**Decision A-33/3.4.4**

**An IOC Ocean Best Practice System (OBPS)**

The Assembly,

1. Recalling Decision IOC-XXX/7.2.1 (III) on the Establishment of the IOC Ocean Best Practices System Project (OBPS),
2. Also recalling the restructuring of elements of the IODE programme into programme components and programme activities by IODE-XXVII (2023), and the categorization of OBPS as an IODE programme activity,
3. Noting that the Ocean Best Practices System Repository (OBPS-R) of best practices will support all IOC programmes as well as contribute to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development [USA] by providing a permanent curated archive of adopted methodologies and best practices in ocean sciences,
4. Also noting that within the context of the OBPS a best practice is defined as a methodology that has repeatedly produced superior results relative to other methodologies with the same objective; to be fully elevated to a best practice, a promising method will have been adopted and employed by multiple organizations,
5. Further noting that best practices can be guidelines, standard operating procedures, manuals, technical specifications, and papers,
6. Recognizing that:
7. the dissemination and use of rigorously tested adopted methodologies and best practices related to the IOC mandate will facilitate activity within and across disciplinary boundaries of ocean science,
8. the experience gained by IODE and GOOS through the OBPS project led to the establishment of: (a) a permanent repository offering its community a platform to publish their ocean-related best practices and find practices of others using innovative search and access technology; (b) an endorsement model whereby GOOS endorsed best practices for ocean observing networks and Essential Ocean Variables (EOVs) are identified within the community and in the OBPS-R; (c) a peer review journal publishing outlet; and (d) a community forum and a training resource leveraging community capabilities, can be used more widely across IOC,
9. best practices relevant for and across all IOC mandates will be essential for the implementation of the entire value chain, for interoperability of data along that value chain, and for the development of ocean products and services with high societal benefits,
10. involvement and cooperation in the further development of OBPS by all IOC programmes and regional sub-commissions will be essential to ensure the widest possible development, dissemination and use of best practices and involvement of multiple stakeholder communities,
11. IOC and WMO have established close, efficient and effective collaboration in ocean best practices leveraging the OBPS,
12. Decides to:

(i) transition the “IOC Ocean Best Practices System (OBPS) project” to the “IOC Ocean Best Practices System” under all IOC programmes and sub-commissions with revised terms of reference as attached in Annex 1 of this decision;

(ii) establish the IOC Steering Group for the Ocean Best Practices System (OBPS) with the terms of reference as attached in Annex 2 to this decision;

1. Notes that any financial or administrative implications of the activities fall within the parameters of the IOC Programme and Budget, as adopted by IOC Governing Bodies;
2. Urges Member States to actively participate in the OBPS by submitting relevant community practices on ocean observation, data management, research methods, products and services, through the relevant IOC programmes and sub-commissions, and by promoting the use of practices contained in the OBPS at the national, regional and global level;
3. Recommends that the OBPS reports back to the IOC Assembly at its 34th session in 2027 on progress against its objectives, workplan and cross-IOC engagement.

Annex 1 to Decision IOC-3.4.4

**IOC Ocean Best Practices System (OBPS**)

Terms of Reference

Objectives:

1. Foster innovation and excellence by engaging with relevant IOC communities in a joint and coordinated effort towards producing, regularly reviewing and sustaining relevant best practices and standards;
2. Increase efficiency, reproducibility and interoperability of the value chain of IOC by providing the community with a unified, sustained and readily accessible interdisciplinary knowledge base of adopted methodologies and best practices;
3. Maintain and advance the OBPS Repository as a universal and accessible platform for IOC-relevant ocean related best practices and standards.

Annex 2 to Decision IOC-3.4.4

**IOC Ocean Best Practices System Steering Group**

Terms of Reference

Objectives

1. Propose the vision, strategy, biannual workplan and associated budget for consideration by Member States;
2. Advise on technical, operational and user aspects;
3. Report on progress against the biannual workplan, as part of overall IOC reporting to the IOC Assembly, and to other components of IOC and partners as relevant;
4. Provide advice to the OBPS Manager as relevant;
5. Assist in identifying extra-budgetary funding sources to further develop the OBPS;
6. Advocate for the OBPS as a preferred resource for adopted methodologies and best practices within the IOC mandate;

Membership

(i) Representatives from IOC programmes and regional sub-commissions;

(ii) OBPS Manager;

(iii) IODE IT Manager;

(iv) OBPS Co-Chairs;

(v) Invited Experts as relevant;

(vi) Representatives of partner organizations, projects or programmes as relevant;

1. Representatives of the IOC Secretariat.

The Steering Group will meet annually and will elect its (Co-) Chair(s) for a period of two years, preferably from amongst its members, renewable once.