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| SummaryThis Addendum is a part of the IOC Technical Secretary’s report and provides a detailed update on the work accomplished by IOCAFRICA over the period March 2023 to April 2025. It is structured according to the components of work in the 2023–2025 IOCAFRICA workplan, offering a comprehensive overview of programme implementation under the themes of GOOS Africa, Africa InfoHub, climate change adaptation in coastal zones, capacity development, ocean literacy, and governance.Although activities under the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) have a dedicated agenda item at the Eighth Session of the Sub-Commission, key highlights and achievements are also summarised in this Addendum for continuity and alignment with the broader workplan components.Furthermore, given IOCAFRICA’s expanding portfolio of strategic collaborations, a separate section is dedicated to reporting on international and regional partnerships. This includes contributions to UNESCO’s intersectoral initiatives, the African Union, coordination with global science and heritage platforms, and the establishment of impactful collaborations to support implementation, knowledge exchange, and capacity enhancement across the region.Together, these components reflect IOCAFRICA’s continued leadership and commitment to supporting Member States in strengthening ocean science, advancing regional integration, and delivering on the priorities outlined in the IOC Medium-Term Strategy and the Africa Ocean Decade Roadmap. |

**Highlights of Programme Implementation by Component (2023–2025)**

1. This report provides a structured update on the IOCAFRICA programme implementation over the 2023–2025 intersessional period, based on the components of the approved workplan. Activities are presented thematically by workstream, aligned with the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029), the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, Agenda 2063, and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030). Each section outlines major achievements, partnerships, training and engagement activities, technical and institutional contributions, and planned follow-up actions.

**Component 1: GOOS-Africa**

1. The GOOS-Africa component aimed to support and strengthen Africa’s contribution to the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), with specific attention to observing infrastructure, regional coordination, oceanographic expeditions, and integration with the GOOS 2030 Strategy. It aligned with IOCAFRICA’s vision to foster inclusive, sustainable, and science-based marine observation and services across the continent.

Review of tide gauge network in Africa

1. As part of this workstream, IOCAFRICA organized a technical review meeting on 28–29 February 2024 to consolidate findings from the continental assessment of tide gauge infrastructure. The meeting, held virtually with support from the Secretariat and hosted by the GOOS-Africa Coordination Office at CURAT (Abidjan), brought together experts from national hydrographic and oceanographic agencies to finalize the draft report on the state of tide gauges in Africa.
2. The finalized assessment will inform strategic investment in tide gauge expansion and integration with the Global Sea Level Observing System (GLOSS), including data availability, gaps, and technical maintenance protocols.

Support to oceanographic expeditions

1. OCAFRICA provided logistical and travel support to enable African scientists and Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs) to participate in oceanographic research cruises aboard South African and Nigerian research vessels. These included deployments in the Southeast Atlantic and Gulf of Guinea in mid-2023 and early 2024.
2. The participation of regional scientists facilitated in-situ data collection, cross-national collaboration, and on-board training in hydrography, marine chemistry, and benthic sampling protocols. Reports from these expeditions have been submitted to the Secretariat and are under review for integration into regional databases.

Strengthening GOOS-Africa coordination

1. Support was provided for operational strengthening of the GOOS-Africa Coordination Office hosted by CURAT in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire. Activities included provision of IT infrastructure, institutional coordination support, and technical assistance in the implementation of GOOS-Africa priorities.
2. The Secretariat continued to support dialogue between GOOS-Africa, the GOOS Global Office, and IOCAFRICA Member States to ensure alignment of regional plans with GOOS programme components. A proposed operational framework for joint implementation was circulated in March 2025 and is currently under review by the Steering Committee.

Challenges encountered

* Implementation of GOOS-Africa activities faced delays related to coordination and role clarity among the IOCAFRICA Secretariat, the GOOS-Africa Steering Committee, and the GOOS Global Office, particularly concerning fund disbursement responsibilities and execution authority.

Next steps

* Finalize and disseminate the continental tide gauge review report and initiate consultations on resource mobilization for upgrading priority stations.
* Operationalize the proposed coordination framework among IOCAFRICA, GOOS-Africa, and the GOOS Global Office to support streamlined implementation.
* Expand opportunities for African researchers to join research cruises and promote publication of expedition findings under the SEAWARD Africa Programme.
* Continue institutional support to the GOOS-Africa Coordination Office, including its role in leading Decade Actions focused on ocean observations.
* Continue institutional support to the GOOS-Africa Coordination Office, including its role in leading Decade Actions focused on ocean observations, forecasting, and regional early warning systems. (Implementation details to follow)

**Component 2: Africa InfoHub**

1. The Africa InfoHub component focused on enhancing digital platforms for improved accessibility, visibility, and interoperability of African marine data. These efforts contributed to regional implementation of the IOC Ocean Data and Information System (ODIS) and supported broader goals under the Africa Ocean Decade Roadmap.

ODIS technical support (back-end)

1. IOCAFRICA, with support from the Government of Flanders and in partnership with the IODE Project Office, implemented a back-end technical support programme to onboard African institutions to ODIS. From June 2023 to January 2025, technical assistance was delivered to NODCs and data units in Namibia, Tunisia, Madagascar, Nigeria, and Ghana.
2. The support included the installation and configuration of CKAN metadata catalogues, generation of JSON-LD sitemaps, and integration of data holdings into the ODIS global discovery layer. Institutions were assisted in setting up public-facing metadata portals with ODIS-compliant APIs.
3. Dedicated consultants, coordinated by IOCAFRICA and IODE, undertook site-specific engagements and technical troubleshooting. A final synthesis report submitted in January 2025 (Jeff McKenna) detailed onboarding status, recommended maintenance actions, and institutional feedback.

