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Item 4.1 of the Provisional Agenda

**IOC-WIDE STRATEGY ON SUSTAINABLE OCEAN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT  
(2025–2030) AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (2025–2027)**

Summary

By IOC Decision A-32/Dec.4.7, the Assembly at its 32<sup>nd</sup> session took note of the scope and process for developing the IOC-wide Strategy on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management for the period 2024–2030 through document [IOC/A-32/4.7.Doc\(1\)](#). A draft strategy was presented to Member States at the 57<sup>th</sup> session of the IOC Executive Council through document [IOC/EC-57/4.3.Doc\(1\).Rev.](#), which was based on inputs as synthesized in document [IOC/INF-1537](#) and its addendum and two online consultations held in May 2024.

This document presents the final draft of the IOC Strategy and Implementation Plan on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management. It is based on the outcomes of the Working Group on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management, as established by decision EC-57/4.3, which met during two online meetings in February and April 2025 and a 2-day in-person meeting in March 2025. A Report of the Working Group is available in document IOC/INF-1541.

The proposed decision is referenced A-33/Dec.4.1 in the Action Paper (document IOC/A-33/2 Prov.) and contains the Terms of Reference of the proposed IOC Working Group on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management for the period 2025–2030.



## Part I Introduction

### Context

1. The **ocean** faces significant **pressures that are accelerating at unprecedented speed**. Habitat fragmentation and destruction, unsustainable resource use and marine pollution, particularly plastic waste, are reaching alarming levels, and climate change exacerbates threats with ocean warming, acidification and deoxygenation destabilizing marine ecosystems. These impacts drive significant changes and loss in marine biodiversity, threaten fisheries that support billions of people worldwide, and loom over critical blue carbon ecosystems.

2. Simultaneously, the **ocean economy is growing significantly**, outpacing global economic growth. This expansion is driven by key sectors like tourism, and shipping, alongside emerging industries such as marine biotechnology, aquaculture and renewable energy. Ocean-based industries are projected to contribute over USD\$3 trillion annually to the global economy by 2030, with employment in these sectors growing faster than the global average. There are an estimated 370-500 million Indigenous Peoples worldwide<sup>1</sup>—many of whom are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of ocean degradation and climate change. For many, the ocean is of great social, spiritual, cultural and economic importance and the connection and need to protect and steward it for future generations is deeply felt.

3. **International agreements** that **guide global action for sustainable** development and environmental conservation increasingly rely on data and knowledge. Under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDG 14 sets 10 targets for ocean conservation and sustainable use. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework sets out 4 goals for 2050 and 23 global targets for 2030, including the commitment to conserve at least 30% of terrestrial and inland water areas and of marine and coastal areas by 2030. The Agreement under the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) aims to strengthen ocean governance beyond national jurisdictions. Achieving the Paris Agreement's overarching goal of pursuing efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels is equally crucial for the future of ocean health and services. All these commitments call for increased collection and use of ocean data and knowledge to guide decision-making at all scales.

4. The triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, combined with the ocean's growing economic importance, and the need to include international commitments in national planning, underscores the imperative role that coordinated ocean planning and management must play. **Global momentum and practice are building for an evidence-based, whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach to ocean planning and management**, ensuring long-term health and productivity of marine environments and the climate, while fostering sustainable economic growth and societal well-being, and inclusive of consideration for equity, social justice, and the needs of marginalized communities.

### Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management

5. Sustainable ocean planning and management (SOPM) is a **comprehensive, strategic and future-oriented framework** designed to guide decision-making about the overall sustainable use and conservation of a nation's entire ocean resources. By integrating ecosystem and economic considerations, societal benefits, and climate resilience, SOPM aims at preserving the long-term health of marine ecosystems, and the natural services they provide, while optimizing sustainable economic growth at all scales (from local to global). It further aims at incorporating adaptive management strategies to address climate change impacts and environmental variability.

