IOC Circular Letter No 2739
(Available in English and Spanish) 9 October 2018

To: National Coordinating Bodies for liaison with IOC of Costa Rica, Chile, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago
Permanent Delegations to UNESCO and National Commissions for UNESCO of Costa Rica, Chile; Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago

cc.: UNESCO Offices in Santiago de Chile, Montevideo, Kingston, Quito, San José and Lima
Head of UNESCO IOC Regional Secretariat for the IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions

Subject: Feasibility study for the adaptation of the ‘Ocean School’ programme to Central and South America

We wish to request your participation in disseminating a survey regarding the possible internationalization of a Canadian programme called “Ocean School” (http://www.oceanschool.ca) which is foreseen in the context of the project titled “Regional and Global Actions in support of the Ocean Literacy for All initiative, and of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development”, funded by the Government of Sweden, and coordinated by the IOC and the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Venice, Italy.

‘Ocean School’ is a groundbreaking ocean science education programme, developed by the University of Dalhousie, the Ocean Frontiers Institute and the National Film Board of Canada for the Canadian school system. A brief description is attached to this letter in English and Spanish.

The project coordinated by UNESCO and its IOC aims at verifying the possibility of adapting ‘Ocean School’ to different educational systems and cultural contexts. A decision was made to begin with countries in Central and South America and to run feasibility studies in Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Jamaica, Panama, Peru, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The feasibility study first starts with gathering the views of teachers through a survey and the organization of a teacher training course on ocean literacy basic principles and on learning how to use ‘Ocean School’ tools with 20 teachers from the above countries participating at the end of November in Costa Rica.
The survey, available online both in English and Spanish, is targeted at teachers and has a deadline for completion on 31 October 2018:
https://goo.gl/forms/zlIQPNnRgQeuOu192 (EN)
https://goo.gl/forms/0xGGXkixspUCawef1 (ES)

The feasibility study will encompass statistical analyses of the data collected and will help in the preparation and adaptation of further tests and possible trainings in the region.

With this letter, I ask your support to disseminate, as widely as possible, the survey to school principals and teachers.

The participants in the training will be selected from the teachers who will have replied to the survey.

If you have any questions please contact Ms Francesca Santoro (f.santoro@unesco.org), IOC Programme Specialist on Ocean Literacy.

With this project, we aim at further promoting ocean education, as an essential element for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and in particular of SDG 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all), and SDG 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development).

I wish to recall here the words of UNESCO Director-General, Audrey Azoulay, at the opening of the 51st session of the IOC Executive Council last July: “With a greater understanding of the science, we must also reinforce our work on ocean literacy, so that decision-makers can fully take advantage of scientific research in order to affect real policy change.”

We count on your support.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

Vladimir Ryabinin
Executive Secretary

Enclosure: Information note on ‘Ocean School’ Programme
WHAT IS OCEAN SCHOOL?

Ocean School is a groundbreaking learning experience that uses powerful storytelling techniques, immersive technologies, interactive media, and an inquiry-based learning model to advance environmental awareness and ocean literacy—the understanding of our influence on the ocean and the ocean’s influence on us. It builds critical thinking and problem-solving skills, improves understanding of marine science and culture, provides exposure to diverse marine career paths, and fosters a culture of ocean sustainability and environmental stewardship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATE</th>
<th>CONNECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ocean School uses creative storytelling techniques and disruptive technologies anchored in inquiry-based learning at a depth which has not been offered before. OS provides educators with engaging content/activities that promote meaningful integration of technology and assessment.</td>
<td>Using linear video, immersive 360° video, virtual and augmented reality and collaborative gaming, OS delivers experiences that create an emotional and lasting connection with the environment, providing motivation and agency for learners to address critical challenges by taking action.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EMPOWER

Ocean School is providing learners—the next generation of ocean citizens, innovators, and decision-makers—with the knowledge, tools, interest and skills needed to investigate and design innovative solutions for the accelerating challenges that face the world’s oceans.
THE CONTENT

Guided by an onscreen youth explorer, learners join ocean subject matter experts from academia, government, Indigenous communities, NGOs, industry, and other sectors/stakeholder groups in the field as they work together to tackle some of our most pressing questions about the ocean. While ocean science is the backbone of Ocean School's educational content, the learning experience also integrates socio-economic and cultural dimensions of the human relationship with the ocean, including Indigenous and traditional knowledge. This highlights the important cultural role of the ocean, and ensures scientific issues are put into the broader real-world context.

Ocean School strives for on-screen diversity in gender, ethnicity, educational background, geographic region and subject matter expertise. This promotes objectives in youth empowerment (especially for girls and under-represented populations) and provides exposure to a broad range of marine career paths. Ocean School encourages youth interest in STEM-related careers (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). Immersive technologies provide learners with the tools and practices that scientists use every day.

THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Ocean School is a free, state-of-the-art educational experience featuring rich media designed to foster deep engagement with current ocean challenges and solutions. Designed by education technology experts, in consultation with Canadian educators, the platform and its tools enable educators to push the boundary of inquiry-based learning—to harness learners’ experiences and creativity, and empower them to take increasingly higher responsibility for planning and assessing their own learning.

The OS learning experience begins by presenting the learner with a critical challenge that guides their learning and ends with a “take action” on issues like habitat protection, sustainable fishing and traditional ways of knowing. Learners navigate the platform and its media rich learning objects with agency and purpose. OS is integrated with Google Classroom so that educators have all the tools they need to gather evidence and assess learning without disrupting the learner’s action-inquiry experience.

OS is currently available in French and English—with plans to add additional Indigenous and international languages. Primarily designed for classroom learners aged 11-15, the modular and flexible nature of the platform allows the resources to be tailored to the technology available, irrespective of learners’ age and interests.

Ocean School will be distributed to Canadian classrooms via a Web-based platform, building on the National Film Board’s existing online educational offering, which currently reaches 2.5 million students—representing over 50% of total students in Canada—and more than 4.5 Canadians who can access NFB’s existing platform through their public libraries.