



**2021** United Nations Decade  
**2030** of Ocean Science  
for Sustainable Development

# National Decade Committee for Belgium HANDBOOK



Decade Implementing Partner  
Secretariat of the National Decade Committee for Belgium



**2021** United Nations Decade  
**2030** of Ocean Science  
for Sustainable Development

**Vision: ‘the science we need for the ocean we want’**

**Mission: ‘to catalyse transformative ocean science solutions for sustainable development, connecting people and our ocean’**

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# 1. Why a Handbook?

The present booklet is a **living document** that summarizes key concepts and information to **support Belgian representation and participation in the Ocean Decade.**

The Ocean Decade (OD) goes beyond the capacity of a single nation, aims to unify a diversity of disciplines, nationalities, and generations towards co-design transformative ocean science for sustainable development.



## 2. What is the Ocean Decade about?

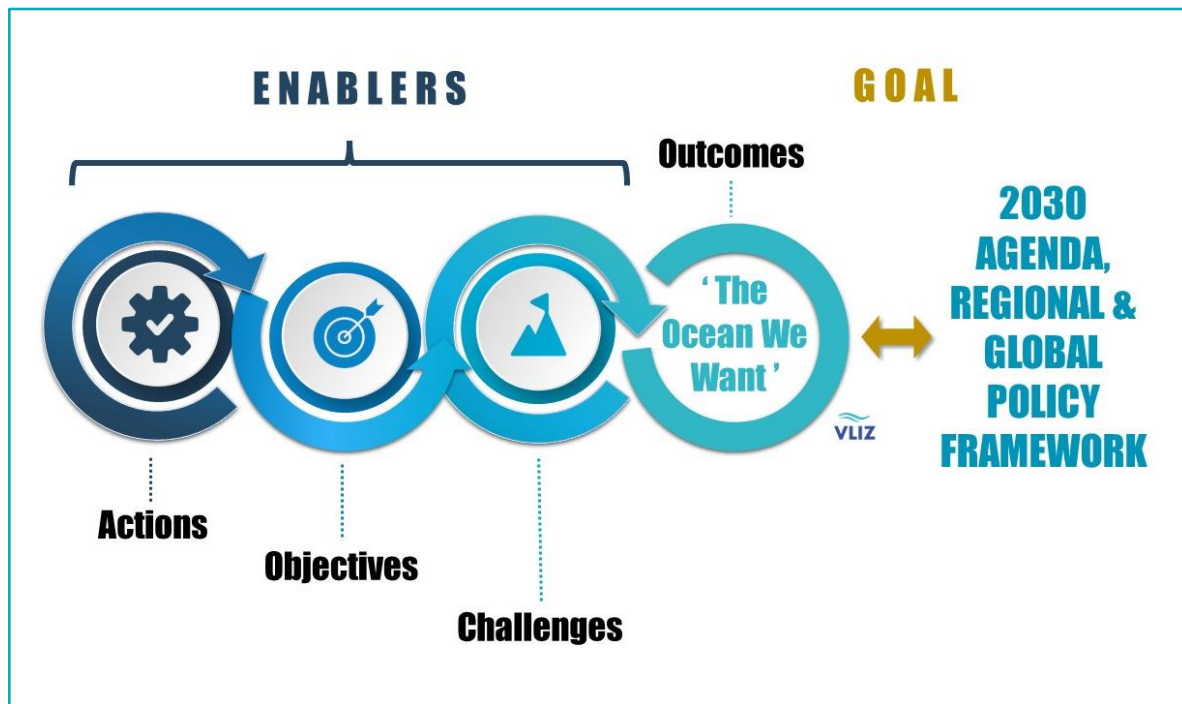


Figure 1. Representation of the Ocean Decade Action Framework based on UNESCO graphics.

### The Ocean Decade Action Framework

Four elements are key to the implementation of the Ocean Decade:

1. **Ocean Decade actions:** tangible initiatives by a wide range of stakeholders to fulfil the objectives and thus achieve the Challenges.
2. **Objectives:** the steps in the process that allow us to evolve from the ocean we have to the ocean we want. Objectives are relevant to all Challenges.
3. **Challenges:** the most immediate needs with a centralized position.
4. **Outcomes:** representing 'the ocean we want'.

