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INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION

2026 Meeting of the IODE Management Group
IOC Project Office for IODE, Oostende, Belgium
28-29 January 2026

REPORT (MAX 2 PAGES) - please answer in bullets where possible
1. Title of IODE Programme Component/Programme activity, IOC Programme or Decade activity (and acronym)
OBIS: The Ocean Biodiversity Information System
2. Report submitted by *(Name/Date/email)*
Katherine Tattersall (katherine.tattersall@csiro.au) & Dan Lear (dble@mba.ac.uk)
3. Updates since IODE-28
- **New partnerships, agreements:** Renewed 5-year partnership agreement with GBIF; 3 year partnership agreement with Minderoo Foundation (eDNA expeditions Phase II 2026-2028). eDNA Expeditions Phase II mobilises environmental DNA observations to help build a global biomolecular observatory for marine life. From 2026 to 2028, local teams at 25 marine sites worldwide will carry out repeated sampling campaigns, with results flowing back as decision-ready insights to directly support local marine management and conservation, as well as contribute to global ocean knowledge. The project is now in the process of recruiting 25 marine sites to join the initiative. As of 26 January 2026, 181 sites have applied while applications remain open until the 15th of February 2026. - **New OBIS nodes**: Panama, Brazil, Norway, Ecuador - **New data**: In the last 10 months OBIS has published 40M new observations from 1900 new datasets, that is 6 new datasets and +100,000 observations per day. Before, the average was 1 new dataset per day. - **EU Project reports and deliverables**: OBIS has contributed to key deliverables and reports for several EU Funded projects - **Full OBIS database cloud optimized**: The full OBIS database is now available as a continuously updated cloud optimized parquet dataset, hosted under the AWS Open Data Sponsorship program. - Developed **species range maps for over 12,000 species**, including **climate change impact projections**. All maps openly available through the AWS Open Data Sponsorship Program. - Developed the **speciesgrids product**, cloud-optimized gridded datasets of WoRMS aligned marine species distributions, based on OBIS and GBIF occurrence snapshots. - **OBIS dataset with monthly sea temperature** with regular monthly updates scheduled. - **OBIS products catalogue** is currently being tested (internally), with expected public launch early 2026. - **A webpage to register DOIs** for OBIS derived datasets and data products to ensure proper provenance trails for OBIS mediated data. - **New OBIS website** developed, with improved functionality. - Active **collaboration with GBIF to ensure that data standards and data publication workflows are aligned**, in particular around eDNA data collection and processing. - In 2025, OBIS registered **991K data downloads** representing a total of **342B species occurrence records**. - We identified **169 peer-reviewed publications** citing OBIS in 2025. - **Communication & engagement -** Improved engagement with OBIS Nodes and Nodes

visibility increase through targeted actions: **monthly newsletter, spotlight articles, OBIS Nodes Awards**, recognising outstanding community contributions.
- **New OBIS Communication strategy and OBIS Communication Action Plan** to fully support OBIS new strategic orientations and workplan
- **Massive growth on social media**, especially on LinkedIn (March 2025-January 2026): 165K impressions / 4634 followers (+140% growth) / 3741 reactions
- Development of **regional support groups for Nodes in Latin America and the Caribbean** (implemented, active) **and Africa** (in progress) to increase data mobilization, contribution and capacity development
- **Prominent co-lead role at the Living Data 2025 conference** in Bogotá, Colombia, with more than 15 sessions led or co-led, that showcased OBIS role as the global marine biodiversity data infrastructure.
- The **13th session of the OBIS Steering Group (SG-OBIS-13),** 25-27 October 2025 in Bogotá, Colombia. Revised the **Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives**, the **2026–2027 Workplan**, and strengthened alignment with IOC-IODE priorities.

OBIS updates on **Actions from IOC/IODE-28 are reported in Appendix 1**. In summary, OBIS has completed all Actions due by end 2025 and has in progress Actions that are ongoing.

4. How does your work align with the objectives of IODE, the UN Ocean Decade, and other multilateral agreements?

The work of OBIS aligns with IODE objectives in the following ways:
- provides robust, interoperable infrastructure for the collection, standardisation, and open exchange of marine biodiversity data.
- operationalises FAIR data principles, strengthens national and regional data capacities through a global network of OBIS Nodes
- supports evidence-based ocean science and management by ensuring long-term stewardship of high-quality biodiversity information.

OBIS aligns with the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development objectives in the following wayst:
- enables the “data-to-knowledge” pipeline required to deliver a clean, healthy, productive, predictable, safe, and accessible ocean.
- mobilises species occurrence data across all ocean basins and time periods & underpins Decade Outcomes related to ecosystem understanding, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable ocean governance
- supports multiple Decade Programmes and initiatives focused on marine life, digital oceans, and capacity development.

