

10 000 Ships for the Ocean: Global Momentum Builds as Hundreds of Ships Join Initiative Following Launch at UN Ocean Conference

The 10 000 Ships for the Ocean initiative, launched at UNOC3 in Nice, marks a major milestone for advancing global ocean observation and collaboration.



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Supported by the [World Meteorological Organization \(WMO\)](#), the [Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission \(IOC\)](#) of UNESCO, and the [International Maritime Organization \(IMO\)](#), the event brought together international organizations, governments, scientists, and private sector leaders around a shared mission: to equip 10 000 commercial vessels with meteorological and oceanographic sensors to collect critical ocean data by 2035.

Held in the Blue Zone of UNOC3, the launch attracted over 150 participants and demonstrated strong interest from scientific and private sector stakeholders. The momentum reflects a global commitment to scaling up ship-based ocean observations through a broad and coordinated alliance.



UNESCO-IOC

Why This Matters

Vast areas of the global ocean remain poorly monitored, creating major gaps in our understanding of ocean and climate systems. Yet accurate,

timely, and sustained ocean data is essential to address climate change, improve maritime safety, strengthen early warning systems, and support sustainable development.

“For over a century, commercial ships have been acting as our eyes in the ocean, collecting vital weather and ocean data. A global alliance with the shipping industry is what we need to scale up our ship-based observing infrastructure, shape the future of ocean intelligence, and unlock global benefit for operations, forecasting, early warnings, climate understanding and environmental stewardship.” - Celeste Saulo, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization.

By transforming commercial vessels into real-time ocean observatories, the initiative will help close observation gaps - especially in under-sampled regions. It directly supports the [Global Ocean Observing System \(GOOS\)](#), the backbone infrastructure for coordinated and sustained ocean observations led by the IOC.

“The ocean is Earth’s life-support system, but we cannot protect or manage it effectively without sustained ocean observations. By equipping ships with observing instruments, we can unlock a powerful opportunity: a public-private partnership that strengthens both science and maritime operations, driving us toward a more resilient, sustainable future.” - Vidar Helgesen, Executive Secretary of the IOC.

Turning this bold vision into reality demands innovation and coordinated commitment at scale. That is why GOOS is now engaging the global scientific and maritime communities to accelerate action: ***“Industry has a vital role to play in building the critical and sustainable global ocean observing system that will provide the information humanity needs for the future,”*** said Joanna Post, GOOS Director and head of the Ocean Observations and Services Section at IOC at the launch event.

The data collected through the initiative will enhance not only maritime operations but also weather forecasting and early warning capabilities.

“This initiative will address the gap in weather measurements over the ocean,” says Florence Rabier, Director General of the ECMWF. “To give a context, we currently use 15 times fewer data over sea than over land to predict the weather worldwide - the more data points we get, the more accurate our forecast models will be.”

The success of the initiative will not only rely on broader participation, but also on our capacity to innovate. As the volume of data increases, so too will the need for scalable and interoperable systems to manage and use it effectively.

“The 10 000 Ships initiative will raise a wide range of technical and scientific challenges that the academic community and meteorological agencies are used to addressing. However, success will also depend on our ability to scale up, standardize, and automate working methods, while making them accessible and usable by as many people as possible, particularly fleet management teams. This is where AI, along with other scientific and digital tools, can play a vital role. The initiative is certainly a highly motivating opportunity for scientists to apply their creativity and expertise in support of its success,” said Laurent Mortier, Professor of Oceanography at Institut Polytechnique de Paris, at UNOC.

Early Commitments Lead The Way

Thanks to early commitments from pioneering companies, nearly 500 ships have already been pledged, including from MSC, Maersk, SMT, Høegh Autoliners, Brittany Ferries, and Alcatel Submarine Networks. These initial contributions provide a strong foundation for the long-term public-private partnerships needed to reach the goal of 10 000 instrumented vessels (full list at www.10000ships.org).

“We are proud to join the 10 000 Ships for the Ocean initiative. Protecting our blue planet, especially the Ocean, is at the heart of our activities. By participating, we contribute to global ocean observations and enhance maritime safety, operational efficiency, and environmental stewardship.

We hope many other shipping companies will join us,” says Stefania Lallai, Vice President Sustainability Cargo Division, Mediterranean Shipping Company.

The initiative is led by [OceanOPS](#) - the operational centre of GOOS - and the GOOS Ship Observations Team, and directly supports the development of a truly global and sustained ocean observing system.

“Our planet and its vast ocean demand a scale of observation we have yet to achieve. We can expand our surface observing infrastructure tenfold, empowering the maritime industry and the multidisciplinary scientific community in an unprecedented co-design and co-operative framework,”
said Mathieu Belbéoch, Manager of OceanOPS at UNOC.

What's Next?

The 10 000 Ships initiative will now focus on:

- **Continuing bilateral engagement with shipping companies worldwide**
- **Structuring the community under a unified governance model**
- **Co-designing an implementation roadmap with industry, national agencies, and global partners**
- **Organizing a high-level Summit within six months to align on governance, technical pathways, and financing mechanisms.**

Call to Action

We invite ship owners, operators, and industry leaders to join this global mission.

Your vessels can become part of a global effort to monitor the ocean in real-time - contributing to climate solutions, maritime safety, and sustainable ocean management.

To learn more, become a partner, or view the list of early signatories, visit www.10000ships.org