ODIS front-end portal development and regional metadata catalogue

1. To complement back-end efforts, IOCAFRICA launched the development of multilingual front-end portals to provide user access to marine data products. These platforms feature searchable metadata, visualization tools, and institutional profiles.
2. The regional metadata repository hosted at <https://ioc-africa.org/dbs/displayData.php> provides access to datasets from over 30 African institutions, supporting transparency, scientific collaboration, and regional data integration. IOCAFRICA also launched a pilot institutional data portal for the various NODCs in Africa (<https://www.odinafrica.org/en/national-networks.html>).

Capacity development and regional engagement

1. A regional training on FAIR Data Principles was hosted from 21–25 August 2024 in Mombasa, Kenya in collaboration with KMFRI and the OceanTeacher Global Academy (OTGA). The workshop trained 40 participants from 20 countries in metadata standards, ODIS architecture, and open data protocols.
2. In addition, IOCAFRICA supported the establishment of the African Marine Training Platform (https://africa.marinetraining.org/), with funding from NORAD. The portal currently lists over 270 training courses from 18 African countries and is integrated with OTGA, UNESCO Chairs, and Centres of Excellence.
3. IOCAFRICA presented African ODIS use cases (e.g. fisheries, ecosystem monitoring, coastal hazards) at IODE-XXVII (March 2025) and contributed to global interoperability pilots showcasing Africa’s digital ocean architecture.

Challenges encountered

* Persistent digital infrastructure gaps in several Member States limited onboarding efforts. Language barriers and inconsistent metadata documentation reduced adoption across Francophone and Lusophone institutions.
* Sustainability concerns remain regarding long-term portal maintenance, human capacity, and support for metadata updates.

Next steps

* Expand institutional onboarding to include data centres in Cameroon, Senegal, and Mozambique, with new funding proposals under development.
* Deliver follow-up virtual training on publishing biodiversity and ocean-climate datasets using the ODIS catalogue and metadata tools.
* Strengthen cross-platform interoperability through partnerships with GMES&Africa, and African universities.
* Produce multilingual user manuals and video tutorials tailored to national partners to foster independent metadata management and cataloguing.
* Promote wider institutional use of the metadata platform and facilitate integration of front-end portal functionalities into national marine data strategies, building on the foundational work of the now-completed Ocean InfoHub (OIH) project.

**Component 3: Climate Change Adaptation in Coastal Zones (Including Ocean Science)**

1. This component focused on improving Africa’s capacity to generate and use ocean science to address climate change impacts on marine and coastal ecosystems. The activities supported key priorities under the IOC Medium-Term Strategy, Africa Blue Economy Strategy, and Ocean Decade Challenges 2 (protect and restore ecosystems and biodiversity) and 6 (increase community resilience to ocean hazards).

Assessment of vulnerability and climate impacts on coastal and marine ecosystems

1. IOCAFRICA launched a consultancy-driven assessment to provide a comprehensive synthesis and analysis of data on the vulnerability of the region’s marine and coastal ecosystems to climate change. The assessment evaluates the combined impacts of climatic and human-induced stressors on ecosystems, examines current adaptation strategies, and proposes actionable recommendations tailored to policymakers, stakeholders, and conservation practitioners.
2. The overarching aim is to advance an ecosystem-based policy and spatial management framework to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of Africa’s marine and coastal ecosystems, particularly in West Africa. The consultant was onboarded in November 2024. The first draft of this report was reviewed by UNESCO peers with expertise in climate adaptation and marine ecosystems. A validation workshop is planned for July 2025 following the consultant’s submission of the initial draft. This peer feedback will help refine interpretations and enhance the quality of the report. The validation process is designed to culminate in a regional workshop in Q3 2025, bringing together national and regional experts to integrate diverse perspectives and scientific knowledge. This collaborative approach is expected to yield adaptation strategies that are both scientifically robust and socially inclusive. By incorporating insights from a broad range of stakeholders, the process aims to capture macro-scale climate drivers as well as localized ecosystem and community-level impacts.

Early warning systems for coastal hazards

1. In partnership with IOC-UNESCO and national agencies, IOCAFRICA supported Morocco and Namibia in scoping national early warning systems (EWS) for harmful algal blooms (HABs). National consultations took place in Rabat (17–19 May 2023) and Windhoek (25–26 October 2023), resulting in country-level roadmaps for the establishment of HAB early warning systems.
2. Additionally, IOCAFRICA commissioned the development of a web-based early warning dashboard for climate-related marine and coastal hazards under the Ecosystem-based Climate Resilience and Adaptation for Marine and Coastal Ecosystems (ECRAMME) initiative. The dashboard, developed during Q1–Q2 2025, integrates observational, satellite, and modelled data for key climate indicators including sea surface temperature, sea level anomaly, wave energy, ocean acidity, and coastal erosion. The dashboard synthesizes data from multiple sources including CMIP6 HighResMIP, Sentinel-2, Landsat, and regional field surveys, covering projections from 1950 to 2100. It also visualizes hazard exposure and vulnerability metrics across the Gulf of Guinea.The tool aims to empower coastal communities by improving local preparedness, enhance public protection planning, and promote long-term regional resilience. The first demonstration version of the ECRAMME dashboard is complete and will be launched during a stakeholder meeting planned for Q3 2025, targeting marine researchers, disaster risk practitioners, and national adaptation planners. The platform is further expected to support IOCAFRICA’s engagement with the African Union’s Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Action System (AMHEWAS) and contribute to Africa’s voice in global processes such as the UN Early Warnings for All initiative and the Global Ocean Observing System’s regional priorities on hazard monitoring and climate services.