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO : <https://www.unesco.org/en/indigenous-peoples>

6. The ocean is a complex, interconnected and dynamic system that is influenced by numerous factors simultaneously, including societies' changing priorities. SOPM adds value to **existing ocean governance** frameworks which typically address only one specific component of managing this complexity. Marine spatial planning (MSP)<sup>2</sup>, for example, largely focuses on organizing human activities in time and space and minimizing conflicts, with focus on preserving ecosystems. Integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) usually aims at addressing complex management issues in the coastal zone in a holistic way, while fisheries or tourism management frameworks shape their respective sectors. While many efforts have been successful—and this IOC-SOPM Strategy will build on the strong foundation in MSP and ICZM—this **fragmented** ocean governance approach<sup>3</sup> has so far failed to deliver the ocean health required to face current environmental challenges. Moreover, the ocean's economic and social potential tends to benefit only a few, with little regard for its overall return to society as a whole, including in developing countries where equitable distribution of benefits is crucial.

7. SOPM expects to remedy this by serving as a **unifying 'umbrella' for ocean-related governance at all scales**—from within national waters to its use to deliver multilateral agreements—thereby integrating existing and future **management frameworks** (such as marine spatial plans, marine protected area management plans, integrated coastal area and watershed management plans, sectoral plans such as for tourism, renewable energy, or fisheries management), **processes** (visioning monitoring and goal-setting, stakeholder participation and consultation, evaluation, sustained financing), **policies** (such as development of a national blue economy or climate policies), translation of commitments made through **international agreements** as well as **indigenous and local knowledge** and community-based management approaches, where available, into a comprehensive, coherent whole. SOPM can include ocean accounting to compile consistent and comparable information across social, economic and environmental domains to better understand the distribution of ocean services across coastal communities aiming for greater equity and inclusion.

8. **SOPM's whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach allows** to integrate these various components, **making ocean conservation and exploitation an integral part of a nation's resource management**, connected across sectors, administrative boundaries, jurisdictions and the land-sea interface, and aligned with international agreements. By bringing all aspects of the ocean and its governance together, SOPM allows to address challenges and to act upon opportunities, thereby facilitating nations' potential to secure an ocean that is protected, produces sustainably, and where nature and people prosper.

9. SOPM is most effective when **based on robust scientific and indigenous and local knowledge** about the conservation needs and future dynamics of the underlying ecosystem. It might hence require transboundary collaboration amongst nations, and with the United Nations, during both the planning and implementation phases. It also demands understanding of the connections between national SOPM processes and ocean management issues in watersheds, rivers, on land, and in areas beyond national jurisdiction. SOPM needs to be institutionalized, endorsed, financed and capacitated to ensure effective implementation, and be backed by strong political will and commitment. It is best developed as a continuing and iterative process that is updated and improved through performance monitoring, evaluation, and results from new research, enabling adaptation to changing contexts.

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<sup>2</sup> IOC's refers to MSP as a public process of analyzing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives that are usually specified through a political process: <https://www.mspglobal2030.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Fragmented governance of our one global ocean: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333342057\\_Fragmented\\_Governance\\_of\\_Our\\_One\\_Global\\_Ocean](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333342057_Fragmented_Governance_of_Our_One_Global_Ocean)

## Target Audience

10. The primary target audience for this IOC-SOPM Strategy are **decision-makers and professionals responsible for the planning and management of ocean areas** and their resources across IOC Member States. Planning and managing ocean areas sustainably requires a comprehensive understanding of the ocean's physical, chemical, biological and geological systems. It is important to use a multi-disciplinary approach that includes natural and social sciences, as well as indigenous and local knowledge, and knowledge from end-users, thereby ensuring that decisions will account for human activities, economic drivers and societal needs, and respect indigenous and local knowledge. Beyond understanding current conditions, decision-makers must be equipped with the ability to predict and forecast change, whether in environmental conditions, industries or society. Integrating these multiple layers of information allows them to anticipate future challenges and opportunities so that decisions taken today contribute to a sustainable ocean 10, 20, or even 50 years from now.

11. Most decision-makers and professionals responsible for the planning and management of ocean areas and its resources have scientific or technical training in one or several disciplines. It is therefore a challenge to have the necessary overview. Translating complex science, data and interdisciplinary knowledge into actionable insights, facilitating the uptake of data, creating suitable knowledge products, and strengthening capacities can help address this challenge. This can be done by leveraging open-source technologies and collaborative platforms for knowledge sharing and capacity development.

