Procedures for Proposing and Evaluating IODE Projects and Activities
(Revised edition)
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1. BACKGROUND

At its 24th session (2017) the IODE Committee approved the Report of the Inter-sessional Working Group to Propose a Re-structuring of IODE which recommended revising the current structure, projects and activities of IODE and decided that the relation between projects (e.g. data flow) should be better communicated within the IODE community but also to the user communities. The Committee agreed that both existing and new IODE projects and activities will benefit from a more effective tracking and oversight process to help ensure that they meet IODE strategic goals and objectives. The Committee adopted Decision IODE-XXIV.3 IODE (Project and Activity Performance Evaluation). These procedures apply to both existing and new projects and activities.

This revised edition includes changes requested by IODE-XXV to reduce the number of project forms to New Projects/Activities and Annual Project Report and to include a requirement for a SWOT analysis for all new project proposals.

2. TERMINOLOGY

The following terminology is used to describe IODE project and activities:

- **IODE Pilot Project**: An exploratory effort with limited duration (e.g., 1-2 years) requiring complete or partial direct IODE financial funding as well as project office management in-kind support. A pilot project cannot be extended/renewed: if successful then a proposal can be submitted for an IODE project.

- **IODE Project**: A temporary effort with limited duration (e.g., 1-2 years) requiring complete or partial direct IODE financial funding as well as project office management in-kind support. Projects can be renewed using a new proposal application process at the discretion of the IODE-MG Executive (IODE Management Group Executive members).

- **IODE Activity**: A temporary effort with limited duration (e.g., 1-2 years that can be extended as decided by the IODE-MG Executive) requiring only IODE project office management in-kind support with defined objectives or purpose (no funding). Activities can be in the form of institutional endorsements that draw favourable attention to IODE as an organization and help IODE to explain how it contributes to IOC objectives.

- **IODE persistent project**: A long-term effort (requiring complete or partial direct IODE financial funding as well as project office management in-kind support) or activity. Such long-term efforts need to be reviewed by the IODE Management Group at the same frequency as other projects and activities. Current examples include OBIS, WOD, GTSP, GOSUD, OceanDocs, OceanExpert etc.
3. PROPOSING NEW PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

It is essential that all IODE projects and activities carry out tasks that serve the objectives of the IODE Programme\(^1\) and IOC High Level Objectives\(^2\).

Projects or activities that serve only the needs of a sub-community of IODE and are not linked to the main objectives and strategic goals of IODE and IOC are not sustainable. Every project or activity, either a proposal for a new or an existing project or activity will therefore need to justify its resourcing from IODE by explaining how it meets these objectives.

Proposals for new projects and activities are considered by the IODE Committee and included in the IODE work plan and budget. The IODE Committee must balance the work plan with available financial and human resources. As the demand for resources is likely to be higher than available resources it is important to “score” submitted proposals so they can be ranked in accordance to their score.

New proposals must address the questions presented in the New Project/Activity Template. Project proposals should also include additional documentation to support the submission and must include a SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis is used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats involved in the project and to identify the internal and external factors that will influence the ability to achieve the project objectives. Only proposals up to 5 pages long will be evaluated.

The IODE Committee sessions are held every two years, usually around March, and all working documents must be available to Committee members on 1\(^{st}\) January of the year in which the Committee meeting is held. This includes all project or activity proposals requiring funding. The deadline for submission of proposals for new projects and activities should start no later than 1\(^{st}\) September of the year preceding the IODE Committee Session.

3.1 PROCESS FOR PROPOSING NEW PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

The process for proposing projects and activities will include the following:

1. All project and activity proposals will be submitted to the IOC Project Office for IODE using the New Project/Activity Form (Annex I). The template should be completed in English. Additional documentation, including a SWOT analysis, to support the proposal should also be attached.
2. The Project Office will check all submitted proposals for compliance with the template. Proposals that do not comply will be returned to the submitter with a note explaining what is missing. Submitters have 10 working days to re-submit. Failure to re-submit within that period results will result in rejection of the proposal.
3. Re-submitted proposals are checked for compliance with the template. Proposals that were re-submitted but still do not comply are rejected. The submitters will be informed of this by email.

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\(^1\) https://www.iode.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=375&Itemid=100091
\(^2\) http://www.ioc-unesco.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=29&Itemid=81
4. All proposals that comply with the proposal template are sent to the IODE-MG Executive by email, with a request to review and score the proposals, not later than a given deadline.

5. IODE-MG Executive will review and evaluate proposals using the proposal evaluation criteria. IODE-MG Executive may select a pool of independent or subject matter experts from the IODE community to provide peer-review comments regarding proposed project and activities.

