome Aucan from GRA: PI GOOS discussed the challenges and opportunities in the Pacific region, focusing on improving data curation and leveraging cooperation with existing networks. Brief discussion on the way forward of NFP, including establishment of the GRA Advisory group was made.

A comprehensive [NFP survey](#) was launched on 2 December 2024, with 34 responses received so far. The survey aimed to gather information on: understanding communication and support needs between GOOS Office and NFPs (Part I), the national coordination (Part II) and priorities (Part III) for ocean observation, NFP evolving roles and actions (Part IV) and Advisory Group (Part V). The preliminary analysis of the survey result is available [here](#). Uptakes from the survey include:

(1) Communication and support

- The **NFP LinkedIn group** is underutilized with some unaware of it, some restricted from using LinkedIn in public offices, and other not using LinkedIn. The **use cases** are not fully aware of or used by NFPs, but many NFPs showed their interests in co-developing one for their country in 2025. Number of meetings need to be addressed.
- It was suggested that NFP guidelines, reporting templates and knowledge sharing as well as a common framework and joint actions that NFPs can achieve jointly .

(2) National coordination

- 70% of the responding countries have (23.5%) or in process (47%) to have national ocean observing systems and national coordinating mechanisms.

(3) National Priorities

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Most countries focus on **coastal areas and regional seas**, due to economic importance, environmental concerns, and impact of climate change. (4) NFP evolving roles and actions

- NFPs dedicated to strengthening national ocean observing system and national coordination, expanding data collection, integration and accessibility, and connecting to GOOS in 2024. While in 2025, NFPs committed to engage with national focal points that are related to ocean observations and raise the level of data collection in the country to support GOOS.
- NFPs are willing to help other NFPs specifically in case studies, capacity development trainings and sharing of best practices.

#### (5) NFP Advisory Group

- NFPs were open to the idea to establish NFP Advisory Group, with the focus on providing strategic guidelines, enhancing collaboration and knowledge sharing, supporting to NFPs in aligning national priorities with global and regional initiative, etc.
- It was suggested to have 5-10 members in the NFP Advisory Group (1-2 from each IOC Group). But there is also a voice to include GRA representatives (who are also NFPs) to the Advisory Group.

An IOC Circular Letter ([CL-3024](#)) was sent on 3 February 2025 requesting member states to update and nominate GOOS NFPs (Deadline: 28 February 2025).

### Work/Project plan

Including Deliverables (e.g. Activities/Actions/ KPIs) and Budget / Resource needs

→ 2025

→ 2026-2027

#### ➤ 2025

- Update the NFP lists (through the [CL-3024](#))
- Finalize the NFP Survey analysis and publish the report
- Organize the 3<sup>rd</sup> NFP Forum in October, and an online meeting in April
- Establish NFP Advisory Group, and develop the Terms of Reference of the Group
- Have a clear workplan for developing NFP Implementation Plan (including timelines, main contents, resources needed, etc.)

#### ➤ 2026-2027

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### Background paper

- NFP Advisory Group in function
- Develop an implementation guideline for GOOS National Focal Points, focusing on:
  - How to connect to national/regional networks, and how to establish national hub (committee) for ocean observations
  - How to connect and contribute to GOOS components (GRAs, OCG networks, OceanOPS, etc.)
  - How to assess and report national contributions to GOOS
- Enhance the regional collaboration and interactions of NFPs, e.g., through Organize more regional NFP meetings in conjunction to GRA activities.
- Organize GRA-NFP joint in-person meeting in 2026.

### Expected outcomes for GOOS

- NFP and National GOOS Committee to be an effective mechanism of GOOS to:
  - Understand the national requirement and priorities on ocean observations
  - Advocate GOOS at national/regional level
  - Map how the national observing system contribute to GOOS
- NFP are closely linked to related GRAs, making NFPs and GRAs are effective implementing mechanisms for GOOS.

### Considerations for the GOOS Steering Committee

- How should GOOS address and support the needs of nations to make the system work (more NFPs and more active ones)? and how do the national observing system contribute to GOOS?
- Should the NFP TOR be presented to the IOC Assembly?
- **NFP Governance:** Is an advisory group or something similar required for NFPs?
- .....

### Proposed decisions/recommendations

- GOOS SC takes note of the ongoing NFP survey and encourage GOOS Office to publish the survey analysis report together with NFPs contributing to it.
- GOOS SC supports the idea to develop the NFP implementation guidelines.
- GOOS SC recommends the increase connection between NFPs and GRAs, e.g., through Organize more regional NFP meetings in conjunction to GRA activities.



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- GOOS SC suggests the development of engagement plan of using the existing NFP/GRA mechanism to leverage the maximum support to the national priorities on ocean observations.
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