



IFAG Online Meeting No. 2

18 November 2025

Agenda

IFAG Agenda:

- Updates on outcomes of the 43rd Session of the UNESCO General Conference
- Update on budget situation for 2026/2027 biennium
- Update on resource mobilisation priorities and approach
- Improving efficiency and effectiveness in IOC governance
- IOC Communications Strategy

Additional orientation session:

- Update on the GOOS Reform



Update on outcomes of the 43rd Session of the UNESCO General Conference

Outcomes of 43rd UNESCO General Conference



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43 C

General Conference
43rd session, Samarkand 2025

5. Recalls that by means of 216 EX/Decision 44 the Executive Board recommended that the General Conference at its 42nd session agree to an increase in the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission's (IOC) share of the UNESCO regular budget of [1%], not to be decreased by transfers of funds to other parts of the budget and that a baseline be identified and agreed for IOC's share of UNESCO's regular budget under document 42 C/5 and future C/5 documents and that no reduction to this baseline be made in the future unless agreed by the General Conference; and *recommits* to 216 EX/Decision 44 in order to ensure that IOC receives no less than 3% of the available overall regular budget;

II

Recognizing 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 adopted by the General Conference at its 30th session,

1. Takes note of IOC Resolution A-33/3.II on the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026–2027 and decides to include in document 43 C/5 Approved the relevant elements of the IOC Results Framework, as determined by the IOC Assembly and presented in Part II of document IOC/A-33/5.1.Doc(1);
2. Also takes note of IOC Resolution A-33/3.III on the assessment of governance and management processes;

[Item 3.4 of the revised agenda](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD ON THE DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2026–2029 (43 C/5) AND FUTURE PROGRAMME AND BUDGET CYCLES

OUTLINE

Source: 222 EX/Decision 21, 43 C/6 Add.

Background: This item has been included in the revised agenda of the 43rd session of the General Conference following a request by Canada addressed to the President of the General Conference on 1 November 2025.

Purpose: The present document submits a draft resolution for the General Conference reflecting the relevant paragraphs from the 43 C/6 Add. concerning the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026–2029 (43 C/5) and future Programme and Budget cycles.

Decision required: paragraph 2.

Outcomes of 43rd UNESCO General Conference



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43 C

General Conference

43rd session, Samarkand 2025

43 C/64
10 November 2025
Original: English

3. *Invites the Director-General to contribute to the full implementation of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission's (IOC) functions as established in its Statutes as well as the tasks assigned to the IOC Secretariat, including by the delegation of authority to the Executive Secretary of IOC, when applicable;*
4. *Invites the Executive Secretary of IOC to submit draft sections relating to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) in Volumes 1 and 2 of future Draft Programme and Budget documents (Draft C/5 documents) to the IOC Assembly;*
5. *Invites the Director-General to forward the IOC Assembly's recommendations concerning the sections relating to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) in Volumes 1 and 2 of future Draft Programme and Budget documents (Draft C/5 documents) to the Executive Board for transmission to the General Conference as part of the C/6 document.*

[Item 3.4 of the revised agenda](#)

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Outcomes of 43rd UNESCO General Conference

PROPOSED RESULTS FRAMEWORK FOR UNESCO 43 C/5	
IOC Core Output 2.4:	Member States critically supported in strengthening their capacity to conduct marine scientific research, generate knowledge, and develop and implement science-based tools, services, and policies in order to reverse the decline in ocean health and accelerate the transition towards sustainable management of ocean-related risks and opportunities
<i>Performance Indicators</i>	
2.4.IOC 1	Number of Member States routinely collecting and managing FAIR EOV data on biodiversity and ecosystems through GOOS, ODIS and OBIS
2.4.IOC 2	Number of Member States engaged in ocean climate research networks, including ocean acidification, deoxygenation and blue carbon
2.4.IOC 3	Number of Member States' communities recognised as Tsunami Ready
2.4.IOC 4	Number of Member States supported in Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (incl. Marine Spatial Planning)
2.4.IOC 5	Percentage of leadership roles in the UN Ocean Decade Actions held by women or Early Career Ocean Professionals



Update on Budget Situation

Total UNESCO regular budget: **\$ 610 045 936 (ZNG)**

IOC at 3% minimal baseline: 2 scenarios EX/222

	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%



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Joint meeting of Commissions

Item 3.2 of the revised agenda

43 C

General Conference
43rd session, Samarkand 2025

43 C/13
10 November 2025
Original: English

ADOPTION OF THE APPROPRIATION RESOLUTION FOR 2026–2027

Update on Budget Situation

Total UNESCO Expenditure Plan: **\$ 534.6 M**

No scenarios or budgetary envelopes shared yet

3.00% for IOC: \$ 16M or -24% vs 42 C/5



Potential IOC Expenditure Plan Proposal

Assembly preference: maintain 42C/5 Regular Budget Staff of **34.5 posts** with some adjustments

Staff cost – **12.8 M** / Non-Staff – **3.2 M**

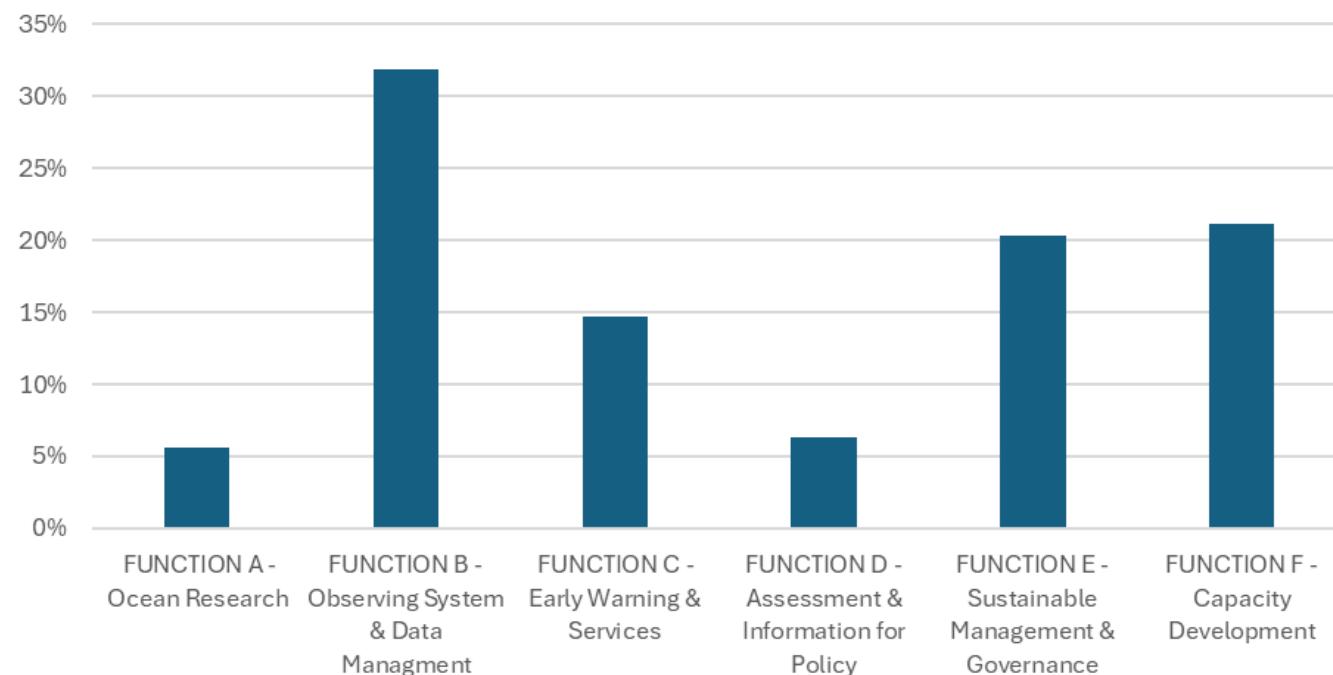
Overall ratio **80/20**

Keep prioritisation as determined by Assembly in 42 C/5

Reallocating IOC contribution to Intersectoral output (Ocean Literacy) to RSB core capacity development budget