6. The IODE Co-chairs will review the evaluations for all proposals and calculate the average score for each proposal, rank the proposals by their average score, and prepare a summary table according to descending scores including title, score and evaluation comments.

7. The IODE Co-chairs will provide a summary table to the IODE-MG Executive requesting approval.

8. The IODE-MG Executive will review the summary table and inform the IODE Co-chairs of their approval. If one or more of the members disagrees then the IODE Co-chairs should be informed immediately so corrections can be made to the summary table.

9. The IODE Co-chairs will prepare a working document for the upcoming IODE Committee Session including the reviewed proposals, the summary table with scores and evaluation comments.

10. The IODE Co-chairs will submit the working document to the Head of the IOC Project Office for IODE, who will post the document on the web site for the upcoming IODE Committee Session.

Based upon the above, the total process will require approximately four months. Taking into account the deadline for submission of working documents this means that step 1 should start no later than 1st September of the year preceding the IODE Committee Session.

This process is mapped in the diagram in Annex V.

4. EVALUATING NEW PROJECT AND ACTIVITY PROPOSALS

The IODE-MG Executive will act as the evaluation panel to assess each proposal within the context of IODE and IOC objectives. Each member of the evaluation panel will score each proposal with a score 4, 2, or 0 points (with 4 being the highest score) based on their individual evaluation. Scores from all panel members will be added and a project must receive an average score of 60% or more to be considered for recommendation by the IODE-MG Executive to the IODE committee.

Members of the IODE-MG Executive may choose to serve on the evaluation panel or may nominate expert(s) to carry out the evaluation on their behalf. No evaluation panel member may provide an evaluation of a project or activity in which they are involved. Once the evaluation is completed, a written report of results will be made available to IODE-MG Executive no later than two months after the annual reports are received. Results of the evaluation will be anonymized and shared with proponents.
4.1 CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING NEW PROJECT AND ACTIVITY PROPOSALS

The following evaluation criteria will be used:

a. Does the project or activity target one or more IODE or IOC objectives? Are there strong arguments to justify this assertion?
   Score: 4. Metric: the arguments are strong and the support is clear
   Score: 2. Metric: the project or activity appears to target one or more objectives, but arguments are weak
   Score: 0. Metric: the project or activity does not seem to support an IODE objective or the arguments are unconvincing

b. Are there tangible commitments from participating participants and countries?
   Score: 4. Metric: commitments are clear and documented by letters of support
   Score: 2. Metric: commitments are clear but documentation is lacking
   Score: 0. Metric: commitments are unclear and documentation is lacking

c. Do the project or activity deliverables enhance IODE activities?
   Score: 4. Metric: deliverables are easily identified with IODE deliverables
   Score: 2. Metric: deliverables are clear but not easily connected to IODE deliverables
   Score: 0. Metric: deliverables are unclear and do not connect to IODE deliverables

d. Is there strong support from IODE stakeholders for the deliverables of the project?
   Score: 4. Metric: there is documented support from, or participation of stakeholders
   Score: 2. Metric: there is some weakness in documented support or stakeholders are absent
   Score: 0. Metric: support is not documented and stakeholders are absent

e. Are there clear performance metrics for the project (including SWOT analysis)?
   Score: 4. Metric: metrics are well explained and relevant to evaluating project against deliverables
   Score: 2. Metric: some metrics are poorly explained and it is unclear how they can be used in evaluating performance
   Score: 0. Metric: metrics are poorly defined or cannot be used to evaluate performance

f. Does the project need financial or other support from IODE to meet its objectives?
   Score: 4. Metric: no support is required
   Score: 2. Metric: some non-financial support is desirable
   Score: 0. Metric: full financial support is crucial to the project

g. Does the project or activity fill a gap in IODE activities?
   Score: 4. Metric: the gap is well described as is how the project addresses it
   Score: 2. Metric: the argument that there is a gap is not strong, or the project is now clear as to how the gap is addressed
   Score: 0. Metric: neither the argument of the gap, not the way the project addresses it is well presented
h. Is there a strong governance model for the project (e.g. working group, advisory group)?
   
   Score: 4. **Metric:** the model is well described and appears quite workable given the participants
   
   Score: 2. **Metric:** the model is well described, but there is some doubt of its workability
   
   Score: 0. **Metric:** the model is poor

i. Overall, how strong is the project or activity proposal?

   Score: 4. **Metric:** well described, and well received by many IODE members
   
   Score: 2. **Metric:** well described but has more limited member support
   
   Score: 0. **Metric:** the proposal or activity did poorly in gaining IODE member support

The Evaluation Score Sheet in **Annex III** is to be used for new IODE project and activity proposals.

