15th GOOS Steering Committee meeting

25-27 March 2026 | Hyderabad, India

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Session 3: GOOS reform: Mission, scope and accountability mechanism

Session chair: SC Co-Chairs

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Introduction to new Mission, Scope and accountability mechanism

SC Co-chairs

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01

Mission and scope

01

An updated and forward-focused mission statement outlines the essential role in delivering coordinated action and strategic outcomes for GOOS

Support stakeholders with implementation of effective observation systems

Support continuous improvement of ocean observing system to meet changing scientific, economic, ecological, environmental, and technological needs

Facilitate worldwide coordination and data sharing for a unified, comprehensive ocean monitoring, forecasting, and service value chain

Be receptive to the GOOS components, sponsors, Member States, suppliers, users, and the broader ocean observing enterprise

Build a robust and adaptable system that can withstand disruptions and deliver long-term, reliable data

To **enable** and **evolve** a **globally integrated**, **responsive**, and **resilient** ocean observing system for **thriving communities** and a **healthy ocean**

Ensure essential ocean data are ultimately transformed into actionable insights to support resilient societies and protect ecosystems – turning science into real-world impact while advancing the ocean economy, weather, and climate communities

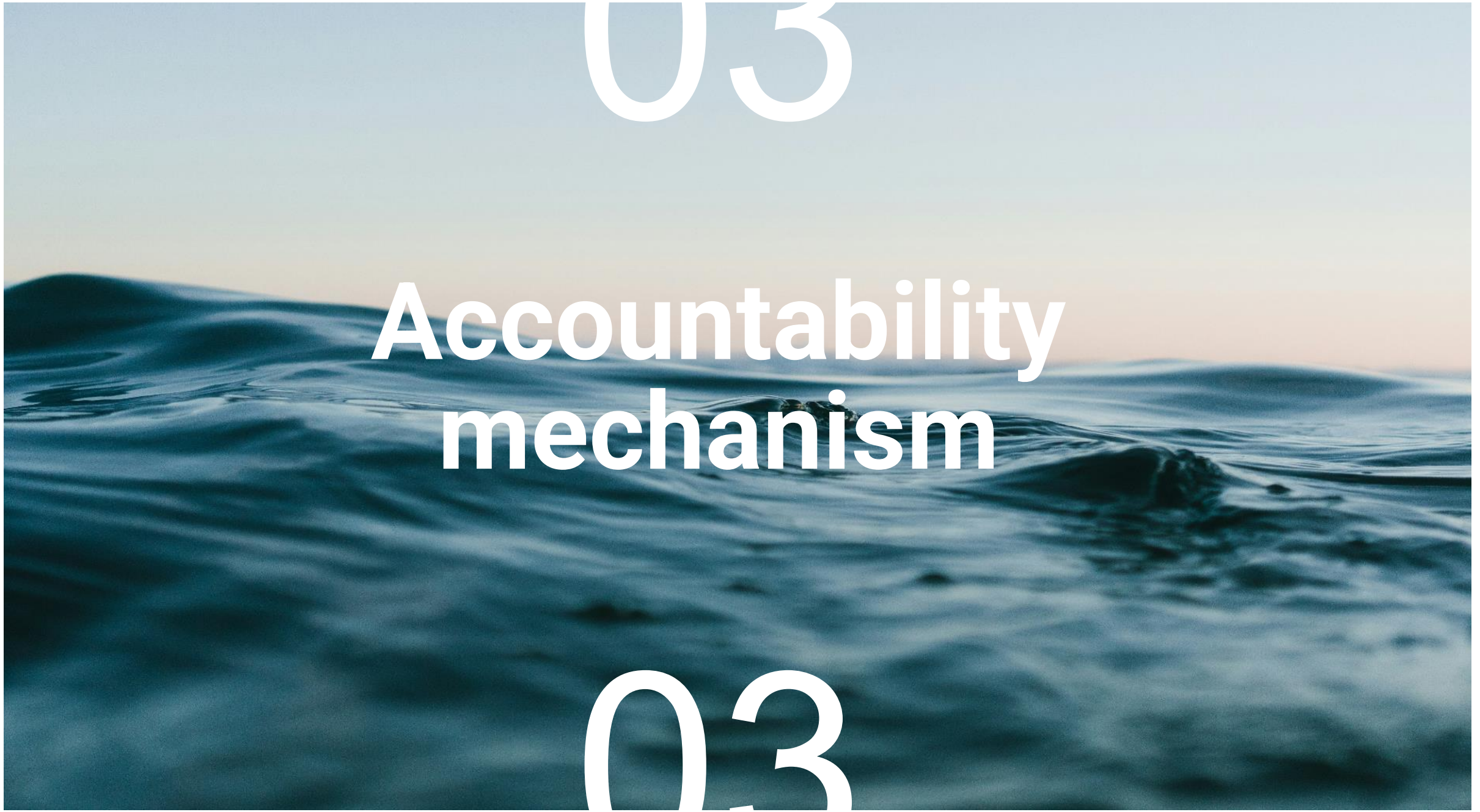
Refined mission statement based on the GOOS reform project

By acting on its strategic choices, the GOOS will be empowered to adapt its operational focus for greater impact and sustained relevance

FROM…	…TO
Reacting and responding to the **immediate needs** of the ocean observing community as they arise	**Shaping** and **advising** the global ocean observing agenda
Viewing the **operational** and **scientific oceanography community** as the primary stakeholder	Being agile and responsive to **Member States**, **providers**, and **users** of ocean observation data
Relying on **Member State contributions** for funding	Augmenting **public funding** from diverse Member States, supplemented by growing financial and in-kind contributions from **non-traditional actors**
Operating under a **broad-based sponsorship structure** (e.g., IOC, WMO, UNEP, and ISC)	Engaging with **key strategic sponsors** (e.g., IOC, WMO), supported by a broader coalition with clearly defined **roles** and **priorities**

GOOS is committed to deliver distinctive value to Member States, suppliers and users of ocean observing data towards 2030+

	Member States (as decision makers, not suppliers or user) e.g., countries that have formally joined the IOC and WMO with rights and obligations, national focal points	Ocean Observing Data Providers e.g., Member States, oceanographers, marine scientists, research institutions, scienitifc networks, private sector	Ocean Observing Data Users e.g., Member States, scienitifc community (as data users), private sector (fisheries, shipping, energy etc.), NGOs, educators, civil society, philantropists, innovators
Who struggle with...	Uneven expertise and infrastructure, complex platforms, fragmented coordination, and unclear roles between GOOS and Member States	Fragmented data and governance, administrative burden, and insufficient recognition and visibility	Inaccessible and non-user friendly data, engagement complexity, and lack of co-design involvement
We provide...	A **globally integrated**, **responsive**, and **resilient** ocean observing system		
That...	Strengthens marine ecosystems, ocean economy, national resilience, and maritime security through data-driven decisions and policy-relevant observations	Advances groundbreaking research and relevant operational ocean science	Fuels innovation, supports disaster risk reduction, and supports thriving marine ecosystems and ocean economies via smarter, data-driven decisions



03

Accountability mechanism

03

The OKRs operationalize the GOOS's revised mission, breaking it down into strategic priorities and measurable outcomes

> To **enable** and **evolve** a **globally integrated**, **responsive**, and **resilient** ocean observing system for **thriving communities** and a **healthy ocean**

Objective	**Enable ocean observing system**	**Evolve globally integrated ocean observing system**	**Be responsive to Member States, suppliers of ocean observation data, and users**	**Ensure resilience of the global ocean observing system**
Key Result	**% observing systems with interoperable EOV dataflows**	**# of Member States contributing to and sharing data from GOOS Networks**	**# of co-developed initiatives or products with stakeholders**	**% increase in GOOS funding and committments**

Suggested process to get started with measuring GOOS results starting in year 2026

1. Define baselines for each Key Result in year 2026
2. Apply a % yearly increase to each Key Result through 2030
3. Embed OKRs into existing performance dashboards/ reporting tools
4. Review Key Results annually and adjust priorities as needed

OKR – Objectives and Key Results

To drive system-wide performance and ensure accountability, it is proposed that components report on four results of the revised mission

☑ Expected reporting on the key result

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			Member States	Ocean Observing Data Providers	Ocean Observing Data Users	
GOOS Secretariat			☑			☑
Expert Panels				☑	☑	
ICG	☑	☑		☑		Joint reporting
Ocean observing data providers	☑			☑	☑	
NFPs[1]			☑			☑
ETOOFS				☑	☑	

Note: These key results require structured consultations to determine how each GOOS component will contribute to achieving the objectives, while also mapping intersections with other IOC entities (e.g., IODE and related programs)

Recommended changes

- All GOOS components will be assigned a defined set of targets that directly align with the GOOS revised mission
- These targets will serve as measurable indicators of each component's contribution to system-wide goals and will be shared with the GOOS Steering Committee on annual basis via the annual reporting process
  - NFPs will be expected to submit regular reports to the GOOS Secretariat which will consolidate and syntethise to inform strategic decision-making (see slide #21)
  - ICG will submit joint report based on input from ocean observing data providers
  - GOOS Secretariat targets will be aligned with IOC medium-term strategy

1) Ocean observing data providers includes GOOS Networks and other observing communities

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Summary of responses on considerations for GOOS reform

Joanna Post

15th GOOS Steering Committee meeting | 25-27 March 2026 | Hyderabad, India

Mission and Scope

- Achieving GOOS's mission requires a serious, long-term commitment to sustaining the full breadth of its coordinating functions including, all three Panels, and the new ICG.
- While making Member States more visible and recognizing data users is a positive step, there is a need for clearer and more concrete strategies to increase the number of users and funders, which is expected to be a key challenge.
- The wording *responsive* and *receptive* does not bring the right messaging. GOOS should not be receptive but rather pro-active in initiating co-design and co-development with Member states, stakeholders, providers and users of ocean observation data, etc.
- Proposed scope and structure lack actual methods to evolve an integrated system that delivers insights to support resilient societies and protect ecosystems, as outlined.

Mission and Scope

- Slide 8 appropriately captures the purpose part of the mission statement, the collective of WMO Members, as user in stating “Ensure… data are ultimately transformed into actionable insights…advancing the… weather, and climate communities.” However, this is missing from much of the rest of the text. This limits the understanding of the users of GOOS to “ocean-based users” while in fact the user community is larger and connecting to them can help build understanding of the value of GOOS.
- The reform’s mission and scope should acknowledge GOOS’s position within the broader IOC (and WMO) institutional framework and define how GOOS interacts with other IOC programmes.
- Capacity development should be given proper consideration, especially regarding the future of GOOS’s own GRA structure and the potential role of IOC’s OceanTeacher Global Academy.
- Slide 8: the the role of science is underemphasized. Should be highlighted in mission statement to maintain a strong link between scientific research and real-world impact.
- Slide 9: Concerns about removing "the operational and scientific oceanography community” as primary stakeholder

Accountability mechanism - comments

- The accountability mechanism is missing some steps in a theory of change. How will GOOS's outputs from its different structures allow for / instigate action amongst Member States, who are ultimately responsible for implementing GOOS? Their implication and funding is needed to achieve the proposed key results.
- The OKRs need to be clearly defined to be meaningful, but also to be able to calculate the baselines without investing too much time.
- To ensure meaningful accountability, GOOS should track operational indicators, such as the proportion of networks adhering to minimum metadata passports and implementing endorsed best practices across the observation lifecycle.
    - We propose a clear federated standards chain: Panels define scientific requirements and EOV specifications; the ICG coordinates operational implementation (network specification sheets, minimum metadata passports, lifecycle coverage, and bestpractice endorsement pathways); and the Secretariat supports visibility, partnerships, and uptake.
-

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- It is not clear what “observing systems” means in this context. Are we thinking of global ocean networks? Are we thinking of national/regional observing systems? Doing the baseline seems like a huge task in the second case.

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- Unclear definition of “GOOS Networks”. Exclusively OCG observing networks? Or does it also encompass BioEco community observing initiatives and programmes? How are observing initiatives not led by MS, e.g., intergovernmental or private-sector initiatives, captured under this framework?
- Insufficient as key result. Progress toward this objective should be measurable even if the number of contributing Member States remains unchanged.
- Suggestion: a good addition would be in fact a Member State which has certain coastal observing capacity (an observing system) and is willing to share those data even if they are not part of any of the current global GOOS networks.
- Suggestion: A more meaningful “Key result” for this objective would be the volume of data shared by each Member State and/or the number of new observing programmes from Member States contributing to GOOS. Assigning unique identifiers to all datasets contributed to GOOS would enable consistent measurement of data volume and the number of contributing programmes per Member State.

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- Concern that metrics unintentionally encourage Member States to focus primarily on domestic or economically driven activities resulting in fragmentation of the observing system rather than reinforcing global integration. A stronger emphasis on a global perspective is considered necessary
- Co-design and product-oriented activities should be evaluated based on how they connect to and benefit the international community (e.g., sharing outcomes as global best practices, open data integration, and technology transfer).
- The implicit push for a closer connection with stakeholders looks clear and valid, but the formulation not so clear. The Observing Co-Design programme has shown that these approaches require considerable dedicated resources, for the Secretariat and to facilitate that stakeholders can participate. If we are using this simply as a way to change the “modus operandi” of GOOS elements and in particular the panels, this may be OK.

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- Suggestion: Establish a formal system to officially evaluate and publicly announce each Member State's (and NFP's) contributions to these global investments (e.g., via a public dashboard or report card). This official recognition would provide NFPs with a credible advocacy tool to convince domestic policymakers and financial authorities of the need for explicit and sustained budget allocations for open-ocean science.

