

IOC Officers meeting  
20-21 January 2026



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**Joint work on Capacity  
Development and Ocean  
Literacy:**

***Groups of Experts and  
IOC Secretariat planning***

# IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023-2030



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## Outputs:

1. Human resources developed at individual and institutional levels
2. Access to technology, physical infrastructure, data and information established or improved
3. Global, regional and sub-regional mechanisms strengthened
4. Development of ocean research policies to support sustainable development objectives
5. Visibility, awareness and understanding on the roles and values of the ocean and ocean research in relation to human wellbeing and sustainable development increased
6. Sustained resource mobilization reinforced

# Tasks of the Groups of Experts



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**Six output  
areas**

**16 Activities**

**30 Actions**

**185  
Pathways**

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**IOC/A-33/4.2.Doc(1)**  
Paris, 15 May 2025  
Original: English



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INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION  
(of UNESCO)

Thirty-third Session of the Assembly  
UNESCO, 25 June–3 July 2025

Item 4.2 of the Provisional Agenda

**DRAFT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN  
FOR THE IOC CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023–2030**

Summary

In 2023, the IOC Assembly adopted the IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023–2030 (IOC/INF-1433) and its Outreach and Communications Plan (IOC-32/4.3.Doc(2)). In 2024, the Executive Council revised the Terms of Reference of the IOC Group of Experts on Capacity Development (GE-CD) and instructed the Group to present a draft Implementation Plan to the IOC Assembly at its 33<sup>rd</sup> session.

This document presents the draft IOC Implementation Plan for the IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023–2030 in accordance with Executive Council Decision EC-57/4.6. The proposed plan builds on the work of the Task Team on Needs Assessment and the Working Group on Implementation Plan, both established by the IOC Group of Experts on Capacity Development (GE-CD). The full plan given in appendix to this document in English only was approved by the GE-CD in April 2025 and is now proposed to the Assembly for adoption. The full plan is preceded by a four-page summary in the working languages of the Commission.

The proposed decision referenced A-33/Dec.4.2 in the Action Paper (document IOC/A-33/2 Prov.) also proposes the continuation of the IOC Group of Experts on Capacity Development with revised terms of reference.

Restricted Distribution

**IOC/A-33/4.4.Doc(1)**  
Paris, 24 April 2025  
Original: English



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INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION  
(of UNESCO)

Thirty-third Session of the Assembly  
UNESCO, 25 June – 3 July 2025

Item 4.4 of the Provisional Agenda

**DRAFT IOC OCEAN LITERACY PLAN OF ACTION FOR 2026–2030**

Summary

Decision A-31/3.5.4 (2021) established an IOC Ocean Literacy Group of Experts for a period of four years, with the Group to report to the IOC Member States on its activities at the 33<sup>rd</sup> session of the Assembly. It also endorsed the IOC Ocean Literacy Plan of Action 2018–2021 ([IOC/A-31/3.5.4.Doc](#)) as a guidance document for the work of the Group of Experts for the four-year period. An addendum to this document with the detailed explanation of the priorities for Ocean Literacy complement this document (in English only).

This document prepared by the Group of Experts provides a draft of an updated IOC Ocean Literacy Plan of Action for 2026–2030 for the consideration of the Assembly in view of its final adoption by the IOC Executive Council in 2026.

The proposed decision(s) is referenced A-33/Dec.4.4 in the Provisional Action Paper ([IOC/A-33/AP](#)) of the 33<sup>rd</sup> session of the IOC Assembly.

**Nine priority  
areas**

**21 Areas of  
activities**

**45 Activities**



## Decision A33/4.2

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Having examined document IOC/A-33/4.2.Doc(1),

Notes document IOC/A-33/4.4.Doc(1);

Also notes that the remit of the IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023–2030 and its Implementation Plan include elements of ocean literacy;

Adopts the Implementation Plan of the IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023-2030;

Decides to continue the work of the IOC Group of Experts on Capacity Development with the terms of reference included in the Annex to this decision;

**Encourages the Executive Secretary to explore opportunities to align the IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023–2030 Implementation Plan with the IOC Ocean Literacy Plan of Action for 2026–2030 through joint working of the Capacity Development and Ocean Literacy Secretariat and the respective Group of Experts;**

**Requests the Chair of the IOC Group of Experts on Capacity Development to report on the outputs of joint work and the mechanisms developed for alignment with the Ocean Literacy Group of Experts to the IOC Executive Council at its 59th session;**

## Decision A33/4.4



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Having examined the draft IOC Ocean Literacy Plan of Action (2026–2030) contained in IOC/A-33/4.4.Doc(1),

Notes document IOC/A-33/4.2.Doc(1) that contains the proposed ‘IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023–2030 Implementation Plan’ which considers priority areas of action for ocean literacy;

Decides to continue the work of the IOC Ocean Literacy Group of Experts with the terms of reference included in the Annex to this decision;

Requests the IOC Secretariat to seek and use all available synergies with the Education Sector of UNESCO, corresponding to intersectoral Output 2.6 of 43 C/5, in implementing the Plan of Action, in particular its enhanced Priority 1;

Encourages the Executive Secretary to explore opportunities to align the IOC Ocean Literacy Plan of Action for 2026–2030 with the IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023-2030 Implementation Plan through joint working of the Capacity Development and Ocean Literacy Secretariat and the respective Group of Experts;

Requests the Chair of the Ocean Literacy Group of Experts reports on the outputs of joint work and the mechanisms developed for alignment with the Capacity Development Group of Experts to the IOC Executive Council at its 59th Session

# Activities since the 33<sup>rd</sup> Assembly

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Reconstitution of the Capacity Development and Ocean Literacy Groups of Experts (as per Decisions A33/4.2 and A33/4.4)

- 26 nominations received for the Group of Experts on Capacity Development and 36 nominations received for the Group of Experts on Ocean Literacy (2 experts nominated to both Groups)
- Co-chairs for each Group elected
  - Capacity Development Group of Experts: Suzan El-Gharabawy (Egypt), David O'Sullivan (Ireland)
  - Ocean Literacy Group of Experts: Diana Payne (USA), Ronaldo Christofolletti (Brazil)



# Activities since the 33<sup>rd</sup> Assembly



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Group of Experts	Capacity Development	Ocean Literacy
Gender		
Female	12	23
Male	14	13
Regions (IOC electoral groups)		
I	8	10
II	1	4
III	4	7
IV	5	8
V	8	7
Members from previous group	12	10

# Activities since the 33<sup>rd</sup> Assembly

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Meetings of each of the Groups of Experts and a joint meeting of the two Groups of Experts 17-21 November 2025, UNESCO HQ Paris

## Ocean Literacy Group of Experts (17-18 November)

- priorities for action within the draft Ocean Literacy Plan of Action
- coordination of ocean literacy activities implemented across regions (case studies presented from IOCARIBE and WESTPAC)
- synergies with relevant external groups
- assessment and monitoring progress of ocean literacy across Member States

## Capacity Development Group of Experts (20-21 November)

- assisting global and regional programmes (OTGA, IOC traineeships)
- capacity Development needs assessment survey (Global Ocean Science Report)
- CD Hub and Ocean Decade Capacity Development Facility
- promoting the IOC Capacity Development Strategy



# Joint meeting of the Groups of Experts (18-20 November): objectives



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- (i) Identify across the draft IOC Ocean Literacy Plan of Action 2026-2030 and the Implementation Plan for the IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023-2030 areas of:
  - a. Overlap - areas where priorities identified in the two documents directly intersect
  - b. Similarity - themes, methods, and goals that align but do not necessarily directly overlap
- (ii) Reach a common agreement on the main areas of overlaps and similarities between the draft IOC Ocean Literacy Plan of Action 2026-2030 and the Implementation Plan for the IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023-2030
- (iii) Identify a joint workplan that focused on:
  - refining the text in the Implementation Plan for the IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023-2030 to acknowledge the draft IOC Ocean Literacy Plan of Action 2026-2030
  - further developing the draft IOC Ocean Literacy Plan of Action 2026-2030 to align it with the IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023-2030
  - developing a longer-term mechanism for aligning activities

# Areas of overlaps/synergies/opportunities

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## **Ocean literacy**

Ocean literacy is a component of the IOC CD Strategy and through this, the IOC Medium Term Strategy

## **Capacity development**

Both plans articulate capacity development activities

## **Education/training activities**

Both plans articulate education and training activities across age groups/disciplines

## **Multi-stakeholder engagement**

Both plans articulate activities associated with building regional/sub-regional networks and engagement of citizen science



# Areas of overlaps/synergies/opportunities

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## **Collaboration with Regional Sub-Commissions**

Both plans identify activities associated with improving communication, engagement and collaboration with RSCs

## **Identification of priorities/needs**

Both plans identify activities associated with gathering information on and identifying needs/priorities – needs assessments

## **Enhancing communication**

Both identify activities associated with enhancing communication outputs and engagement

## **Facilitating access to information and resources**

Both identify activities associated with increasing access to information and resources



# Areas of overlaps/synergies/opportunities

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## Resource mobilisation

Both plans identify activities with mobilising resources, both monetary and in-kind from the same sources

## Policy engagement

Both plans identify the need for/activities associated with integration of information into decision/policy making processes



# Workplan and activities to January 2026



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## Three Task Teams established:

### 1. Align overlapping components of the CD implementation plan and OL plan of action.

- Identify text within the CD implementation plan where direct reference to the OL plan of action can be included and the text updated
- Review process completed in December
- Revised CD implementation plan submitted in January

### 2. Review current approaches to needs assessments

- Align needs assessment approaches across CD and OL to avoid duplication of efforts
- Utilise complimentary processes that can yield useful information (e.g. Global Ocean Science Report)
- Identify new ways of thinking / doing? (e.g. targeted activities with RSCs)

### 3. Identify OL / CD opportunities for collaboration.

- Undertake a mapping / gap analysis exercise of all existing CD/OL and associated data/info portals within the IOC (and the Ocean Decade)
- Provide recommendations on how best to align in a coherent fashion, ensuring that duplicity with the ongoing IOC review of communications is avoided
- Develop a shared online webinar in Q3 (or 4) 2026 hosted by the CD & OL Groups of Experts documenting the exercise
- Recommend other areas where OL CD groups can collaborate.
- Work towards co-hosting a side-event at the 2027 Ocean Decade Conference in Rio de Janeiro.

# IOC Secretariat planning: capacity development and ocean literacy



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## Staffing

- Historically through temporary staff, secondments (VLIZ) and consultants
- IOC PA post now fully deployed to the Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe in Venice.

## Funding

- Limited Regular Budget
- High reliance on funds from the Special Account to run core elements such as OTGA and support both of the IOC Groups of Experts.
- Funding at the Regional Sub-Commission (RSC) level is more generous, however most RSCs have limited staff able to deploy funds effectively.

Have no mechanism through which we can:

- identify CD activities across the whole of IOC (to understand where, how and what)
- identify where we are progressing the Strategy (and where we are not)
- evaluate and adapt the Strategy



# IOC Secretariat planning: capacity development and ocean literacy

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## **Approach**

Reviewed IOC's approach to capacity development and ocean literacy as cross-cutting programs that should be effectively coordinated within the context of the development of a Medium-Term Strategy Implementation Plan, and evaluating efficiencies in the IOC's programme of work

## **Engagement**

IOC Management Team, including RSCs (2025 retreat, MTMs)  
CD staff

## **A Future State**

Both ocean literacy and capacity development should be deployed through the one programme, in alignment with the IOC Capacity Development Strategy. Ocean literacy should be recognized as a key component of the IOC Capacity Development Strategy, as recognized in Decisions A-31/3.5.4. and A33/4.4.