**Strategic ocean–climate partnerships and policy capacity support**

1. IOCAFRICA partnered with Lagos State University, the Federal Ministry of Marine & Blue Economy, and numerous African and international partners to co-host the 4th Annual International Workshop of the US–West Africa Atlantic Coastal Resilience Research Consortium (CRRC), held in Lagos, Nigeria from 19–21 August 2024. The workshop theme—"Harnessing the Blue Economy in Support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science"—focused on collaborative opportunities, and IOCAFRICA supported experts from Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria, and South Africa to contribute.
2. IOCAFRICA and AGNES have forged a powerful collaboration aimed at enhancing Africa's response to climate change and ocean challenges. In 2023, IOCAFRICA expertly facilitated the participation of two African experts in the Pre-COP28 AGNES Strategy Meeting, where their insights significantly influenced discussions on ocean and climate change, culminating in a robust regional input presented at COP28. This partnership has progressed to encompass the Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategies (LT-LEDS) Landscape Study, focusing on the development of effective tools for Africa’s LT-LEDS and NDC 3.0 submissions while proactively addressing transboundary climate risks. At the IPCC Africa National Focal Points and Experts Meeting in March 2024 in Nairobi, IOCAFRICA successfully collaborated with AGNES and UNECA to prepare for the Second African IPCC Strategy Meeting, championing frameworks in AR7 that authentically reflect African realities. Furthermore, in December 2024, IOCAFRICA played a pivotal role in the Africa Experts Pre-Scoping Workshop for the IPCC AR7 cycle, crafting outlines that prioritize Africa’s critical needs in adaptation, mitigation, and physical sciences. In November 2024, the partnership with AGNES and the IPBES Secretariat led to a decisive information session on expert nominations for biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning, ensuring that African expertise is represented in global assessments. Looking ahead, IOCAFRICA and AGNES are poised to co-organize a virtual workshop in March 2025 to expertly prepare for the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue at SBSTA-62, bringing together negotiators and practitioners to identify key themes for coordinated African submissions.
3. IOCAFRICA and Conservation International, in collaboration with Future Ecosystems for Africa (FEFA), are co-developing the Natural Climate Solutions (NCS) Roadmap for Africa. This roadmap—adapted from the global NCS framework—targets pathways for managing, protecting, and restoring land and ocean ecosystems. The final roadmap will be launched at COP30 in Belem, Brazil.
4. The Sub-Commission co-leading the [Blue Africa initiative](https://ascendclimate.org/blue-africa/), coordinated by the University of the Witwatersrand, as part of a regional consortium under the BAOBAB synthesis research stream. IOCAFRICA co-leads the policy and institutional engagement component of the initiative, which is supported by the BAOBAB project under the Climate Adaptation and Resilience (CLARE) research programme and the Step Change initiative, jointly funded by UK aid through the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. The initiative seeks to align carbon storage efforts in African coastal and marine ecosystems with the needs and priorities of African communities.The project aims to fill key knowledge gaps by synthesising data on carbon sequestration capacity in mangroves, seagrasses, and salt marshes, while examining socio-ecological trade-offs and co-benefits. It further supports informed policy development that integrates biodiversity, ecosystem services, and local livelihoods into national climate strategies. IOCAFRICA has supported technical coordination across institutions and contributed to linking outputs to national, continental, and international processes such as the UNFCCC and CBD. Outcomes are expected to inform ongoing dialogues on blue economy, nature-based solutions, and sustainable marine development in Africa.
5. IOCAFRICA also participated in the regional workshop on Marine Carbon Dioxide Removal (mCDR), titled "Towards an African Road Map for Marine Carbon Dioxide Removal (mCDR) Research, Development, and Demonstration: Science, Policy, Governance, and Capacity Development in Africa," hosted by the Tanzania Ocean Climate Innovation Hub in Dar es Salaam from 26 to 27 February 2025. The workshop marked the beginning of a collaborative process to develop an African roadmap for mCDR research and governance.

**Contribution to global and continental processes**

1. IOCAFRICA played a lead role in co-organizing the SDG 14 parallel session and knowledge fair at the Eleventh African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD-11), held in Kampala, Uganda on 10 April 2025. The session, "Advancing SDG 14 Implementation in Africa," emphasized climate-ocean policy links and informed African positions ahead of UNOC-3.
2. Additionally, IOCAFRICA contributed to the Opportunity and Issues-Based Coalition 4 (Climate Action, Resilience and Food Systems), where it worked alongside UNESCO, UNDP, FAO, and UNEP to strengthen the integration of marine science and ocean-climate indicators into National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), early warning frameworks, and the African Union Green Recovery Action Plan. Through this engagement, IOCAFRICA provided technical inputs on coastal resilience indicators, promoted regional use cases such as the ECRAMME dashboard, and advocated for marine data to be prioritized in Africa’s contribution to the global Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative.
3. IOCAFRICA’s work was further showcased in high-level regional knowledge-sharing events, including preparations for the Conference of Ministers of Planning and Finance 2025 (COM 2025). During these engagements, IOCAFRICA aligned with the Opportunity and Issues-Based Coalitions (OIBC 3 and 4) to demonstrate results from joint programming, especially in relation to climate literacy, early warning innovation, and education. Its contributions at these platforms helped enhance institutional visibility, build interagency synergies, and generate momentum for resource mobilization targeting climate-smart ocean solutions under the African Union and UN frameworks.
4. IOCAFRICA has supported technical coordination across institutions and contributed to linking outputs to national, continental, and international processes such as the UNFCCC and CBD. Outcomes are expected to inform ongoing dialogues on blue economy, nature-based solutions, and sustainable marine development in Africa.

Challenges encountered

* Weak cross-sectoral coordination, fragmented climate datasets, and underdeveloped national marine observation networks continue to limit the integration of ocean science into national climate planning.
* Difficulty translating scientific findings into policy-relevant information hampers uptake of marine data in adaptation programming and funding proposals.

Next steps

* Support operational deployment of national HAB early warning systems in Morocco and Namibia and explore expansion to additional Member States.
* Organize a regional expert workshop on blue carbon and climate adaptation finance in Q4 2025.
* Scale marine pollution monitoring tools and develop policy briefs targeting coastal resilience under the UNFCCC and AU frameworks.
* Continue collaboration with Blue Africa, IPBES, and regional universities to generate African-led knowledge on climate-ocean interactions.

**Component 4: Capacity Development**

1. Capacity development remains a central pillar of IOCAFRICA’s work, contributing to the implementation of the IOC Capacity Development Strategy (2022–2029) and addressing the long-standing need to build and retain scientific expertise and infrastructure across the continent. Activities under this component covered training courses, onboard research experience, technical workshops, and Early Career Ocean Professional (ECOP) engagement.

Training workshops on ocean observation, modelling, and applications

1. IOCAFRICA organized and supported three regionally focused training workshops. One of the flagship activities was the blended training on ‘The Implementation of FAIR Principles to African Marine and Coastal Data’, conducted in partnership with the Kenya Marine & Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI) at KMFRI headquarters in Mombasa, Kenya, from 23–26 September 2024. The training brought together 22 participants from 16 IOCAFRICA Member States, primarily data managers affiliated with National Oceanographic Data Centres (NODCs) and Associated Data Units (ADUs). The training focused on enhancing the capacity of participants to address key technical and policy-related aspects of data stewardship. Key modules included: (i) identification of critical data gaps across African countries, (ii) methods for strengthening quality control protocols, (iii) techniques for publishing and citing scientific data, and (iv) operational mechanisms to contribute to and access data through regional nodes of global platforms such as the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS) and the Ocean Data and Information System (ODIS). The training helped lay the groundwork for regional dialogue on user needs, data access, and digital infrastructure.
2. In addition, IOCAFRICA is planning support for two further workshops: one focused on ocean data acquisition, processing, and archiving in collaboration with OTGA and national centres of excellence; and another workshop on ocean modelling and forecasting, co-organized with the South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON), University of Cape Town, and CSIR, which is currently in the planning stage and scheduled to take place in September 2024.
3. Preparations are underway for a training workshop on remote sensing and marine applications, scheduled for Q3 2025 at CURAT, Abidjan. This workshop will focus on applications for fisheries management, ocean health monitoring, and marine spatial planning.
4. A training workshop on environmental DNA (eDNA) for marine biology is also in preparation. It is planned for Q4 2025 in Cape Verde, in collaboration with the Ocean Science Centre Mindelo, Instituto do Mar (IMar), GEOMAR, and the Ocean Decade Capacity Development Facility. The training will support biodiversity assessments and emerging ocean observation methodologies.

Regional training courses on ecosystem restoration and earth observation

1. Two blended (online and onsite) regional training courses are underway in quarter 3 of 2025. The first, will focuse on tracking ecosystem restoration and nature-based solutions in the Western Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, was co-organized with UNESCO Chairs and OTGA RTCs. The second course, to be hosted in Accra, Ghana, provided instruction on the use of AIS and Earth Observation tools for marine resources management and was delivered in partnership with the University of Ghana and MarCNoWA.

Marine spatial planning and institutional strengthening

1. IOCAFRICA is planning a national workshop on marine spatial planning (MSP) in Comoros, to be held following the publication of the country’s draft MSP roadmap. The workshop is expected to engage government, academia, and community stakeholders.

*Support to ECOPS*

1. IOCAFRICA delivered an exciting and wide-ranging suite of support for Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs), reflecting its commitment to building the next generation of African ocean leaders. Notably, the Sub-Commission supported five ECOPs to participate in the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference held in Barcelona in April 2024. The ECOPs contributed substantively to the SEAWARD Africa satellite event, engaged in Vision 2030 white paper dialogues, and networked with senior ocean leaders and partners through oral presentations, dialogues, and exhibitions.
2. An IOCAFRICA facilitated training for early-career African researchers in oceanographic expeditions aboard research vessels is being planned in collaboration with the National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (NIOF), Egypt, in the 2nd quarter of 2025. These included practical training in hydrographic surveying, biogeochemical sampling, and data logging procedures.
3. In collaboration with WIOMSA, IOCAFRICA is co-developing a special journal issue to highlight ECOP contributions to ocean science aligned with the Africa Ocean Decade Roadmap. The call for papers was issued in February 2025, with publication planned for early 2026.
4. One ECOP from Algeria was supported to attend the African Marine Environment and Sustainability Initiative (AFMESI) symposium held in Lagos, Nigeria, from 24–25 September 2024. The symposium advanced high-level discourse on Africa’s blue economy, with emphasis on innovation, finance, resilience, and governance.
5. IOCAFRICA facilitated five North African ECOPs to participate in the blended OTGA training course on “Introduction to oceanographic survey techniques and data management,” held in Malta from 4–17 November 2024. This unique course was co-developed with the Alfred Wegener Institute, Stockholm University, Aqua Biotech Group, the International Ocean Institute, and the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Blue Economy.
6. One ECOP from Tanzania participated in the Ocean Governance Training for Africa hosted by the International Ocean Institute–Southern Africa in Cape Town from 4–29 November 2024. The training enhanced her expertise in marine spatial planning, policy formulation, and regional governance collaboration.
7. IOCAFRICA, in partnership with the Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection, co-hosted a side event at the 2025 ECOSOC Youth Forum on 15 April 2025. The event, titled "African Youth at the Forefront of Ocean Protection: A Cross-Program Synergy for Sustainable Education and Environmental Stewardship," spotlighted African youth contributions to the Ocean Decade and sustainability leadership.
8. Looking ahead, IOCAFRICA is offering travel support for African ECOPs to participate in the 2025 African Ocean Science and Policy Congress and the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC-3) in Nice, France. Selected ECOPs will attend sessions, present their work, and contribute to Africa’s voice in shaping the future of ocean governance and sustainable development. This opportunity further demonstrates IOCAFRICA’s commitment to ensuring that Africa’s early-career professionals are empowered, visible, and well-represented at key global ocean platforms.

Challenges encountered

* Limited financial resources constrained broader participation in training courses and international meetings.
* Logistical challenges, including visa delays and coordination of in-person/onboard activities, occasionally impacted the participation of selected ECOPs.

Next steps

* Finalize and implement planned training activities for Q3 and Q4 2025, including the remote sensing and eDNA workshops.
* Expand the regional mentorship framework for ECOPs in partnership with academic institutions and regional commissions.
* Document outcomes of capacity development initiatives through regional progress reports and link findings to policy uptake and sustainability planning.
* Mobilize additional technical and financial resources to scale the reach and frequency of ocean science training across all subregions.

**Component 5: Ocean Literacy**

1. IOCAFRICA implemented a diverse and impactful suite of activities to advance ocean literacy and foster meaningful community engagement across the continent. These efforts were aligned with the IOC Ocean Literacy Framework and contributed to raising the visibility and relevance of the Ocean Decade across African countries. By working with national institutions, biosphere reserves, youth organizations, media houses, and regional policy actors, IOCAFRICA’s literacy agenda reflected a comprehensive, inclusive, and culturally responsive strategy to promote understanding and stewardship of the ocean.

Community outreach and international observance events

1. IOCAFRICA collaborated with national and regional partners in organizing ocean literacy activities during major international observances including World Oceans Day (June 8) and World Tsunami Awareness Day (November 5). Together with the Ministry of Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs in Kenya, the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), and the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, IOCAFRICA jointly organized the national World Oceans Day (WOD) event in Kenya in 2023.
2. In November 2023, IOCAFRICA, in partnership with the UNESCO-IOC Ocean Literacy Programme, organized the Ocean Literacy Dialogues (OLD) for Africa. The event convened stakeholders from government, academia, the private sector, intergovernmental organizations, ECOPs, and NGOs to define regional priorities for ocean literacy. Key recommendations from the Dialogue included the integration of indigenous and local knowledge as an essential component of African ocean literacy and the advancement of blue schools as drivers of community engagement and stewardship.
3. IOCAFRICA also collaborated with the African node of the ECOP Programme and the African Union Commission (AUC) to host a virtual commemoration of Africa Day of Oceans and Seas in 2023. The event focused on raising awareness of the synergies between the Africa Decade of Oceans and Seas (2015–2025) and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030), while emphasizing how continental marine and maritime strategies align with the Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap.
4. IOCAFRICA successfully conducted the Training of Trainers (ToTs) on the role of Marine Biosphere Reserves in environmental conservation and sustainable development in March 2025. Held in Zanzibar, Tanzania, from 11–13 March 2025, the ToTs gathered managers of marine biosphere reserves in Africa and the Adjacent Island States. It aimed at exploring the role of biosphere reserves as ocean literacy hubs, laboratories and socio-economic drivers. The managers lauded the initiative and encouraged it to be an ongoing forum for the enhancement of learning and knowledge and best practices sharing and exchanges. The 20 represented BRs developed comprehensive outlines for implementing the actions for the Venice Declaration on Ocean Literacy—and a monitoring and reporting structure for these actions was also established at the workshop.

Education, translation, and regional materials

1. To expand access to ocean knowledge among non-English-speaking populations, IOCAFRICA commissioned the translation of core Ocean Literacy resources into Kiswahili and Arabic. The Kiswahili version is currently in press, while the Arabic version is under contract. These materials, including the IOC Ocean Literacy Toolkit and the UNESCO Ocean Literacy for All guide, will be disseminated through national education systems and local environmental NGOs once finalized.
2. Additionally, IOCAFRICA co-organized a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on Ocean Literacy and Marine Conservation from 25–28 March 2025, in collaboration with Fida International. The training engaged 25 participants—comprising nine teachers, seven faith leaders, eight project staff, and one community worker—from diverse backgrounds. Expert facilitation was provided by Bahari Hai, A Rocha Kenya, and UNESCO-IOC, while Fida International coordinated logistics and reflections. The ToT aimed to equip participants with practical tools to champion marine conservation through education, religious teachings, and community-based actions. Topics included the Blue Schools concept, the role of faith in environmental stewardship, and ocean literacy strategies. Post-training evaluations indicated that 98% of expectations were met, affirming the programme’s relevance and quality. Participating organizations committed to providing ongoing mentorship and support to foster sustained implementation and knowledge transfer at community level.

Policy and advocacy

1. IOCAFRICA initiated the drafting of policy briefs highlighting the role of ocean literacy in supporting the objectives of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy 2050, and Agenda 2063. In collaboration with the African Group of Negotiators Experts Support (AGNES), IOCAFRICA launched the development of four targeted policy briefs on: (i) blue carbon, (ii) ocean health in Africa, (iii) the ocean-climate nexus and loss and damage, and (iv) ocean and climate finance. A team of multidisciplinary experts has been identified to lead the drafting process, with the outputs intended to support Member States' policy frameworks and negotiations under relevant African Union and UN processes.

Public engagement and awareness campaigns

1. IOCAFRICA supported outreach campaigns targeting learners, media professionals, local authorities, and coastal community members. These campaigns used radio programs, youth-led video competitions, and coastal theatre to encourage dialogue on sustainable ocean practices. In 2025, IOCAFRICA initiated discussions toward a strategic partnership with the African Marine Environment Sustainability Initiative (AFMESI) to promote ocean literacy in African communities through the innovative use of epic drama and storytelling. The proposed flagship initiative, titled "Water is Life," will employ cultural performance and community engagement to raise awareness on the importance of ocean and water stewardship. Originally premiered in Nigeria in 2018 under the title "OMINI – IYE," the production is being considered for continental rollout with anticipated support from IOC-UNESCO. The initiative aims to foster policy dialogue, cultural reflection, and community advocacy through a powerful blend of science and the arts once fully launched.
2. As part of this collaboration, IOCAFRICA and AFMESI jointly organized a virtual dialogue on 21 January 2025 titled "Upskilling Broadcasting Journalist Knowledge on Blue Economy Reporting in Nigeria." The session brought together more than 60 participants, including journalists from five leading Nigerian television houses, communication professionals, and ocean literacy advocates. The dialogue aimed to strengthen media engagement on ocean issues and enhance the role of journalists in promoting responsible coverage of blue economy themes.

Challenges encountered

* Many national stakeholders lacked dedicated institutional arrangements for ocean literacy, limiting sustainability and integration into curricula and local planning.
* Production and distribution of translated and culturally adapted materials remain resource-intensive.

Next steps

* Develop a regional ocean literacy action plan to guide future activities and partnerships in line with IOC’s Global Ocean Literacy Strategy.
* Expand school-based and youth-led programming through collaboration with Ministries of Education, NGOs, and marine protected areas.
* Mobilize new partnerships and funding for the development of audiovisual resources and teacher training programmes in multiple African languages.

**Component 6: IOCAFRICA Governance**

1. IOCAFRICA governance activities during the reporting period focused on enabling effective delivery of its workplan through strategic leadership, operational support, and intergovernmental coordination. This included preparations for major statutory sessions, strengthening internal processes and outreach systems, maintaining the visibility of the Sub-Commission, and ensuring alignment of governance mechanisms with the IOC Medium-Term Strategy. Emphasis was placed on proactive engagement with Member States, integration with UNESCO’s programme delivery reforms, and ensuring institutional resilience despite budget constraints. Investments were also directed toward revamping the digital presence of IOCAFRICA and ODINAFRICA, as part of broader visibility and communication efforts.

Statutory meetings and coordination

1. The Eighth Session of the IOC Sub-Commission for Africa and the Adjacent Island States (IOCAFRICA-VIII) is being planned for Mombasa, Kenya, from 7 to 9 May 2025, and will be preceded by the Scientific Conference on Advancing the Blue Economy in Africa (5–6 May 2025). These landmark events are designed to convene over 100 delegates, including representatives of Member States, regional organizations, youth networks, UN agencies, and development partners. Although USD 50,000 was allocated to support the organization of the session and the associated scientific conference under the 2023–2025 work plan, recent UNESCO resourcing and spending policy adjustments mean that only 70% of this allocation is currently available for use. Despite these financial constraints, the Secretariat has undertaken extensive planning and partner outreach to mobilize in-kind support and co-financing in order to ensure successful delivery of these flagship events.

Secretariat operations and staff travel

1. The Secretariat maintained core operations and technical coordination with a small but dedicated team based at the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa in Nairobi. As part of this arrangement, IOCAFRICA not only benefits from administrative infrastructure but also contributes to the collective work of UNESCO in the region. IOCAFRICA supported both programmatic and administrative functions of the office during the reporting period. Notably, the Sub-Commission contributed financially to the recruitment of a national liaison from Eritrea to enhance communication between UNESCO and the Eritrean government. This liaison role supports engagement in ocean-related priorities including marine spatial planning, conservation of coastal and underwater cultural heritage, institutional capacity building in ocean sciences, and ocean literacy.
2. IOCAFRICA also contributed to the operational functionality of the UNESCO Regional Office by supporting the rental of temporary office space in Nairobi for IOCAFRICA staff between May 2024 and March 2025, ensuring continuity in programme delivery and coordination with national and regional stakeholders.
3. Staff travel was facilitated to support capacity-building events, consultations, and high-level participation in several strategic engagements. These included the IOC Officers’ meetings (13–15 January 2025), the 57th Session of the IOC Executive Council at UNESCO Headquarters (25–28 June 2024), and the World Congress of Marine Stations (WCMS) in Japan in December 2024, where IOCAFRICA presented findings from its unpublished report on the status of ocean observation platforms in Africa. The Secretariat also participated in the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance (AAORIA) and Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation Ocean Observing and Modeling Workshop at the U.S. Department of State’s Marshall Center in Washington, DC. IOCAFRICA used the platform to contribute to the development of a collaborative workplan, ensuring the integration of African priorities. Bilateral discussions with potential partners were initiated during the event, setting the stage for future collaboration.

Information sharing and digital platforms

1. IOCAFRICA’s website and social media platforms were continuously updated to reflect programme activities, event announcements, and strategic documents. In late 2024, IOCAFRICA commissioned a full redesign of both the IOCAFRICA and ODINAFRICA websites, working with Globefinity ITS Ltd. The redesign aimed to improve user experience, accessibility, and responsiveness across mobile and desktop platforms while enhancing branding, search functionality, and integration with UNESCO-IOC resources. Key features include multilingual support, interactive forums, and story maps. The project included requirement gathering, design and development, testing, deployment, and a structured plan for hosting, maintenance, and training through the end of 2024. As of December 2024, development had reached the final testing phase. The websites are expected to significantly improve institutional visibility, support engagement with Member States, and offer streamlined access to oceanographic data and regional programme updates. These upgrades also incorporate enhanced cybersecurity measures, content management tools, and user analytics to support more dynamic communication and outreach.

Challenges encountered

* The limited number of Secretariat staff remains a significant constraint to scaling engagement, technical coordination, and partner servicing across the continent.
* Ensuring continuity in communication and follow-up from decentralized activities requires further investment in regional focal points and digital infrastructure.

Next steps

* Strengthen the Secretariat's human resource base and technical backstopping capacity through new staff positions and secondments.
* Institutionalize feedback mechanisms between sessions, including intersessional reporting templates and partner consultation platforms.
* Further develop digital communication tools and data-driven dashboards to track progress across programmes and enhance transparency in decision-making.

**Implementation of UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) in Africa**

1. As the host of the Decade Coordination Office for Africa, IOCAFRICA played a central role in advancing Ocean Decade implementation on the continent. Its work focused on mobilizing Decade Actions, supporting national coordination structures, building strategic partnerships, and catalyzing inclusive engagement across stakeholders.
2. In June 2023, IOCAFRICA organized the Africa Ocean Decade Information Webinar for Call No. 06/23. This call, which included a specific co-design theme for Africa, the Caribbean, and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), attracted 29 submissions from Africa and the Adjacent Island States—the largest submission rate for the region to date. Of these, 15 were shortlisted for co-design training and potential seed funding. The training is scheduled to commence in mid-April 2025.
3. IOCAFRICA, in partnership with the Ocean Decade Taskforce, developed and launched the “Science and Knowledge for a Sustainable and Resilient Ocean Economy in Africa (SEAWARD Africa)” programme. Officially endorsed as an Ocean Decade Action (ID. UN36), SEAWARD Africa is an umbrella programme that coordinates and centralizes Decade Actions in Africa. It aligns with the nine priority areas of the Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap, fosters synergies among initiatives, and has already received seven expressions of interest, of which two have been endorsed.
4. To ensure national alignment, IOCAFRICA supported the establishment of five new National Decade Committees (NDCs) in Benin, Ghana, Morocco, Seychelles, and Tanzania—bringing the total number of active NDCs in the region to eight.
5. At the Marine Regions Forum 2023, IOCAFRICA and MeerWissen co-hosted a session on co-designing at the science–policy–society interface, highlighting replicable best practices of co-designed programmes and emphasizing inclusive stakeholder engagement.
6. In April 2024, IOCAFRICA supported the Taskforce and partners—including GEOMAR, the Belmont Forum, FAO’s EAF-Nansen Programme, and ECOP Africa—in organizing a satellite event at the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona. The event, “Looking SEAWARD: African Oceans and the Ocean Decade Narrative,” marked the global launch of SEAWARD Africa and served to highlight African leadership in the Decade. IOCAFRICA facilitated the participation of six of its Officers in the event.
7. Also in 2024, the Challenger 150 programme collaborated with the Taskforce to publish a report titled “Practical Actions to Strengthen Capacity and Advance Deep-Water Research in Africa.” The report presents short-, medium-, and long-term actions to address research capacity challenges.
8. The first cohort of the African Ocean Decade Taskforce completed its term in December 2024. A new cohort, announced in April 2025 following a nomination process led by the IOCAFRICA Secretariat and the Decade Coordination Unit, includes broader representation from SIDS and ECOPs—two groups previously underrepresented.

Challenges encountered

* Despite progress, several challenges remain including limited coordination between national and regional structures, the need for sustained funding for endorsed actions, and insufficient visibility for African contributions to global Decade reporting.

Next steps

* Enhance coordination and alignment of endorsed Decade Actions through regular convenings under SEAWARD Africa.
* Support the operationalization of newly formed National Decade Committees and encourage additional Member States to establish NDCs.
* Mobilisation of resources for projects and initiative under SEAWARD Africa through a multi-donor Trust Fund.
* Scale partnerships to support African participation in international Decade events and funding pipelines.
* Strengthen Africa’s presence in global Decade platforms through targeted visibility, communications, and knowledge-sharing strategies.