### 5. EVALUATING EXISTING IODE PROJECTS, ACTIVITIES AND PERSISTENT PROJECTS

All approved IODE projects, activities and persistent projects, whether ongoing or ending, must meet the evaluation criteria defined by the IODE-MG Executive and will be evaluated annually based on the report provided. The annual report will describe the results achieved to date and future proposed work.

Members of the IODE-MG Executive may choose to serve on the evaluation panel or may nominate expert(s) to carry out the evaluation on their behalf. No evaluation panel member may provide an evaluation of a project or activity in which they are involved. Once the evaluation is completed, a written report of results will be made available to IODE-MG Executive no later than two months after the annual reports are received. Results of the evaluation will be anonymized and shared with proponents.

If projects and activities do not provide a final report or if progress is less than satisfactory with respect to deliverables, then they will not be considered for another funding cycle unless clear actionable remedies are put in place. For example, if a project or activity did not meet stated deliverables or objectives for which funding and support was made available then this could be considered as a reason for not recommending further support or endorsement.

All approved IODE projects, activities and persistent projects must complete the **IODE Annual Project Report Form (Annex II)**. This report is to be submitted annually for evaluation by the IODE-MG Executive and to the IODE Committee at its session. The sections concerning reporting to the IODE Committee session (draft text for summary report and work plan and budget) are to be completed only for the annual report submitted prior to the IODE Committee session.
5.1 CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING EXISTING PROJECTS, ACTIVITIES AND PERSISTENT PROJECTS

The following evaluation criteria will be used to evaluate ongoing project and activity performance:

a. Have annual reports been submitted?
   Score: 4. Metric: annual reports are produced each year and on time
   Score: 2. Metric: there is a gap in annual reporting, or they are delivered later than expected
   Score: 0. Metric: annual reporting is missing

b. Do the reports explain annual milestones and deliverables, and present measurable results of progress towards them?
   Score: 4. Metric: objectives are clear and mostly documented as achieved
   Score: 2. Metric: objectives are clear but documentation of achievements is weak
   Score: 0. Metric: objectives are poorly stated or achievements are unclear

c. Are the project objectives still aligned with those of IODE?
   Score: 4. Metric: objectives are still well aligned
   Score: 2. Metric: there is some misalignment that can be corrected
   Score: 0. Metric: objectives are misaligned with IODE objectives

d. Are project members actively engaged based on documentation in the reports?
   Score: 4. Metric: reports document continuing active involvement by project members
   Score: 2. Metric: reports appear to show some fall off in project member involvement
   Score: 0. Metric: involvement by project members is greatly reduced

e. Were the expected results obtained?
   Score: 4. Metric: reports document that the objectives were achieved or likely to be achieved (results driven)
   Score: 2. Metric: reports show partial success but achievement to date suggest that objectives will likely be met
   Score: 0. Metric: reports indicate little measure of success or promise that results will be obtained

The Evaluation Score Sheet in Annex IV is to be used for existing IODE projects and activities.

6. IODE MANAGEMENT GROUP ACTIONS

Proposals for new projects that do not receive a positive evaluation (<60% of maximum score) will be rejected and the project proposal submitter will be notified of the reason for rejection. Rejected proposals may be resubmitted.
Ongoing projects that do not receive a positive evaluation (<60% of maximum score) will be notified of what actions need to be taken to improve performance and given an appropriate time frame for improvement.

Projects that receive a negative evaluation may have IODE endorsement withdrawn at the discretion of the IODE-MG Executive. The project may not continue to operate nor funds expended unless an approved performance improvement plan is developed and approved by the IODE-MG Executive. The project proponents may propose a new project request for funding.
ANNEX I.  NEW PROJECT/ACTIVITY FORM

This form is to be completed for all new IODE project and activities and submitted as a separate document to info@iode.org (with IODE Projects in the subject line). Attach any additional project documentation and SWOT analysis to support the project/activity.

1. Title of project/activity and acronym

2. Detailed description

3. Describe the scope (include outcome, deliverables, training)

4. Does the project/activity enhance IODE activities and have endorsement or support from the IOC/IODE community or other national, regional, or international programmes? (provide references)

5. Describe the commitments from IODE stakeholders for the project deliverables

6. Expected duration
   - Start date:
   - End date:

7. Name and email of project leader and project team
   - Project leader:
   - Project team members:

8. Workplan and Budget
   - Estimated total budget of the project/activity (US$):
   - Description of activities, expected results and deliverables enhancing the IODE activities to be produced during the next biennium:
   - Budget requested from IODE during the next biennium (starting after the next IODE Committee Session) (US$):
   - Expected IODE project office management staff time requested during the next biennium (person-months):
   - Other resource contributions identified (financial or in-kind including staff):

9. Explain how the project/activity will target one or more IODE or IOC objectives

10. Describe the governance model for the project/activity (e.g. working group, advisory group)

Signed by Project Leader.
Date.

