unesco

Intergovernmental
Oceanographic
Commission

IOC Officers' Meeting
20-21 January 2026

Agenda items

4.1 GOOS Governance Reform
4.3 IOC Data architecture
4.4 WMO-IOC Joint Collaborative Board

4.1 GOOS Governance Reform

unesco
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission

Recalling IOC Decisions A-32/4.8.1 and EC-57/4.1,
A-33/4.5.1 Endorses the Approach to GOOS Reform as contained in document IOC/A-33/4.5.1.Doc(1);
"*Requests the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the GOOS Steering Committee and representatives from Member States and GOOS sponsors, to provide an update on the work to the IOC Executive Council at its the 59th session for Member States review and additional guidance*;"

Draft Proposal for GOOS reform available: https://oceanexpert.org/document/37744

Next steps:
Discuss the draft proposal at the GOOS SC-15, March 2026 and refine including mission and scope of GOOS, revised structure as well as draft staged implementation plan
Present revised draft to IOC EC57 and WMO EC80 (June 2026) for consideration
Eventual adoption of final GOOS reform proposal at IOC A-34 (June 2027) and WMO Congress (May 2027)

The proposal for GOOS reform on a page

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

Value Proposition

We enable and evolve a globally integrated, responsive, and resilient ocean observing system for:

- **Member States** to strengthen **marine ecosystems**, **ocean economy**, **national resilience**, and **maritime security** through data-driven decisions and policy-relevant observations
- **Ocean Observing Data Providers** to advance **groundbreaking research** and relevant **operational ocean science**
- **Ocean Observing Data Users** to fuel **innovation**, support disaster risk reduction, and support thriving marine ecosystems and ocean economies via smarter, **data-driven decisions**

Structure

The following key changes are recommended to optimize how GOOS will be operating going forward:

1. **Streamline GOOS reporting structure and refresh component responsibilities**
2. **Consolidate sponsorship under the IOC and WMO** based on existing contributions and distinguish sponsor, donor, and partner roles
3. **Enhance resource mobilization through the Donor Coordination Group** to convene funders, foster alignment, and drive investment for GOOS
4. **Elevate the GOOS Steering Committee's function** through stronger strategic oversight, targeted skillsets, and longer terms
5. **Empower the GOOS Secretariat** to have clear identity to support the system
6. **Introduce the Infrastructure Coordination Group (ICG)** as an OCG with broadened mandate to centralize the coordination of GOOS networks and other observing communities
7. **Strengthen NFP's role and interaction model** to further enable Member States participation, national coordination, and integration with GOOS standards

Accountability mechanism

GOOS components to report on four results linked to the revised mission to drive system-wide performance and ensure accountability

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 commitments

Governance

New governance meetings to be introduced: 1) Donor Coordination Group to strengthen resource mobilization, 2) NFP Advisory Group with IODE representatives to improve data exchange linkages, 3) GOOS Conference and joint Panel Meeting to strengthen cross-component coordination

Existing governance meetings to be clarified and strengthened e.g., Executive Committee to start exploring innovative ideas, standardized governance across Expert Panels

Additionally, two outstanding decisions that will shape the future structure of GOOS are yet to be addressed

GOOS Regional Alliances (GRAs)

User engagement mechanism

	GOOS Regional Alliances (GRAs)	User engagement mechanism
Key challenge	**GRAs are intended to bridge regional coordination and implementation, but their current structure lacks clarity and coherence** • There is significant variation in the structure and function of GRAs, leading to uneven levels of effectiveness • Interviews revealed confusion and uncertainty about their role and value, including language barriers that hinders collaboration	**Currently, there is insufficient engagement with end-users of ocean observation, resulting in their needs not being adequately addressed** • GOOS lacks a common, actionable view of end-users, resulting in fragmented engagement, limited co-design, inconsistent priorities, and weak justification for long-term funding • Whilst not in scope of the GOOS reform review, the process has confirmed the need for a user analysis and development of user uptake engagement strategy
Options to investigate	• Consider the role and level of integration of GRAs with GOOS (see next slide) • Consider how to sharpen the unique contributions and role vis a vis GOOS in contrast to national system • Consider identifying potential maturity levels for GRAs	• Develop a user uptake strategy • Widen the Expert Panel's mandate beyond EOVs with additional roles on user engagement and co-design • Create a wider "User Engagement Group" to include a broader range of ocean observation end users • Formalize a process of engagement with user communities in collaboration with IOC and WMO • Coordinate and leverage partnerships to further engage with end users

