

INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION

2026 Meeting of the IODE Management Group IOC Project Office for IODE, Oostende, Belgium 28-29 January 2026

REPORT (MAX 2 PAGES) - please answer in bullets where possible
<p>1. Title of IODE Programme Component/Programme activity, IOC Programme or Decade activity (and acronym)</p> <p>IOC Capacity Development Programme</p> <p>2. Report submitted by (Name/Date/email)</p> <p>Karen Evans/23 January 2026/k.evans@unesco.org</p> <p>3. Updates since IODE-28 (*)</p> <p>Following IOC Member States decisions at A33 focused on IOC governance and streamlining of processes, a review of the IOC's capacity development programme was conducted by IOC senior management (E/S, AO, HoS, RSC leads). Recognising 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, a draft plan for coordination of capacity development activities across the IOC (including those focused on ocean literacy) has been developed and was presented to the IOC Officers at their meeting in January 2026 (see https://oceanelogic.org/event/4863). This recognises that 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 by the IOC Assembly.</p> <p>Under the direction of the IOC Executive Secretary, the capacity development programme (including ocean literacy) will sit with the head of the IOC Ocean Science Section, with a dedicated coordinator (P4 position) to be put in place in 2026. Funding support for strengthening the IOC Traineeship programme and the OceanExpert platform to provide a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating capacity development and ocean literacy activities has been secured and will support the continued employment of Sofie De Baenst to carry out these activities.</p> <p>4. How does your work align with the objectives of IODE, the UN Ocean Decade, and other multilateral agreements?</p>

The capacity development programme is guided by the IOC Capacity Development Strategy (2023-2030) and its associated implementation plan and responds to priority needs identified across the IOC and its Member States.

5. Prioritised deliverables 2026-2027

The capacity development and ocean literacy coordinator, under the guidance of the head of the IOC Ocean Science Section will undertake two priority activities across 2026-2027:

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.

6. GOALS 2030 (Where do you see your work / activities / outcomes in 5 years?)

Following the IOC Medium Term Strategy implementation plan, the IOC will strengthen Member States' and regional bodies' ability to anticipate, understand and respond to priority ocean science challenges by implementing the IOC Capacity Development Strategy (2023–2030) in an adaptable manner that recognises and responds to capacity needs. As part of ensuring that the Strategy remains relevant and can adapt to emerging issues and changing MS needs, a multi-tool approach will be designed and delivered to assess Member State needs through time and in association provide a more comprehensive understanding of emerging needs.

Awareness of IOC capacity development and ocean literacy tools will be increased, while targeted support is delivered to Member States with a focus on SIDS and Africa through regular assessments and expansion of training delivered through the OceanTeacher Global Academy (OTGA). The IOC's activities will build a more adaptive and forward-looking global capacity ecosystem that can understand and respond quickly to accelerating scientific and technological change.

7. Considerations for / Requests to the IODE Management Group

Noting of development and streamlining of the capacity development programme as part of overall progress in ensuring greater effectiveness, efficiency and inclusiveness in the governance of the Commission.

The IODE Committee, in developing a workplan for 2027-2029, will be requested to incorporate capacity development activities that align with the IOC Capacity Development Strategy (2023-2030) and its associated implementation plan, deliver into the IOC's Medium Term Strategy, and align with overall coordination of the IOC's capacity development programme. This will ensure that these activities can be incorporated into the relevant work packages of the Medium Term Strategy implementation plan for 2028-2029.

(*) See Action sheet: [IOC/IODE-28/3 Annex V](#)