### 3. 'The Ocean we want' is ...



Figure 2. Ocean Decade outcomes

#### The 7 Ocean Decade Outcomes

1. **A clean ocean** where sources of pollution are identified and reduced or removed.
2. **A healthy and resilient ocean where** marine ecosystems are understood, protected, restored, and managed.
3. **A productive ocean** supporting sustainable food supply and a sustainable ocean economy.
4. **A predicted ocean** where society understands and can respond to changing ocean conditions.
5. **A safe ocean** where life and livelihoods are protected from ocean-related hazards.
6. **An accessible ocean** with open and equitable access to data, information, technology, and innovation.
7. **An inspiring and engaging ocean** where society understands and values the ocean in relation to human well-being and sustainable development.

## 4. What is the focus of the Ocean Decade ?



Figure 3. Ocean Decade Challenges

The Ocean Decade focuses on overcoming 10 challenges, considered critical to achieve 'The Ocean We Want'. The description of each challenge can be found in the Ocean Decade Implementation Plan ([summary](#) and [long version](#)).

## 5. Let's focus on 3 objectives!

**Objective 1:** Identify required knowledge for sustainable development.

**Objective 2:** Generate comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the ocean.

**Objective 3:** Increase the use of ocean knowledge.

**Figure 4.** Ocean Decade Objectives



## 6. How can I contribute?

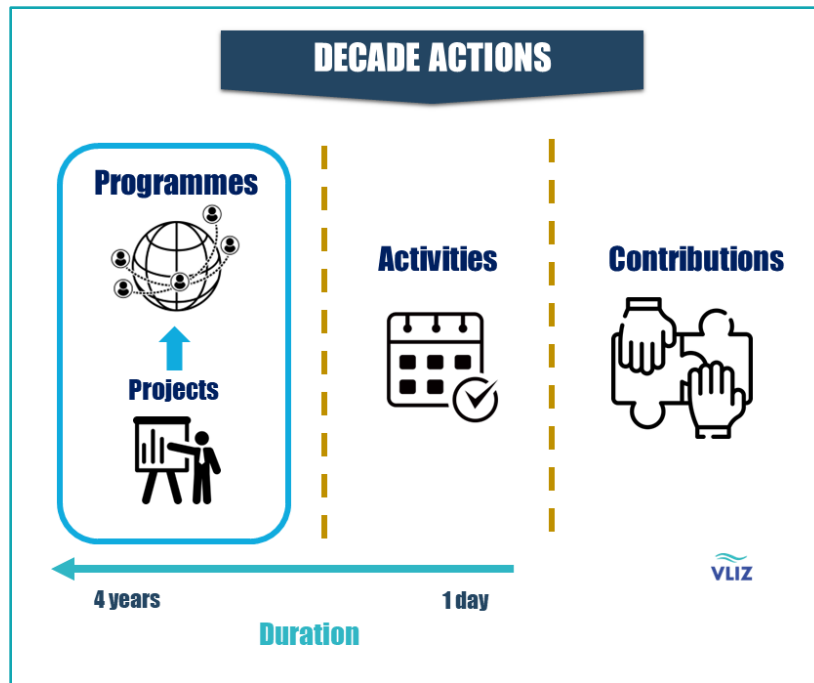
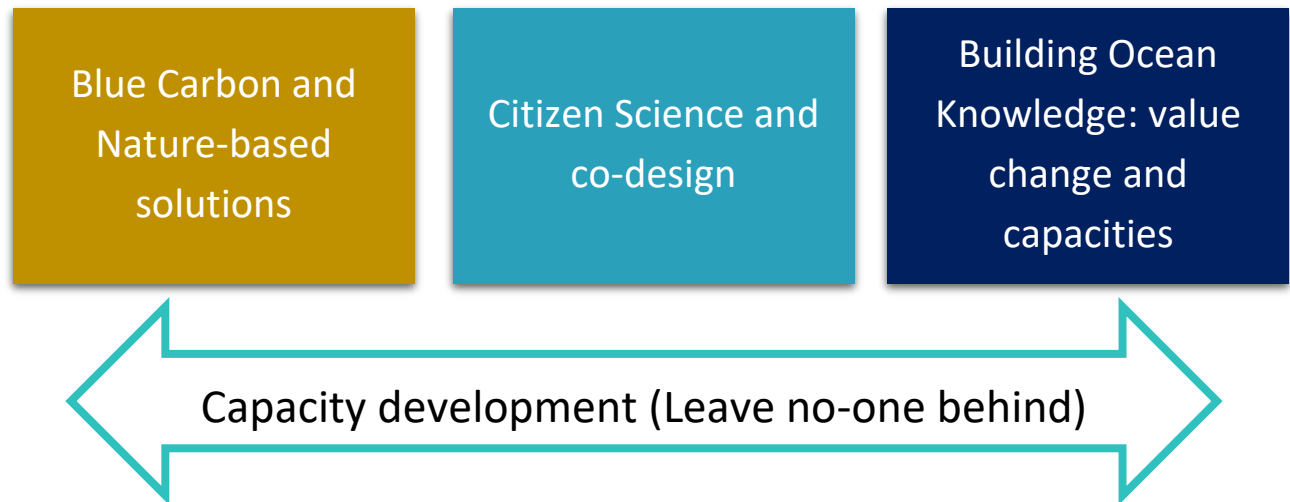


