



IOC Circular Letter No 3053
(Available in English and French)

IOC/VH/FD/pbo
13 August 2025

To : Official National Coordinating Bodies for liaison with the IOC (IOC Member States)
Chair and Vice-Chairs of IOC Subsidiary Bodies (Scientific, Technical and Regional)

C.c. : Permanent Delegations to UNESCO of IOC Member States
National Commissions for UNESCO of IOC Member States
IOC Officers

**Subject: IOC Working Group on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management
(2025–2030): Call for nominations for Members**

The IOC-wide Strategy on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (2025–2030) and Implementation Plan (2025–2027) were adopted by the IOC Assembly at its 33rd session through Decision A-33/4.1. The Strategy's vision is that IOC Member States are equipped to implement knowledge-based Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management for the ocean areas under their jurisdiction. To this end, it is necessary to facilitate the use of data, advance knowledge products, and strengthen the technical capacities of Member States, targeting primarily decision-makers and professionals responsible for ocean planning and management. The SOPM Strategy and Implementation Plan were developed and finalised by a dedicated Working Group co-chaired by Ms Marinez Schrerer (Brazil) and Mr Gunnar Finke (Germany) and mandated by Decision EC-57/4.3 of the Executive Council in 2024.

In June 2025, the IOC Assembly decided to continue the IOC Working Group with revised Terms of Reference, which are presented in the annex of this Circular Letter. The Working Group will be composed of experts nominated by Member States, representatives of IOC programmes, technical and subsidiary bodies, and observers from partner organisations.

Expert nominations from Member States

I therefore kindly requests Member States to nominate experts to the Working Group on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management using the nomination form attached to this letter. The IOC Secretariat strongly encourages Member States to solely nominate experts and professionals with experience and/or responsibilities at the interface of ocean science and ocean management, sustainable planning and management of ocean areas, in particular those with decision-making capacities, and experts at institutions mandated with integrated planning and management of ocean areas.

Chairperson

Yutaka MICHIDA, Prof.
Special Presidential Envoy
for UN Ocean Decade
The University of Tokyo (Atmosphere
and Ocean Research Institute)
Kashiwanoha 5-1-5
2778564 Kashiwa
JAPAN

Executive Secretary

Mr Vidar HELGESEN
Intergovernmental Oceanographic
Commission — UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris Cedex 07 SP
FRANCE

Vice-Chairpersons

Ms Allison D. REED
Foreign Affairs Officer
U.S. Department of State
Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs
Washington, DC
USA

Dr Atanas PALAZOV
Acting Director, Professor
Institute of Oceanology
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
40 Parvi May Str.
9000 Varna
BULGARIA

Capt Carlos ZUÑIGA ARAYA
Director of the Chilean Navy Hydrographic and
Oceanographic Service (SHOA)
Casilla 324,
Valparaiso, 237-0168
CHILE

Dr Hansan PARK
Principal Research Scientist, Korea
Institute of Ocean Science & Technology
(KIOST)
Director general of the Korea–Indonesia Marine
Technology Cooperation Research Center
385, Haeyang-ro, Yeongdo-gu, Busan
REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Prof. Amr Zakaria HAMOUDA
President of Marine Hazards
Mitigation Center (MHMC)
National Institute of
Oceanography and Fisheries
(NIOF)
Qaitbay, Al-Anfoshi
Alexandria
EGYPT

Nominations will be limited to one expert per Member State. Any additional nominations submitted by a Member State will not be considered, which is why coordination across national agencies is encouraged.

Whilst most of the work of the Working Group will be conducted on-line and by correspondence, an annual in-person meeting is expected to take place. National experts are expected to receive support from their national authorities and institutes to cover their expenses associated with attending the in-person Working Group meeting.

In forming the IOC Working Group on sustainable ocean planning and management, consideration will also be given to geographical, cultural and gender balance, as well as diversity of expertise.