Keeping priority to IOCAFIRCA and contribution to SIDS/EWS intersectoral output

Draft 43 C/5 - Regular Budget Expenditure Plan by Function

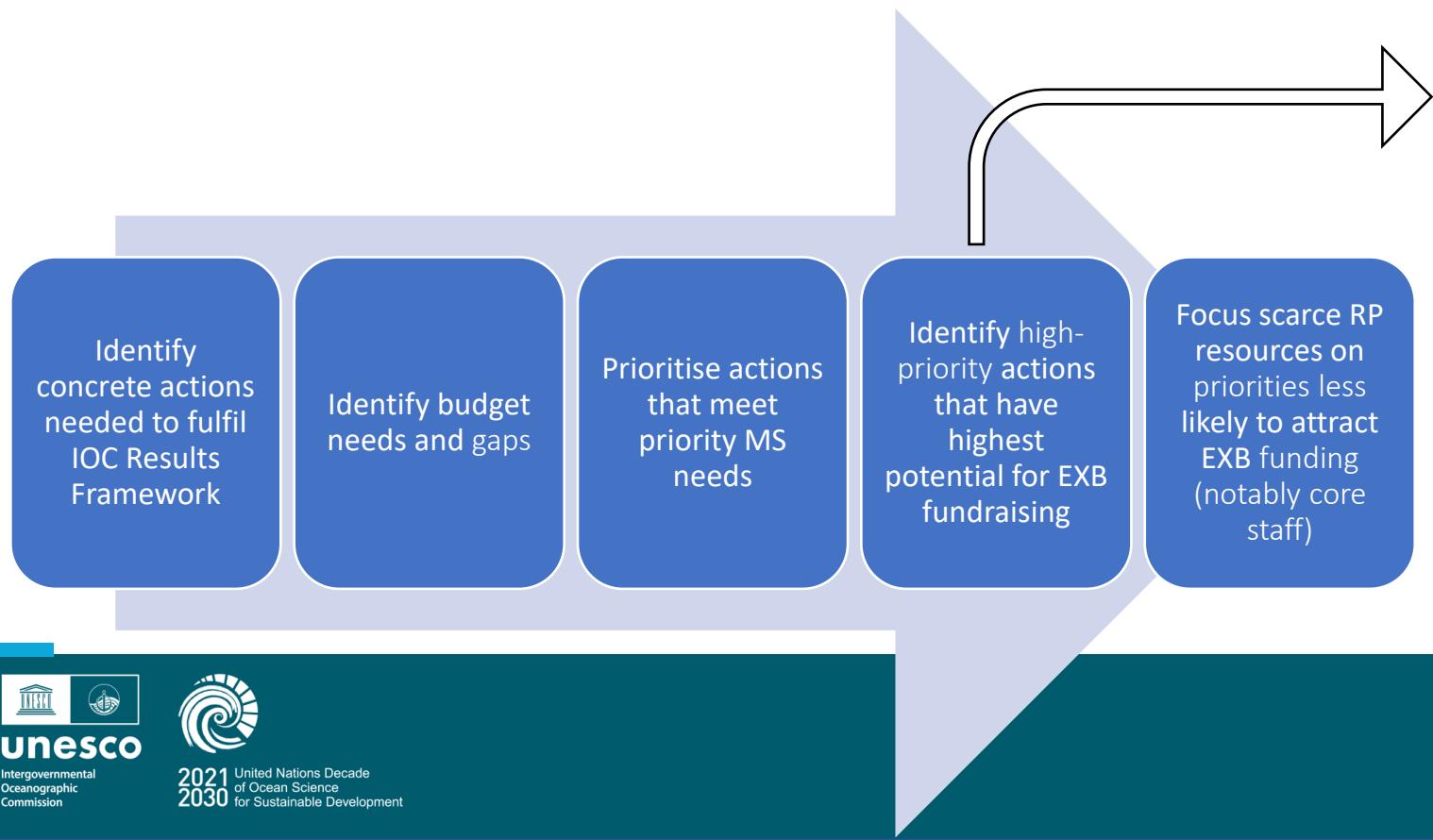




Update on resource mobilisation approach & priorities

Resource Mobilisation Approach & Priorities

- Regardless of the budget scenario adopted, RP budgets will be significantly reduced in the 2026 – 2027 biennium
- Targeted EXB resource mobilisation will be a priority to ensure realization of priority actions in the Results Framework



Examples of Targeted Areas for EXB Fundraising:

- **Developing Global Ocean Data Exchange**
- **Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management:** implementation of priority actions of IOC strategy
- **BBNJ implementation:** observations/data (OBIS), services, applications and CD
- **Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems:** development & testing of concept and piloting in regions inc. observations/data, services, applications & CD
- **Ocean-climate (including Blue Carbon):** observations/data, services, applications & CD (including support to NDC/NAPs)
- **StOR including communications & outreach**



Greater effectiveness, efficiency and inclusiveness in IOC governance

IOC Assembly Decision

“**Requests** 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;”

The UN 80 Initiative

The United Nations' ambitious, system-wide reform effort to respond to a vital question: **'How can the UN adapt to become more agile, integrated, and equipped to respond to today's complex global challenges amid tightening resources?'**

