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**INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION**

(of UNESCO)

**Twenty-seventh Session of the IOC Committee on International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE-XXVII)   
UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 22-24 March 2023**

**Rules of procedure for IODE**  **Programme Components, Programme Activities or Projects**

# Background

Since the early 1990s the IODE programme has created many projects as IODE activities. Before that time IODE had several groups of experts, but these were not always able to implement concrete actions. Projects were considered as more flexible and targeted ways to implement IODE activities.

Today IODE has 15 global Projects (2022):

1.     AquaDocs (formerly OceanDocs, established by IODE-XIX, 2007)

2.     GODAR/WOD (GODAR established by IODE-XIV, 1992)

3.     GOSUD (established by IODE-XVI, 2000)

4.     GTSPP (established by IODE-XV, 1996)

5.     ICAN (established by IODE-XXII, 2013)

6.     IquOD (established by IODE-XXIII, 2015)

7.     ODP (established by IODE-XIX, 2007)

8.     OBIS (established by the IOC Assembly in 2009)

9.     OBPS (IODE/GOOS) (established by the IOC Assembly in 2019)

10.  Ocean InfoHub (including OIH extension project) (extra-budgetary project started 2020)

11.  ODIS (including ODISCat): ODIS established by IOC Assembly in 2017); ODISCat established by IODE-XXV, 2019

12.  OceanExpert (established by IODE-XXIII, 2015)

13.  OceanTeacher Global Academy (including Alumni project) (extra-budgetary project started 2020 as successor of OceanTeacher Academy project)

14.  PacMAN (extra-budgetary project started 2020)

15.  IODE QMF (established by IODE-XXII, 2013)

In addition, IODE participates in several projects funded by other donors and are not included in the above list.

Most of the projects have been formally established through an IODE Recommendation that was subsequently approved by the IOC Assembly (usually part of the overall Assembly decision on IODE. IODE Recommendations are usually submitted to the IOC Assembly because IODE Committee meetings are typically organized a few months before sessions of the IOC Assembly). The IODE Recommendation includes the terms of reference of the project as well as the terms of reference and initial membership of the project’s steering group.

While there is a certain level of similarity between the projects in terms of their management structure it is recommended to adopt a more unified set of rules that should be applied by all existing and new IODE projects and other IODE activities.

# IOC Manual (1989) and IOC Rules of Procedure (2001)

**IOC Manual (1989)**

Reference is made to the [IOC Manual (IOC/INF-785)](https://oceanexpert.org/downloadFile/2885) of 1989. It is noted that the IOC Manual refers only to Scientific and/or Technical Committees (the IODE Committee is a technical committee), Sub-Commissions, Regional Committees, Task Teams, Groups of Experts and Joint Subsidiary Bodies.

Under “2. Rules of Procedure, VII – Committees, subsidiary and other bodies”:

Rule 24 states:

1. The Assembly or the Executive Council shall determine the composition and terms of reference of committees, subsidiary or other bodies set by them. At each of its ordinary sessions the Assembly shall review their composition and terms of reference with a view to making such changes as may be necessary. The Assembly or the Executive Council shall take into account the need for broad geographical participation and appropriate expertise in such bodies.
2. These bodies shall meet in accordance with the relevant decisions of the Assembly of the Executive Council

Rule 25 states:

1. Unless he has been designated by the Assembly or the Executive Council or, in the case of joint bodies, otherwise agreed upon, the Chairman of each committee, subsidiary or other body shall be elected by the body concerned

In addition, under 5. Guidelines for the structure and responsibilities of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission” the below table shows the rights to form secondary subsidiary bodies. This indicates that the IODE Committee (as a Technical Committee) can establish Task Teams and Groups of Experts.

SUMMARY OF RIGHTS TO FORM SECONDARY SUBSIDIARY BODIES

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subsidiary  Parent (Secondary) (Primary)** | **C** (S and T) | SC | **RC** | **TT[[1]](#footnote-1)** | **GE1** |
| Committees (Scientific and technical) | - | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Sub-Committees (SC) | No | - | No | Yes | Yes |
| Regional Committees (RC) | No | No | - | Yes | Yes |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Task Teams (TT) | No | No | No | - | No |
| Groups of Experts (GE) | No | No | No | No | - |

The same document also provides basic elements of terms of reference.

BASIC ELEMENTS OF TERMS OF REFERENCE OF PRIMARY SUBSIDIARY BODIES

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Function     Type Primary  Subsidiary Body | Programme of work & financial requirements | Overall Policy Recommendation | Technical Policy Making | Reporting to Parent Body | Programme Development | | | | | | | Creation of Subs. Bodies | |
| Planning | Promotion | Co-ordination | Scientific advice & guidance | Standard setting & nomenclature | Co-operation | Evaluation | TT[[2]](#footnote-2) | TT2 |
| Scientific and/or Technical Committee | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Sub-Commission | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | - | x | x | x | x |
| Regional Committee | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | - | x | x | x | x |
| Task Team | - | x | - | x | x | x | x | x | x | - | - | - | - |
| Group of Experts | - | x | - | x | x | x | x | x | x | - | x | - | - |

The following descriptions are provided for “Programme Development”:

Planning

"Prepare a detailed plan of action for implementation of the adopted programmes, projects on activities."

Promotion

"Within its field of responsibility, promote the adopted programmes, projects or activities among the interested Member States and/or in the marine scientific community, as necessary, and make, if appropriate recommendations to the [name of the parent body in brief] to this effect."

Co-ordination

"Identify the Member States' institutions, the collaborating organizations, or individuals, as the case may be, participating in the implementation of the adopted programmes, projects on activities and ensure that each such entity is made fully aware of the work it is expected to undertake and how it relates to the work of the other participating entities."

Scientific and technical advice and guidance

"(a) Provide advice to the participating entities, as defined above, on appropriate methods, procedures and operations for the optimum implementation of the agreed programmes, projects or activities;

(b) undertake specific tasks (e.g., prepare scientific and technical reports, reviews, guidelines), if appropriate, to help ensure optimum implementation of the agreed programmes, projects or activities."

Standard setting and nomenclature

"Recommend and co-ordinate the development (with other international organizations) of standards, reference materials and nomenclature for use in marine science and related ocean services."

Co-operation

"Co-operate, as appropriate, with other bodies, such as subsidiary bodies of the Commission or of other international organizations, whether governmental or non-governmental, global or regional, at an equivalent (or approximately equivalent) hierarchical level, as decided by [the name of the parent body in brief]."

Evaluation

"(a) Examine the results of the adopted programme, projects or activities at regular intervals determined by their nature;

(b) make recommendations to [the name of the parent body in brief] on the application of these results; and

(c) provide advice to [the name of the parent body in brief] on desirable improvements in programme conception or execution."

**Creation of Secondary Subsidiary Bodies**

The right to create a Secondary Subsidiary Body is indicated in the table above. All Secondary Subsidiary Bodies shall be established initially for one intersessional period only (see section on Frequency of Meetings, below). Further extension shall be by specific decision at each session of their respective parent bodies.

In general, the Guidelines given above apply also to Secondary Subsidiary Bodies. It is clear, however, that Secondary Subsidiary Bodies have no authority to create tertiary subsidiary bodies. Nevertheless, informal sub-groups (e.g., Sub-groups of Experts) may be formed to deal with specific aspects of the work of a subsidiary body but shall have no formal status and their activities shall be the responsibility of the subsidiary body alone.

**Membership and Composition**

Scientific and/or Open to all interested Member States

Technical Committees

Sub-Commissions Open to Member States of the region concerned, and other interested Member States

Regional Committees Same as for Sub-Commissions

Task Teams Decided by the parent body (normally consisting of a few governmental experts appointed by Member States concerned)

Groups of Experts Experts acting in their personal capacity and selected for their knowledge and expertise in the subject concerned

It is noted that the above specifications were also included in “Guidelines for the structure and responsibilities of the subsidiary bodies of the commission, and for the establishment of decentralized offices” (IOC/INF-1193) (2005).

**IOC Rules of Procedure (2001)**

Reference is also made also to the [IOC Rules of Procedure (IOC/INF-1166, 2001)](https://oceanexpert.org/downloadFile/2884),   
Rule 25:

2. The Assembly or the Executive Council can establish subsidiary bodies jointly with other organizations as stated in Article 9.2 of the Statutes. In such cases, the Terms of Reference, the member- ship and the expected lifetime will be established, and any subsequent reviews and changes carried out, in consultation with the other organization(s) involved. No decisions affecting the joint bodies will be undertaken or expected, without such consultations.

3. Unless otherwise designated by the Assembly or the Executive Council or, in the case of joint bodies, otherwise agreed upon, the Chairperson of each subsidiary body shall be elected by the body concerned.

**Conclusion**

The IOC Manual and IOC Rules of Procedure do not mention programme activities including projects and Project Steering Groups. However, when considering the basic elements of the terms of reference for Task Teams and Groups of Experts it is noted that these resemble the most those of IODE Projects as applied since the 1990s by IODE.

Two differences between Task Teams and Groups of Experts are:

1. Membership: GE membership is composed of experts acting in their personal capacity and selected for their knowledge and expertise in the subject concerned (a circular letter is issued by the Secretariat, member states submit nominations and the Secretariat selects the members). For Task Teams membership is decided by the parent body and normally consist of a few governmental experts appointed by Member States concerned. In the case of IODE projects the initial membership follows the Task Team rule but as the project proceeds additional members may be added by the steering group as needed;
2. Evaluation: Task Teams are not involved in evaluation while Groups of Experts are. IODE Steering Groups are involved in project (internal) evaluation.

It is for these reasons that the IODE Committee is proposing Rules of Procedure for IODE Projects based on the descriptions listed above for Task Teams and Groups of Experts.

# Rules of Procedure for IODE Activities 2023

Since the creation of the first IODE projects in the 1990s the terms of reference of a IODE Project and Steering Group have been defined by a Recommendation submitted by the IODE Committee to the IOC Governing body (in the case of IODE this is usually the Assembly) or a Decision by the IODE Committee (in cases where there were no financial implications to IOC).

Taking into account the new designations as proposed/adopted by IODE-XXVII there are now IODE Programme Components, Programme Activities and Projects:

* Programme Component (PC): activity with core UNESCO/IOC RP funding and staff support that enables the activity to operate on a permanent basis;
* Programme Activity (PA): Long-term activity receiving minimal UNESCO/IOC RP funding supplemented by in-kind and/or extra-budgetary support;
* Project: Activity that is limited in time and is fully funded from extra-budgetary sources (Each Programme Component or Programme Activity can be further strengthened through “Projects”)

The terms of reference of a Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project and its Steering Group can only be modified by the parent body and/or IOC Governing body (in the case of IODE this is usually the Assembly).

Steering Groups will elect their own (Co-)Chair(s)(see below). A Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project can have one Chair or more than one Co-Chairs. In this document we will refer to (Co-)Chair(s).

In IODE Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Steering Groups decisions are made by consensus. Voting will only be organized if no consensus can be reached.

**3.1 Establishment of an IODE Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project through a Recommendation**

As described above IODE Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project should be established by an IODE Recommendation or a Decision by the IODE Committee (in cases where there were no financial implications to IOC).

A Recommendation is a proposal for an action that needs to be approved by an IOC Governing Body.

A recommendation (or decision) has the following structural elements:

* Paragraphs that start with “noting”, “recalling” , “recognizing”, etc.: these give the background to justify the establishment of the project.
* “Recommends the establishment of the XXX project with Terms of Reference as attached in Annex A to this Recommendation”.
* “Recommends the establishment of the IODE Steering Group for the XXX project, with terms of reference as attached in Annex B to this Recommendation”.

