



IFAG 2025-2026: 1st online meeting – 2 October 2025

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2021 United Nations Decade
2030 of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development

Implementing IOC Resolution A-33/3

- 42 C/5 (2024-2025) budget implementation
- 43 C/5 (2026-2027) process leading to UNESCO General Conference
- Operationalizing the new IOC Results Framework
- Considering new financing mechanisms, including for regional sub-commissions
- Communication strategy & visual identity
- Improving efficiency and effectiveness in IOC governance
- Multilateral collaboration and coordination
- IOC & the Future of the Ocean consultation process – Phase 2



2024-2025 Budget implementation

2023 Decision of UNESCO Executive Board (216 EX Decision 44) and General Conference (42 C/5 Appropriation Resolution) - **IOC share of UNESCO budget at 3%**

UNESCO 2025 management actions & disproportionate cuts for IOC (17% vs 11% of USA contribution to UNESCO)
Potential UNESCO regular budget deficit of **\$75M**, of which **3% = \$2.25M**. IOC non-staff budget cut by **3M**.

IOC Assembly called for compliance without delay with the 3% decision.

As at today:

- No further funds release, funds block remains as reported to the Assembly
- IOC budget reduction = 32% of biennial budget for activities
- \$0.3M blocked on the USA 2023 Special Account
- Staff recruitment on pause
- 8 posts (out of 34.5) are vacant, zero access to savings of 2nd semester 2025
- Main impact on GOOS, IODE & regional capacity development workplans

2024-2025 Budget implementation

Anticipated non-staff regular budget execution at year end 2025:

Function A: Ocean Research	58%	IOCAFRICA	65%
Function B: Observing System	70%	IOCARIBE	69%
Data & Information Management	62%	IOC WESTPAC	61%
Function C: Early Warning Systems	77%	IOCINDIO	55%
Function D: Assessment & Information for Policy	34%		
Function E: Sustainable Management & Governance	85%		
Function F: Capacity Development	64%		
Contribution to UNESCO IP2 through Ocean Literacy	52%		
Operating costs & other contributions	94%	IOC OVERALL	70%

Q&A / Discussion



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Draft 43 C/5 Budgeting – Spring 2025 Executive Board

221 EX/20

2 ZNG scenarios and 1 ZRG (light) scenarios:

- IOC's share of overall UNESCO budget = 3% (difference in decimals)
- 2 ZNG scenarios imply a reduction compared to 42 C/5
- in ZRG scenario, IOC's share of the 'growth' is 2%
- in all scenarios, increase in staff costs \$1.1M for the same number and level of posts as in 42 C/5 or + 9%
- Reduction to non-staff (activities) varies from -4% in ZRG to – 17% in the lowest of ZNG scenarios

	42 C/5		43 C/5 ZRG		variance (vs 42 C/5) *	
UNESCO	685,445,000		719,717,095		34,272,095	5%
IOC	21,134,686	3.083%	21,874,400	3.039%	739,714	3%
<i>staff**</i>	<i>12,102,087</i>	57%	<i>13,243,823</i>	61%	<i>1,141,736</i>	9%
<i>non-staff</i>	9,032,599	43%	8,630,577	39%	-402,022	-4%

	43 C/5 ZNG1		variance (vs 42 C/5)	
UNESCO	685,445,000		0	0%
IOC	20,707,320	3.021%	-427,366	-2.022%
<i>staff</i>	<i>13,243,823</i>	64%	<i>1,141,736</i>	9%
<i>non-staff</i>	7,463,497	36%	-1,569,102	-17%

	43 C/5 ZNG2		variance (vs 42 C/5)	
UNESCO	685,445,000		0	0%
IOC	20,983,999	3.061%	-150,687	-0.713%
<i>staff</i>	<i>13,243,823</i>	63%	<i>1,141,736</i>	9%
<i>non-staff</i>	7,740,176	37%	-1,292,423	-14%

Draft 43 C/5 Budgeting – Fall 2025 Executive Board

222 EX/21

2 ZNG scenarios and 1 ZRG (light) scenarios with 11% budget reduction:

- IOC's share of overall UNESCO budget = 3% (difference in decimals)
- Reduction to non-staff (activities) varies from -32% in ZRG to – 43% in the lowest of ZNG scenarios

