

IOC Circular Letter No 3067
(Available in English, French, and Spanish)

IOC/CD/KE/ACM/Pbo
3 February 2026

To : IOC National Official Coordinating Bodies for Liaison with IOC (IOC Member States)

C.c. : Permanent Delegations to UNESCO of IOC Member States
National Commissions for UNESCO in IOC Member States
Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission
Officers of Major IOC Subsidiary Bodies (Scientific, Technical and Regional)
Regional and Specialized Training Centres of IOC OceanTeacher Global Academy

**Subject: Call for proposals to host a OceanTeacher Global Academy
Regional or Specialized Training Centre**

The OceanTeacher Global Academy (OTGA) is a flagship capacity development platform of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, supporting communities and countries in acquiring the skills needed to make impactful ocean decisions and policies. Guided by the [IOC Capacity Development Strategy, 2023–2030](#), OTGA mobilizes a global network of experts and training centres towards a common goal. Through its online platform and in-person courses, OTGA supports over thousands of learners within IOC Member States, and beyond, strengthening global understanding of ocean research, observations, and increased benefit from services and various ocean science advances. Free and open to all, OTGA offers a growing portfolio of innovative topics and “blue skills”, building a global network of ocean champions and ensuring every country has the tools, knowledge, and capacity required for a resilient and sustainable ocean future.

OTGA Training Centres are institutions, or coordinated groups of institutions, that deliver training across a broad range of ocean science topics with a regional presence (Regional Training Centres—RTCs) or provide targeted, specialized training (Specialized Training Centres—STCs), aligned with IOC’s high-level objectives. OTGA RTCs and STCs are nominated by IOC Member States and selected through an official evaluation process. They form the institutional backbone of OTGA training activities by ensuring the human, financial, and infrastructural resources required to design and deliver high-quality learning services that respond to regional and thematic training needs of IOC Programmes, IOC Regions, and IOC Member States. Each RTC or STC designates a Coordinator who serves as the main contact point and is responsible for managing training activities.

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These responsibilities include representing the Centre in designated meetings, proposing new courses, preparing workplans, and monitoring, evaluating, and reporting activities in accordance with OTGA guidelines. RTCs and STCs share responsibilities with the OTGA Secretariat whenever such collaboration is identified and mutually agreed. Detailed roles and requirements for OTGA RTCs and STCs are described in Annex A.

Through this letter, the IOC Secretariat invites IOC National Official Coordinating Bodies for liaison with IOC and focal points to forward this invitation to research and academic institutions in their country with the training capacity to **host or continue to host** OTGA Regional or Specialized Training Centres for a period of 5 years.

Proposals to **request** or **renew** membership should be submitted using the *Application form to host an OTGA Regional Training Centres or Specialized Training Centre* (Annex B). Submissions that do not use the application form will not be accepted.

Proposals to request or renew membership will be limited to one OTGA Regional Training Centre (RTC) or Specialised Training Centres (STC) per Member State. A proposal to request new membership can only be submitted if a Regional Training Centre or Specialised Training Centre is not present or is no longer present in the Member State. It is understood that Specialised Training Centres are limited to one per discipline/thematic area globally. Any additional submissions from a Member State will not be considered, which is why coordination across national agencies and checking the list of current OTGA RTC/STCs in Annex A before submitting a proposal is encouraged.

All applications (new requests and renewals) must be accompanied by an endorsement letter from the IOC National Official Coordinating Bodies for liaison with IOC ([IOC Member States](#)).

Selection procedures and criteria are described in Annex C.

The secretariat would appreciate receiving applications no later than 15 April 2026 addressed to Mithona Prak (m.prak@unesco.org) and ioc.training@unesco.org.

The OTGA secretariat will review the proposals with a view to updating the list of OTGA Regional and Specialized Training Centres by June 2026. All successful applications will be notified by then.

Any questions regarding the Regional Training Centres, Specialised Training Centres or OTGA can be addressed to the OTGA manager Ana Carolina Mazzuco (ac.mazzuco@unesco.org).

With the assurances of my highest consideration, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

[signature]

Vidar Helgesen
Executive Secretary

Enclosures: (English only)

- 1/ Annex A: Requirements for OTGA Regional or Specialized Training Centres
- 2/ Annex B: Application form to host an OTGA Regional Training Centre (RTC) or Specialized Training Centre (STC)
- 3/ Annex C: Application guidelines for OTGA Regional or Specialized Training Centres

ANNEX A. Requirements for OTGA Regional or Specialized Training Centres

1. Description

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO is building global capacity related to ocean science, services, and management, through its OceanTeacher Global Academy (OTGA) training platform. Operating through a network of Regional Training Centres (RTCs), Specialized Training Centres (STCs), and affiliated partners, OTGA develops and delivers training services, products, and guidance to enhance capacity development, knowledge sharing, and expertise available worldwide.

OTGA training activities cover a range of topics related to the IOC high-level priorities, contributing to the IOC Mandate and the implementation of the *IOC Capacity Development Strategy (2023–2030)*, enabling equitable participation of all IOC Member States, IOC Programmes, IOC Regional Sub-Commissions and IOC Technical Subsidiary Bodies.

The objectives of OTGA are to:

1. Develop, in collaboration with programmes across the IOC, a comprehensive capacity development platform to deliver customized training for equitable capacity related to ocean research, observations and services;
2. Create and facilitate open and free access to new knowledge, learning resources, and training opportunities to support the needs and priorities of IOC Programmes, IOC Regional Subsidiary Bodies, IOC Member States, and beyond when needed;
3. Coordinate, guide, and empower a global network of centres, partners, experts, and learners, through training and community building; and
4. Promote the wide use of international standards and best practices in knowledge-sharing and training for ocean sciences.

To achieve its objectives, this OTGA provides:

- Coordination of a global network of training centres, partners, experts, and learners, including mechanisms for collaboration and sharing of technical expertise;
- Maintain a customized Learning Management System, with a shared e-Learning Platform;
- Planning, development, and delivery of training courses and other knowledge-sharing activities, including the creation of learning resources and training materials, in multiple languages and knowledge systems, and facilitation of professional exchange;
- Guidance on learning services procedures, standards, and best practices; and
- Enhanced and innovative opportunities for individual upskilling and institutional capacity development.

All training shall follow OTGA Course Management Guidelines and comply with IOC rules and regulations.

Updated information on OTGA activities, governance, procedures, standards, and core documents is accessible through this link: <https://oceanexpert.org/event/4852>

2. Requirements for Membership

OTGA Regional Training Centres (RTCs) and Specialized Training Centres (STCs) are institutions or coordinated groups of institutions that undertake delivery of training on a broad range of topics with a regional presence (i.e., RTCs) or targeted specialized training (i.e., STC) in ocean science that contribute to the high-level objectives of the IOC. RTCs and STCs are nominated by IOC Member States and undergo an official selection process. They provide the institutional backbone for the training activities. As hosting organizations, they ensure the human and financial resources and facilities to design and deliver targeted learning services, responding to the regional training needs of the IOC Programmes, IOC Regions, and IOC Member States. Each RTC and STC contact point, Coordinator, is responsible for managing its training activities, including representing the RTC/STC in designated meetings, proposing new courses, providing workplans, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting according to OTGA guidelines. An RTC or STC shares responsibilities with OTGA Secretariat whenever the need is identified and agreed.

Formal membership to OTGA is required for RTCs and STCs, which shall ensure the human and financial resources and facilities to satisfy the following:

- Identify learning needs
- Design learning services
- Deliver learning services (online, face-to-face, and blended)
- Administer and manage the learning services

The RTC or STC must have adequate training facilities and competent instructors.

The RTC or STC must be able to respond to the training needs of the IOC Programmes, IOC Regions, and IOC Member States, including the design and delivery of training that contributes to meeting these learning needs using competent instructors and an environment that is conducive to learning. The establishment and maintenance of the RTC or STC is the responsibility of the hosting institution, although co-funding of learning services resources is possible.

Membership of a new RTC or STC can be requested to OTGA Secretariat by any national or international institution through its IOC Focal Points at any time. RTCs are limited to a number of one per IOC Member State and can only be requested once an RTC is no longer present in that country. STCs are limited to one per scope/theme aligned with IOC Mandate and its related activities.

Membership of RTC or STC shall be revised and renewed every 5 years, counting from 2026, RTCs and STCs will be invited to resubmit documentation, and a complementary open call can be issued to fill out regional gaps or needs.

Membership evaluation and approval shall be carried out by OTGA Secretariat, in consultation with other IOC experts.

Membership can be terminated upon request of the RTC or STC followed by a justification and letter of approval from the IOC Focal Point of the host country, or by OTGA Secretariat in case of persistent multiple-year inactivity or failure to comply with these Terms of Reference or related guidelines.

3. Further information

If you have questions or require additional information on your request to hosting an OTGA Regional or Specialized Training Centre, please contact Ms Ana Carolina Mazzuco, OTGA Coordinator (ac.mazzuco@unesco.org) with Ms Karen Evans, Head of Section, IOC Ocean Science, IOC Capacity Development Coordinator (k.evans@unesco.org) in copy.

ANNEX B. Application form to host an OTGA Regional Training Centres or Specialized Training Centre

This application is to host (apply for or renew membership) of a:

OTGA Regional Training Centre (RTC)

OTGA Specialized Training Centre (STC)

[OTGA Regional Training Centres (RTCs) and Specialized Training Centres (STCs) are institutions or coordinated groups of institutions that undertake delivery of training on a broad range of topics with a regional presence (i.e., RTCs) or targeted specialized training (i.e., STC) in ocean science that contribute to the high-level objectives of the IOC.]

1. Details of the applying institution

1a. Name of institution(s) to host proposed RTC/STC		<i>(provide name, address, URL)</i>
1b. Name of proposed RTC/STC coordinator		<i>(provide name, contact details); link to OceanExpert profile</i>
1c. Experience of proposed RTC/STC coordinator		<i>(provide CV, including qualifications, teaching experience, language proficiencies)</i>
1d. Names of proposed RTC/STC trainers		<i>(provide CVs, including qualifications, teaching experience, language proficiencies); links to OceanExpert profiles</i>
1d. Clarify if this application is a request for new membership or renewal of current membership		

2. Identify learning needs

The RTC or STC must demonstrate solid capabilities, including processes and/or procedures in place, to conduct assessments and identify regional or specialized training needs, in support of the implementation of *IOC Capacity Development Strategy (2023-2030)*.

2a. Provide details on how the applicant institution identifies training needs and the decision-making process on which courses/topics to be prioritised.
2b. Explain how these assessment processes and/or procedures can support the implementation of <i>IOC Capacity Development Strategy (2023-2030)</i> .

3. Designing learning services

The RTC or STC must ensure that its training activities are consistent, standardized, follow OTGA Course Management Guidelines, and comply with IOC rules and regulations.

OTGA maintains a customized Learning Management System, with a shared e-Learning Platform (<http://oceanteacher.org/>; Moodle-based) to manage activities, alumni, and host materials for all training courses. The RTC or STC will be required to use the OTGA e-Learning platform.

3a. Provide a description of the experience using guidelines for organizing and managing training courses in the hosting institution.

3b. Provide details of the experience in the use of a Learning Management System, for example Moodle LMS, by the hosting institution.

4. Delivering learning services

The RTC or STC must have capabilities to deliver training by competent instructors and staff in terms of scientific, technical, training, and educational expertise. The RTC or STC must also ensure a favourable learning environment, with the necessary equipment and facilities for an efficient and effective delivery of training in the scope of IOC Mandate, related to ocean sciences, services, and management.

4a. Provide details on (a) academic qualifications, (b) teaching qualifications, (c) operational experience of facilitators (instructors and staff) in the hosting institution and (d) languages used for delivering training.

4b. Provide a description of dedicated physical infrastructure of training facilities in the hosting institution. Include details about Information and Communication Technology (ICT), learning spaces, laboratory facilities, onshore and offshore access, equipment, instrumentation, safety and security, etc.

5. Administering learning services

The RTC or STC must have appropriate management services in place to support national and international training activities, including proven capability to assist with formal documentation, planning and budgeting, obtaining visas, booking accommodation, travelling logistics, liaising with service providers, creating contracts, receiving and handling payments, etc. RTC or STC should foresee accommodation options for participants, facilitate access to food and drink, and coordinate transportation.