**Annex A to Recommendation/Decision …**

**Terms of Reference of the IODE XXX project**

Objectives

Description of the objectives of the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project

**Annex B to Recommendation/Decision …**

**Terms of Reference of the IODE Steering Group for the IODE XXX project**

Objectives

“The SG-XXX shall: “…

Membership

“The initial membership of the group will include …”

For medium to large size Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project, it may be decided (and if funding is available) to recruit a manager (see below).

**3.2 Terms of reference of a IODE Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Steering Group**

The main roles of an IODE Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Steering Group are to:

1. Propose the vision, strategy, work plan and timetable for the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project;
2. Advise on technical aspects of the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project;
3. Monitor the development of the adopted work plan, identify any problems and propose remedial action;
4. Invite additional experts as members of the Group, as needed by the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project;
5. Report to the IODE Management Group (every year) and IODE Committee (every two years);

Regular meetings of the Steering Group should be held (at least) once a year. The Co-Chairs can decide, in consultation with the members, to have more than one meeting a year if needed.

Regular meetings should preferable be organized as in-person meetings but can, if insufficient funds are available (either from IOC/IODE) or through self-funding, can be held online or hybrid.

Regular meetings are meetings during which decisions (on work plan implementation, re-allocation of approved budget, elections of Co-Chairs, invitation of new members) can be made (if a quorum of members is present. A quorum is defined as 50% of the membership +1) and for which official reports are published in the IOC Series “Reports of Meetings of Experts and Equivalent Bodies).

*Ad hoc* or informal meetings may be organized at any time). They can be held in-person, hybrid or online. They can also publish reports but these will not have an official character and should be considered as information documents.

**3.3 Terms of reference of members of an IODE Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Steering Group**

The terms of reference of an IODE Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Steering Group are included in the Recommendation or Decision that established the project. This refers to the objectives of the group and initial membership.

Members of the Steering Group should be selected based on the expertise they can contribute to realizing the objectives of the Steering Group and objectives of the Project.

Membership selection should also take into account both geographic and gender balance.

The Steering Group can decide to contact individual experts based on their relevant expertise or can publish a call (through direct mailing, web site or other communication methods) to seek new members. The membership will, in addition, include members of the IODE Secretariat as well as, as necessary, other members of the IOC Secretariat.

There are no formal limitations to the number of members of a Project Steering Group, but it is recommended to keep the maximum size to a manageable number (e.g., 20).

There are no formal limitations to the duration of membership of IODE Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Steering Groups. However, members who no longer have the time to participate actively are invited to step down to give room to new members.

Support for participation of SG members (and/or (Co-)Chair(s) in in-person meetings of the Group may be provided, depending on availability of funds.

**3.4 Terms of reference of the IODE Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Steering Group (Co-)Chair(s)**

The role of (Co-)Chair(s) is:

1. To Chair sessions of the IODE Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Steering Group;
2. To monitor the development of the adopted work plan, identify any problems and propose remedial action, in close consultation with the IODE Secretariat and SG members/Work Package leads;
3. To call for meetings of the IODE Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Steering Group, in close consultation with the Project Manager and/or IODE Secretariat;
4. To assist the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Manager and/or IODE Secretariat with the preparation of project reports;
5. To represent the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project and its Steering Group at meetings and other events;
6. To promote the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project at meetings and other events;

Notes:

* If they so desire, Co-Chairs can focus (in addition to the tasks outlined above) on particular elements of the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project work plan if they have specific expertise in those elements.
* In order to maximize efficiency and coordination it is recommended that Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Managers, IODE Secretariat and Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project (Co-)Chair(s) communicate regularly.

When participating in external events, Co-Chair(s) will not represent their institution or country but always represent the Steering Group.

The (Co-)Chair(s) are not involved in the day-to-day implementation of the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project which is the remit of the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Manager (unless none has been recruited).

Election criteria and holding of elections

* (Co-)Chair(s) are elected from the membership of the Steering Group.
* There are no formal requirements in terms of expertise, educational background, experience, other qualifications to guide the election of (Co-)Chair(s). In practice (Co-Chair(s) are usually elected based on their level of activity in the work of the Steering Group over a period of time, the respect they have gained from the membership of the Group and their professional expertise related to the subject of the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project.
* In exceptional cases one or more Co-Chairs can be invited from outside the Group if they can bring in exceptional expertise or experience or if no other candidates have come forward. In such cases the Steering Group will need to invite them as members first after which he/she/they can be elected (Co-)Chair(s).
* Proficiency in the working language of the group is essential.
* Experience in mobilizing resources is an additional element but not a requirement (all members of the SG are encouraged to assist with resource mobilization).
* In the election of (Co-)Chair(s) geographic and gender balance should be respected.
* Elections of (Co-)Chair(s)s can only be held during regular meetings of the Steering Group (see above) during which a quorum of the membership is present.
* (Co-)Chair(s) are elected for one inter-sessional period of the Steering Group (regular meeting), with the possibility of re-election for an additional term. In exceptional circumstances Co-Chairs (or one of them) can be re-elected for a third term. If more than one regular meeting is organized within a calendar year then the term of office will be one year.
* Exceptions (e.g. further extensions) are possible by a decision of the IODE Committee.
* If, for a large Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project, two Co-Chairs are not considered sufficient, then alternative arrangements may be considered. Such arrangements should be proposed for approval to the IODE Committee.

Succession arrangements for (Co-)Chair(s)

* (Co-)Chair(s) should inform the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Manager and IODE Secretariat of their desire to step down at least 6 months before the expiry of their term of office or next regular meeting of the Steering Group, whichever comes first. This will allow the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Manager and IODE Secretariat to start the election procedure for the new (Co-)Chair(s).
* If one Co-Chair decides to step down and the other(s) decides to remain then only one new Co-Chair needs to be elected. The other Co-Chair(s) can remain in office.
* When (Co-)Chair(s) step down after one or two terms, they will become Past (Co-)Chair(s)s and will be invited to provide guidance to the incoming (Co-) Chair(s) during the first term of the new (Co-) Chairs. This will be a voluntary service to the new (Co-)Chair(s) and the outgoing (Co-)Chairs may decline.
* When (Co-)Chair(s) step down after one or two terms they may remain members of the Steering Group. They should inform the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Manager and IODE Secretariat at the time they inform of their decision to step down.

**3.5 Terms of Reference of the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Manager**

* Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project without external funding will recruit a volunteer Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Manager.
* Larger funded projects can recruit Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Managers as UNESCO/IOC consultants or project appointments (the latter when the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project is funded from extra-budgetary resources). Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Managers work under the administrative supervision of a UNESCO/IOC staff member. Project Managers are usually recruited for the full duration of the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project. For long-term Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project continued contractual arrangements will continue as long as funds are available or until the consultant/staff resigns.

The tasks assigned to a Project Manager are:

1. Coordinate the implementation of the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project by all partners (all work packages), based upon the adopted work plan, in close consultation with the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project (Co-) Chair(s), members of the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project Steering Group, work package leads and IODE Secretariat;
2. Coordinate communication and cooperation between Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project partners and other organizations, programmes and projects, as relevant;
3. To prepare annual and other reports as required by the IODE Secretariat, the governing bodies of the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project parent programme(s) or IOC governing bodies;
4. To plan and implement communication activities of the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project (web site, brochures, social media,…)
5. To manage and supervise administrative implementation, including budget management, of the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project;
6. To assist the IODE Secretariat with resource mobilization for the Programme Component, Programme Activity or Project

# Transition period

For existing projects at the time of adoption of the current Rules of Procedure, there will be a transition period to adjust their structure –and methods- accordingly. Such transition shall be completed prior to the next IODE Management Group meeting (end of 2023 or early 2024).

[end of document]

1. Provided that no costs fall on the Commission or costs have been allocated by a Governing Body. A request for approval of costs may be submitted, by an appropriate Primary Subsidiary Body, to a Governing Body either when the Secondary Subsidiary Body is first formed or with the proposed programme of work and financial requirements when submitted to the Executive Secretary by the Primary Subsidiary Body. See also Section 1.5, below. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Provided no costs fall on the Commission on the necessary costs have been allocated by a Governing Body. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)