For IODE use only.
Date received:
ANNEX II. ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT FORM

This form is to be completed for all approved IODE projects and activities. Project reports are to be submitted annually to info@iode.org (with IODE Projects in the subject line). Sections 10 and 11 are to be completed only for the annual report submitted prior to the IODE session. Attach any additional project documentation.

Submitted by:

1. Title of project/activity and acronym

2. Project established by (provide reference to IODE Committee session and Decision)

3. Project leader(s)

4. Members of the project Steering Group (provide link to IODE project page)

5. Objectives of the project

6. Activities implemented and accomplished milestones

7. Problems experienced and measures taken

8. Results achieved

9. Deliverables produced

--------THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS ARE TO BE COMPLETED FOR THE ANNUAL REPORT PRIOR TO IODE SESSION--------

10. Draft text for the annotated agenda and summary report (TO BE USED FOR REPORTING TO THE IODE SESSION)

11. Work plan and budget for the next intersessional period

Budget requested from IODE during the next biennium (starting after the next IODE Committee Session) (US$)
Expected IODE Project Office management staff time requested during the next biennium (person-months)
Other resource contributions identified (financial or in-kind including staff):

Signed by Project Leader.
Date.

For IODE use only.
Date received:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation score sheet. New IODE projects and activities</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of Project:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Does the project or activity target one or more IODE or IOC objectives? Are there strong arguments to justify this assertion?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score 4 - the arguments are strong and the support is clear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score 2 - the project or activity appears to target one or more objectives, but arguments are weak</td>
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<tr>
<td>Score 0 - the project or activity does not seem to support an IODE objective or the arguments are unconvincing</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Are there tangible commitments from participating participants and countries?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score 4 - commitments are clear and documented by letters of support</td>
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<td>c. Do the project or activity deliverables enhance IODE activities?</td>
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<td>f. Does the project need financial or other support from IODE to meet its objectives?</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Score 4 - no support is required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score 2 - some non-financial support is desirable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score 0 - full financial support is crucial to the project</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Does the project or activity fill a gap in IODE activities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score 4 - the gap is well described as is how the project addresses it</td>
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<tr>
<td>Score 2 - the argument that there is a gap is not strong, or the project is now clear as to how the gap is addressed</td>
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<td>Score 0 - neither the argument of the gap, not the way the project addresses it is well presented</td>
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<td>h. Is there a strong governance model for the project (e.g. working group, advisory group)?</td>
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<td>Score 4 - the model is well described and appears quite workable given the participants</td>
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<td>Score 2 - the model is well described, but there is some doubt of its workability</td>
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<td>Score 0 - the model is poor</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Overall, how strong is the project or activity proposal?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score 4 - well described, and well received by many IODE members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Score 2 - well described but has more limited member support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Score 0 - the proposal or activity did poorly in gaining IODE member support</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL SCORE</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE (SHOULD BE &gt;=60%)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>%</td>
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</table>
# ANNEX IV. EVALUATION SCORE SHEET. EXISTING IODE PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES

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<th>Evaluation score sheet. Existing IODE projects and activities</th>
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<td><strong>Name of Project:</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>a. Have annual reports been submitted?</strong></td>
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<td>Score 0 - objectives are poorly stated or achievements are unclear</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>c. Are the project objectives still aligned with those of IODE?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Score 4 - objectives are still well aligned</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL SCORE**

**PERCENTAGE (SHOULD BE >=60%)** %
ANNEX V. PROCESS DIAGRAM FOR PROPOSING NEW PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES

Proposes
- Start process
  - Submit new proposal
  - Request to re-submit

Compliant with template?
- yes
  - Yes, re-submitted proposal?
    - yes
      - Inform submitter
    - no
      - End process
  - no

Informs Project Office
- New Project/Activity Template

Process for proposing new projects and activities

IDOE Project Office
- Submit new proposal
  - Request to re-submit

Compliant with template?
- yes
  - Yes, re-submitted proposal?
    - yes
      - Inform submitter
    - no
      - End process
  - no

Proposes
- Start process
  - Submit new proposal
  - Request to re-submit

Compliant with template?
- yes
  - Yes, re-submitted proposal?
    - yes
      - Inform submitter
    - no
      - End process
  - no

IDOE MSG
- Review and score proposal
  - comments
  - external reviewers?
    - yes
      - External review
    - no
      - End process

IDOE Co-Chairs
- Review evaluations
  - Summarized table (average score and rank proposal)
  - Prepare IDOE working document