

**IOC Circular Letter No 3046**

(Available in English, French, Spanish, Russian)

IOC/VH/KE/fs

17 July 2025

To : Official National Coordinating Bodies for liaison with the IOC (IOC Member States)

C.c. : Permanent Delegations to UNESCO of IOC Member States  
National Commissions for UNESCO of IOC Member States  
IOC Officers  
Chair and Vice-Chairs of IOC Subsidiary Bodies (Scientific, Technical and Regional)

**Subject: IOC Group of Experts on Ocean Literacy:  
Call for nominations for members**

Since the endorsement of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO's (UNESCO-IOC) Ocean Literacy Plan of Action (2018–2021), efforts focused on ocean literacy have significantly expanded and evolved beyond formal educational contexts to embrace diverse perspectives, progressing broader restoration of society's relationship with the ocean. This evolution reflects a deeper recognition of the ocean's role across social, cultural, and economic dimensions, underscoring the need for renewed strategies and broader coordinated efforts in ensuring ongoing sustainable use of the ocean. This is reflected in the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development Vision 2030 [White Paper on Challenge 10](#): 'Restoring society's relationship with the ocean' and is a central goal of the UNESCO-IOC coordinated Decade Coordination Office for Connecting People and Ocean and IOC programmatic efforts focused on ocean literacy.

UNESCO-IOC established the Group of Experts on Ocean Literacy through IOC Assembly Decision A-31/3.5.4. This multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder body has been instrumental in guiding the implementation, coordination, and evolution of ocean literacy initiatives by UNESCO-IOC regionally and globally. Their expertise and experience have provided vital insights into effective practices, stakeholder engagement, and innovative approaches to making ocean science accessible and actionable. These have helped to guide the development of a draft Ocean Literacy Plan of Action (2026–2030), which was presented to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the IOC Assembly in document [IOC/A-33/4.4.Doc\(1\)](#).

In reviewing the draft Ocean Literacy Plan of Action, the IOC Assembly identified that there is an ongoing role for the Group of Experts (Decision A-33/4.4) with updated Terms of Reference (provided in Annex 1). The updated Terms of Reference reflect the need for greater coordination with the IOC Group of Experts on Capacity Development in finalizing the draft Ocean Literacy Plan of Action 2026–2030 and alignment of ocean literacy activities with capacity development priorities

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and actions across the IOC, including the regions, and with relevant groups, including, but not limited to, UNESCO Sectors, Indigenous Peoples, civil society organizations, international organizations, academic institutions, NGOs, relevant networks, and private sector associations.

As part of facilitating greater coordination with the IOC Group of Experts on Capacity Development (see IOC Circular letter 3045), the Chairs of both groups of experts will report on the outputs of their joint work and the mechanisms developed for their alignment to the IOC Executive Council at its 59<sup>th</sup> Session in June 2026. The Group of Experts on Ocean Literacy will deliver a report on the results of its activities to the IOC Assembly at its 34<sup>th</sup> Session in 2027.

The IOC Secretariat therefore requests Member States to kindly nominate experts to the Group of Experts on Ocean Literacy using the nomination form attached to this letter.

Nominations will be limited to one expert per Member State. Any additional nominations submitted by a Member State will not be considered, which is why coordination across national agencies is encouraged.

In forming the Group of Experts on Ocean Literacy, consideration will be given to geographical, cultural, and gender balance, and diversity of expertise, and in particular, in developing and implementing ocean literacy related activities.

The Secretariat would appreciate receiving nominations before Friday 29 August 2025 by email to Ottavia Carlon ([o.carlon@unesco.org](mailto:o.carlon@unesco.org)).

Any questions can be addressed to Dr Francesca Santoro ([f.santoro@unesco.org](mailto:f.santoro@unesco.org)) with copy to the Head of the Ocean Science Section, Dr Karen Evans ([k.evans@unesco.org](mailto:k.evans@unesco.org)).

With the assurances of my highest consideration, I remain,

Yours sincerely

*[signature]*

Vidar Helgesen  
Executive Secretary

Enclosures:

- 1/ Terms of Reference for the IOC Group of Experts on Ocean Literacy
- 2/ Nomination form for the IOC Group of Experts on Ocean Literacy membership

**1/ IOC Group of Experts on Ocean Literacy**  
(Assembly [Decision A-33/4.4](#)), June 2025

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Terms of Reference

The IOC Group of Experts on Ocean Literacy (GE-OL) is composed of no less than 20 experts nominated by IOC Member States responding to a call by circular letter detailing the GE-OL membership and taking into consideration geographical balance, multidisciplinary expertise, gender balance and diversity of languages and cultures.

The Group of Experts will advise on and, where applicable, will contribute to the implementation, coordination, and evolution of the IOC Ocean Literacy Plan of Action (IOC/A-33/4.4.Doc(1)) through:

- (i) improved coordination of ocean literacy activities implemented across regions;
- (ii) identification of synergies with relevant groups, including but not limited to UNESCO Sectors, Indigenous Peoples, Civil Society Organizations, international organizations, academic institutions, NGOs, relevant networks, and private sector associations;
- (iii) support the assessment and monitoring progress of ocean literacy across Member States;
- (iv) ensuring the coordination of the work of the GE-OL with the GE-CD Experts, with a particular focus on aligning the IOC Ocean Literacy Plan of Action 2026-2030 with the IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023–2030;
- (v) assisting the IOC Secretariat in developing a longer-term mechanism for coordinating ocean literacy and capacity development related priorities and actions across the IOC.

The Group of Experts will participate, with the support of the IOC Secretariat, in ocean diplomacy initiatives to advance ocean literacy and policy decisions, paying particular attention to priority groups, such as youth and SIDS;

The Group of Experts can be called upon to advise Member States and relevant stakeholders when support is required to implement and deliver ocean literacy initiatives, as appropriate.

The Group of Experts' contributions will include, but not limited to:

- (i) proactively drafting position and white papers;
- (ii) supporting the targeted use and dissemination of ocean communication strategies and toolkits, ensuring they reach appropriate audiences in ways that are contextually relevant and aligned with the Plan of Action;
- (iii) leveraging a directory of specialists to foster collaboration between different sectors and audiences;
- (iv) contributing to and reviewing IOC ocean literacy documents;

The Group of Experts will proactively communicate its progress, activities, and initiatives to relevant stakeholders.

The Group of Experts shall report its results to the IOC Assembly at its 34th session.

## 2/ IOC Group of Experts on Ocean Literacy – Nomination Form

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Name:

Position:

Institution:

Country:

Tel:

Email:

Postal Address:

Relevant expertise:

### **Additional comments:**

Nomination submitted by:

Signature:

Position:

Government Department/Agency:

Date:

Nomination Forms duly completed and signed should be sent by **Friday 29 August 2025** to the IOC Secretariat by email to Ottavia Carlon ([o.carlon@unesco.org](mailto:o.carlon@unesco.org)) through one of the following channels:

1. The national coordinating body for liaison with IOC (see the [list](#))
2. The Head of the National Commission for UNESCO
3. The Permanent Delegate to UNESCO

Note: Nominations will be limited to one expert per Member State. Any additional nominations submitted by a Member State will not be considered, which is why coordination across national agencies is encouraged. Any questions regarding the IOC's ocean literacy activities and the Ocean Literacy Group of Experts can be addressed to Dr Francesca Santoro ([f.santoro@unesco.org](mailto:f.santoro@unesco.org)) with copy to the Head of Ocean Science Section, Dr Karen Evans ([k.evans@unesco.org](mailto:k.evans@unesco.org)).