# IOC Secretariat planning: key activities for 2026-2027

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1. Better understand where, how and through what mechanisms IOC is currently delivering capacity development, including enhancing ocean literacy
  - Undertake a mapping exercise of activities and products including websites and online platforms.
  - Identify areas where the IOC is progressing the Capacity Development Strategy, areas that are not being addressed, why, and what can be used to streamline programmatic activities and the Strategy itself.
  - Implement the outputs from the joint work of the Group of Experts, particularly with regard to collaboration.
2. Refocus the core of the capacity development and ocean literacy programme to:
  - Support alignment and integration of activities
  - Connect and support Regional Sub Commissions
  - Sustain OTGA as a primary platform for delivering training
  - Sustain the IOC traineeship programme, with a particular focus on Africa and SIDS
  - Support mechanisms for providing strategic direction to the IOC
  - Strengthen the OceanExpert platform to provide a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating capacity development and ocean literacy activities.

# IOC Secretariat planning: capacity development and ocean literacy



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## Funding of positions

- Capacity Development and Ocean Literacy coordinator: funded through the currently vacant core staff position – to be advertised
- Admin officer (in place): half funded through the ocean literacy DCO and half funded through capacity development/ocean literacy Special Account funds
- OTGA Manager: VLIZ secondment (in place)
- IOC traineeship and Ocean Expert development officer (in place): NORAD funds (secured)

## Funding of workplan

- IOC Groups of Experts on Capacity Development and Ocean Literacy and their activities: capacity development/ocean literacy Special Account funds
- OTGA: funded through IODE training and Capacity Development Regular Budget funds and EXB projects
- IOC traineeship programme and OE development: NORAD funds (secured)
- Support to Regional Sub-Commissions: RSC Capacity Development Regular Budget and Special Account funds, and EXB project funds.

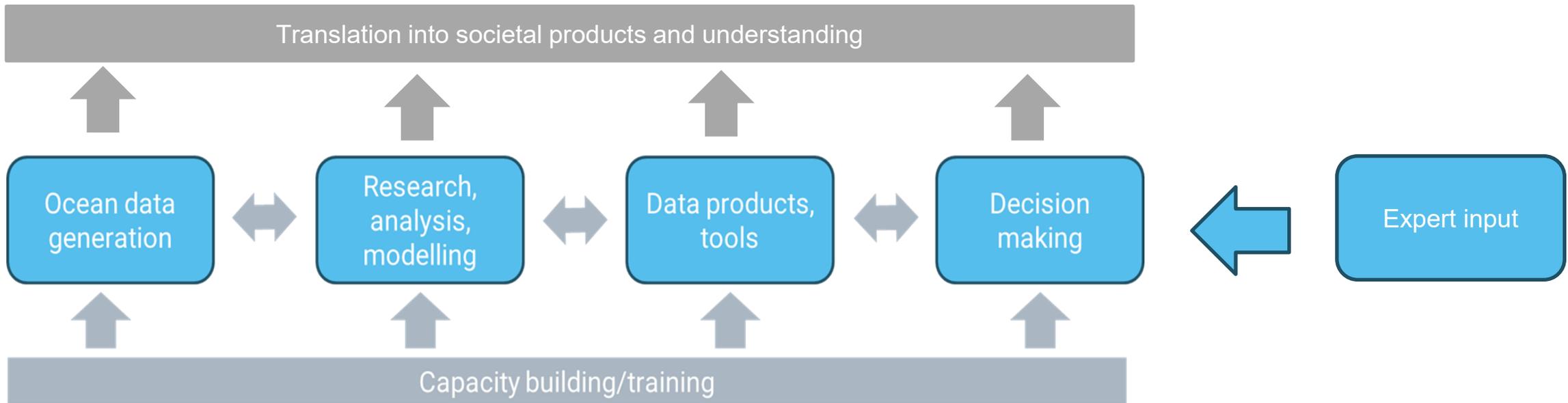


# Capacity development and ocean literacy within the IOC



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**THANK YOU**