

**Name or GOOS Component:**

OOPC

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## Considerations for the GOOS Reform proposal

Draft proposal: <https://oceanexpert.org/document/37899>

### Mission, scope and accountability mechanism

(slides 7 - 10 and 24 - 26)

**What are your concerns regarding the reform proposal on mission, scope and accountability mechanism?**

**Slide 25-**

1<sup>st</sup> OKRs-% observing systems with interoperable EOVS dataflows.

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? Already doing the baseline seems a huge task in the second case.

2<sup>nd</sup> OKR – “# of Member States...”

This is unclear and a bit restrictive if it is only GOOS networks. I would argue that 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.

3<sup>rd</sup> OKR – “# of co-developed initiatives or products with stakeholders”

The implicit push for a closer connection with stakeholders looks clear and valid to us, 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.

Slide 26 – There are several things not very clear in the table. First of all, does this accountability assignment imply that those GOOS elements that are ticked are the only responsible for certain of the OKRs? I would imagine that the Steering Committee and the Donor Coordination Group should play a role too. While it seems too much of an ask for NFPs to be responsible for more funding coming from their nations, it is surprising that they do not

have connection with increasing the number of Member States contributing data (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).

Finally, we note that the Mission reads “sustained relevance”, but not “sustained impact”. We are unsure about how decisive adding “sustained is”, but if we add it, it should apply to both terms.

Slide 10 is useful.

**If you don't agree with the proposal - what is the alternative? Why?**

1<sup>st</sup> OKRs-% observing systems with interoperable EOVS dataflows.

Clarify “observing systems”: is a GOOS network an observing system or not?

**2<sup>nd</sup> OKR – “# of Member States ... GOOS networks”**

GOOS networks and/or open data regional or global data repositories? GOOS only manages the global networks, but is it not the purpose of the reform to get more data into the system from the coast, for instance?

**3<sup>rd</sup> OKR – “# of co-developed initiatives or products with stakeholders”**

Provided that there is dedicated staff to support these co-development processes.

**Slide 26**

The SC should be accountable for OKR2 and OKR4, the Donor Coordination Group should be accountable for OKR4. NFP should not be accountable for OKR4.

**How do we make it work? What does the implementation look like? (including with respect to your component)**

Members of OOPC are already co-developing initiatives or products with stakeholders but this would not have been possible without extra funding/support external to the panel. The OKRs need to be clearly defined to be meaningful, but also to be able to calculate the baselines without investing too much time.

**Proposed structural changes nr. 1-5**  
(slides 11 - 19)

**What are your concerns regarding the reform proposal on the first five structural changes?**

One concern is that some of the solutions rely on bodies/capacities that are not there yet, for which we do not have the resources, while eliminating bodies that do exist.

We are referring specifically to the NFP, the new Steering Committee and the GRAs, and the low number of Core Secretariat. We will develop those concerns later.

Going slide by slide:

**Slide 14 -Monitor observing system** design. Again, if by observing system we are referring to GOOS networks, we would advise to use that term, or at least to include a definition of what we mean by observing system.

NFP tasks: this is too ambitious and unrealistic. Very few countries can afford this, someone dedicated to coordination.

**Slide 15-**

**Ocean observing system coordinator.** Again, aren't we talking about GOOS networks here? Presumably yes, and in that case this should be clearly stated.

The "innovation catalyst" part would require a different profile for the Secretariat and it does not seem a core need. It is not even clear that experts contributing to GOOS are necessarily at the forefront of the latest technological advancements.

Supporting the GOOS SC or the Donor Coordination Group does not seem to be part of the tasks of the Secretariat, and this is missing.

**Slide 16 –**

We got to a similar differentiation during GCOS reform, it is very useful. Just noticing that while there is a bit of text about UNEP, there is nothing about ISC (maybe on purpose)

**Slide 17 –**

A Donor Coordination Group would require specific Secretariat support. The experience from WMO and SOFF that this can be extremely resource consuming to be successful.

**Slide 18 –**

We have doubts about the changes in the "elevated" GOOS Steering Committee.

By eliminating the representation of GOOS bodies in the Steering Committee we are effectively separating the "decision making body", from the body that is really pushing forward the activities (voluntarily). There is a risk that the decisions of the SC are not sufficiently

informed, and that they are questioned by those that should implement them (but had not had an opportunity to participate in their development).

Opening calls through IOC and WMO every two years would require a significant investment of time given how formal these processes are. The regional representation may be imposed by IOC rules, however, an IOC representative may not necessarily be knowledgeable or sufficiently connected to the observing infrastructure in the region they represent, unless they are also involved in some GRA.

