



INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION  
COMMISSION OCÉANOGRAPHIQUE INTERGOUVERNEMENTALE  
COMISIÓN OCEANOGRÁFICA INTERGUBERNAMENTAL  
МЕЖПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВЕННАЯ ОКЕАНОГРАФИЧЕСКАЯ КОМИССИЯ

اللجنة الدولية الحكومية لعلوم المحيطات

政府间海洋学委员会

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**IOC Circular Letter No 2956**

(Available in English, French, Russian, Spanish)

IOC/VR/JA/YX/JB/ei  
24 August 2023

- To : Official National Coordinating Bodies for liaison with the IOC  
Permanent Delegates/Observer Missions of IOC Member States to UNESCO  
National Commissions for UNESCO in IOC Member States
- C.c. : Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of IOC  
Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of IOCINDIO, IOCAFRICA, WESTPAC, IOCARIBE  
IOC partner organizations

**Subject: Invitation to Member States to submit a letter of adherence to the newly adopted IOC Sub-Commission for the central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO) in accordance with Resolution A-32/1**

The IOC Assembly at its Thirty-second Session (UNESCO, Paris, 21–30 June 2023) adopted Resolution A-32/1, by which it elevated the former IOC Regional Committee for the central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO) to an IOC Sub-Commission. The new Sub-Commission will be officially considered established after nine (9) official letters of adherence have been received by the IOC Executive Secretary from the National Focal Points of IOC Member States.

Therefore, let me cordially invite IOC Member States interested in becoming a member of the new IOC Sub-Commission to send me such an official national letter of adherence.

Once the IOC Executive Secretary has received nine letters, the first inauguration session of the Sub-Commission will be called, at which its Officers will be elected. IOCINDIO, as an IOC Regional Committee, will be dissolved at the beginning of the inauguration first session of the new IOC Sub-Commission. It should be recalled that any IOC Member State may join the Sub-Commission at any time. Let me also clarify to Member States that they have the right to be members of more than one regional subsidiary body of IOC.

It is worth noting that the establishment of the IOCINDIO Sub-Commission will bring a new momentum for the development and implementation of the IOC programmes in the region and will also enhance the regional ocean science-policy interface at a time when important programmes are pursued in the region, notably, the Second International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE-2), the Indian Ocean Global Ocean Observing System (IOGOOS), the Indian Ocean Research Moored Array for African-Asian-Australian Monsoon Analysis and Prediction (RAMA), the IOCINDIO Coastal

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Vulnerability initiative, the IOCINDIO Network of Ocean Sciences and Research Infrastructures for Capacity Development in the Indian Ocean, several initiatives related to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development (2021–2030), and many others supported with significant national contributions and implemented through networks of national and regional oceanographic research institutions including the UNESCO Chairs and Category 2 Centres.

For this reason, including the need to continue intergovernmental support to IOC programmes in the central Indian Ocean and to prepare the session of IOCINDIO as an IOC Sub-Commission, let me encourage interested Member States to send in their letters of adhesion, wherever possible, before 31st December 2023. This indicative timeline would allow us to possibly organize the first session of IOCINDIO well before the thirty-third session of the IOC Assembly scheduled for June 2025, for a proper reporting, provided that 9 letters of adhesion have been received.

Starting the work of IOCINDIO as a Sub-Commission will require national commitments and contributions, for example, establishing its Secretariat as a part of IOC Secretariat. The commitments and contributions to the Sub-Commission can be financial or in-kind including loan/secondment of personal to the IOC Secretariat, hosting Programmes or Projects Offices for the implementation of IOCINDIO programmes, projects or/and activities, etc.

I would like to recall with appreciation that the Government of India has already expressed interest in supporting the Secretariat of the Sub-Commission.

Please kindly submit your national letter of adhesion, preferably together with an expression of national commitments and contributions to IOCINDIO as well as any intention to host the first session of the Sub-Commission to the Executive Secretary of the IOC ([v.ryabinin@unesco.org](mailto:v.ryabinin@unesco.org)) with a copy to Mr Justin Ahanhanzo acting Technical Secretary of IOCINDIO ([j.ahanhanzo@unesco.org](mailto:j.ahanhanzo@unesco.org)), Ms Elena Iasyreva ([e.iasyreva@unesco.org](mailto:e.iasyreva@unesco.org)), and Ms Xenia Yvinec ([k.yvinec@unesco.org](mailto:k.yvinec@unesco.org)) at your earliest convenience.

Kindly note that the current membership of IOCINDIO, as an IOC Regional Committee, is as follows: Australia, Bangladesh, France, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

With the assurances of my highest consideration, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

*[signed]*

Vladimir Ryabinin  
Executive Secretary

Enclosure: IOC Resolution A-32/1: Establishment of an IOC Sub-Commission for the central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO)

IOC Resolution A-32/1

**Establishment of an IOC Sub-Commission for the central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO)**

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission,

**Recalling** IOC Resolution XX-14 'IOC Programme Group for the central Indian Ocean' and Decisions A-31/3.5.6 and IOC/EC-55/3.5.2 on the 'Status of the Regional Committee for the central Indian Ocean',

**Having examined** the final report of the open-ended intersessional Working Group on the status of the regional committee for the central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO) 2022-2023 proposal for the establishment of an IOC sub-commission for the central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO) (IOC/A32/4.5(Doc.1),

**Taking into consideration** that:

- (i) the central Indian Ocean plays an important role in, inter alia, regional, and global climate, including the monsoons, El Niño-Southern Oscillation, precipitation and snow in Eurasia, weather, and extreme events,
- (ii) after more than three decades of activities, IOCINDIO has gathered invaluable experiences, learned lessons, and developed best practices, which contributed to the deliberations of the Open-ended Intersessional Working Group (OEIWG) on the transformation of IOCINDIO into an IOC Sub-Commission,

**Noting with appreciation** that there is a strong interest in many IOCINDIO Member States to work together towards the establishment of the Sub-Commission, strengthen implementation of the IOC programmes in the region, achieve the objectives of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030), and develop the capacity of IOCINDIO Member States in ocean sciences and sustainable ocean management,

**Noting further** that it is the practice of the IOC to invite all Member States to participate in the work of the Commission and its regional subsidiary bodies,

**Acknowledges** the leadership and **appreciates** the commitment of both the IOC Chairperson and IOCINDIO Chairperson, who acted as Co-Chairs of OEIWG;

**Expresses its appreciation** to:

- (i) the Member States which participated in and contributed to the deliberations of OEIWG;
- (ii) the IOC Vice-Chairperson for Electoral Group IV and Chairpersons of the IOC Sub-Commission for Africa and the Adjacent Island States (IOCAFRICA) and the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC) for their contributions to the work of the OEIWG, as well as to the IOC Executive Secretary and the Technical Secretary of IOCINDIO for the support provided;

**Decides:**

- (i) to establish the IOC Sub-Commission for the central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO) with the Terms of Reference annexed to this Resolution;
- (ii) that IOCINDIO as an IOC Sub-Commission will enter into force after nine (9) formal Letters of Adhesion have been received by the IOC Executive Secretary from competent national focal points of IOC Member States;

- (iii) that the IOCINDIO as an IOC Regional Committee will be dissolved at the beginning of the first meeting of the IOC Sub-Commission;

**Requests** the IOC Executive Secretary to:

- (i) issue, within four (4) months following the adoption of the present Resolution, a Circular Letter inviting Member States to submit a Letter of Adhesion to the IOCINDIO Sub-Commission;
- (ii) upon entry into force of the present Resolution on establishment of IOCINDIO as an IOC Sub-Commission, call the first Session of the Sub-Commission at which its Officers will be elected.

Annex to IOC Resolution A-32/1

**Terms of Reference  
for the IOC Sub-Commission for the central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO)**

**1. Title**

IOC Sub-Commission for the central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO)

**2. Mission**

The IOC Sub-Commission for the central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO) is a primary regional intergovernmental subsidiary body of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, with its area of interest within central Indian Ocean<sup>1</sup>, and its purpose is to promote international cooperation and to coordinate programmes in research, services, and capacity development, in order to learn more about the nature and resources of the ocean and to apply that knowledge for the improvement of management, sustainable development, the protection of the marine environment, and the decision-making processes of its Member States.

**3. Objectives**

The Sub-Commission shall:

- (i) Promote international cooperation and coordinate activities agreed by the governing bodies of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO;
- (ii) Make recommendations to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO on issues and areas of its competency;
- (iii) Prepare a plan for implementation of the agreed activities;
- (iv) Offer a platform for identifying regional issues and solutions based on international cooperation;
- (v) Cooperate with relevant organizations, agencies, and institutions;
- (vi) Cooperate with other subsidiary bodies and programmes of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO on matters of common interest, in particular with adjacent Sub-Commissions, IOCAFRICA and WESTPAC.

**4. Structure**

The Sub-Commission will include:

- Member States
- Officers
- Thematic or subregional Working Groups or Task Teams, as required; and

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<sup>1</sup> The "central Indian Ocean", as IOCINDIO area of interest, is adjacent, to the West, to that of IOCAFRICA, and to the East, to that of WESTPAC.

- Secretariat.

## **5. Member States**

The Sub-Commission will include the IOC Member States that have appropriately informed the IOC Executive Secretary about their adhesion. IOCINDIO membership will not be limited to Member States geographically attached to the Indian Ocean. IOC national focal points for IOCINDIO Member States will be the same as for IOC.

## **6. Officers**

The Board of Officers of the Sub-Commission will comprise the Chair and two Vice-Chairs elected by its Member States. The Board shall serve in accordance with the Guidelines for Structure and Responsibilities of the Subsidiary Bodies of the IOC.

## **7. Working Groups and Task Teams**

The Sub-Commission will establish its subsidiary working bodies as required and in accordance with the Guidelines for Structure and Responsibilities of the Subsidiary Bodies of the IOC. Joint subsidiary working bodies, especially with IOCAFRICA and WESTPAC, may be established.

## **8. Secretariat**

The IOCINDIO Secretariat will operate as a part of the IOC Secretariat under the authority of the IOC Executive Secretary.

## **9. Meetings**

IOCINDIO Member States will meet for the intergovernmental session of the Sub-Commission regularly, at least once in two years, preferably in the first part of the year of an IOC Assembly and well in advance of that Assembly to ensure quality statutory reporting.

## **10. Budget**

The IOC Sub-commission for the central Indian Ocean shall be funded from the IOC Regular Budget and extrabudgetary contributions. IOCINDIO should actively explore opportunities for raising additional resources for implementation of its programmes.

## **11. Mechanisms for coordination with adjacent Sub-Commissions**

The principle will be to maximise the value of joint work of adjacent IOC Sub-Commissions on issues of common interest, exclude duplication, and ensure no interference in governance of IOC subsidiary bodies, including adjacent bodies. Cooperation on issues of common interest and using capacity development opportunities of adjacent regional subsidiary bodies is encouraged. Coordinated contribution of regional subsidiary bodies to IOC global programmatic activities is strongly encouraged. Regular consultations between Sub-Commissions' Chairs, Boards of Officers, and Secretariats will be established to achieve co-design, co-development, and co-delivery. Normative and standard setting functions will be uniform and global, at the IOC level. Regional implementation shall follow global standards and contribute to the development of common best practices, taking into account, where required, regional differences and circumstances.

*(June 2023)*