12. The IOC-SOPM Strategy will also be of use to a wider audience. **Scientific institutions, NGOs, academia, and other stakeholders** at regional, national or multilateral levels working towards a sustainable ocean will benefit from an IOC-SOPM Strategy that aims to align ocean knowledge with planning and management needs. Scientific institutions can use this strategy to guide research priorities that directly support policy and decision-making, NGOs can apply its insights to advance evidence-based policies while academia can leverage it to train the next generation of ocean professionals with interdisciplinary expertise. These are just a few examples, as the widespread sharing of easily understandable knowledge about ocean health can feed all levels of society.

## The Role of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)

13. **IOC foundational mandate and legacy:** IOC's dual mandate—to promote international cooperation in ocean research and capacity, while applying that knowledge for the improvement of management and decision-making—makes it uniquely positioned to help nations develop science- and knowledge-driven SOPM. As a trusted UN body for ocean science and capacity development, IOC builds on over 60 years of expertise in data coordination, training and technical guidance through its programmes, expert networks, and regional sub-commissions. Many of its initiatives already embody key SOPM principles, providing a strong foundation for IOC to advance its role in coordinating worldwide efforts in this regard, and thereby generating additional value for its Member States.

14. **Ocean data coordination and coastal risk preparedness:** The IOC generates authoritative knowledge on the state of the ocean and emerging challenges, particularly focusing on multiple stressors that are crucial for ecosystem-based management. Through its Tsunami Early Warning System and community preparedness work, IOC helps Member States enhance regional coordination, training, and risk management, ensuring that science-driven preparedness can be embedded into national ocean planning and management, especially at the land-sea interface. Through its Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), Ocean Data Information System (ODIS) and Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS), IOC plays a pivotal role in coordinating and collating ocean data and information, providing nations with access to real-time, historical, and predictive insights into ocean conditions, biodiversity and socio-ecological systems. Yet, despite the vast amount of ocean data, still too little of it informs policy and decision-making. This is where IOC has

untapped potential—to bridge the gap between science and action—and where the IOC-SOPM Strategy expects to advance Member States' capabilities to navigate the complex realities of sustainable ocean management, helping to inform decisions.

15. **Capacity development and training in ocean planning and management:** IOC supports nations in building the technical expertise needed for effective ocean management. Its leadership in MSP has helped and/or guided over 126 Member States and territories to develop marine spatial plans through successful initiatives such as MSPGlobal. By facilitating access to training, capacity development and exchange of good practices, particularly in developing nations, IOC strengthens the ability of decision-makers to implement sustainable and inclusive ocean strategies, including indigenous and local communities where appropriate. These existing global and regional networks of practitioners offer effective pathways to develop capacities on SOPM in all ocean basins. IOC's training programmes and youth initiatives, such as the Ocean Teacher Global Academy (OTGA) and the Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOP) network, help educate the next generation of ocean leaders and offer existing mechanisms through which IOC can support Member States in developing capacities for SOPM.

16. **Adaptability to regional contexts:** Recognizing that Member States face diverse socio-economic and environmental challenges and start from different baselines, IOC is well placed to ensure support to SOPM efforts is tailored to regional and national realities. Through its network of regional sub-commissions—IOCARIBE in the Caribbean, IOCAFRICA in Africa, WESTPAC in the Western Pacific, and IOCINDIO in the Central Indian Ocean—, IOC can deliver localized expertise and facilitate intra- and inter-regional collaboration, as well as promoting South-South cooperation and knowledge exchange among developing countries facing similar ocean management challenges. This enables IOC Member States to identify and address local and region-specific needs and opportunities while aligning with international commitments for a sustainably managed ocean.