OBIS aligns with objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) & Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as it
- informs national reporting and indicators. More specifically, OBIS is a recognized complementary indicator for Target 20 and 21 and aligns with the technologies/monitoring capacity element of Target 20.

OBIS also contributes to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the UN World Ocean Assessment, the UN SDGs and UNCLOS and the new BBNJ (High Seas) Agreement.

5. Prioritised deliverables 2026-2027

The OBIS Workplan 2026-27 was endorsed at SG-OBIS-13. See SG-OBIS-13 Report section 5:

Outcome #1: Ensure an operational OBIS Nodes Coordination Group (NCG)
- **KPIs 1-5:** 1. Dual session NCG meetings; 2. # Nodes participating; 3. # Nodes presenting/leading discussion; 4. Reported inter-node collaborations, 5. Node satisfaction with OBIS communication and support
- **Deliverables 1-3:** D1.1 NCG meeting minutes published; D1.2 Revise meeting structure; D1.3 Improved OBIS Pulse Newsletter for horizontal Node-to-Node communications

Outcome #2: Create and adopt communication tools to leverage the visibility of the Nodes and their contributions

- **KPIs 1-2:** 1. Number of Nodes using the OBIS communication toolkit to reach institutions/funders; 2. High measured satisfaction with the development of OBIS communication kit that fits needs of OBIS Nodes
- **Deliverable:** D2.1 Building block-based OBIS communication toolkit aimed at funders, backers and OBIS host orgs, that can be adapted to each OBIS Node

Outcome #3: Improve and track capacity among OBIS Nodes

- **KPIs 1-3:** 1. # Node-to-Node mentoring activities established annually; 2. # FAQ entries; 3. Number of OBIS Nodes who have filled capacity gaps in a year through NCG-led actions
- **Deliverables 1-4:** 3.1 Create onboarding roadmap for new Nodes; 3.2 Establish Node-to-Node program; 3.3 Create process for capturing capacity discussions across comms in an FAQ; 3.4 Create Node Knowledge Repository on OBIS website for processes, tools, skills available Nodes.

Outcome #4: Ensure an operational Data Coordination Group (DCG)

- **KPIs 1-2:** 1. At least 5 dual online meetings through Oct 2026; 2. Bimonthly dynamic task reprioritisation to ensure strategic alignment and effective resource allocation.
- **Deliverables 1-2:** 4.1 DCG meeting minutes shared through public portal/OBIS website; 4.2 Share to DCG prioritised activities for bi-monthly review/endorsement.

Outcome #5: Review and support the alignment and adoption of data standards, specifications and publication mechanisms

- **KPIs 1-5:** 1. Two online workshops by end 2026; 2. Support plan for WoRMS annotation completed and approved by June 2026; 3. Planned approach, roadmap, resourcing required to index DwC-DP with complete documentation, validated by DCG by June 2026; 4. Implementation plan and timeline to incorporate standardized methods for tracking, quantifying and reporting EOV data coverage and trends, approved by SG-OBIS Oct 2026; 5. Implementation plan for eDNA data management course with outline and timeline by Oct 2026.
- **Deliverables 1-5:** 5.1 Deliver 2 data standards workshops for OBIS; 5.2 Document plan to support WoRMS Data Management Team for taxon annotation improvements; 5.3 Document DwC-DP indexing strategy; 5.4 Document implementation plan and timeline to quantify/monitor EOV data within OBIS; 5.5 Review OBIS guidelines on eDNA data and plan and document training to improve knowledge and eDNA data delivery.

Outcome #6: Ensure an Operational Products Coordination Group (PCG)

- **KPI:** At least 5 dual online sessions through to October 2026
- **Deliverable:** Meeting minutes shared through public portal (as for other CGs)

Outcome #7: Robust operational deployment of the OBIS Products Catalogue

- **KPIs 1-3:** 1. Relationships to EOVs and other indicators can be annotated to Products in the OBIS Products Catalogue ; 2. Data products (OBIS Nodes and OBIS Secretariat sourced) are registered in the OBIS Products Catalogue; 3. Products from OBIS Products Catalogue are available for harvest by ODIS.
- **Deliverables 1-4:** 7.1 OBIS Products Catalogue, with OBIS styling, integrated to OBIS domain and operational infrastructure; 7.2 OBIS Products Catalogue schema extension for indicators (including EOVs) can be mapped to international policy outcomes ; 7.3 Github repository to monitor/incorporate feedback from OBIS Nodes on metadata nomenclature; 7.4 Training material for OBIS Products Catalogue, including guidance including markup for international policy alignment

Outcome #8: Data product pilot showcasing OBIS' ability to serve national policy outcomes and highlight the richness of available data in OBIS's national and regional Nodes.