	43 C/5 ZRG (-11%)		variance (vs 42 C/5)		variance (vs 43 C/5 ZRG)	
UNESCO	640,548,215		-44,896,785	-7%	-79,168,880	-11%
IOC	19,422,549	3.032%	-1,712,137	-9%	-2,451,851	-11%
staff	13,243,823	68%	1,141,736	9%	0	0%
non-staff	6,178,726	32%	-2,853,873	-32%	-2,451,851	-28%

	43 C/5 ZNG1 (-11%)		variance (vs 42 C/5)	
UNESCO	610,045,936		-75,399,064	-11%
IOC	18,389,398	3.014%	-2,745,288	-13%
staff	13,243,823	72%	1,141,736	9%
non-staff	5,145,575	28%	-3,887,024	-43%

	43 C/5 ZNG2 (-11%)		variance (vs 42 C/5)	
UNESCO	610,045,936		-75,399,064	-11%
IOC	18,622,656	3.053%	-2,512,030	-12%
staff	13,243,823	71%	1,141,736	9%
non-staff	5,378,833	29%	-3,653,766	-40%

Draft 43 C/5 – Main budgetary challenges

222 EX/Decision 21 or IOC Resolution in 43 C/5 Volume 1

3% as the minimal baseline not explicitly reflected in any General Conference decision

IOC Resolution A-33/3:

- optimize staffing and maintain the number and level of positions foreseen in the 42 C/5 as a minimal baseline
 - Possible in -11% budgetary scenarios as within recommended 75/25 staff/non-staff ratio but at a high cost to programme activities
 - **Impossible in a -22% Expenditure Plan**
 - Critically vulnerable areas will remain under-staffed and under-resourced under regular budget
 - Solutions for reinforcement, including the optimal staffing of regional sub-Commissions (IOC Resolution A-33/1) will depend on voluntary contributions

Draft 43 C/5 Budgeting – moving forward

IOC Resolution A-33/3:

- *Considers that the programmatic choices of the Secretariat ...follow Member States' strategic guidance, in line with the priority areas of the 42 C/5... and the spirit of maintaining the achievements related to the high-level principles of the IOC Resolutions A-32/4 and EC-57/2;*
- *Acknowledges that the working assumptions of the proposed budgetary scenarios for 2026-2027 may change in light of the potential loss of funding for the regular budget...*
- *Highlights the critical importance of continuing and strengthening a clear comprehensive consultation process with IOC Member States..s*
- *Requests the Executive Secretary to continue bringing all relevant developments.. .to regular and timely online meetings of IFAG*

Next steps:

- 222ND UNESCO Executive Board: decisions and recommendations on budgetary envelopes and expenditure plans
- 43rd UNESCO General Conference: final decisions
- IOC Resolution A-33/3 drafted by Member States to be 'resilient to the unknown' will guide the Secretariat in the preparation of proposals
- Initial discussion of adjusted budgets and expenditure plans at the next IFAG meeting on 18 November 2025

Q&A / Discussion



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Draft 43 C/5 Programming – Spring 2025