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Joint reporting

- The role and accountability of the Donor Coordination Group in fundraising efforts is not articulated. Accountability for the percentage increase in GOOS funding and commitments (OKR4) should rest primarily with the Donor Coordination Group and SC, not with the Secretariat and NFPs.
- SC also accountable for OKR2
- Expectations placed on NFPs under this proposal need to be recalibrated: the level of engagement assumed is high, yet NFP participation in this domain has historically been uneven.
- It seems too much of an ask for NFPs to be responsible for more funding coming from their nations, and it is surprising that NFPs do not have connection with increasing the number of Member States contributing data (no. 2) (presumably, they are closer to the national data providers and could have some influence there, while it is not that obvious that they will have sufficient power to set national funding priorities into GOOS programme).

Discussion and decisions

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Thank you

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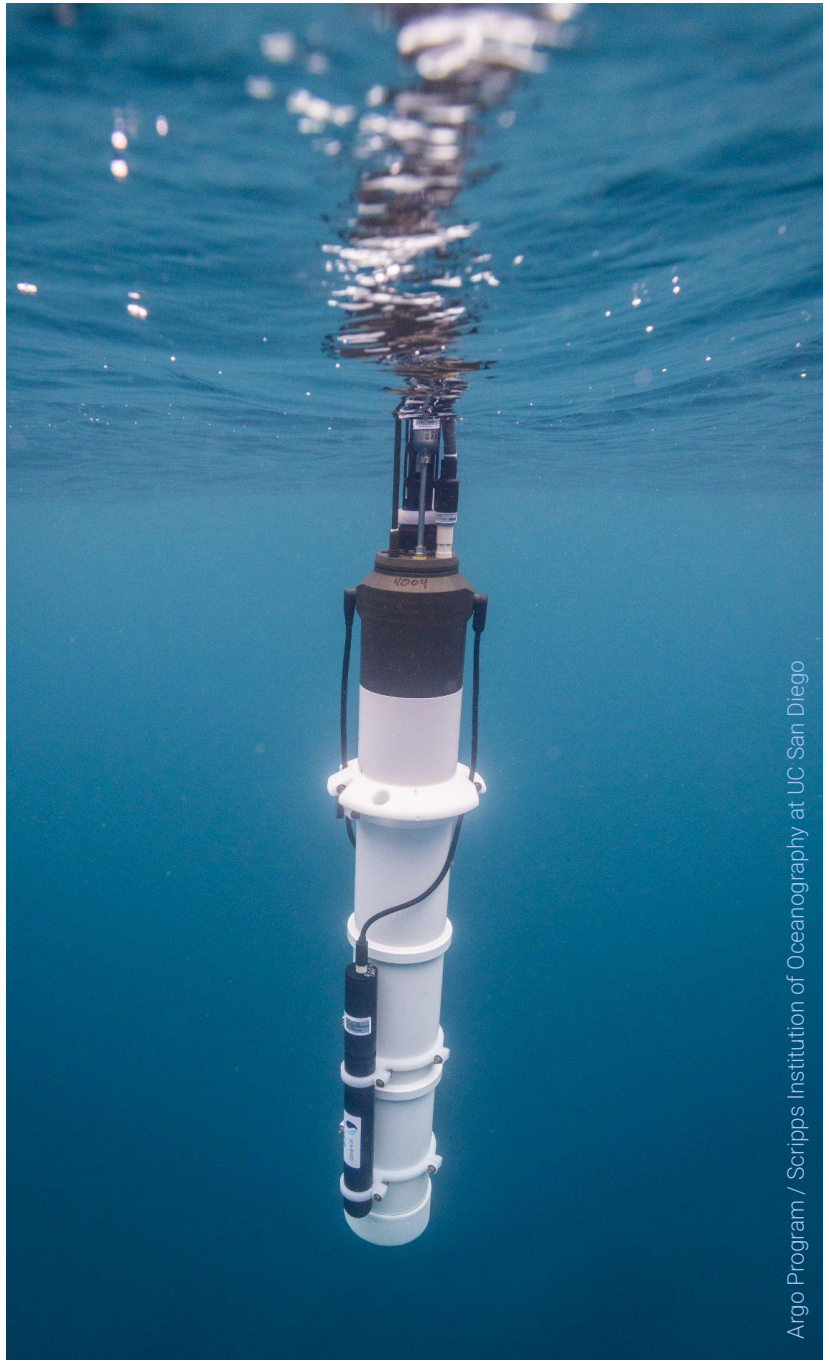

Argo Program / Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego