



2021 United Nations Decade
2030 of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development

Decade Advisory Board

Meeting No. 01/2025

20 February 2025

REPORT



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Intergovernmental
Oceanographic
Commission

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(IOC/2025/ODS/63)

DECADE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING NO. 01/2025

20 February 2025

13h – 16h CET (online)

MEETING REPORT

1. Welcome and Opening

The Co-chairs welcomed participants and emphasized the importance of the discussions ahead, particularly in preparation for the 2025 UN Ocean Conference (UNOC) in June and the upcoming in-person meeting of the Board in London in March. The Decade Coordination Unit (DCU) outlined the meeting's agenda, which included key updates on Ocean Decade implementation, a pre-discussion on new Decade Action Programme submissions, and an update on the Ocean Decade mid-term evaluation. The meeting also covered preparations for UNOC, including how the Ocean Decade will engage in high-profile sessions and events.

2. Update on Ocean Decade Implementation

The DCU provided an update on the overall progress of the Ocean Decade, highlighting steady growth in participation and activities. Following the closure of Call for Decade Actions No. 08/2024 in January 2025, the number of endorsed Decade Actions is expected to increase further. The distribution of Decade Actions across the [10 Challenges](#) remains balanced, although Challenge 2 (ecosystem and biodiversity protection and restoration) and Challenge 9 (capacity development) continue to grow at a faster rate than others.

Other major updates and upcoming milestones were shared, such as the news that the Ocean Decade Alliance is set to announce a new patron, with additional interest from several other countries.

The DCU also shared updates on strategic flagship initiatives, including a new initiative with OECD and the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) to measure the economic and social return on investment in ocean science, with a position paper set to be presented at the World Ocean Summit in Tokyo in March 2025. There are also accelerated efforts to increase financial and in-kind contributions to achieve 100% seabed mapping by 2030 and the development of a Youth Inclusion Strategy and Gender Action Plan to enhance engagement across diverse communities. There will also be a report on Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK) integration in the Decade, with an operational framework expected to be launched at UNOC.

Finally, the number of National Decade Committees (NDCs) has now reached 40, with Tanzania being the latest country to establish one. Work is underway to provide toolkits and resources to support NDCs in integrating ocean science into national policy frameworks, particularly in relation to biodiversity strategies and action plans.

3. Pre-discussion on Call for Decade Actions No. 08/2024 Programme Submissions

The DCU provided an update on the review process for Call for Decade Actions No. 08/2024, which closed in January 2025. A total of 98 submissions were received from 30 countries, including 67 Project proposals, 26 expressions of interest for Decade Programmes, and 5 Contributions. While most proposals were at the Project level, four of them showed the potential to be considered full Decade Programmes and are undergoing expert review. These Programmes will be formally presented to the Board in London, with the goal of confirming endorsements before World Oceans Day on June 8, 2025.

A main discussion focused on two large-scale Programme submissions, which address deep-sea microbiomes and methane seeps. These proposals raised concerns due to potential overlaps with existing Decade Programmes. The DCU asked the Board to decide whether these should be reviewed as full Programmes or redirected as Projects under existing structures. While the proponents had engaged in discussions with the DCU and presented support from international partners, questions remained about the level of differentiation and collaboration with previously endorsed Decade Programmes.

Several Board members emphasized the importance of ensuring new Programmes do not duplicate existing efforts, enquiring proposals to demonstrate clear added value and integration with existing Decade structures, encouraging greater collaboration and synergy among proponents. A final decision will be made in the coming weeks, with further discussion planned at the next Board meeting in March.

4. Planning and Draft Agenda for In-Person DAB Meeting No. 02/2025

The in-person meeting in March 2025 in London, hosted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), will be a critical moment to discuss key strategic, operational, and governance matters. The draft agenda includes: endorsement of Decade Programmes from Call No. 08/2024.; mid-term evaluation review and recommendations; discussion on the Call for Decade Actions No. 09/2025, set to launch in April 2025; strategic engagement in global events, including UNOC and COP30; and future planning for the Decade beyond 2030.