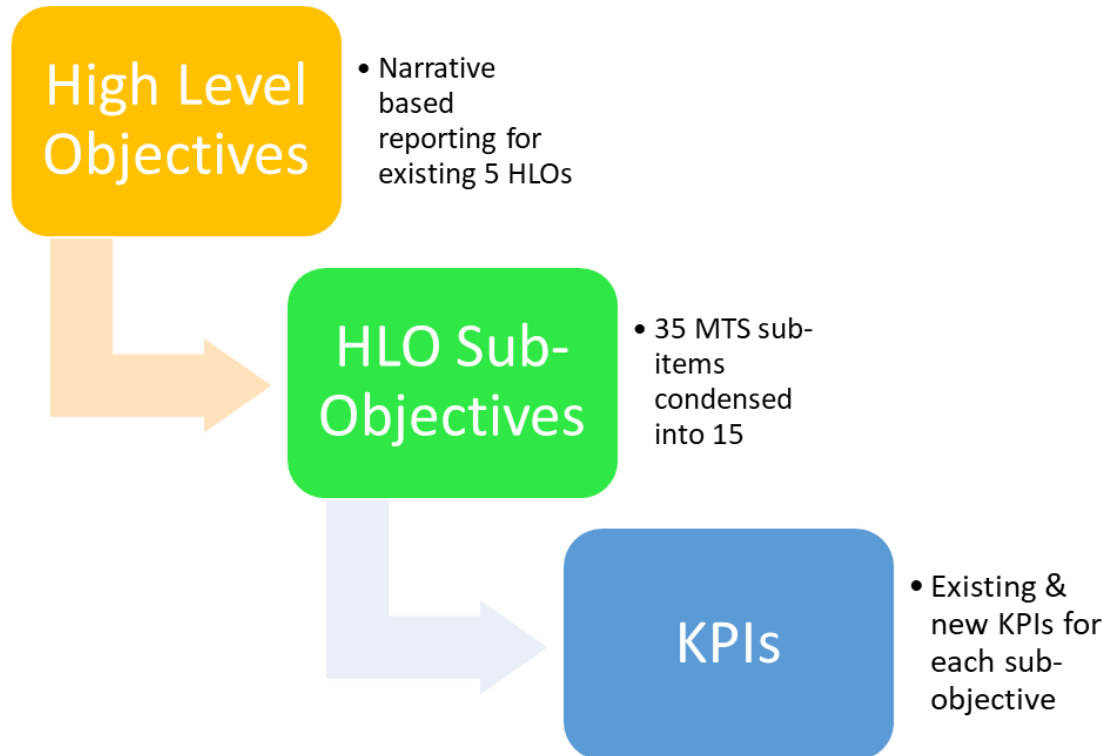
UNESCO Executive Board - 221 EX/Decision 20:

Bearing in mind that the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) is established as a body with functional autonomy within UNESCO, with the IOC Assembly being the principal organ under the IOC Statutes,

Invites the Executive Secretary of the IOC to submit the sections relating to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in Volumes I and II of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5) to the IOC Assembly at its 33rd session and to forward the recommendations of the IOC Assembly to the General Conference at its 43rd session;

Draft 43 C/5 Programming – June 2025

New IOC Results Framework



Restricted distribution



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IOC/A-33/5.1.Doc(1) Rev.

Paris, 25 April 2024

Original: English

INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

Thirty-third Session of the Assembly
UNESCO, Paris, 25 June –3 July 2025

Items 5.1 and 5.4 of the Provisional Agenda

**DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET 2026–2027 (DRAFT 43 C/5)
FIRST BIENNIUM OF THE 2026–2029 QUADRENNIUM**

Summary

Introduction

Part I – Draft Programme and budget 2026–2027 as presented as part of UNESCO's draft 43 C/5 to the 221st session of the UNESCO Executive Board (221 EX/20)

Part II – Detailed IOC workplan proposal based on Member States' guidance in IOC Resolutions A-32/4 and EC-57/2

Decision proposed is referenced Dec. A-33/5.1 in the Provisional Action Paper IOC/A-33/AP Prov.



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Draft 43 C/5 Programming – main governance challenges

IOC Resolution A-33/3:

- *Requested the IOC Executive Secretary to ensure transmission of this resolution to the 43rd session of UNESCO General Conference*
- *Endorsed ... the new IOC Results Framework as presented in Part II of IOC/A-33.51.Doc(1)*
- *Requested the IOC Executive Secretary to seek an agreement with UNESCO on the recovery of management costs charged to voluntary contributions to the IOC*

Potential solutions:

- In the absence of an established mechanism to transmit the IOC Assembly to the UNESCO General Conference, ensure that it is referenced in the IOC Resolution in 43 C/5 Volume 1
- Include IOC-specific provisions in the decision on 222 EX/33 on the Special Account for Management Costs, consistent with its Statutes and global and regional Member States governance mechanisms

Q&A / Discussion



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Operationalising the IOC Results Framework 2026 – 2027

IOC Results Framework will be operationalized through a **Secretariat Implementation Plan** which will guide the work of the Secretariat through:

- Identification of key deliverables to contribute to MTS High Level Objectives
- Prioritisation of activities based on resource availability
- Tracking of progress towards KPIs and setting a baseline for 2028 – 2029 Results Framework
- Identification of resource mobilisation and partnership needs
- Input to narrative / key messages contained in Communications Strategy

Secretariat Implementation Plan will be developed in draft form and discussed at by IOC Secretariat management team in October in the context of other issues arising from IOC Resolution A-33/3 i.e.:

1. *Consideration of new financing mechanisms including for RSCs*
2. *Communications strategy and visual identity*
3. *Improving the working methods of IOC governing bodies*
4. *Multilateral collaboration and coordination*
5. *IOC and the Future of the Ocean - Phase 2 (+ links to post-Decade legacy for IOC)*

Consideration of new financing mechanisms including for RSCs

The Assembly called for the Executive Secretary to:

- Explore the opportunities offered by Article 10.4 of the Statutes of the Commission such as establishing special purpose financial mechanisms or cost-sharing arrangements with donor Member States and to present a proposal to the IOC Assembly at its 34th Session. (Art 10.4 reads: “The Commission may establish, promote or coordinate, as appropriate, additional financial arrangements to ensure the implementation of an effective and continuing programme at global and/or regional levels.”)
- Explore:
 - o formal integration of General Service staff positions within the regular budget for the IOCAFRICA Secretariat;
 - o mobilizing additional resources, including extra-budgetary funding and co-financing arrangements, as well as human resources partnerships to support essential staff positions;
 - o providing optimal funding for operationalization of the office and programme activities; and
 - o ensuring prioritization of IOCAFRICA Secretariat’s operational budget across all budget scenarios, in keeping with Africa’s status as a UNESCO Global Priority;
 - o a proposal for a dedicated IOCAFRICA Support Fund under the IOC Special Account to be presented to the IOC Executive Council at its 59th session.

The Assembly also:

- **Requests** the IOC Executive Secretary to seek an agreement with UNESCO on the recovery of management costs charged to voluntary contributions to the IOC and include IOC’s direct costs in project proposals, as appropriate.

Discussion within Secretariat **to prepare analyses for discussion with IFAG** with outcomes presented to EC-59 / Assembly-34:

- Analysis of different options for financing including as yet untried models
- Identification of options for new partnership and human resource models including in RSCs
- Leveraging and benefitting from experiences in innovative partnerships through Ocean Decade
- Principles and approaches to resource mobilisation to capitalize on renewed distinct identity of IOC and key messages developed as part of Communications Strategy



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Communications strategy and visual identity

“Further asserts that, the IOC Executive Secretary, who is the equivalent of the level of Assistant Director-General (ADG) and acts with the instructions provided by the IOC Assembly and the Executive Council shall, without prejudice to other tasks that may have been or may be delegated to them, be accountable for:

(...)

disseminating and promoting the recognition and use of the results of the IOC and co-sponsored programmes, including by means of reinstating and consistently using the distinct visual identity of the IOC in communications and publications;”

Develop an **IOC Communications Strategy for presentation to EC-59** that the translates Assembly decision into action by:

- Providing a framework to project a unified institutional voice.
- Positioning the Commission as the UN’s lead body for ocean science and a unifying institution at the interface of science, policy, and society.

The Communications Strategy will include:

- New and unified IOC brand and visual identity & modalities for use
- Definition of IOC’s narrative framework and key messages
- Mapping and prioritising audience
- Media and external partnerships (criteria, governance)
- Leveraging Ocean Decade visibility
- Pathways for IOC Member States engagement: survey, toolkits, networks of Coms FPs, etc.
- Internal coordination, workflows, processes, and harmonization

Improving efficiency and effectiveness in IOC governance

The Assembly requested “the IOC Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Officers and IFAG, to review the working methods of the IOC Governing Bodies, in order to ensure greater effectiveness, efficiency and inclusiveness in the governance of the Commission, and to present to the IOC Executive Council at its 59th session concrete recommendations that could be implemented at the 34th session of the IOC Assembly;

Highlights the critical importance of continuing and strengthening a clear and comprehensive consultation process with IOC Member States on governance, programming and budgetary matters of the Commission;

Welcomes, in this context, the IOC Executive Secretary’s proposal to better align the schedules of IOC subsidiary bodies meetings with those of primary IOC Governing Bodies and the entire UNESCO programming and budgeting cycle;”

Develop **proposals for discussion with IFAG and Officers** increase effectiveness including:

- Strategic approach and structure to focus on delivering the MTS and Results Framework
- Working methods for EC and Assembly (duration, documentation, working groups etc.)
- Working methods for regional and technical subsidiary bodies (timing and sequencing, outcomes and process to feed into budgeting and programming)
- Influence of UN80 process

