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INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

Fifty-ninth Session of the Executive Council
UNESCO, Paris, 30 June–3 July 2026

Items 4.4 and 4.5 of the Provisional Agenda

DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET 2028–2029 (44 C/5)
PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Summary

This document presents the preliminary outline of the Secretariat's approach to the draft programme and budget for 2028–2029 (Draft 44 C/5). The Executive Council's feedback will guide the Secretariat's submissions into the UNESCO programme and budget drafting cycle (presented in Annex I to this document), with the final Draft 44 C/5 to be presented for approval by the IOC Assembly at its 34th session, prior to its consideration by the UNESCO General Conference at its 44th session.

Decision proposed is referenced Dec. IOC/EC-59/4.4 in the Provisional Action Paper [IOC/EC-59/AP Prov.](#) The document will be examined by the sessional Financial Committee and the conclusions reflected in the Draft Resolution that the Financial Committee will be submitting to the Executive Council for adoption under item 4.5 in accordance with paragraph 15 of the Draft Revised Guidelines for the Preparation and Consideration of Draft Resolutions ([IOC/INF-1315](#)).

1. IOC's Programme and Budget for the last biennium of the programmatic quadrennium 2026–2029 will continue to be guided by the Commission's **mission statement, vision, high level objectives and functions** as defined in the [IOC Medium-Term Strategy for 2022–2029](#).

2. This four-year programme, which concludes just before the end of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) and the 2030 SDG deadline, has been designed to reflect the priorities of Member States as defined in the resolutions and decisions of the IOC's Governing Bodies. Programmatic design continues to benefit from the results of Phases 1 and 2 of the 'IOC and the Future of the Ocean' consultation process that seeks to identify the IOC's future strategic priorities in order to best meet the current and emerging needs of Member States. Phase 3 will also be informed by the UNESCO80 Roadmap implementation ensuring coherence and alignment across the Organization's strategic planning processes.

3. In accordance with UNESCO General Conference Resolution 43 C/82, which requested the Director-General to present a strategic plan aligned with the UN80 initiative—aimed at identifying efficiencies, reviewing how mandates are implemented, and examining potential structural changes—the Director-General submitted the UNESCO80 Roadmap to the 224th session of the Executive Board. This followed extensive consultations with stakeholders, both within UNESCO (including the IOC Secretariat) and externally. The roadmap, which indicates that efforts will continue to reinforce the Organization's capacity, positioning, communication, and outreach, while fully respecting its intergovernmental governance, was adopted at the 224th session of the Board.

4. By its decision 224 EX/12, the Executive Board decided to establish an open-ended working group, scheduled to meet until the end of July 2026, with a view to reviewing mandate implementation across UNESCO in the context of the preparation of the forthcoming 44 C/5.

5. In accordance with IOC Resolution A-32/4, EC-57/2 and A-33/3, the Secretariat shall make every effort, in the draft programme and budget proposal for 2028–2029, to reflect the IOC priorities in terms of long-term sustained observations and data and information management, as well as regional subsidiary bodies and activities and Member States' capacity building, which are fundamental to:

- Healthy ocean and sustained ocean ecosystem services
- Effective warning systems and preparedness for tsunamis and other ocean-related hazards
- Resilience to climate change and contribution to its mitigation
- Scientifically-founded services for the sustainable ocean economy; and
- Foresight on emerging ocean science issues.

6. In this context, it is proposed that the IOC work in 2028–2029 continue to focus on:

(i) *delivering the IOC Output:*

'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',

with the implementation organized as a framework of six functions: A. Ocean research; B. Observing system/data management; C. Early warning and services; D. Assessment and information for policy; E. Sustainable management and governance; F. Capacity Development, realized through IOC's and co-sponsored programmes, the work of IOC's regional and technical subsidiary bodies.

(ii) *giving priority to key action areas:*

- a) Upscaling and sustaining the Global Ocean Observing System (**GOOS**) infrastructure to address user needs including Member States own needs and providing data and information to support implementation of UN conventions and frameworks including in relation to climate, biodiversity and ocean health.
 - b) Strengthening the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (**IODE**) programme to achieve global coverage and operationalizing a coordinated IOC data architecture.
 - c) Strengthened **coordination in relation to marine biodiversity** to better support Member States in fulfilling commitments in implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the BBNJ Agreement, as well as regional policy frameworks.
 - d) Advancing the **Tsunami Programme** ambition to achieve 100% of communities at risk to be Tsunami Ready and initiating planning and implementation of broader multi-hazard early warning systems to support climate resilience, sustainable biodiversity and ecosystem management, and food security.
 - e) Supporting **Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management** including through strengthened regional delivery mechanisms and acting as global knowledge partner for Member States' commitments to develop and implement Sustainable Ocean Plans.
 - f) Enhancing Member State's **capacity** to engage in and benefit from IOC programmes with a particular focus on **Africa and SIDS**.
 - g) Enhancing delivery of the '**Ocean Decade**' to strengthen the collective impact of IOC-led and partner-led Decade programmes and projects to inform societal decision making at all scales and lay the foundation for the post-2030 legacy of the Decade.
- (iii) *contributing to UNESCO Intersectoral Outputs on Environmental Education and Early Warning for All with focus on SIDS, and*
- (iv) *measuring progress against the performance indicators of the IOC Results Framework, as endorsed by the IOC Assembly at its 33rd session.*

7. Work across these action areas will depend on Member State investment in ocean observations and science and will in turn serve as evidence of the societal and economic benefits of such investments. The efforts will be supported by cross-cutting actions in capacity development, ocean literacy, and strategic communications.

8. IOC-led assessment and knowledge synthesis products, and IOC's contributions to partner-led products will be key elements of the work to deliver global and regional information across the science-policy-society interface. Actions will be tailored to regional needs and will have a specific focus on priority groups including Africa, SIDS and Early Career Ocean Professionals. Partnerships within and outside the UN system will be actively pursued and strengthened to ensure effective delivery of IOC's work.

9. With its vision of '*the ocean we need for the future we want*', the Ocean Decade coordinated by the IOC, will continue to provide an overarching framework for IOC programmes to innovate and trial transformative approaches to the generation of timely, relevant and co-designed knowledge that has direct applicability to decision making. The Ocean Decade fosters the ability of IOC programmes to work in new ways, with new partners, and focusing on emerging issues, thus building the foundation of the future IOC for the post-Decade era. The Ocean Decade will continue to highlight the societal benefits of IOC and its programmes and support the evolution of ocean science to be able to deliver beyond the diagnostics of existing or emerging problems to co-design effective solutions for implementation by actors across society.

10. The results of the 'IOC and the Future of the Ocean' consultation process will be used to refine regional and global programmatic proposals with a focus on:

- (i) a continued emphasis on supporting critical ocean observations and data exchange, including coordination mechanisms between global and regional programmes;
- (ii) sustained focus on the work of the Regional Sub-Commissions, including capacity development and the development and dissemination of applications, services and tools to support the uptake of ocean science in policy and action;
- (iii) measures to strengthen the role of Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management as a consolidated framework for IOC support to Member States, including approaches to leverage partnerships and extrabudgetary resources to support implementation of the IOC Strategy on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management; and
- (iv) measures to enable IOC to respond to emerging opportunities in the context of the BBNJ Agreement.

11. Integrated budget proposals, in line with the governing bodies' decisions, will be supported by internal analyses of persistent and emerging financing gaps and opportunities for enhanced extrabudgetary resource mobilization within the IOC Results Framework.

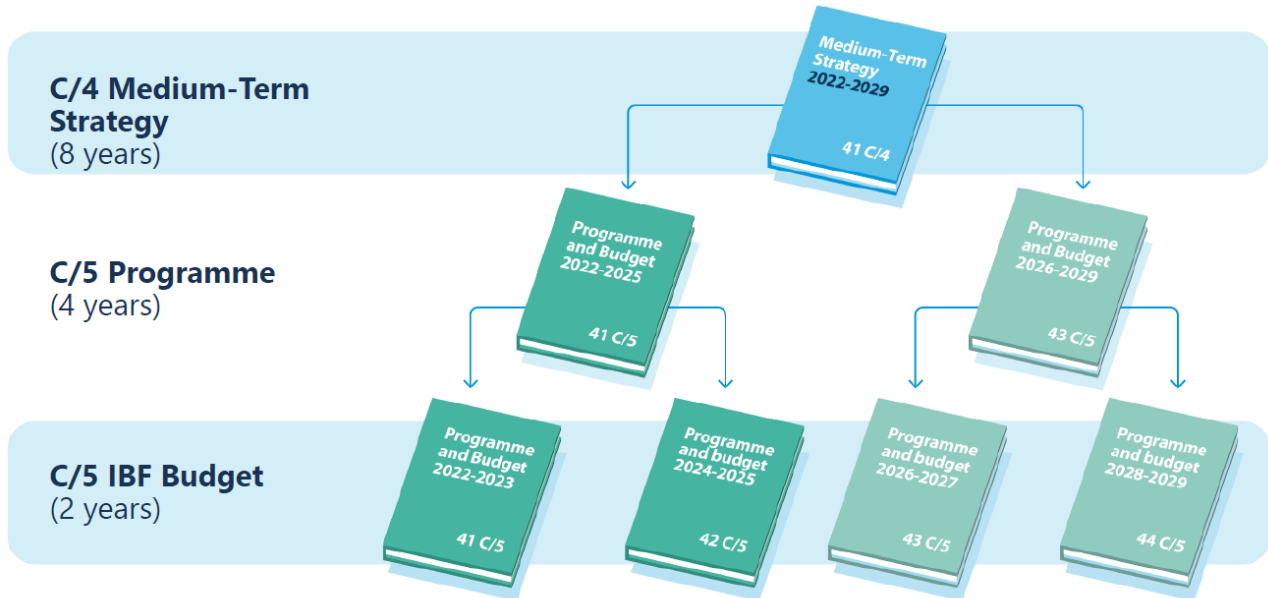
12. The Secretariat's drafting work will benefit from inputs from IOC's global programmes and subsidiary bodies (both technical and regional) in accordance with the revised meeting schedule approved by the Assembly, as well as from timely and regular consultation with Member States through the open-ended Intersessional Financial Advisory Group.

13. The final proposal will be reviewed by the IOC Assembly at its 34th session, prior to the consideration of the UNESCO Programme and Budget for 2028–2029 (Draft 44 C/5) by the UNESCO Executive Board and General Conference in the fall of 2027.

Annex I

PRESENTATION OF THE UNESCO PROGRAMMING & BUDGETING CYCLE

UNESCO overall planning architecture



Strategic Documents

Document number	Title	Nature
C/4	Medium-Term Strategy	8 years
C/5	Programme and Budget	4 years Programme 2 years Budget
C/6	Recommendation by the Executive Board on the draft C/5 to the General Conference	Prepared at the spring session of the Executive Board of the 2 nd year of the biennium If necessary, Addendum may be prepared at the autumn session of the Executive Board.
C/11	Recommendation by the Executive Board on the draft C/4 to the General Conference	Prepared at the spring session of the Executive Board of the year of the General Conference at which it will be adopted. If necessary, Addendum may be prepared at the autumn session of the Executive Board



44 C/5 Preparation Sequencing

2026		2027		
224 EXB (SPRING)	225 EXB (AUTUMN)	226 EXB (SPRING)	227 EXB (AUTUMN)	44 GC (NOV.)
Adoption of the 43 C/5 budget (2026-2027) & expenditure plan (one-time exception)	Decision on: DG Preliminary Proposal of the Draft Programme and Budget (2028-2029) (draft 44 C/5)	44 C/6: Decision and recommendation to GC on the Draft Programme and Budget (2028-2029) (draft 44 C/5)	44 C/6 Add. (if necessary): Additional recommendations of EXB to GC on the draft 44 C/5	Adoption of the Programme and Budget (2028-2029) (44 C/5) Consideration and Adoption of the Roadmap for: • 45 C/4 (Medium-Term Strategy 2030-2037) • 45 C/5 (Programme and Budget 2030-2033)