17. **Global partnerships:** The IOC-SOPM Strategy aims to serve as a guiding framework to strengthen existing, and develop new, partnerships with key actors at all scales toward enhancing data access, expertise and innovation, bridging the gap between science and policy, and facilitating equitable access to technology and capacity development opportunities for developing countries. Partnerships can encompass UN and non-UN entities, governmental and non-governmental agencies, including leading partners in SOPM such as, for example, the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy<sup>4</sup>. As the lead agency for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) (UN Ocean Decade), the IOC facilitates global ocean science and knowledge collaboration to advance ocean sustainability. A dedicated Sustainable Ocean Planning (SOP) Programme was developed in partnership with several international organizations and launched at the Barcelona UN Ocean Decade Conference in 2024. The implementation of the IOC-SOPM Strategy is a key element of IOC's contribution to the UN Ocean Decade SOP programme. At the same time, IOC can use this partnership as a vehicle to access and activate SOPM communities in leveraging implementation of its IOC-SOPM Strategy.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://oceanpanel.org/>

## Part II The Strategy

### Vision and Mission

18. To assist Member States in their efforts to develop SOPM in a rapidly changing context, the vision of the IOC-SOPM Strategy is:

*“IOC Member States are equipped to implement knowledge-based Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management”*

19. The vision will be translated into reality through the following **mission**:

*“Support decision-makers in implementing Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management by facilitating the uptake of data, advancing knowledge products and strengthening capacities, by 2030”*

20. The IOC-SOPM Strategy will serve as a guiding and harmonizing framework for IOC’s programmes and regional sub-commissions, leveraging their expertise in ocean research, services, knowledge, training and capacity development to achieve the vision. It will translate the mission into reality by making full use of the IOC value chain to bridge the gap between science and decision-making, and by combining IOC’s strengths and collective capacities as well as its partnership potential through the UN Ocean Decade and beyond.

21. The IOC-SOPM Strategy highlights IOC’s efforts to fulfill its dual mandate in the climate-ocean-biodiversity nexus and is grounded in an ecosystem-based approach that considers the functioning of the marine ecosystem as an integrated entity. Hence its borders might not necessarily be aligned with existing administrative and political boundaries. It also needs to consider integrating socio-economic aspects and livelihood dependencies of coastal communities into ecosystem-based management approaches.

22. The implementation of the IOC-SOPM Strategy’s mission will uphold and further strengthen the purpose of the IOC, with science, knowledge and research serving as the foundation upon which policy and decision-making processes of Member States are built. The IOC-SOPM Strategy sets out four main strategic objectives which will guide actions to achieve five expected outcomes.

### Strategic Objectives

23. Four strategic objectives will guide the implementation of the IOC-SOPM Strategy:

(i) **Enhance integration and mainstreaming of Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management approaches**

The IOC-SOPM Strategy will build on the strong foundation of IOC’s MSPGlobal and the Integrated Coastal Area Management Programme (ICAM) work that have already supported various Member States, by leveraging existing frameworks, exchanging good practices, mainstreaming scientific findings relevant to SOPM, and delivering technical guidance across ecological and socio-economic dimensions. By facilitating knowledge exchange and adaptation to diverse national and regional contexts, the IOC-SOPM Strategy will help Member States ensure their SOPM approaches are science-based, inclusive of indigenous and local knowledge, and equitable and adaptable to evolving socio-economic priorities at all scales.

(ii) **Increase visibility and facilitate use of improved observations, data and knowledge**

While hundreds of millions of data points are collected globally each year, including through IOC's networks and programs like GOOS and OBIS, and numerous local and indigenous communities hold invaluable knowledge about the ocean, only a fraction is transformed into actionable insights suitable to decision-makers. By translating this wealth of data and knowledge into understandable and accessible information, decision-support tools and products, and by promoting their regular update and use, SOPM can be more effectively guided by evidence-based knowledge on the ocean's state and change.

(iii) **Strengthen cross-sectoral and transboundary coordination and collaboration**

Strengthening cross-sectoral and transboundary collaboration is essential for effective SOPM, as marine ecosystems often span across wider ocean basins, and transcend administrative and political boundaries and jurisdictions, including at the land-sea interface or in areas beyond national jurisdiction where different governance arrangements pertain. Many economic activities—such as maritime transportation, renewable energy projects or fisheries—also operate across national boundaries, making cooperation critical when balancing ocean health with socio-economic development. Therefore, SOPM frequently requires coordinated action among sectors and nations to address shared challenges or opportunities. Such cooperation requires the need to collaborate across nations, but also with UN and non-UN entities.

(iv) **Expand capacity development**

Expanding capacity development is critical to ensure that decision-makers across IOC Member States—regardless of their resources, expertise or socio-economic context—are adequately equipped to develop knowledge-based SOPM. Amongst others, decision-makers need access to the latest scientific data and knowledge, good practices, and innovative tools to navigate the complexities of a sustainably managed global ocean. This can be delivered by strengthening training programmes, knowledge sharing platforms, and educational initiatives. Engaging Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs) helps educate the next generation of ocean leaders and can secure long-term continuity in SOPM expertise across Member States.

## **Expected Outcomes**

24. By implementing its mission, the IOC-SOPM Strategy expects to deliver five outcomes:

(i) **Strengthened ocean planning and management policy approaches underpinned by science-based tools and evidence**

The IOC-SOPM Strategy expects to enhance the sustainability and equitability of SOPM policies at national levels by leveraging IOC's scientific expertise and capacity development, and by promoting knowledge and the exchange of good practice across Member States. By integrating insights and emerging findings and information from IOC programmes and relevant partners, and by coordinating the improvement of the format and coverage of ocean data and knowledge, the IOC-SOPM Strategy will facilitate evidence-based decision-making among IOC Member States for a sustainable ocean.

(ii) **Enhanced integration of ocean observation, data and knowledge in decision-making**

The IOC-SOPM Strategy will enhance integration of ocean observations, data, relevant scientific findings and indigenous and local knowledge into decision-making by facilitating exchange and coordination across ocean data, monitoring and management communities, including Indigenous Peoples, local communities and the private sector. Leveraging the collective data infrastructure developed and used by IOC programmes—such as ODIS and



OBIS—and exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for AI-driven predictive modelling and forecasting, will further enhance the relevance and utility of ocean data in policy and management processes. The transformation of complex ocean data into information that is useful and relevant to decision-makers is central in this endeavour. It will further promote the visibility and uptake of data and information into SOPM.

**(iii) Elevated coherence and consistency across sectors, boundaries and the land-sea interface**

Recognizing the interconnected nature of ocean challenges, the IOC-SOPM Strategy will promote inclusive approaches to cross-sectoral and transboundary collaboration at sea, as well as the land-sea interface. Building on the collaborative and holistic foundations of existing IOC programmes, and global initiatives where the IOC has a coordinating role such as the UN Ocean Decade, the IOC-SOPM Strategy will foster partnerships with diverse stakeholder communities, including sectors such as energy, tourism, shipping and fisheries. Dialogue will be facilitated in view of identifying synergies, trade-offs, and win-win solutions in support of SOPM. A key focus will be on improved consideration and management of cumulative impacts that have effects across boundaries and jurisdictions.

**(iv) Increased knowledge and capacity of stakeholders**

The IOC-SOPM Strategy seeks to intensify capacity development efforts across all aspects of SOPM, from the collection of relevant data and knowledge to their application for decision-making. Priorities include developing and enhancing access to guidance and knowledge products, strengthening global and regional mechanisms (such as Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans), promoting the development of ocean research policies, increasing visibility and awareness, and boosting sustained resource mobilization. This will empower decision-makers, policymakers, right-holders, and stakeholders with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective SOPM.

**(v) Improved integration of climate change adaptation, mitigation and coastal resilience, and biodiversity conservation**

In response to the urgent need to address climate change impacts and marine biodiversity loss, the IOC-SOPM Strategy seeks to assist Member States in their efforts to integrate climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as resilience and ecosystem restoration, in SOPM. This will involve coordinating with IOC's climate, biodiversity and coastal hazard-related initiatives to develop tools and guidelines that identify and incorporate resilience measures, generate scientific knowledge on the role of ocean ecosystems in climate issues, such as those related to blue carbon habitats and ecosystem services. The integration of biodiversity conservation and climate measures in SOPM will see development of guidance on biodiversity- and climate-inclusive approaches and its application.