Figure 5. Ocean Decade actions: programmes, projects, activities, and contributions.

- **Programmes:** your initiative can be endorsed as a programme if it is long-term (4 years), multi-national and covers a global or at least a regional geographic scope.
- **Projects:** your initiative can be endorsed as a project if it is regional, national, or subnational in scope. It needs to contribute to a Decade programme (check here the current Ocean Decade programmes)
- **Activities:** one-off, standalone initiatives that contribute to an Ocean Decade challenge(s).
- **Contributions:** support the Ocean Decade through funding, in-kind expertise, or knowledge (critical and/or transformative).

**Are you ready to submit an initiative? [Go to Annex 1](#)**

## 7. What are the key topics for Belgium?



**Figure 6.** Key topics for Belgium, based on the outcomes from the NDC-BE Open meeting (Dec 2022) and previous open consultations (2018, 2019).

### Theme 1 | Blue Carbon and Nature-based solutions

- Co-design among academia, private sector, government and citizens, bringing together the 4Helix.
- Better guidelines and tools to implement Nature Inclusive Design (NID) and use of Ecosystem Services.
- Support public awareness for transformative change, convince users of planetary boundaries (e.g., Science café's)

### Theme 2 | Citizen science and co-design

- Communicate and provide guidance (support) in application procedure for ocean decade endorsement.
- Improve dissemination about the Ocean Decade to non-scientific groups.
- International network: screening of potential partners and/or collaborations with Latin America or African countries

### Theme 3 | Building Ocean Knowledge: value chain and capacities

- Disseminate best practices in building knowledge value chains (e.g., OTGA and Ocean InfoHub). Advocate the use of Ocean InfoHub standards.
- Connect knowledge value chains and communities of practitioners/users (e.g., for software and analysis).
- Develop the knowledge value chain to (automate) answer general research questions.
- Package the services (in value chain) and make more accessible all the services by value chain.

## 8. What are the current Ocean Decade actions with Belgian partners?



Figure 7. Some examples of Decade actions with Belgian participation, status April 2023

### Programmes: global or regional initiatives of at least 4 years duration

- **Ocean Practices for the Decade** by the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE).
- An Ocean Data and Information System supporting the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (**OceanData 2030**), led by IODE.
- **Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative SSKI** (WoRMS also contributes to this programme).
- **Digital Twin of the Ocean DITTO**.
- **Ocean Tracking Network (OTN)** (The European Tracking Network contributes to this programme).
- **Global Ocean Oxygen Decade (GOOD)**
- **Ocean Literacy With All (OLWA)**
- **CoastPredict**

## Projects: regional or national initiatives of at least 1 year

- Above and beyond – completing the World Register of Marine Species (**ABC WoRMS**).
- **OceanTeacher Global Academy (OTGA)**: Building Capacity and Accelerated Technology Transfer for the Ocean Decade by IODE – FUST (Flanders UNESCO Trust funds) project.
- **European Tracking Network (ETN)**.
- **eDNA expeditions** by IODE – FUT-FUST project
- Pacific Islands Marine Bioinvasions Alert Network (**PacMAN**) by IODE – FUST project
- **OBIS 2030** – The biodiversity data hub for the Ocean Decade Actions
- **Ocean InfoHub (OIH)** by IODE – FUST project
- **Marine Regions – Marine Gazetteer**
- **Sea Level Station Monitoring Facility**

## Activity: stand-alone initiatives of one or multiple days

- The **International Conference on ocean education and training** by OceanTraining
- The **VLIZ Marine Science Day** editions from 2023 to 2026.