4.3 IOC Data architecture

unesco
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission

RE: Decision A-33/3.4.2 and Decision A-33/3.4.3

Challenges: UNESCO blocked 68% IODE biennial budget 2024-2025 and blocked onboarding of new staff (2/3 IODE posts)

Ocean Data Information System was initially adopted by IODE in 2019 to "*work with existing stakeholders, linked and not linked to the IOC, to improve the accessibility and interoperability of existing data and information, and to contribute to the development of a global ocean data and information system, to be referred to as the IOC Ocean Data and Information System, leveraging established solutions where possible*"

ODIS scope is retained by the A-33/3.4.2 Decision and expanded to include: "*develop in collaboration with programmes across the IOC, the IOC Ocean Data and Information System (ODIS) as a foundational digital ecosystem where users can discover and access data and information products, services, and other assets provided by Member States, projects and other partners associated with IOC.*"

In current IODE structure - currently ODIS is one of the three IODE programme components.
Everything except OBIS and OTGA sits under ODIS.
This make the ODIS programme component responsible for:

- Databases: Global Oceanographic Data Archaeology and Rescue; Underway Sea Surface Salinity Data Archiving Project; Global Temperature-Salinity Profile; World Ocean Database; International Quality Controlled Oceanographic Database
- Websites and infrastructure: OceanExpert and AquaDocs
- Organisational systems and communities: International Coastal Atlas Network; National Oceanographic Data Centre Quality Management Framework

4.3 IOC Data architecture

unesco
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission

First step of A-33/3.4.2 – reconstitute ODIS SG - reconstituted Dec 2025 members listed in OE – and will prepare a work plan as per mandate. Initial discussions to take place during IODE management group meeting 28-29 Jan 2026 as part of wider IODE workplan discussions.

Skill set of Members of ODIS SG – very similar to skillsets of suggested members of IWG on data architecture

ODIS has the potential to deliver the organisational and technical infrastructure required for the proposed data architecture.

IODE has been awarded funding from NORAD to define the scope, structure and governance of the future IOC Data Information System/ Data Architecture (including the current ODIS technical infrastructure) and to develop a FAIR Ocean Data Charter during 2026.

IOC secretariat proposes that ODIS SG are consulted in the course of the NORAD-funded work – eliminating the need for a separate IWG on data architecture.

Proposal for data architecture will not be available by EC59 – but will be available by A-34

4.4 WMO-IOC Joint Collaborative Board

unesco
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission

IOC Decision A-33/4.6 (WMO Executive Council 79 (Resolution 6.3/1)

Recent activity - Meeting **Virtual, 27-28 October 2025 – agenda covered**

1. Discuss and analyze the results of the JCB survey,
   100 agencies responded, responses from 65 countries/territories. Aim:
   - Gather insights and suggestions from members
   - Assess current priority work areas
   - Inform future directions for the Collaborative Board

   Preliminary results
2. Update progress on the four focus areas (observation, data, coastal resilience, and capacity development),
   1. Ocean observing - Subgroup on ocean basic observing networks started
   2. Oean Data - Subgroup TOR to be revised and this group will start work in 2026
   3. Coastal and maritime resilience – work ongoing, including operational standards, digital services and blue economy integration – need to consider user requirements e.g. under RRR
   4. Capacity development – currently separate activities in WMO and IOC with some cross panel representation

Next steps – JCB to provide "*recommendations to the WMO and IOC Executive Councils in 2026 on future governance arrangements*"

Forward looking considerations for JCB highlighted by Member State survey – **but focus needed**

unesco
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission