

# FAQ - Call for Decade Actions No. 11/2026

*This document is provided as a supplement to the Guidance Note for Applicants and the online submission forms. In the event of any discrepancy, those documents shall prevail as the definitive guidance. This document may be updated as necessary during the Call period; applicants are therefore encouraged to check back periodically for any revisions.*

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- **Call for Decade Actions No. 11/2026**

### 1. What is being solicited through Call for Decade Actions No. 11/2026?

This Call for Decade Actions— the eleventh in a series launched every six months as part of the Ocean Decade— is structured in three parts:

- **Part I – Expression of Interest for Decade Programmes:** Decade Programmes are solicited through a two-stage process. The first stage consists of a short Expression of Interest (EOI) outlining how the proposed programme meets the eligibility criteria for Decade Programmes described in this Guidance Note. Proponents whose Expressions of Interest meet the required criteria will be invited to submit a full proposal at a later stage.
- **Part II – Ocean Decade Projects:** At the project level, the Call is soliciting initiatives that respond to the priorities of one of the 30 endorsed Decade Programmes participating in this Call for Decade Actions.
- **Part III – Ocean Decade Contributions:** The Call is soliciting submissions of financial or in-kind resources to support the Ocean Decade and/or its Decade Actions, including travel support for the [2027 Ocean Decade Conference](#) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

### 2. When will the Call close?

There are different closing dates for different elements of the Call. The key dates to remember are:

- **31 May 2026, 23:59 UTC:** Submission of Expression of Interest for Decade Programmes.
- **31 August 2026, 23:59 UTC:** Submission of full applications for Decade Projects
- **31 August 2026, 23:59 UTC:** Submission of Ocean Decade Contributions.

**IMPORTANT:** The timing of decisions on endorsement under this Call will depend on the volume of submissions received, but it is anticipated that decisions will be made in the first semester of 2027.

### 3. What is the Expression of Interest form process?

To avoid pre-empting the results of the [Vision 2030 process](#), applicants are first invited to submit an Expression of Interest of potential Decade Programme proposals that aim to address any of the 10 Decade Challenges, demonstrating the urgency of the initiative and the alignment (i) with the priorities outlined in the Barcelona Statement and the broader Vision 2030, (ii) its synergies and proposed collaboration with existing Decade programmes; and (iii) the tangible means by which the science and knowledge generated by the programme will inform decision making and contribute to sustainable development.

After the analysis by the DCU, proponents might be invited to submit a full proposal that will later be brought forward to Decade Advisory Board’s consideration in the review process.

### 4. Where can I find partners for my proposed Decade Action?

You can find out about the Decade Actions already endorsed [here](#), where you can identify potential partners. You can also contact the [National Decade Committees](#) and [Regional Taskforces](#). The [Ocean Expert](#) is another useful resource to find new partners.

## ● Introduction to Decade Actions

### 5. What is a Decade Action?

Decade Actions are the tangible initiatives that will be carried out to fulfil the Decade's priorities. They will have four different forms:

- **Programmes** are large-scale, multi-year and typically multi-country initiatives that will be made up of different projects, activities and contributions. Programmes will be implemented on the global or regional scale and will typically be interdisciplinary. The following criteria can be used as a guide to determine whether your initiative is a programme:
  1. **Leadership:** ability to host and support coordination of endorsed Decade Projects. Programmes must solicit Decade Projects through the Calls for Decade Actions
  2. **New addition to the Ocean Decade:** addresses a thematic area or geographic region that has not yet been substantially covered by [existing endorsed Decade Programmes](#).
  3. **Scope for growth:** demonstrates an ability to grow and expand over time and incorporate new partners or geographies.
  4. **Scale:** either global reach or major regional scale
  5. **Duration:** at least 4 years
  6. **Disciplines:** evidence of multi-disciplinary and transdisciplinary approach and team
  7. **Science to policy impact:** evidence of clear pathways for scientific knowledge to inform decision making
  8. **Funding:** at least 5% of the total programme budget must be secured at the time of submission. In addition, proponents must either have identified reliable funders committed to supporting the Programme or demonstrate that they are actively seeking funders who can secure the remaining budget partially or fully in the future.
  9. **Lead partner:** international scope and experience that matches ambition of programme
  10. **Partners:** international group of partners
  11. **Capacity development:** includes relevant elements of capacity development
- **Projects** are shorter, more focused initiatives that will typically, but not always, form part of different Programmes endorsed as part of the Decade.
- **Contributions** are in-kind or financial resources that are provided to a Decade Action or to support the coordination functions of the Ocean Decade.
- **Activities** are one-off, standalone initiatives—such as an event, workshop, publication, audiovisual production, or training opportunity, among others—that contribute to a Decade Programme or Project or to one of the Ocean Decade Challenges.

## **6. What is the Ocean Decade Implementation Plan and where can I find it?**

The [Ocean Decade Implementation Plan](#) is the guiding document for the Ocean Decade. It is a non-prescriptive framework that identifies the priorities and guiding principles for the Decade, as well as the desired outcomes at the end of the Decade. It also provides information on how people can participate in Decade activities, how Decade activities will be financed, who will coordinate the Decade and how the impact of the Decade will be measured.

