SECOND UPDATED INTRODUCTION TO THE IOC MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY 2014–2021

The UN General Assembly proclaimed in December 2017 the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, to be coordinated by IOC from 2021 to 2030. The IOC Officers at their annual meeting in Paris, 16–18 January 2018, considered that this major development would require a further update to the introduction to the IOC Medium-Term Strategy 2014–2021 initially endorsed by the IOC Assembly in its Resolution XXIX-2, Annex 1. The draft update presented in this document has been circulated to the Intersessional Financial Advisory Group for comments and is now presented for consideration by the IOC Executive Council.

Proposed decision: This document is part of the report of the Chair of the Intersessional Financial Advisory Group to the Executive Council. It will be further examined by the statutory sessional open-ended Financial Committee. The decision will be reflected in the Draft Resolution that the Financial Committee will submit for adoption by the Executive Council under item 6.2 in accordance with paragraph 15 of the guidelines for the preparation and consideration of draft resolutions (IOC/INF-1315).
Annex 1 to Resolution EC-LXXIX-2/DR.(6.2)

**UPDATED** INTRODUCTION TO THE IOC MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY, 2014–2021

*(as updated by the IOC Assembly at its 29th session in 2017 and Executive Council at its 51st session, 3–6 July 2017)*

1. The last decade demonstrated an increased understanding of the importance of the oceans as a source of life, and the realization that building regional know-how is essential for facilitating solving regional economic and social problems.

2. The IOC has a recognized and unique role in the UN system in relation to ocean science and the science base for ocean management. Its status as a body with functional autonomy within UNESCO has been carefully designed to provide an efficient platform for coordination, information and sharing of knowledge to contribute to sustainable and peaceful development.

3. When designing a medium-term strategy, it is crucially important to have a realistic appreciation of the possibilities and limitations within available budgets. Continued emphasis on coordination, exchange, initiation of activities and strengthening of key functions is required, while implementation to a large degree has to be done in collaboration with other organizations and entities. This is challenging and demanding and will require key inputs from Member States in collaboration with the IOC Secretariat.

4. In line with the IOC mission statement, a vision for the period 2014–2021 is formulated below based on perceived societal needs, emerging issues, and requirements for intergovernmental coordination. The Rio+20 Conference\(^1\) has provided very useful and timely context for the role of IOC as expressed in this strategy and its high-level objectives.

5. The years 2014–2015 were marked by significant developments in the global environmental and ocean management, including the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular of the stand-alone Goal 14 on the Ocean; the recognition of the role of the Ocean in the UNFCCC Paris Climate Agreement; the endorsement of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the SAMOA Pathway. IOC’s strong contribution to all these frameworks convincingly shows that IOC has withstood a test on its relevance, impact and stability and has been on the right path to contributing ocean-related solutions to global challenges of our time.

6. IOC efforts gained the ultimate recognition in December 2017 with the proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at its seventy-second session, of ‘the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development for the 10-year period beginning on 1 January 2021, within existing structures and available resources’. In its Resolution A/RES/72/73, UNGA ‘calls upon the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission to prepare an implementation plan for the Decade in consultation with Member States, specialized agencies, funds, programmes and bodies of the United Nations, as well as other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and relevant stakeholders.’

7. This strategy will cover eight years to be consistent with the new UNESCO medium-term planning context which includes four-year programme cycles. It will be implemented in a manner consistent with priorities and guidelines agreed by the IOC Governing Bodies, including the review by the IOC Executive Council at its 49th session of the Strategic Results Report and the consideration by the IOC Assembly at its 29th session of the ‘Future of the IOC Roadmap’.

\(^1\) [http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/futurewewant.html](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/futurewewant.html)
8. The period 2018–2020 will have a particular focus on the preparation of the Implementation Plan for the Decade and lead to the IOC Medium-Term Strategy for the period 2022–2029.

“We recognize that oceans, seas and coastal areas form an integrated and essential component of the Earth’s ecosystem and are critical to sustaining it…”

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