5a. Provide details of the appropriate services that are available in the hosting institution to support training participants, such as assist with formal documentation, planning and budgeting, obtaining visas, booking accommodation, travelling logistics, liaising with service providers, creating contracts, receiving and handling payments, etc.

5b. Provide details of any quality management process or standards that are in place for managing learning services.

5c. Provide details of accommodation options for training participants, for example, on site or local.

5d. Provide details of catering facilities that are available to training participants.

5f. Provide details on distance and ground transportation from RTC/STC facilities to accommodation facilities.

5g. Provide details on distance and ground transportation from RTC/STC facilities to closest and or main arrival in the country (airports / train stations, etc.)

6. Sustainability of the Centre

The RTC or STC must be able to sustain its training activities under OTGA. This includes the development of operational, strategic and business plans for the continued operation of the RTC or STC from 2026-2030, and beyond.

6a. Provide details of any counterpart contributions and how the hosting institution plans to achieve long-term sustainability for the RTC/STC.

ANNEX C. Application guidelines for OTGA Regional or Specialized Training Centres

Applications for OTGA Regional Training Centres (RTCs) and Specialized Training Centres (STCs) are welcomed from one single institution or a consortium (group) of institutions, with a registered national representation within one of the IOC Member States (refer to [IOC Member States list](#)), that manage and undertake training activities on a broad range of topics or targeted specialized training in ocean science related to the IOC Mandate, such as (not limited to):

- National (or international) oceanographic, marine, or maritime institutions; and
- National (or international) ocean-related educational, research, development, and/or innovation institutions.

Applicant institutions shall provide narrative evidence and documentation of compliance with the Requirements for OTGA Regional or Specialized Training Centres (Annex A), and endorsement of the IOC National Official Coordinating Bodies. Applications must include:

- Fully completed Application form to host an OTGA Regional Training Centres or Specialized Training Centre (Annex B);
- Dossier of documents as proof or evidence of the information provided in the Application form (e.g., facilities and infrastructure, human resources, financial perspective, national registration, training programmes, support service, etc.);
- Endorsement letter from the representative of the applicant institution; and
- Endorsement letter from the respective IOC National Official Coordinating Body for liaison with IOC, supporting and authorizing the application.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Solely one application by IOC Member State will be accepted.

New membership requests from Member States where RTC/STCs are already present will only be accepted if the current host institution withdraws to apply for renewal.

Deadline for applications is on 15 April 2026, 23:59 (Central European Time) and must be submitted by email to OTGA Secretariat (ioc.training@unesco.org) and to Mithona Prak (m.prak@unesco.org).

Terms of the membership

Accepted memberships will apply for the next consecutive 5 years, counting from the publication of selection results and updated list of RTC/STCs. Membership details and requirements can be found in Annex A.

Selection criteria and evaluation

Applications will be evaluated by IOC based on the following:

- Applicant institution(s)'s profile;
- Quality of the application;
- Compliance with the Requirements for OTGA Regional or Specialized Training Centres;
- Relevance of the application to IOC high-level priorities, globally and regionally, and alignment with IOC strategies and plans (e.g., [IOC Medium-term Strategy 2022–2029](#); [IOC Capacity Development Strategy, 2023-2030](#); etc.);
- Alignment of the application with OTGA vision and workplan; and
- Geographical distribution and scope.

Membership evaluation and approval shall be carried out by OTGA Secretariat, in consultation with other IOC experts, such as representatives of IOC programme Sections, IOC Regional Sub-commissions, and IOC Technical Subsidiary Bodies.

Applicant institutions may be required additional documentation and undergo online meetings to clarify information provided.

The number of selected RTC/STCs will depend on IOC's capability to provide coordinated management and support while ensuring high-quality procedures and standards for training activities.

Timeline

Launch of call for proposals by IOC	15 February 2026
Deadline to submit applications to OTGA Secretariat	15 April 2026 23:59 (CET)
Review of applications by OTGA Secretariat, and alignment meetings with applicant institutions	16 April to 15 May 2026
Updated list of OTGA RTC/STCs	Expected by June 2026