### **Slide 19**

The table lacks details on the Programme Specialists functions and an indicating of who does what, in particular if this is absorbing the activities done by the current IODE Secretariat.

It looks as if the regular funds from IOC will go to these new functions which are not described, while the panels and the ICG (the core) rely on external funds. This is the current situation, which is unfortunately happening, but we do not think this is the model we should present as ideal.

On top of that, in our view for the Governance Reform to succeed, in particular the greater ambition reflected in the OKR, the NFP and general increase in the number of meetings and bodies (Donor Coordination Group, Joint Panel Meetings, GOOS Conference), the proposed Core Secretariat is not sufficient. As it is, it looks a similar situation as it is now (if we consider staff currently working in IODE, but staff in Paris, regardless of whether they are permanent or JPOs).

### **If you don't agree with the proposal - what is the alternative? Why?**

Make sure that the GOOS SC has sufficient visibility and understanding of the work done by GOOS components, and that GOOS components can influence GOOS SC decisions. At least one representative from ICG and another from the panels (it could be rotation).

Secretariat supporting core elements of GOOS, in particular the panels and the networks should clearly be part of the core Secretariat and funded in a sustainable way.

In our view, a Secretariat capable of supporting GOOS as indicated in the proposal should have approximately 12 members in levels from P2 to P5 (vs 10 now). This accounts for a "normal" size, considering that IODE office will be under the responsibility of GOOS director now, plus the extra work involved in engaging properly with the NFP (or, in our view, this should first be with the GRAs), supporting the co-development activities, and the raise funding activities (Donor Board etc.).

**How do we make it work? What does the implementation look like?** (including with respect to your component)

It all mainly boils down to securing more funding. With the current resources this is not doable.

**Proposed structural change: Infrastructure Coordination Group (ICG)**  
(slide 20)

**What are your concerns regarding the reform proposal on the ICG?**

The ICG has an expanded scope compared to the current OCG and yet, the level of Secretariat support is very modest (lower box on slide 19), in particular in a first instance where many disparate pieces will need to be put together.

**If you don't agree with the proposal - what is the alternative? Why?**

ICG would require 1.5 FTE of a P3.

**How do we make it work? What does the implementation look like?** (including with respect to your component)

We lack capacity to do a proper-sustained follow-up of the activities of OCG, even though we try to be as present as possible (either the chairs or the officer attend the annual meetings and/or some of the round tables in between). One of the selection criteria of OOPC members is their connection with GOOS networks. For the data side of things, OOPC would probably need to get one of the experts more engaged in the work of ICG so that they acted as a bridge between both bodies (which is the case with experts who are also participating in OCG).

**Proposed structural change: NFP role and interaction model**  
(slide 21)

**What are your concerns regarding the reform proposal on NFP role and interaction?**

As mentioned before, the description of tasks and responsibilities of the NFP are very difficult to fulfil unless there are people exclusively dedicated to fulfil those tasks in the countries, which is unlikely. If the number of NFP increases, then also the staff within GOOS Secretariat supporting and engaging with the NFPs will have to devote an important amount of time to follow this up. It is definitely a good

aspiration, but in our view, it corresponds to a GOOS programme which would need to have much more budget (for more staff and to support travels), and a geopolitical situation which would make possible for countries to have that kind of posts. In Europe GOOS could in principle leverage the EOOS system, but this does not seem to be working effectively either.

As a reference, GCOS national, with a proper GCOS coordinator, equivalent to the NFP only exist in 5 countries, even if in theory this role should exist because there all parties have their delegates in SBSTA following the COP, which in theory should oversee the climate networks in their respective countries.

Another problem is the myriad of focal points already existing for the different networks.

**If you don't agree with the proposal - what is the alternative? Why?**

We believe that before trying to make NFPs work, it would be advisable to explore how the connection GOOS-GRAs can be improved.

**How do we make it work? What does the implementation look like?** (including with respect to your component)

OOPC has connection with regional activities more through CLIVAR panels than through the GRAs, but the GRAs are in fact ex-officio of the panel.

**Proposed structural change: GOOS Regional Alliances – THE TABLE CANNOT BE EDITED, WE HAVE ADDED TEXT BELOW**  
(slides 22-23)

**How do you see the future role of GRAs in GOOS?**

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**How do we make it work? What does the implementation look like?** (including with respect to your component)

**How do you see the future role of GRAs in GOOS?**

We acknowledge the difficulties in connecting with the GRAs. Nevertheless, we trust that the SC will provide an opportunity for the right open conversations to take place and set the basis for a strengthened connection where both parts can benefit. There is probably not a single solution, but a different solution for each of the GRAs and it may well be that the conversations do not succeed in all cases. But we think this needs to happen.