The Implementation Plan was presented to the United Nations at the 75th Session of the General Assembly in 2020 and can be found, together with a summary version in several language versions on the Ocean Decade website.

## **7. Why should I seek endorsement of my initiative as a Decade Action?**

Endorsement of an initiative as a Decade Action provides official recognition that the initiative is part of a collective effort to meet the Ocean Decade vision. Proponents of endorsed Decade Actions will have the opportunity to join a highly visible, shared, global effort that builds on decades of achievement in ocean science. There will be opportunities to create new collaborations across disciplines, geographies and generations, as well as opportunities to access new sources of support.

## **8. Can my Action be moved from one category to another during the course of the Decade?**

Yes. This is either through evolution of the action by the proponent themselves (i.e. a project expands partnerships and geographic scope to become a programme) OR through assessment by the DCU (i.e. a programme submission is reviewed and identified as more in line with project scope).

- **Eligibility**

## **9. Who can carry out and seek endorsement for a Decade Action?**

There are no restrictions on the types of institutions that may submit a proposal for endorsement under this Call. However, as part of the process, the applying entity is expected to be an established institution with the capacity to undergo the required due diligence procedures. A wide range of stakeholders—including research institutes, governments, UN entities, NGOs, community groups, philanthropic foundations, as well as business and industry—are encouraged to carry out Decade Actions. The capacity and experience of the lead proponent in managing large-scale programmes and projects will be assessed as part of the review process.

## **10. Are ongoing or existing initiatives eligible for endorsement as Decade Actions?**

Yes. However, proponents will need to clearly describe how their initiative meets the Decade endorsement criteria and how the proposed Decade Action represents transformative ocean science, including moving past 'business as usual'.

## **11. My proposal is a certification or awarding scheme. Am I eligible to submit as a Decade Action?**

No. Certification and awarding schemes are not eligible under this Call. This is because third parties are not authorized to grant the use of the Decade logo beyond their own organization, nor to encourage other entities to claim affiliation with the Decade. Certification and award schemes are considered too closely aligned with such practices. However, science-based projects that focus on developing methodologies, standards, or best practices related to certification or award schemes may be eligible for submission as Decade Actions.

- **Endorsement Process**

**12. How long will the endorsement process take?**

The first endorsement decisions under the current Call for Decade Actions are expected to be made in the first half of 2027. Depending on the type and complexity of the Decade Action submitted, final decisions may be communicated in the second half of 2027. Applicants are encouraged to ensure that accurate contact information is provided in their submission, so that updates on the status of the review process can be shared in a timely manner. Please note that all applicants will be notified of the outcome of their submission by email.

**13. What are the Ocean Decade endorsement criteria for Decade Actions?**

When requesting endorsement, proponents of proposed Decade Actions need to demonstrate how they fulfill those criteria in the following list that are relevant to their proposed Decade Action:

- i. Contribute to fulfilling the Ocean Decade Challenges and to achieving the Decade objectives and the associated sub-objectives.
- ii. Accelerate the generation or use of knowledge and understanding of the ocean, with a specific focus on knowledge that will contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and complementary policy frameworks and initiatives.
- iii. Are co-designed or co-delivered by knowledge generators and users, and thus facilitate the uptake of science and ocean knowledge for policy, decision making, management and/or innovation.
- iv. Ensure that all data and resulting knowledge are provided in an open access, shared, discoverable manner in accordance with the provisions of UNCLOS, and are appropriately deposited in recognized data repositories consistent with the IOC Oceanographic Data Exchange Policy or the relevant UN subordinate body data policy.
- v. Strengthen existing or create new partnerships across nations and/or between diverse ocean actors, including users of ocean science.
- vi. Contribute toward capacity development, including, but not limited to, beneficiaries in SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs.
- vii. Overcome barriers to diversity and equity, including gender, generational, and geographic diversity.
- viii. Collaborate with and engage local and indigenous knowledge holders.

**14. If I am submitting a Programme for endorsement, do all the component projects need to be identified before submission?**

No. However, you should be able to describe the types of projects that will form part of the Programme, the timing and process to identify projects, and the governance or coordination structure for the Programme and its future projects.

**15. Can I still submit a request for endorsement even if I do not fulfill all the endorsement criteria?**

Yes. Proponents will be asked to explain how their Decade Action supports all the endorsement criteria. However, detailing a justification of why one or more criteria is not applicable is acceptable.

## 16. Who will decide if I receive endorsement?

The endorsement process that will apply to the Decade Actions solicited under this Call is as follows:

- **Expression of Interests for Decade Programmes:** For the Expressions of Interest, the Decade Coordination Unit will review the submissions for completeness and ask for recommendations of the Decade Advisory Board on which proponents should be invited to make full programme submissions. For full submissions that are accepted, the Decade Coordination Unit will work with individuals selected from the [Expert Roster](#) to complete a first technical review of the submissions, seek the comments of relevant DCC/DCOs and regional taskforces and present the findings to the Decade Advisory Board. The Board will review and make recommendations on endorsement, and this information will inform the IOC Executive Secretary who will take the decision on endorsement of the Programme.
- **Decade Projects:** For Projects that are being solicited by endorsed Decade Programmes, the Decade Coordination Unit will organize a first technical review of the submissions and will seek the advice of the relevant endorsed Programme on the submission. This information will inform the IOC Executive Secretary who will take the decision on endorsement of the Project.
- **Decade Contributions:** The Decade Coordination Unit will carry out a technical review of the submissions, including consultation with relevant Decade Programmes and decentralized coordination structures, and provide this information to the IOC Executive Secretary who decides on endorsement.

## 17. Will I be notified if my request is refused?

Yes. All proponents who have submitted requests will be notified of the outcome. Where possible, feedback will be provided on the reasons for refusal, along with recommendations to strengthen the alignment of the initiative with the Decade vision.

## 18. Can I resubmit my request if it is refused?

Yes. Where possible, in cases where requests are not approved, information will be provided on the reasons for the decision, along with recommendations to strengthen the alignment of the initiative with the Decade vision.

## 19. If I am not ready for this Call for Decade Actions, will I have another chance to submit it?

Yes. Calls for Decade Actions will be launched every 6 months throughout the Decade. The next Call will be launched on 15 October 2026.

## 20. Do I need approval from the national Government (e.g. the IOC focal point) before submitting my request for endorsement?

No.

## 21. Do United Nations bodies need to get endorsement for their Decade Actions?

United Nations bodies do not need to apply for endorsement. UN agencies wishing to submit a Decade Action can register their Decade Actions via a separate process at any time. The registration form can be found by contacting [oceandecade@unesco.org](mailto:oceandecade@unesco.org)

## **22. What happens once my Decade Action is endorsed?**

Once a Decade Action is endorsed, it will be part of a collective, global effort to fulfil the vision of the Decade. Once it is endorsed, the proponent can use the logo of the Decade when communicating their initiative in accordance with the [Ocean Decade Brand Guidelines](#). Each Action is responsible for its own coordination which includes liaising with Decade structures. Proponents will be asked to sign a charter upon endorsement outlining expectations and provide simple annual reporting on the progress of their Action via an online template. Examples of the Charters for endorsed Projects and Programmes, which outline the roles and responsibilities of Decade Actions, are available via the link provided in the "Guidance Note for Applicants".

## **23. Do projects need to be associated with programmes?**

Typically, projects will be hosted under currently endorsed Decade Programmes.

- **Funding**

## **24. How can I get funding for my Decade Action?**

The Ocean Decade is not a financing mechanism. However, endorsed Decade Actions benefit from increased visibility, access to a global network of ocean science stakeholders, and entry to platforms that can facilitate connections with potential partners and funders. As part of the endorsement process, proponents are requested to indicate whether the necessary funding for implementation has been secured. Endorsed Decade Actions are also expected to provide regular updates on their funding needs.

## **25. Do I need to have secured funding before I submit my request for endorsement?**

No, although it is expected that some funding has already been secured. Within your submission, you will be asked to indicate if you have secured any or all the funding for your proposed Decade Action.

- **Coordination Structures**

## **26. What is the Decade Advisory Board and who is on it?**

The Decade Advisory Board is an advisory body to the IOC Executive Secretary and the IOC Governing Bodies and will provide strategic advice and recommendations for the implementation of the Ocean Decade including advice on the endorsement of Decade Programmes. The Board is comprised of 15 members and representatives of UN entities and experts from relevant scientific disciplines, as well as from stakeholder groups. You can find more information [here](#).

## **27. What is the Decade Coordination Unit and where is it based?**

The Decade Coordination Unit is the central coordination structure of the Decade. It is based within the IOC-UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. Its three main functions are to act as the: (i) primary coordination office for the implementation of Decade Actions; (ii) Secretariat for the Decade Advisory Board; and (iii) Secretariat for the Ocean Decade Alliance.

- **Communications and Branding**

**28. Once my initiative is endorsed can I use the Ocean Decade logo in my communications?**

Yes, but only in accordance with the [Ocean Decade Brand Guidelines](#) which will be provided, along with the logo files, following endorsement. Decade Actions are only allowed to use the logo for their own activities. They may not grant the use of the logo to projects sitting under their Programme or to any other third party. Further information will be provided on endorsement of your Decade Actions.

**29. How can I get regular updates on what is happening during the Ocean Decade?**

The latest news from the Decade Coordination Unit and endorsed Decade Actions are showcased on the Ocean Decade website at [www.oceandecade.org](http://www.oceandecade.org). You can also [subscribe to our newsletter](#) to receive updates straight to your inbox.

You are warmly invited to follow the social media accounts of the Decade and IOC/UNESCO:

Twitter: @UNOceanDecade  
Instagram: @UNOceanDecade  
Facebook: @oceandecade  
X/Twitter: @locUnesco  
Instagram: @ioc\_unesco  
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