- **KPI:** Data products expressing species richness or species-specific distribution models available for Node/Region implementation

- **Deliverable:** 8.1 Demonstrate OBIS capacity to inform national-scale biodiversity strategy through developing data products that serve national policy outcomes

6. GOALS 2030 (Where do you see your work / activities / outcomes in 5 years?)

OBIS supports the IOC's high-level objectives, reinforcing its position as the primary global repository for marine biodiversity data. It is strategically positioned to support the BBNJ Clearing-House Mechanism and plays a key role in the publication of biological Essential Ocean Variables (EOVs). In addition, OBIS seeks to expand its work on molecular- and imagery-based data, supported by robust quality-control pipelines to deliver high-quality and fit-for-purpose marine biodiversity information.

OBIS aims to deliver data products and modular components that support Member States in decision-making, management, and monitoring, including reporting on progress toward global commitments. These products will also help Member States increase resilience and preparedness for global change, including through the development of early warning systems. OBIS aims to accelerate research by providing baseline biodiversity information in performant, accessible, and inclusive formats.

Through engagement and capacity development activities led by its Nodes, OBIS will ensure that local data providers from ecologically significant areas can fully contribute to marine biodiversity data publication, mobilization and uptake.

This direction aligns with the new OBIS vision, mission, and objectives approved at its most recent Steering Group meeting (October 2025). The objectives are:

- Build a sustainable global marine biodiversity data infrastructure
- Support evidence-based ocean biodiversity policy
- Deliver operational biodiversity data services
- Empower communities through capacity development and collaboration

7. Considerations for / Requests to the IODE Management Group

- Ensure resilience and security of the OBIS Secretariat team to enable delivery of key strategic objectives aligned to IODE priority areas including BBNJ
- Seek clarity on alignment and impact of the IOC Comms Strategy on OBIS capacity to engage, mobilize and communicate, particularly through our social media channels - OBIS attending the Information Session on 28 January 2026
- Please provide an update on the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between IOC and the Government of Flanders.
- IODE MG to support submission of two OBIS led FUST proposals: Mozaïek & Propagules.
- IODE MG to thank donors: the Minderoo Foundation (eDNA expeditions) and Flanders (BiOES feasibility study)

* Also see Action sheet: IOC/IODE-28/3 Annex V

Appendix 1 - IOC/IODE-28/3 Actions

Action 113 - …requested that OBIS develops robust indicators and guidelines for State Parties on how to use OBIS in their national reporting to the CBD:

- **The products coordination group has noted the need for such indicators and added it in its planning for 2026.**

Action 227 - …recommended that [PacMan] results and …practices should be used as examples for similar projects by Member States:

- **OBIS is currently redesigning its approach to communicate on its use cases to include projects and achievements. This renewed approach will improve visibility, discoverability, uptake and potential developments beyond the already established usages.**

Action 228 - … encouraged future eDNA initiatives to collaborate with OBIS and share DNA-derived species occurrence data with OBIS to enhance global marine biodiversity monitoring.

- **OBIS is recognized as the biodiversity database for marine data originating from state-of- the-art eDNA projects across European projects like eDNAqua-Plan, MARCO-BOLO and DTO-Bioflow. Outreach on OBIS eDNA activities is done continuously both by OBIS nodes as well as e.g. through the OBON (Ocean Biomolecular Observation Network) network.**

- *Action 234 - …instructed all IODE programme components and programme activities to prepare documentation for the next meeting of the IODE Management Group detailing how the new Rules of Procedure have been adopted in their management structure*:

- **Complete for OBIS**

Action 280 - ...urged IODE data centres as well as …OBIS… to actively participate in, and contribute to, the development and implementation of science based, sustainable ocean planning and management activities and invited …to collaborate with …SOPM team for the development of a first pilot initiative that can inform and fine-tune the design of targeted, future IODE data and information knowledge products for SOPM:

- **OBIS products and services are developed to contribute to SOPM. This contribution is now part of OBIS Objective 3.**

Action 303 - …acknowledged the importance of collaboration with IOCINDIO and requested IODE Programme Components to support data architecture efforts (similar to EMODNet / MEDIN) in the region, with the help of RSB funded CD programmes supported or hosted by OTGA RTCs, C2Cs and NODCs and ADUs (ODIS, OBIS nodes) already established in the region

- **Ongoing exploration of collaboration paths with IndOBIS, the Indian OBIS Node, which could serve as a focal point for the initiative.**

Action 429 - …instructed IODE programme components and IODE programme activities to actively promote IODE in events and communications and invited other IOC programmes to recognize IODE as a partner in their communication efforts.

- **OBIS has been acknowledging IODE and its importance on communications and events, including at Living Data 2025 (visibility in presentations)**

Action 474 - …recommended the eDNA expeditions Decade project to continue in a second phase if funding sources come available recognizing the enormous value of these expeditions to the global biodiversity community in establishing pipelines and processes from eDNA collection to product development.

- **eDNA Expeditions 2026-2028 is fully funded by Minderoo. The project is in its first implementation phase (see https://ednaexpeditions.org/)**