The goal of the initiative is to create a UN that is:

- More efficient and cost-effective
- More responsive to crises and countries' needs
- More effective in delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals
- More accountable to taxpayers and the people it serves
- More supportive of UN staff and their mission-critical work

The UN 80 Initiative – an example

“The Initiative aims to use finite resources as effectively as possible, and with fewer bureaucratic burdens. Examples of specific recommendations from the UN Mandate review:

- Prioritize and streamline requests for reports, working groups or meetings
- Provide shorter reports and reduce maximum word counts
- Reduce the volume of text of decisions, in order to provide more clarity, effective implementation and greater impact.
- Frame decisions/mandates in a way which allows flexibility for the executive to organize the work based on comparative advantages and resources
- Refrain from mandating new tasks which are not backed by resources or an explicit reduction in other tasks.

“Greater effectiveness and efficiency”

Design IOC Assembly/Executive Council/Subsidiary Body agendas to focus on IOC objectives, progress made, challenges, opportunities and directions:

- Redesign reports (written and oral) of subsidiary bodies and the Secretariat accordingly
- Require reports to reference the Results Framework and show how activities are contributing
- Highlight more clearly the purpose and rationale for draft decisions
- Review the roles and functioning of our **156** subsidiary bodies, steering and working groups etc
- Consider more use of online meetings,
- Limit Executive Council and Assembly meetings to 5 days within one working week
- Avoid oral presentations that duplicate written reports
- Make better use of the $\frac{1}{2}$ day meeting of the Executive Council preceding the Assembly

“Greater inclusiveness”

- Hold subsidiary body meetings earlier in the IOC planning/budgeting cycle
- Facilitate MS meeting preparations by having more focused agendas and less wordy documentation with clear links to Medium-Term Strategy and expected outcomes
- Ensure correct and up to date list of national IOC Focal Points
- More regular engagement with IOC Officers and Chairs / Co-Chairs of RSBs / TSBs to inform consultations within electoral groups on important issues and decisions (e.g. following example of Group 1)
- Identify schedules/dates and host countries for RSBs at least 12 months in advance to allow for financial planning for MS
- More regular and substantive online meetings with Member States, IFAG or otherwise to ensure increased engagement from more regions



IOC Communications Strategy

1. Acting on IOC Assembly Decisions

- reaffirmed the Commission's statutory autonomy and called for the IOC to assume full ownership of its communications, including a clearer expression of its institutional identity within the UN system.
- the Secretariat has been developing a new communications strategy to translate these decisions into action:
 - a foundation for a more coherent and unified IOC voice,
 - strengthening visibility while fully reflecting the Commission's mandate as the UN's lead body for ocean science and a unifying institution at the interface of science, policy, and society.



2. Building a Unified IOC Institutional Voice

IOC's broad and diverse programme structure and communities

- variety of naming practices, platforms, and communication approaches across sections, sub-commissions, and programmes.
- the strength and reach of the Commission, and also highlights opportunities for greater alignment to reinforce visibility, coherence, and recognition of IOC's leadership role.

Advancing a unified IOC institutional voice is a collective effort:

- the active collaboration of all components of the Commission (Secretariat, sections, sub-commissions, programmes) and importantly, the engagement of Member States as key contributors and amplifiers of IOC's messages.

Success will depend on **shared ownership, clear governance, and strong participation from leadership** and Member States alike. By working together and co-creating communication efforts, we can ensure the IOC speaks with a coherent and authoritative voice across the UN system and the wider ocean community: one that reflects the Commission's wide mandate and the diversity of its Member States.



3. What Will the Communications Strategy Cover?

The Communications Strategy will outline a unified approach to:

- Strengthening the IOC's institutional identity, including a new brand & visual Identity.
A draft logo and brand identity will be shared in early 2026, with approval sought at the June 2026 Executive Council.
- Clarifying and amplifying the IOC's narrative, ensuring communications consistently reflect the Commission's broad mandate and global leadership in ocean science & beyond.
- Enhancing coherence across the IOC ecosystem, aligning messaging and visibility across sections, sub-commissions, programmes and initiatives.
- Expanding engagement and visibility, enabling Member States, partners and the wider ocean community to more effectively contribute to and amplify IOC communications.
- These elements aim to strengthen the IOC's voice, visibility and impact across the UN system and the global ocean community, in line with Assembly decisions.



3. IOC Communications Strategy Timeline