## Contribution: in-kind and adds-on support to the ocean decade mission

- The **Brilliant Marine Research Idea Grant** was endorsed as a **contribution** due to its support to transformative science.
- **Decade Coordination Office for Ocean Data Sharing** by IOC-IODE
- **Ocean Training & Capacity Development Facility** (in-kind and adds-on) - FUST project.
- **VLIZ as Decade Implementing Partner**

**Full list of Ocean Decade actions with Belgian partners at:** [Ocean Decade Network – National Decade Committee for Belgium](#).

## 9. What is in there for me?

### *From the Ocean Decade:*

**Visibility for your work:** take it to international forum

**Global engagement:** get 1st hand information of latest development and diversity of networks/programmes.

**Collaboration:** access specialised networks, accelerate uptake and exchange

**Access to resources:** training, information, experts, contributions, resources and funding.

### *From the National Decade Committee:*

**Ocean Decade Support:** Secretariat support to align your initiatives to Agenda 2030

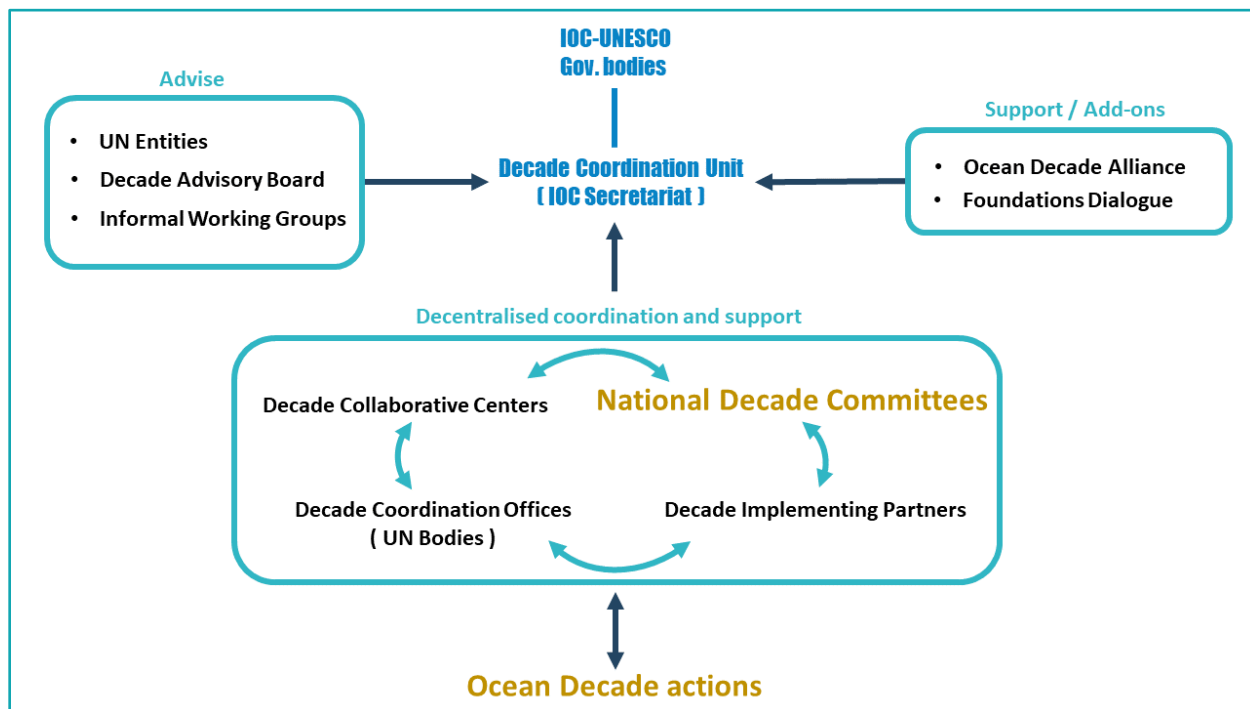
**Liaise with existing Ocean Decade actions:** programmes, projects, partners.