Board members emphasized the need for efficient time management to balance operational discussions (e.g., Programme endorsements) with strategic planning for the long-term impact of the Decade. Some members suggested reducing time spent on individual Programme reviews by conducting pre-discussions via email or shared documents and dedicating more in-person meeting time to broader strategic discussions, including the Decade's legacy beyond 2030. Additionally, a key discussion point for London will be the next phase of the Decade in the context of the findings of the mid-term evaluation, particularly how to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework; address gaps in assessing Decade progress; sustain long-term financial and institutional commitments to ocean science; and shape the post-2030 ocean science landscape.

An updated draft agenda will be shared with Board members for comments before finalization.

5. Update on 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC)

The 2025 UN Ocean Conference (UNOC) will be co-hosted by France and Costa Rica and will take place in Nice from June 9-13, 2025. The Ocean Decade is expected to play a central role, with key participation in the main conference with political declaration that is currently being negotiated, with efforts to embed Ocean Decade priorities into the final text. There will also be thematic Ocean Action Panels, including one on ocean science, co-led by the International Seabed Authority and IOC.

Additionally, three pre-Conference special events will be held: the One Ocean Science Congress on June 6-7, focused on scientific progress toward Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14; the Blue Economy and Finance Forum on June 7-8, exploring financing ocean science and sustainable investment; the Ocean Rise and Coastal Resilience Summit, launching a global coalition of cities focused on ocean resilience.

The Ocean Decade will also organize key events, including the Ocean Decade Forum on June 11, showcasing the impact of Decade Actions; the High-Level Ocean Decade Alliance Meeting on June 8-9, engaging Heads of State and strategic partners; seabed mapping and investment Events, promoting Decade-led initiatives; and Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK) event, where the new ILK framework will be launched.

The Board emphasized the need for strong messaging and strategic engagement at UNOC, ensuring that the Decade's impact and achievements are widely showcased and there were also clear recommendations for sustaining investment in ocean science beyond 2030 are presented.

The meeting concluded with a call for efficiency and strategic focus in the upcoming in-person discussions, recognizing the importance of aligning Decade priorities with the broader global ocean agenda. The Co-chairs thanked all participants and reiterated the significance of the next steps in shaping the future of the Ocean Decade.

Annex A: Meeting Agenda

13.00 – 13.05	Welcome and Opening
13.05 – 13.30	Update on Ocean Decade Implementation
13.30 – 13.45	Pre-discussion on Call for Decade Actions No. 08/2024 Programme submissions
13.45 – 14.15	Planning and draft agenda for in-person DAB Meeting No. 02/2025
14.15 – 14.50	Update on 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference
14.50 - 15.00	AOB

Annex B: List of Participating Board Members

Expert Members

Prof. Donovan Campbell, University of the West Indies (Jamaica)

Awa Bouso Dramé, University College London; CoastGIS Research Institute (Senegal)

Linda Faulkner, Natural Sciences Commissioner - New Zealand's National Commission for UNESCO; Chief Scientist Māori Environmental Research, NIWA (New Zealand)

José Maria Figueres, Pristine Seas, ORRAA; Antarctica 2020; SICPA Latin America; Tojoy Shared Holding Group (Costa Rica)

Charlotte Hudson, The Pew Charitable Trusts (USA)

Adrian Lema, National Center for Climate Research, Danish Meteorological Institute (Denmark)

Julie Reimer, Senior Policy and Economic Advisor, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Prof. Hiroaki Saito, Atmosphere and Ocean Research Institute (AORI), The University of Tokyo (Japan)

Marc Simon, SUEZ France, Scientific Council of H/OEHS Exposure Scenario Tool (IHEST)

Katy Soapi, Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science at the Pacific Community (SPC, New Caledonia)

Dr. Alexander Turra, Oceanographic Institute of the University of São Paulo (IOUSP, Brazil)

Nina Wambiji, Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) (Kenya)

UN Agency Representatives

Fredrik Haag, International Maritime Organization (IMO)

Jasdeep Randhawa, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)

Proclaimed in 2017 by the United Nations General Assembly, the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), provides a convening framework to develop the scientific knowledge and partnerships needed to catalyse transformative ocean science solutions for sustainable development, connecting people and our ocean. The Ocean Decade is coordinated by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC).

Established during the Preparatory Phase and to continue throughout implementation until 2030, the IOC's Ocean Decade Series will provide key documentation about this global initiative and aims to serve as a primary resource for stakeholders seeking to consult, monitor and assess progress towards the vision and mission of the Ocean Decade.