### **PART III Implementation, Evaluation of Progress and Adaptation**

25. The IOC-SOPM Strategy's vision, mission, strategic objectives and expected outcomes will be achieved through a biennial Implementation Plan. The initial 2025–2027 Implementation Plan details the actions, deliverables, timeframes, leading/cooperating partners, and budget requirements for the IOC-SOPM Strategy's first biennium (see below). The Plan will be implemented jointly with the different IOC programmes and regional sub-commissions, in close collaboration with the IOC Member States, and with the support of the UN Decade SOP Programme, and relevant IOC regional and international partners. Implementation of the actions will be financed through a combination of existing IOC programme funding and new resources to be raised from donors both in the context of the UN Decade SOP Programme and beyond.

26. The IOC-SOPM Working Group will evaluate the IOC-SOPM Strategy's progress on a bi-annual basis. The IOC-SOPM Working Group will meet twice a year to monitor the implementation

of the plan—and update as needed—to address specific programme-related matters regarding SOPM, as well as emerging issues and needs among Member States and relevant regional and international organizations. The co-chairs of the IOC-SOPM Working Group will report to the IOC Member States through a standing item on the agenda at the IOC Assembly sessions. The SOPM Working Group meetings, and the guidance from Member States received at the IOC Assembly, will ensure continuous oversight and refinement of the IOC-SOPM Strategy and its successive Implementation Plans, thereby fostering its effectiveness and adaptability to evolving challenges and opportunities.

## PART IV Implementation Plan 2025–2027

### Timeframe and expected outcomes

27. This document presents the proposed activities, deliverables, timeframes, partners and budget requirements to start implementing the IOC-SOPM Strategy **from mid-2025 until end 2027<sup>5</sup>**, and progress towards its five expected outcomes by 2030:

**Outcome 1:**

Strengthened ocean planning and management policy approaches underpinned by science-based tools and evidence

**Outcome 2:**

Enhanced integration of ocean observation, data and knowledge in decision-making

**Outcome 3:**

Elevated coherence and consistency across sectors, boundaries and the land-sea interface

**Outcome 4:**

Increased knowledge and capacity of stakeholders

**Outcome 5:**

Improved integration of climate change adaptation, mitigation and coastal resilience, and biodiversity conservation

An overview of the activities, deliverables, timeframes, partners and resources needed, and linkage to the five expected outcomes, is provided in Table 1.

### Activities

28. A set of **activities** has been identified that are designed to **serve as actionable steps towards meaningful progress** in achieving the five expected outcomes. Building on the strengths of the IOC, the outcomes and activities for 2025–2027 are closely linked to existing programmes and projects, and will be strategically aligned to contribute to SOPM by ensuring efforts are not isolated but part of a coherent and integrated effort.

### Collaborative partnerships

29. **Partnerships** are central to achieving the outcomes of the IOC-SOPM Strategy. The IOC's extensive network of experts and its commitment to global and regional cooperation offer Member States valuable support for capacity development in various aspects of SOPM. The IOC-SOPM Strategy's Implementation Plan will build and foster collaborative partnerships with multilateral, regional and sectoral bodies as well as initiatives such as the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy or the UN Global Compact, with a focus on technical support and the articulation of efforts to support common objectives. The successful implementation of the IOC-SOPM Strategy requires the following:

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<sup>5</sup> The 2,5-year timeframe is chosen for consistency with IOC's biennial budget cycles.

**(i) Regional Engagement through four IOC sub-regional commissions**

Including IOCARIBE for the Caribbean, IOCAFRICA for Africa, WESTPAC for the Western Pacific and IOCINDIO for the Central Indian Ocean, these sub-commissions of IOC have been instrumental in facilitating regional cooperation and knowledge sharing with IOC Member States for decades. They primarily encourage cooperation at the regional level to address ocean issues that are common to Member States in each region, in alignment with global IOC programmes and commitments. The IOC-SOPM Strategy will operate on regional and national levels, requiring engagement across regions and other regional ocean-related groups to define region-specific priorities and actionable steps, ensuring regional responsiveness to local needs and contexts.