**Add-ons:** to magnify impact of Belgian Ocean Decade actions.

The **NDC-BE secretariat** supports the national Ocean Decade actions and partners in the following ways:

- **Ocean Decade secretariat support:** a full-time employee dedicated to supporting core-group members from the NDC-BE secretariat.
- **Liaise with existing Ocean Decade actions:** like programmes, projects, and partners to collaborate and bring in the support of shared infrastructure and technologies. For example: Ocean Info Hub (OIH), Ocean Teacher Global Academy (OTGA), Sea Level Station Monitoring Facility, Marine Regions, WoRMS.
- **Add-ons:** Belgian Ocean Decade actions are among priorities for additional and dedicated support from the NDC-BE Secretariat, to enhance their impact. Core-group members can present their endorsed actions and will be evaluated with the co-chairs and NDC-BE Secretariat according to the order in which they are sent.

# 10. Where am I in the Ocean Decade?



**Figure 8.** Ocean Decade Ecosystem. Where entities are grouped by their role on advice, support, and decentralised coordination. In yellow is where NDC members can participate.

## Central coordination

1. **IOC Secretariat**, coordinates the overall work of the Ocean Decade (not sure if this is correct?)
2. **Decade Coordination Unit (DCU)** is the central hub that manages the day-to-day operations and implementation of the Ocean Decade, it is hosted by the IOC secretariat.

## Advise by

3. **UN entities** will get involved through the secretariats to ensure a well-coordinated inter-agency approach.
4. **Decade Advisory Board**, composed of 15 members from 13 countries, provides strategic technical advice on the implementation process. See members here: <https://oceandecade.org/decade-advisory-board/>
5. **Informal Working Groups**, they provide advice and expertise to IOC/UNESCO on the implementation process.

## Support / Add-ons by

6. **Ocean Decade Alliance**, eminent partners which aim to catalyse large-scale resource commitments towards the Decade. See patrons and institutional members here: <https://oceandecade.org/ocean-decade-alliance/>
7. **Foundations Dialogue**, informal, global network of community, corporate and private Foundations that have chosen to work together to support the vision of the Ocean Decade. Affirming their compromise in [the Bouknadel Statement](#).

## Decentralised coordination and support

8. **Decade Collaborative Centres (DCCs)** and **Decade Coordination offices (DCOs)**, provide dedicated long-term support to coordinate Decade Actions at the regional (i.e., around major Ocean basins) or thematic (i.e., around Decade Challenges) level. They support capacity development, communications, tracking of progress, resource mobilization, catalysing new partnerships and initiatives. They work in direct collaboration with DCU, NDCs and DIPs.
9. **Decade Implementing Partners (DIPs)**, non-UN regional or international organizations, outside formal governance. They act as decentralized coordinators.
10. **National Decade Committees (NDCs)** facilitate national coordination of Ocean Decade activities. *See all NDCs here:* <https://oceandecade.org/national-ocean-decade-ecosystem/>



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# 12.ANNEX

## Annex 1. Prepare to submit your action

The following diagram aim to help you narrow down which type of ocean decade action could be the best fit for you.

### What is your status?



## Annex 2. Extra checklist for your submission

The list is not exhaustive; you can start filling it in as a starting point. It is meant to serve as a guidance.

	Programme	Project	Activity	Contribution
Review ocean decade challenges, objectives and outcomes				
Identify what programme you will support	n/a		n/a	n/a
Overall goal				
Who are my partners?				
Budget and secured percentage of it				
Do you know where to apply for extra funding?				
What will be the main outcomes				
Main activities			n/a	
Will you/would you like to include capacity development activities?			n/a	If applicable
Will or would you like to apply co-design and/or co-delivery approach?				
Will or would you like to involve indigenous, local communities (citizens, fishermen, ...)				
Do you envisage/apply a multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary approach?				
How are you planning to share your data/information/knowledge?				
Will you overcome barriers to diversity and equity, including gender, generational and geographic diversity.				
How do you benefit from having your Contribution endorsed by the Ocean Decade?	n/a	n/a	n/a	



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Engage in the Ocean Decade on [oceandecade.org](https://oceandecade.org)



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