



2021 United Nations Decade
2030 of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development

The Ocean Decade 70

Decade Advisory Board

Meeting No. 04/2025

25 November 2025

REPORT



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Intergovernmental
Oceanographic
Commission

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(IOC/2025/ODS/70)

DECADE ADVISORY MEETING NO. 04/2025

25 November 2025

13h – 15h30 CET (online)

MEETING REPORT

1. Welcome & Overview of Agenda

The Co-chairs welcomed participants and highlighted the importance of this last meeting of the year, which also serves as the last meeting of the current group of Decade Advisory Board (DAB) members in the framework of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 ('Ocean Decade'). The Co-chairs introduced the agenda and key topics for discussion.

2. Introductory remarks from IOC Executive Secretary

The Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO opened with reflections on the concluding terms of several members, acknowledging their longstanding contributions. He highlighted the significant achievements of the current Decade Advisory Board, including its guidance to the [2024 Ocean Decade Conference](#), its contributions to the [Mid-Term Evaluation](#), the revision of the Board's [Terms of Reference](#), and its early input into preparations for the [2027 Ocean Decade Conference](#). He noted that these efforts have collectively strengthened the foundation for the second half of the Ocean Decade. He concluded by thanking the Co-chairs, the outgoing members and welcoming continued engagement from those remaining for the next cohort of the Board.

3. Quick update of Decade implementation & review of Project recategorization request (CliMetS)

The Decade Coordination Unit (DCU) provided an update on developments since the previous meeting in September, noting increased expansion of initiatives led by African institutions and strengthened regional collaboration in the Caribbean and Africa and the potential for a new regional coordination hub in the Mediterranean. The DCU also reported progress in implementing the post-Mid-Term Evaluation [Action Plan](#), noting ongoing restructuring efforts and resource mobilization, outreach to UN-Oceans members regarding DAB nominations, the development of approaches for coordinated reviews of Decade Collaborative Centers (DCCs) and Decade Coordination Offices (DCOs), preparations for onboarding new DAB members, and the forthcoming release of the Gender Action Plan and the Indigenous and Local Knowledge Frameworks. The DCU also provided preliminary information on the [Island States Ocean Summit](#), scheduled for 3-4 June 2026, which will be hosted by the Nippon Foundation and co-organized with IOC.

3a. Project recategorization request

The Board considered the request from the endorsed CliMetS Project to be recategorized as a Decade Programme. The Board noted the issues discussed during Meeting No. 02/2025 that led to the endorsement of this initiative as a Project, namely the need for: (i) enhanced co-design approaches that take account of regional and national priorities, (ii) stronger evidence of the ways in which science and knowledge generated by the Project would be used to inform decision making, (iii) clear processes for data sharing, and (iv) strong international collaboration.

The Board noted with appreciation the advancement of the CliMetS initiative over the last eight months including the results of the regional workshops, increased planning for feeding into regional and global policy frameworks, the establishment of new international partnerships, and planned discussions with the [DCO for Ocean Data Sharing](#) (ODS). It re-emphasized the importance and unique nature of the initiative in advancing global research on methane seeps and coordinating national and regional research initiatives, and highlighted the importance of this work particularly in the light of the recently adopted IPCC guidelines on greenhouse gas inventories and the outcomes of UNFCCC COP30.

It recommended that the Project be recategorized as a Programme and encouraged the proponents to continue to:

- Draw synergies with ongoing international research and dialogue on mCDR approaches;
- Continue engagement and co-design with partners – particularly in the Global South and developing countries (including Small Island Developing States); and
- Actively work with the DCO-ODS to align with the Decade’s recommended approaches to data sharing.

4. Planning for 2027 Ocean Decade Conference & discussion

The DCU presented the early planning for the 2027 Ocean Decade Conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, noting strong engagement from national and local authorities following the recent planning mission in October. The progress on logistics, security and protocol arrangements was highlighted. The proposed structure includes a three-day main conference from 7-9 April 2027, preceded by partner-led events on 5-6 April. A more streamlined format than the previous Conference is envisaged, with a smaller number of satellite events, clearer links to Conference outcomes, integration of civil society focused activities and potential inclusion of research vessels.

The discussion further underlined the need for a robust preparatory process throughout 2026 and early 2027 to identify priority areas for impact, map knowledge needs and assess existing and emerging Decade contributions. A phased approach is planned, including technical mapping, regional and thematic consultations, engagement with a diverse set of stakeholder groups and the development of regional thematic roadmaps to guide commitments and resource mobilization ahead of the Conference. The Board members encouraged alignment with the [Vision 2030 process](#), strong links to policy processes at multiple scales and focus on practical leverage points, highlighting the importance of a clear legacy beyond 2030. Members

also sought clarification on the proposed timeline and the intended outputs of the preparatory process, which the Secretariat confirmed would be detailed in early 2026.

5. Reflections on work of DAB 2024-2025

The DAB expressed strong appreciation for the work of the Co-chairs, the DCU and the Secretariat, underscoring the quality of preparation and facilitation that supported effective deliberations throughout the 2024-2025 cycle. Several members highlighted the positive working atmosphere and the value of the professional networks that have developed through the Board's work. The Secretariat's responsiveness, the efficiency of endorsement processes and the clear progress of Decade initiatives were cited as signs of a maturing and increasingly influential Decade ecosystem.

At the same time, members identified areas for further improvement, particularly regarding the onboarding of new expert members, clearer articulation of expectations and more structured preparatory inputs for strategic discussions. Suggestions included more explicit guidance on how to leverage DAB expertise and greater clarity on priority tasks where the Board can meaningfully contribute between meetings. The Board also underscored the importance of strengthening co-design practices, broadening engagement with underrepresented groups and maintaining targeted and realistic work planning for the next period.

The DCU also expressed its thanks to the Co-chairs and all expert members of the Board for their work over the last two years.

6. Date of next meeting

An onboarding meeting for the new DAB 2026-2027 cohort is foreseen for mid-January, with exact dates to be confirmed by the future Co-chairs. The in-person meeting is scheduled to take place at FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy on 10-12 February 2026.

Annex A: Meeting Agenda

13.00 – 13.10	1. Welcome & Overview of Agenda	Co-Chairs
13.10 – 13.15	2. Introductory remarks from IOC Executive Secretary	IOC ES
13.15 – 13.45	3. Quick update of Decade implementation & review of Project recategorization request (CliMets)	DCU / All
13.45 – 14.30	4. Planning for 2027 Ocean Decade Conference & discussion	DCU / All
14.30 – 15.15	5. Reflections on work of DAB 2024-2025	Co-Chairs / All
15.15 – 15.25	6. Exchange of information / AOB	Co-Chairs / All
15.25 – 15.30	7. Date of next meeting	Co-Chairs

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, New Zealand's National Commission for UNESCO; New Zealand's Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge; Tūtaiao Ltd (New Zealand)

Dr. Michelle Heupel, Integrated Marine Observing system (Australia)

Charlotte Hudson, Blue Convergence Fund (USA)

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

Angelique Pouponneau, AOSIS (Seychelles)

Dr. Julie Reimer, Senior Policy & Economic Advisor (Canada)

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

Dr. Katy Soapi, Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science, Pacific Community (SPC, New Caledonia)

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

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

UN Agency Representatives

Vera Agostini, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

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 the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO.

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.