**Component 8: Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration**

1. Strategic partnerships remain a cornerstone of IOCAFRICA’s operational and programmatic delivery. The Sub-Commission has deepened collaboration with international organizations, academic institutions, government bodies, and regional networks to advance shared goals in marine science, ocean governance, and sustainable development.
2. IOCAFRICA has contributed to the collective work of UNESCO through both administrative and programmatic support. As part of its presence within the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, IOCAFRICA provided financial assistance for the recruitment of a liaison officer for Eritrea. This strategic engagement was aimed at enhancing UNESCO’s relationship with the country and advancing ocean-related priorities, including marine spatial planning, the protection and conservation of coastal and underwater cultural heritage, institutional capacity building, and ocean literacy.
3. Additionally, IOCAFRICA supported the rental of temporary office space in Nairobi for IOCAFRICA staff between May 2024 and March 2025. This measure ensured continued coordination with national and regional partners and reinforced the Secretariat’s operational resilience.
4. IOCAFRICA's participation in the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance (AAORIA) and Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation Ocean Observing and Modeling Workshop in Washington, DC, further demonstrated its commitment to global collaboration. The Sub-Commission contributed to the formulation of a collective workplan and initiated bilateral discussions with prospective partners for future initiatives.
5. Across all engagements, IOCAFRICA leveraged its institutional credibility and regional positioning to promote African priorities, encourage joint programming, and build enduring partnerships aligned with the UN Ocean Decade, the AU Agenda 2063, and the IOC Medium-Term Strategy.
6. IOCAFRICA was engaged in several key partnership-building and development initiatives during the reporting period. A particularly notable effort involved collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa’s Culture and Science Sectors in the submission of a project to the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund (HEF). The project, aimed at strengthening climate resilience and safeguarding coastal cultural heritage sites in Kenya—including Fort Jesus (Mombasa), Lamu Old Town, and Gedi—emphasizes a multi-UNESCO Convention and intersectoral approach. The activity is designed to respond to the emergency threat posed by climate change on coastal communities and their cultural heritage. IOCAFRICA’s involvement ensures that ocean and climate data, nature-based solutions, and early warning capacities are integrated into the resilience planning for heritage sites. The initiative includes a vulnerability assessment, a capacity-building workshop for site managers and community stakeholders, and the development of a Joint Climate Action Plan. IOCAFRICA's contributions reinforce the application of scientific evidence and local engagement in cultural site management, drawing on its networks in ocean science, ecosystem services, and community adaptation.
7. In addition to this initiative, IOCAFRICA is also collaborating with the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa’s Culture and Science Sectors in the planning and organization of the International Conference on Climate Action at the Intersection of Ocean, Water, Culture, and Heritage in the Indian Ocean and Red Sea Region. Scheduled for September 2025, this intersectoral conference aims to bridge science, policy, and heritage management by convening experts, policymakers, and community leaders across the Indian Ocean Rim and Red Sea region. The goal is to formulate a Joint Action Plan to address the multifaceted challenges of climate change as they relate to cultural heritage, ocean and water resources, and community resilience. IOCAFRICA’s contributions focus on ocean science integration, Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), and knowledge sharing through the UN Decade of Ocean Science framework. The conference will include stakeholders from national governments, regional and international organizations, civil society, youth, and indigenous communities. Outputs will include policy briefs, best practice repositories, and collaborative mechanisms for implementation, all firmly aligned with SDGs 14, 13, 11, and 17, as well as the Paris Agreement, MONDIACULT Declaration, and relevant UNESCO cultural and science conventions.
8. One of the key achievements in this regard was IOCAFRICA’s successful negotiation and partnership in the prestigious Australia Awards Fellowships programme, funded by the Government of Australia. Through this collaboration, IOCAFRICA secured four fellowship slots for African professionals to participate in the programme commencing in 2026. The Australia Awards Fellowships aim to strengthen partnerships between Australian organisations and their counterparts in partner countries through short-term professional development opportunities in Australia. The proposed fellowship aligns with the priority area of Climate Change, Adaptation, Resilience, and Green Energy, with a particular focus on integrating ocean accounts and nature-based solutions into development policies. The fellowship programme will run from March to April 2026 and offer advanced training in blue finance, remote sensing, economic valuation, and social accounting—crucial competencies for supporting climate resilience, low-emission transitions, and sustainable ocean resource management. These skills will be instrumental in helping African countries meet their obligations under the Paris Agreement and global biodiversity targets. Fellows selected for the programme will receive support covering return airfare to Australia, in-country travel, accommodation, living expenses, medical insurance, and all training and professional development activities. Each fellowship is valued at up to AUD 34,500, representing a significant investment in the next generation of African ocean leaders and policy influencers.
9. In November 2024, IOCAFRICA was represented in the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance (AAORIA) and Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation Ocean Observing and Modeling Workshop at the Department of State’s Marshall Center in Washington, DC. IOCAFRICA contributed to the development of a strategic workplan for the network, ensuring inclusion of African priorities. Bilateral discussions were initiated with selected partners toward potential collaborative initiatives.
10. In May 2024, IOCAFRICA partnered with the UNESCO Science Sector to conduct a fact-finding mission to Comoros. The objective was to assess institutional priorities, current capacities, and opportunities for collaboration in ocean science, capacity development, and ocean literacy. During the mission, the IOCAFRICA team met with representatives from governmental agencies, academic institutions, and marine-related programmes. Discussions focused on identifying strategic entry points for strengthening national ocean science coordination, enhancing support for marine spatial planning, and promoting the protection of underwater cultural heritage. The mission also explored the integration of Comoros into regional marine networks and proposed capacity development opportunities to foster institutional resilience and cross-sectoral collaboration. A roadmap is being developed to guide IOCAFRICA's continued engagement with Comoros, with planned activities expected to be implemented starting in 2025.
11. IOCAFRICA is collaborating with CODATA on the development of science-policy recommendations for the 2025 UN Ocean Conference. This includes preparing a policy brief on data priorities in collaboration with the International Science Council (ISC). IOCAFRICA is also working with CODATA to co-organise the 10th edition of the CODATA–RDA Schools of Research Data Science at ICTP, Trieste, integrating modules aligned with ODIS good practices.
12. As a key stakeholder in the OPERA project (Ocean Prediction Enhancement in Regions of Africa), IOCAFRICA will participate in the first consultation workshop organized by Mercator Ocean International and SAEON. The initiative aims to advance ocean forecasting capabilities and partnerships across Africa, with strong synergies expected with IOCAFRICA, the Decade Taskforce, and GMES and Africa.