**(ii) Integration of efforts across IOC and UNESCO Programmes**

The IOC-SOPM Strategy aims to provide comprehensive guidance to IOC programmes and projects, to ensure cohesive alignment in SOPM efforts, while IOC programmes and initiatives will also inform the IOC-SOPM Strategy and its implementation. Leveraging existing initiatives and expert advice from collaborative networks like GESAMP, GOOS and IODE, will enhance coordination of ocean observations, ocean knowledge gathering and marine conservation and sustainable use efforts worldwide. Resources and data will be made accessible through IOC open-access platforms like the Ocean Literacy Portal, ODIS, and OBIS. The IOC-SOPM Strategy will also promote collaboration and capacity development through initiatives such as the OceanTeacher Global Academy, Ocean CD-Hub and by engaging early career professionals through the Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOP) Network. The IOC-SOPM Strategy's implementation will build on the crucial work of MSPGlobal as an IOC-run programme given the established good practices and will extend and adapt these resources to encompass the broader scope of SOPM. Further, IOC will be able to leverage the expertise of UNESCO in other areas (e.g., biodiversity conservation, indigenous and local knowledge systems, hydrology, World Heritage, Geoparks, Biosphere Reserves) to implement the IOC-SOPM Strategy and offer a unique inter-disciplinary approach to ocean management within the UN.

**(iii) Leveraging efforts within the UN Ocean Decade**

A task of the IOC is to coordinate the implementation of the UN Ocean Decade. The IOC-SOPM Strategy, and its implementation, will both build on, and feed into, the activities of the Ocean Decade. In particular, the Ocean Decade Programme on Sustainable Ocean Planning (SOP) will play an important role as a supportive and enabling tool for Member States' SOPM activities. Building on the programme's initiatives to co-design and co-deliver actions will ensure that activities within the IOC address critical gaps in science, knowledge, capacity and action for Member States, as well as adaptation and refinement of priorities to meet emerging challenges. These synergies are essential for achieving the objectives of the IOC-SOPM Strategy, fostering integrated, adaptive, and resilient SOPM that enhance global and regional cooperation and contribute to the long-term sustainability and equity of ocean economies.

**(iv) Collaboration with External Actors**

Building on existing partnerships, the IOC will use the IOC-SOPM Strategy implementation to engage with various UN, and non-UN organizations, including, but not limited to, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the European Union (EU), the Ocean Action Coalition 2030, the UN Global Compact and the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. Collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as for example the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (GOAP)<sup>6</sup> will bring expertise in advocacy,

<sup>6</sup> Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (GOAP): <https://www.oceanaccounts.org/>

community engagement, and indigenous and local knowledge for more inclusive and equitable SOPM. Engagement with academic institutions will drive scientific progress, foster evidence-based decision-making, and provide training for SOPM practitioners. Partnering with the private sector will help leverage resources, innovation, and industry expertise. Collaboration with communication outlets will help raise awareness, promote public engagement, and communicate the importance of SOPM. These partnerships will catalyze research, innovation, and knowledge exchange, leading to cutting-edge tools and methodologies for effective SOPM.

### Budget requirements

30. Whilst the initial phase of implementing and coordinating the IOC-SOPM Strategy will be supported through seed funding provided under the IOC ICAM/MSP regular programme allocation (Function E: Sustainable management and governance), the **delivery of meaningful progress over time will require additional financing through voluntary contributions, including at the level of IOC programmes, to support the delivery of SOPM products.** A key priority of the Implementation Plan's activities between 2025–2027 is identifying and engaging decision-makers and professionals responsible for SOPM across IOC Member States who are the end-user in the IOC value chain (Activity 1 in Table 1), as well as co-designing activities and deliverables with IOC programmes and regional sub-commissions. Resources for the IOC-SOPM Strategy are expected to remain decentralized, with each programme defining its contribution based on allocated budgets. Consultations with IOC programmes and regional sub-commissions will identify deliverables that meet end-user needs, which can be produced from IOC programmes' existing portfolios and strategies. New financial needs will be incorporated in the broader IOC resource mobilization strategy.