The Secretariat would appreciate receiving nominations before Monday 22 September 2025 by email to Dr Fanny Douvere (f.douvere@unesco.org), with copy to Mr Julian Barbière (j.barbiere@unesco.org), Head of the Marine Policy and Regional Coordination Section.

Nominations from Major Subsidiary Bodies of the IOC programmes

As specified in the IOC Assembly decision, relevant IOC programmes and technical/scientific/regional bodies may also nominate representatives to the Working Group to ensure that these programmes/bodies contribute to the implementation of the IOC-wide Strategy. I therefore invite Chairs of Major Subsidiary Bodies (Scientific, Technical and Regional) to appoint a representative to the IOC Working Group by communicating the name of the representative to Dr Douvere by 22 September 2025.

Any questions can be addressed to Dr Fanny Douvere (f.douvere@unesco.org) with copy to Mr Julian Barbière (j.barbiere@unesco.org), Head of the Marine Policy and Regional Coordination Section.

With the assurances of my highest consideration, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

[signature]

Vidar Helgesen
Executive Secretary

Enclosures:

1/ Terms of Reference for the IOC Working Group on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (2025–2030) – Annex to Decision A-33/4.1

2/ Nomination form for IOC Working Group on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (2025–2030) membership

1/ Terms of Reference for the IOC Working Group on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (2025–2030)

Terms of Reference

The IOC Working Group on SOPM is established to guide the implementation of the IOC-wide Strategy on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (2025–2030), [as presented in document [IOC/A-33/4.1.Doc\(1\)](#)], and evaluate its progress.

Membership

- (i) experts nominated by IOC Member States through a call by circular letter that will define the expertise required,
- (ii) representatives of IOC programmes and regional bodies, and
- (iii) observers from partner organizations with a focus on SOPM.

Expert members will be appointed for an initial two years, renewable once for an additional two years.

The designated co-chairpersons will be elected on a rotating basis, for an initial two-year period, with a maximum of two consecutive terms.

The Working Group will function for the period 2025–2030, which aligns with the IOC-SOPM's Strategy's timeline.

The Working Group will work primarily by correspondence and will meet in-person once a year.

Purpose

The purpose of the Expert Group is to:

1. Monitor the implementation of the SOPM Strategy and Implementation plan, and guidance in the regular assessment of user-needs in the area of Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management.
2. Update the IOC- Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management Strategy (in 2027, linking with the results of the 'IOC and the Future of the Ocean consultations') and Implementation Plan (for 2028-2030) as relevant.
3. Advising on identifying emerging needs and science, data and knowledge issues with potential implication for Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management practitioners.
4. Advising on the design and delivery of IOC activities in support of the Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management Strategy.
5. Advising on the IOC contribution to the UN Ocean Decade Programme on Sustainable Ocean Planning.
6. Advising on the 'IOC and the Future of the Ocean' Consultation process' (2024–2027) as it relates to Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management.
7. Providing inputs to the development of the IOC Medium-Term Strategy processes, to be initiated in 2027.
8. Undertaking any endeavour as requested by the IOC Governing Bodies.

2/ IOC Working Group on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (2025–2030)

NOMINATION FORM

Name:

Position:

Institution:

Country:

Tel:

Email:

Postal Address:

Relevant experience:

Additional comments:

Nomination submitted by:

Signature:

Position:

Government Department/Agency:

Date:

Please also include your most recent CV.

Nomination Forms duly completed and signed should be sent by **Monday 22 September 2025** to the IOC Secretariat by email to Dr Fanny Douvère (f.douvere@unesco.org) with cc to Mr Julian Barbière (j.barbiere@unesco.org), Head of Section of the Marine Policy and Regional Coordination, through one of the following channels:

1. The national coordinating body for liaison with IOC (see the [list](#))
2. The Head of the National Commission for UNESCO
3. The Permanent Delegate to UNESCO

Note: Nominations will be limited to one expert per Member State. Any additional nominations submitted by a Member State will not be considered, which is why coordination across national agencies is encouraged.