

The Ocean InfoHub Project: Exchanging oceans data and information through a global, distributed network

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The IOC Ocean InfoHub Project (OIH) is a new initiative to help realise a global digital commons to empower ocean science for sustainable development across scales. Funded by the Government of Flanders (Kingdom of Belgium), the project started in April 2020 and will run for three years. The OIH is coordinated by the IOC Project Office for IODE (Oostende, Belgium), building on its 60-year history of supporting member states in the exchange and management of marine data and information. The OIH will establish a network of regional and thematic nodes that will improve online access to and synthesis of existing global, regional and national data, information and knowledge resources. The OIH will center on an openly accessible web platform designed to support interoperability between distributed resources including existing clearinghouse mechanisms.

The project will first work with IOC-associated online resources - including OceanExpert, OceanDocs/Aquadocs, the Ocean Best Practices System, the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS), the World Ocean Database (WOD) and Ocean Data Portal (ODP) – extended by partnerships with EurOcean, Marinetraining.eu, EMODNET, and other sources in the IOC ODIS Catalogue of Sources (ODIScat). The Ocean Data and Information System (ODIS) will provide the interoperability layer and supporting technology to allow existing and emerging ocean data and information systems, from any stakeholder, to interoperate with one another. This will enable and accelerate more effective development and dissemination of digital technology and sharing of ocean data, information, and knowledge. As such, ODIS will not be a new portal or centralised system, but will provide a collaborative solution to interlink distributed systems for common goals. Together with global project partners and partners in three pilot regions (Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Pacific Small Island Developing States), a process of co-design will enable a number of global and regional nodes to test the proof of concept for the ODIS. The Ocean InfoHub Project will therefore provide an opportunity for partners and users to contribute to, and access the UN Ocean Decade global data ecosystem while also offering capacity development opportunities to all to participate equitably.

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