**Table 1: Activities, deliverables, timing, partners and resources for the implementation of the IOC-wide Strategy during the period mid 2025–end 2027**

| Activities   | Deliverables   | Timing   | Partners   | Resources   | Expected Outcome |
|--|--|----------|--|---|------------------|
| <b>Activity 1:</b><br>Identify decision-makers and professionals responsible for SOPM across IOC Member States and create suitable mechanisms for their engagement as end-users in the IOC-value chain | A global network of decision-makers and professionals responsible for SOPM across IOC Member States who are actively engaging through suitable mechanisms in view of fine-tuning IOC programme delivery for SOPM | Year 1+2 | <b>Lead:</b> IOC-Marine Policy and Regional Coordination Section<br><br><b>In collaboration with:</b><br>IOC Regional sub-commissions<br>All IOC programmes<br>MSPGlobal<br>Ocean Decade Programmes, including SOP Programme<br><br>Other UN Agencies and relevant external partners | Existing resources/<br>New resources to be raised | 1, 3, 5          |

| Activities   | Deliverables   | Timing                               | Partners   | Resources   | Expected Outcome |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|------------------|
| <b>Activity 2:</b><br>Develop a communication plan and materials to raise global awareness on SOPM and the in-country frameworks needed for successful SOPM development  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication plan on SOPM's why, what, how, where and the role of IOC</li> <li>- Multi-lingual communication materials for awareness raising on SOPM and the IOC-SOPM Strategy</li> <li>- Side events at international venues to showcase IOC-SOPM Strategy and concepts</li> </ul>  | Year 1<br><br>Year 1<br><br>Year 1+2 | <b>Lead:</b> IOC-Marine Policy and Regional Coordination Section<br><br><b>In collaboration with:</b> IOC Regional sub-commissions All IOC programmes and initiatives OGTA High-Level Panel for Sustainable Ocean Economy Ocean Decade SOP Programme | Existing resources/<br>New resources to be raised | 2, 4, 5          |
| <b>Activity 3:</b><br>Create SOPM end-user consultations to map national data needs for SOPM development, incl. identifying availability and gaps in IOC data, and design/promote multi-lingual communication materials in function of the above | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a report on the essential data and information end-users need for SOPM development, including opportunities and gaps regarding existing IOC data and networks</li> <li>- Develop and disseminate multi-lingual communication materials destined for decision-makers to improve access to SOPM-related data/information</li> </ul> | Year 1<br><br>Year 1+2               | <b>Lead:</b> co-designed with IOC Programmes and regional sub-commissions GOOS OBIS ODIS MSPGlobal Tsunami & Science Section<br><br><b>In collaboration with:</b> GESAMP & other networks OGTA Ocean Decade SOP Programme                            | Existing resources/<br>New resources to be raised | 2, 4             |
| <b>Activity 4:</b><br>Review existing SOPM initiatives and in-country policy legal   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop and disseminate a technical guide on good practices and</li> </ul>  | Year 1+2                             | <b>Lead:</b> co-designed by IOC-Marine Policy and  | Existing resources/                               | 1, 2, 3          |

| Activities  | Deliverables   | Timing | Partners   | Resources  | Expected Outcome |
|---|--|--------|--|--|------------------|
| frameworks for SOPM to identify good practices and develop technical guidance, capacity, learning frameworks, and resources where gaps exist, particularly for least developed Member States                | <p>the IOC's role in SOPM, focusing on data, science, and tools.</p> <p>- Develop and implement a capacity development plan for SOPM</p> |        | <p>Regional Coordination Section and IOC Regional sub-commissions, MSP Global</p> <p><b>In collaboration with:</b><br/>GOOS<br/>OGTA<br/>Ocean Decade SOP Programme<br/>High-Level Panel for Sustainable Ocean Economy</p> | New resources to be raised   |                  |
| <b>Activity 5:</b><br>Initiate concept and raise funding for a SOPM pilot project making full use of the expertise, data and tools of the IOC and its partners, from knowledge gathering to decision-making | - Concept and ToR for a SOPM pilot project with 1-3 Member States across different IOC regions   | Year 2 | <p><b>Lead:</b> co-designed with IOC Programmes and regional sub-commissions</p> <p><b>In collaboration with:</b><br/>Ocean Decade SOP Programme<br/>Public or philanthropic donors<br/>Other UN Agencies</p>              | Existing resources/<br>New resources to be raised for pilot implementation | 2                |