At least some of the GRAs are effectively communicating with some of the IOC sub commissions, which is also an advantage, as they could help raise GOOS profile in IOC. On the other hand, they are the bodies which can bridge the gap between the open ocean and the coast, where GOOS wants to have more impact.

**How do we make it work? What does the implementation look like?** (including with respect to your component)

Regarding ideas for the implementation, the Report Card and OceanOPS metadata system could be used to show the relative contribution of the countries to the system. This could serve as an incentive for greater participation in some cases.

Another idea could be to make sure that GRAs are somehow part of the delegations attending IOC meetings.

## **Governance** (slides 27 - 33)

### **What are your concerns regarding the proposed governance?**

The governance proposed, understood as a definition of the main internal and external bodies contributing to GOOS either from an operational perspective or strategic, seems reasonable with all the caveats already expressed before:

- GOOS Steering Committee
- NFP (instead of keeping GRAs)
- Insufficient support (both in terms of Secretariat and budget to support travel etc.)

In terms of planning, the frequency and hierarchy of meetings are broadly adequate, provided there is extra budget for the Secretariat to support their organization and to support the travel.

While we believe that having Joint Panel Meetings would be beneficial, Joint Panel Meetings cannot replace the individual Panel Meetings, so we believe that annual frequency is excessive, while the individual panel still should have the opportunity to meet in person separately. There is also the question of budget and, in the case of OOPC, the fact that we only meet every 18 months (for CO2 reasons). One Joint Panel meeting every 3-4 years would suffice.

The preparation of OceanObs Conferences typically consume several months of staff time. Adding a GOOS Conference in the middle does not seem worth it, unless it would coincide with a Joint Panel Meeting and/or ICG, for instance. And this would make everything very complicated too in terms of planning (and very expensive).

**If you don't agree with the proposal - what is the alternative? Why?**

As mentioned before:

- GOOS SC – should have some representation from ICG and Panels (and IODE probably too)
- NFP – before betting on this solution and giving so many responsibilities to this group, exhaust all the possible conversations with the GRAs
- Getting the approval of the co-sponsoring organisations bodies is not sufficient if there is not a commitment to provide more funds. Otherwise, it will be just paper.
- Be less ambitious with the in-person meetings.
- Officers supporting core elements like the networks or the panels should be part of the core secretariat too. The current situation is an anomaly.

**How do we make it work? What does the implementation look like?** (including with respect to your component)

**Draft Implementation Plan**

(slides 34 - 36)

**What are your concerns regarding the proposed implementation plan?**

The geopolitical situation is the opposite to the one we should have to help with this reform. We cannot simply ignore this fact. Embarking in such a process without the proper support (even for something as basic as to ensure that proper baselines for the KR are calculated dedicated staff time will be needed) and, more importantly, without perspectives of increased support in the future seems risky.

**If you don't agree with the proposal - what is the alternative? Why?**

**How do we make it work? What does the implementation look like?** (including with respect to your component)



### **Any additional considerations for the GOOS SC on GOOS reform?**

In general, the proposal allows to rationalize and bring clarity to what the programme is and how its different elements fit together. The proposal also identifies weak points and offers new avenues for its future, to make it more impactful and responsive. This kind of reflection was important, and we believe that the process has already helped those who belong to GOOS, to get a better understanding of its current and potential future scope, and to position ourselves better in that picture.

But, as explained, many details are missing, and, importantly, also the funding component is missing. The “new” programme would be more ambitious, deliver data beyond physics, would work closer to the users, would need more resources for interaction within the components and with those users. And yet, this is not contemplated in the size of the Secretariat, nor in the general funding, which should be somehow anticipated. Having Secretariat is not sufficient, GOOS delivers thanks to the experts, experts can do this voluntarily, but there needs to be money to support their participation, their engagement. Proposing a Donor Coordination Group as a means to attract this extra funding looks natural... but also very resource consuming to make it work.

Our suggestion would be to focus on two or three issues that are already happening and must be prioritised (e.g., what is happening in the data space with the advent of biological data, the interplay OceanOPS/IODE etc., the dialogue with GRAs) before re-structuring and creating new bodies and new processes, specially given the geopolitical environment we are experiencing right now.

Specifically concerning the panel’s work and the last slides (68), there is a call for standardizing the ToR and duties of the panels. But let us not forget that the panels are not funded by GOOS and have other responsibilities towards their funders and there will be a limit to this homogenization. (BTW, this explains why the consultants did not find part of the information on membership concerning OOPC, which they indicate as “low maturity”). Nevertheless, we agree that solving some internal inconsistencies should be something doable without requiring an enormous effort and could be very helpful.