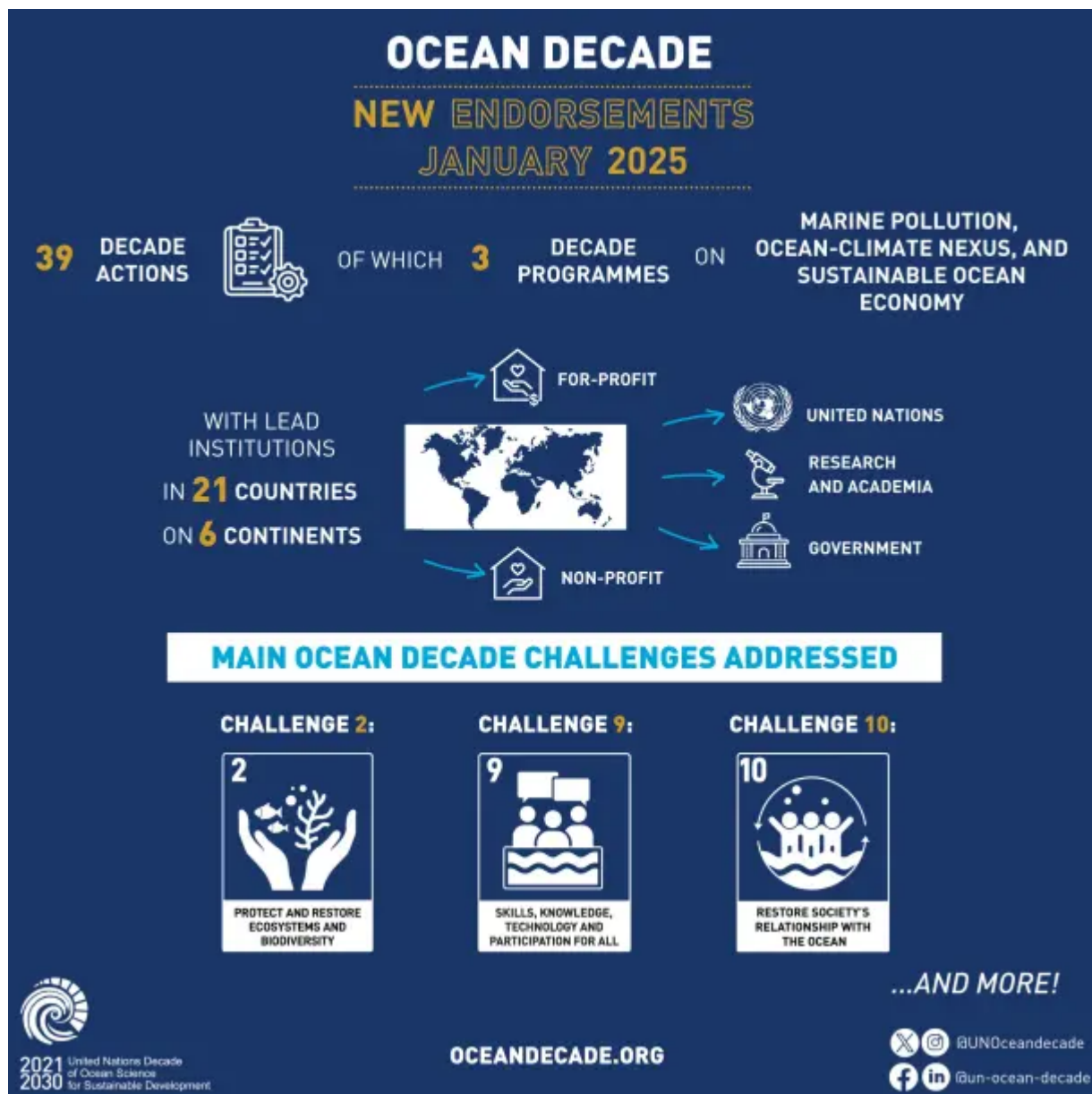


Wave of New Ocean Decade Actions Launch the Year Ahead

As the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 ('Ocean Decade') enters its midpoint, a new batch of 39 Decade Actions is setting the stage for transformative ocean solutions. With momentum building toward the 2025 UN Ocean Conference in June, these Actions exemplify the collaborative spirit driving ocean sustainability worldwide.



20 January 2025

The newly recognized Decade Actions strengthen the existing portfolio of hundreds of initiatives endorsed by the Ocean Decade since 2021. With lead institutions spanning 21 countries – from Australia to Nicaragua, Nigeria, and Greece – the new initiatives address ocean pollution, coastal resilience, hands-on citizen science, and a sustainable ocean economy. They are primarily led by research institutions, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

“Decade Actions embrace a diverse range of profiles – some generate knowledge to fill critical gaps in our understanding of the ocean, while others build capacity and seek to influence decision-making,” said Vidar Helgesen, Executive Secretary of UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO-IOC). “With these initiatives targeting regional and thematic priorities for ocean action, including marine microbiome exploration, light pollution, marine energy, and coastal ecosystems, we continue to expand the role of the Ocean Decade as a global coordination and cooperation mechanism for ocean science across the globe.”

[Discover the full list of endorsed Ocean Decade Actions here.](#)

Tackling priority areas for ocean science

Three new Decade Programmes were officially acknowledged for their work towards the achievement of [Challenge 1 – Understand and beat marine pollution](#), [Challenge 4 – Develop a sustainable, resilient and equitable ocean economy](#), and [Challenge 5 – Unlock ocean-based solutions to climate change](#).

Invisible yet vital to the Earth’s well-being, the ocean microbiome makes up over two-thirds of the ocean’s biomass. Led by Shanghai Ocean University, China, [Deep Ocean Microbiomes and Ecosystems \(DOME\)](#), which will focus on the polar regions and the little-known hadal trenches of the ocean, will work closely with other already endorsed Programmes working on similar issues such as the [Ocean Biomolecular Observing Network \(OBON\)](#), [Challenger 150](#), [Deep Ocean Observing Strategy \(DOOS\)](#), and [Marine Life 2030](#) to give a voice to this hidden majority of the ocean. By creating a global research network, DOME will explore deep ocean microbial diversity, ecosystem processes, and the ocean’s role in sustaining life amid climate change.

Closer to the surface, coastal cities, offshore oil rigs, and ships flood the ocean with artificial light, disrupting natural rhythms and threatening marine habitats. Headed by the University of Plymouth, UK, the [Global Artificial Light at Night Network \(GOALANN\)](#) provides insight into this often-overlooked form of pollution. The Programme convenes leading ocean experts to develop initiatives and tools, including open-access datasets, interactive maps, and policy briefings, to mitigate this growing issue.

[Powering the Blue Economy – Global \(PBE-Global\)](#) under the U.S. Department of Energy’s Water Power Technologies Office, is unlocking energy solutions for a sustainable ocean economy. Marine energy – harnessing power from waves, currents, tides, and temperature changes – is the world’s largest untapped renewable resource. PBE-Global shares knowledge, fosters collaboration, and builds capacity to advance marine energy technology for greater sustainability of industries and coastal communities.

Four Decade Projects implemented in and for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Africa focus on enhancing coastal resilience through video gaming, conserving kelp forests, engaging communities in wastewater management, and managing coastal pollution. Three additional Projects aim to address gender inequalities, inspire youth to become green ambassadors, and strengthen Indigenous leadership in decision-making.

UNESCO-IOC, the only UN body dedicated solely to ocean science and the lead agency for the Ocean Decade, is adding two new Projects to its extensive list of Decade Actions – the largest of any UN organization. Implemented by its [Regional Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific \(WESTPAC\)](#) and Yunnan University, ‘[Ocean Solutions in the East Asian Seas](#)’ provides vital data on marine stressors to inform regional sustainable strategies and strengthen science-based conservation efforts. The Project ‘[Enhance Coastal Resilience to Sea Level Hazards](#)’ will scale up UNESCO-IOC’s [Tsunami Ready](#) initiative in both existing and new countries, strengthening hazard preparedness in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) through improved assessment, measurement, and forecasting.

Building knowledge and capacity for sustainable ocean management

Eleven new Decade Contributions have received official endorsement to support the implementation of the Ocean Decade. These initiatives will provide necessary

funding or in-kind resources for global coastal resilience, marine sustainability, and ecosystem conservation with a focus on underrepresented groups and regions.

Among these, the [OceanX and OceanQuest Around Africa Mission](#), led by OceanX, will support the Ocean Decade in tackling the pressing ocean challenges facing Africa. The exploratory mission will increase understanding of ocean circulation, ecosystem health, and marine biodiversity for sustainable resource management in this region.

Under its 'Climate & Biodiversity Initiative,' the [C&BI - Ocean & Coastal Ecosystems](#) co-branded call for projects by the BNP Paribas Foundation will fund initiatives exploring the climate-biodiversity nexus, science-driven solutions for ocean challenges, and adaptation strategies to scale up ecosystem-based management.

These new endorsements bring the total number of Ocean Decade Actions to 628, implemented on all continents and covering all ocean basins.

The current [Call for Decade Actions No. 08/2024](#) is open until 31 January 2025, aiming to bridge science and knowledge gaps in coastal resilience, society's relationship with the ocean, and the ocean-human health nexus.

[Discover the full list of endorsed Ocean Decade Actions here.](#)

For more information, please contact:

Ocean Decade Communications Team (oceandecade.comms@unesco.org)