Improving efficiency and effectiveness in IOC governance

	Nov-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Aug-26	Sep-26	Oct-26
UNESCO	43 GENERAL CONFERENCE - GUIDING PRINCIPLES		UNESCO CONSULTATIONS/DG PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS (NARRATIVE)						UNESCO BOARD: DECISION & GUIDANCE ON C/5
IOC		IOC OFFICERS MEETING	MEETINGS OF IOC SUBSIDIARY BODIES - YEAR 1 OF BIENNIUM						
			EXECUTIVE COUNCIL DOCUMENTATION PREPARATION						
			IFAG MEETING		IFAG MEETING	IOC EXECUTIVE COUNCIL			
	Nov-26	Jan-27	Feb-27	Apr-27	May-27	Jun-27	Aug-27	Sep-27	Oct-Nov 2027
UNESCO	SECRETARIAT PREPARES FULL FLEDGED C/5		SPRING UNESCO BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS ON C/5						UNESCO BOARD RECOMMENDATION/ GENERAL CONFERENCE
IOC	IFAG MEETING	IOC OFFICERS MEETING	IFAG MEETING	IFAG MEETING		IOC ASSEMBLY			
	SECRETARIAT PREPARES FULL FLEDGED 44 C/5		ASSEMBLY DOCUMENTATION PREPARATION						



Multilateral collaboration and cooperation

The Assembly decided as follows:

*“**Further asserts** that, the IOC Executive Secretary, who is the equivalent of the level of Assistant Director-General (ADG) and acts with the instructions provided by the IOC Assembly and the Executive Council shall, without prejudice to other tasks that may have been or may be delegated to them, be accountable for:*

(...)

the management of, in keeping with the IOC Statutes, collaboration with and representation to multilateral and Member State institutions and processes, including the IOC’s own accreditation to intergovernmental institutions and processes;”

Secretariat to **analyse and present proposals** in relation to:

- Priorities for engagement in multilateral processes given the small Secretariat
- Priorities for deliverables and desired outcomes from engagement for maximum impact
- Ways to increase role, identity and autonomy in relevant multilateral processes
- Internal coordination and reporting

IOC and the Future of the Ocean Phase 2 (and IOC post-Decade legacy)

Also requests the IOC Executive Secretary to proceed with Phase 2 of the (..IOC and Future of the Ocean...) consultation, as outlined in IOC/A-33/5.3.Doc(1), to analyse the effectiveness of supply to meet the needs of Member States and partners as identified in Phase 1 of the consultation, including via multilateral ocean frameworks and other relevant processes;

Decides that Phase 2 of the consultation be undertaken with IOC programmes, Regional Subsidiary Bodies, Member States, including through IFAG, other relevant intersessional working groups, and other relevant stakeholders as necessary, and drawing on the Action Plan in response to the IOS Evaluation of the IOC strategic positioning, the management response to the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Ocean Decade, the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029), and other relevant resources as necessary;

Further requests the IOC Executive Secretary to report on the results of Phase 2 of the consultation to the IOC Executive Council at its 59th session.

Call for Proposals currently open for consultants for Phase 2 consultation that will:

- Finalize a shortlist of priority issues and develop detailed evaluation methodology based on Phase 1 consultation, UN80 process and the outcomes of the 33rd IOC Assembly, the Results Framework, and Ocean Decade priorities.
- Map key providers of ocean-related science, data, services, and tools in each priority area at global and regional levels and consult with partners.
- Assess IOC's current and potential scope of action in each priority area & identify strategic opportunities and challenges including in regions.
- Develop forward-looking options and scenarios for IOC engagement.
- Report to IFAG and EC-59.

Member State consultation – next 3 months milestones

IFAG Mtg 1 (2/10/25)

- Budget status and update (42 C/5 and 43 C/5 (pre-EXB)
- Progress on Res A-33/3 issues

Sec. Mgt Meeting (21 -22 Oct 2025)

- In depth discussion of issues from Res A-33/3 including options and scenarios for presentation to Officers and IFAG

Officers meeting online (17/11/25)

- Decade Advisory Board nominations
- Comms Strategy framework

IFAG Mtg 2 (18/11/25)

- Budget status and update post-GC
- Feedback from management retreat on A-33/3 issues and next steps in different processes

Officers Meeting (20-21 Jan 2026)

- Planning for EC-59
- Progress on Res A-3/3 issues and actions towards EC-59
- Joint session with chairs §/ co-chairs of all regional & technical subsidiary bodies

Q&A / Discussion



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