

PROPOSAL FOR EXTENDING THE IOC-OBPS SCOPE

In 2019, the Ocean Best Practices System (OBPS) became a UNESCO/IOC Project, supported by Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) and the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE). It was designated as a joint GOOS-IODE Project, and subject to the expectations for projects from both these organisations. OBPS has at its core an aim to support 'ocean' practice development and availability. To secure its long-term sustainability and ensure relevance to all IOC mandates, during the SG-OBPS-VII Annual meeting, it was proposed to expand the scope of OBPS beyond GOOS and IODE, redefining its [Terms of Reference](#) and [membership](#). This strategic shift will amplify OBPS's visibility, impact, and value for all IOC Sections.

This proposal will be presented at the GOOS 14th Steering Committee and IODE-28 meetings in 2025 to seek approval for evolving OBPS from a GOOS-IODE Project to a cross-IOC Ocean Best Practice System, with the final decision to be made at the IOC Assembly in June 2025.

The benefits of evolving from a project-based initiative are to become a more sustained and structured system, enabling long-term support for best practices across a growing number of communities. Expanding its reach across the full ocean value chain, the IOC OBPS will engage a broader spectrum of stakeholders, ensuring greater impact. With increased funding, it will gain more stability, making it an even more valuable resource for the IOC community and fostering regional champions, and strengthening the global network of ocean best practices.

We warmly invite all IOC Sections to join the OBPS by contributing to its funding and actively collaborating in shaping its future. By participating, your programme will gain access to a curated repository of methodologies, standards, and tools that enhance operational efficiency and foster global interoperability. Additionally, your involvement will bring opportunities for international recognition, visibility, and collaboration with a network of experts and stakeholders. Together, we can co-develop impactful practices that support the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, advance the IOC mission, and strengthen the resilience of the global ocean community. With broader participation and support, OBPS will continue to grow as a pillar of sustainability, knowledge-sharing, and best practices across all ocean-related sectors. Your contribution is a commitment to shaping a more interoperable and interconnected future for ocean science.

Background Information

History: OBPS began in 2017 as a collaboration between IODE and the AtlantOS/ODIP/RCN Best Practices Working Group (BPWG) to develop a global repository for best practices in ocean sciences. The existing *OceanDataPractices* repository, established under the Ocean Data Standards and Best Practices Project (ODSBP), was expanded and renamed *OceanBestPractices* to encompass all ocean-related best practices. By 2019, OBPS evolved into a full-fledged UNESCO/IOC Project, supported by IODE and GOOS funding. In 2023, OBPS achieved the status of an IODE Programme Activity under the Ocean Data and Information System (ODIS), operating within the UNESCO IODE and GOOS frameworks.

What is the OBPS? The OBPS is a global initiative dedicated to improving and standardising methodologies and practices for collecting, analysing, and sharing ocean data and information across a wide range of ocean stakeholders including researchers, policymakers, and end-users.

What is the OBPS Repository? The OBPS repository is a global, open-access, and permanent digital resource that supports ocean stakeholders by providing a curated collection of methodologies, standards, practices, and endorsed best practices across ocean sciences, operations, data/information management, application, and services. It serves as a hub for

accessing, sharing, refining, promoting, adopting, and endorsing methodologies and practices at all levels of maturity. The repository offers significant value to the dynamic and evolving ocean community by fostering collaboration and encouraging the adoption and endorsement of high-quality practices. Programs that contribute their practices to the OBPS include GOOS, IMOS, ICES, FAO and ARGO, among others.

Why Does IOC Need OBPS? The OBPS plays a vital role in supporting IOC sections and contributing to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By providing a permanent, curated archive of methodologies, standards, and practices, OBPS enables IOC sections to make their documents discoverable, and shareable, while fostering a collaborative space for communities to collectively advance our methodological heritage. It enables the refinement of methodologies, ensures global dissemination, and promotes collaboration within the IOC community and beyond. By bridging knowledge gaps, standardizing practices, and improving interoperability, OBPS strengthens global efforts to facilitate training in high-quality practices, address critical ocean challenges, and ensure global participation.

How Is OBPS Managed? OBPS is steered by the SG-OBPS, which provides strategic guidance, ensures alignment with IOC mandates, and promotes inclusivity in decision-making. The group comprises representatives from IOC Sections, partner organizations, and invited experts, ensuring diverse and balanced representation. It actively seeks funding opportunities, promotes OBPS, advises the community, and supports the Repository and IT Managers. Plans are in place to further expand the group to include broader IOC representation, further fostering collaboration across programs, activities, regions, and disciplines.

Achievements to Date

The SG-OBPS has made significant progress in governance, repository growth, community engagement, capacity building, and technical innovation during 2023-2024, with plans to build on these accomplishments in the future.

In **governance and strategy**, the Advisory Board was established in October 2024, comprising international experts to guide strategy and stakeholder engagement.

The **repository** grew to include 2,241 documents, with 86,720 users and 100,905 sessions (July 2023–November 2024). Technical upgrades, such as metadata filters, and AI tools, improved content accessibility, validation, and multilingual translation.

Community engagement efforts included the 8th Annual OBPS Workshop (October 2024), attracting 700 participants across 72 sessions. Partnerships were strengthened via events like the UN Decade Conference in Barcelona, featuring joint sessions and exhibitions. Additionally, 18 best practice articles were published in *Frontiers in Marine Science*, and nine Decade Projects were hosted by the OceanPractices Program.

Capacity development initiatives included a self-paced OTGA training course launched in November 2024, partnerships with the World Maritime University for biodiversity monitoring and maritime curricula, and the inaugural cohort of OceanPractices Ambassadors (October 2023).

In **metrics and analytics**, a public metrics dashboard was introduced to track content quality, usage and engagement, alongside deeper user insights through tools like Google Analytics and Altmetrics.

Finally, to ensure sustainability, the AISBL legal entity Ocean Practices was established in 2024 to secure long-term funding. Participation in four EU projects (Blue Cloud, ILIAD, Obsea4Clim, and CINEA) further advanced best practices.

Funding Requirements for 2025

To sustain the critical activities of the Ocean Best Practices System (OBPS) in 2025, a total budget of \$87,380 has been allocated to support essential areas such as governance, repository enhancements, and stakeholder engagement. Funding for the first semester, amounting to \$19,960,

has been secured through contributions from IODE and GOOS. However, the second semester requires an additional \$67,420, which we propose to distribute among IOC Sections. For instance, if five sections contribute, the cost per programme would be approximately \$9,631 USD.

| Milestone | Jan-Jun 2025 | July-Dec 2025 | Total 2025 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Project Manager (FTE=1) | \$8,460 | \$16,920 | \$25,380 |
| Travel to IOC Meetings | \$4,500 | \$4,500 | \$9,000 |
| OBPS Annual Workshop | \$0 | \$10,000 | \$10,000 |
| SG-OBPS Annual Meeting | \$0 | \$25,000 | \$25,000 |
| Promotional Material | \$2,500 | \$2,500 | \$5,000 |
| Repository Certification (CTS) | \$0 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 |
| AWS Subscription | \$4,500 | \$4,500 | \$9,000 |
| Total | \$19,960 | \$67,420 | \$87,380 |

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Signed by OBPS Project Manager:

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