



Recommendations for a Youth Inclusion Strategic Action Plan for the IOC/UNESCO's Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021–2030

*Prepared by
the Youth Inclusion Expert Working Group for the UN Ocean Decade,
a program of Heirs To Our Ocean,
a Decade Implementation Partner*

ABOUT THE YOUTH INCLUSION EXPERT WORKING GROUP FOR THE UN OCEAN DECADE

The first half of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021–2030 (Ocean Decade) highlighted challenges in youth inclusion and engagement within the Decade's actions, processes, and structures. In response to a growing demand for youth leaders ages 16–25 years to be included in planning and decision-making matters in which they are the greatest stakeholders, including in ocean and waterway protection and shaping the future of ocean sustainability, the Decade Coordination Unit (DCU) invited Heirs To Our Ocean (H200) to form the Youth Inclusion Expert Working Group for the UN Ocean Decade (YIEWG Ocean Decade) following the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference.

As the first task of the YIEWG Ocean Decade, the DCU requested recommendations for a strategic action plan for the IOC/UNESCO outlining essential steps for the IOC/UNESCO to develop meaningful youth engagement in the Decade.

The first cohort of the YIEWG Ocean Decade was formed as a program of H200 in January 2025. The YIEWG Ocean Decade is made up of 18 youth leaders from around the world, ages 16–25 years, representing diverse backgrounds. Each member commits

to a term of 1 year with the possibility of renewal based on performance and mutual agreement. Membership is voluntary. Members are selected based on their expertise, activism, and leadership within the context of ocean sustainability, youth inclusion, and climate justice.

The YIEWG Ocean Decade **envisions** a world where youth are integral to decision-making at every level, ensuring their voices contribute to achieving a sustainable, just, and equitable future for our ocean and all who share our greater one-water system. The **mission** is to achieve sustainable water systems, a healthy ocean, and a stable and safe climate for the long-term through advancing the meaningful and equitable engagement of the next generation of decision makers within IOC/UNESCO embedding our diverse voices and leadership into the high-level decision-making processes and convenings. The YIEWG Ocean Decade recognizes that meaningful youth engagement is essential for the success of the Decade's Vision 2030 and beyond.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A YOUTH INCLUSION STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR THE OCEAN DECADE

The YIEWG Ocean Decade's first cohort's initial action item was to prepare recommendations for a comprehensive Youth Inclusion Strategic Action Plan (YISAP) aimed at advancing youth engagement and inclusion across the Decade's actions and activities, including conferences and convenings. In preparing, the YIEWG Ocean Decade has collaborated in processing strategy and objectives and in identifying imperative actions to achieve those objectives along with optional metrics for success measurement.

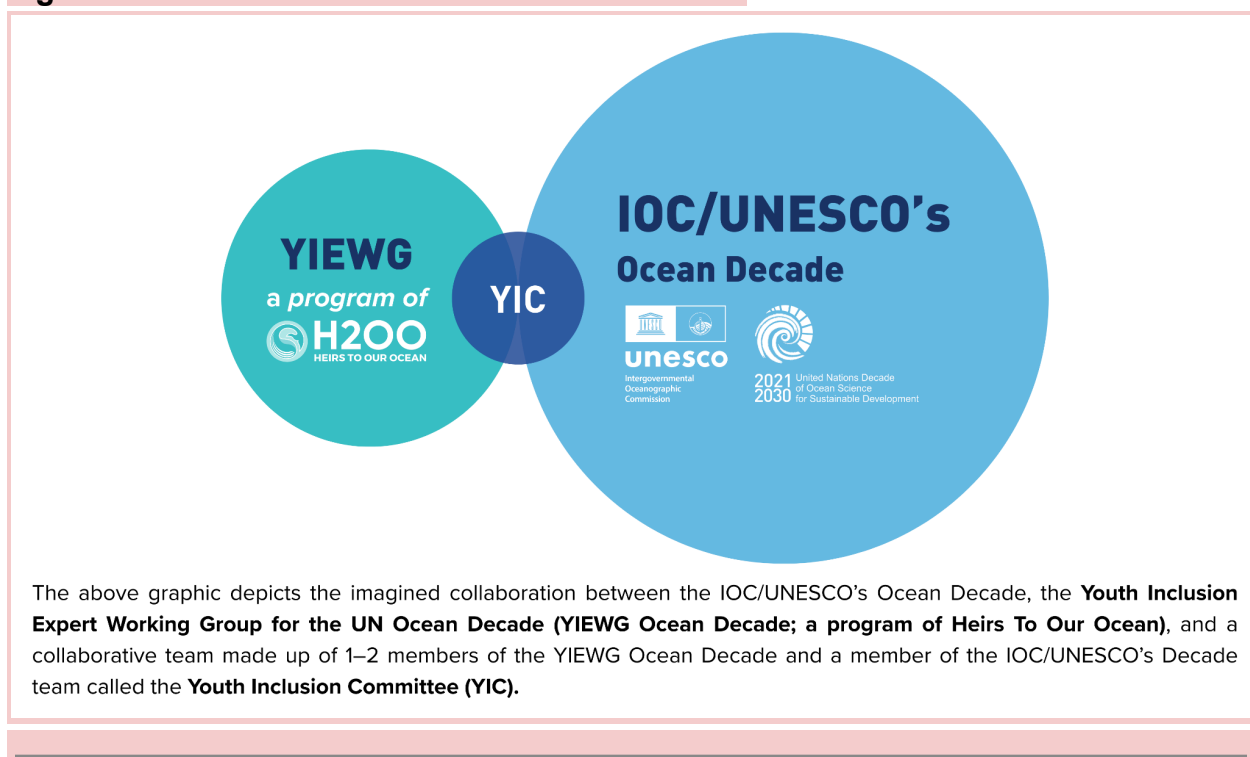
In processing the change necessary to include youth ages 16–25 meaningfully in the Decade, the YIEWG Ocean Decade has considered both what they believe to be essential steps to be taken by the IOC/UNESCO as well as what the IOC/UNESCO may determine is achievable in these early stages of intentionally developing meaningful youth engagement in the Decade. **Accordingly, this YISAP is prepared in two tiers.**

TIER 1 = The objectives and respective actions that the YIEWG Ocean Decade and H2OO have determined are basic and foundationally necessary to achieve meaningful youth inclusion in the Decade.

TIER 2 = The additional objectives and respective actions that H2OO and the YIEWG Ocean Decade believe are essential to achieve meaningful youth inclusion in the

Decade while recognizing that not all of what is recommended may be accomplished at this early stage.

Figure 1: Recommended Collaboration Structure



After an intensive 3+ months of development and preparation, H200 and the YIEWG Ocean Decade are proud to present the following Recommendations for a Youth Inclusion Strategic Action Plan (YISAP) to the IOC/UNESCO to achieve its mission and Vision 2030 for the Ocean Decade and beyond.

The YIEWG Ocean Decade urges the IOC/UNESCO to disseminate these Recommendations for a Youth Inclusion Strategic Action Plan by August 31, 2025. This would ensure all Decade offices, Decade partners, and UN Member States involved in the Decade including NCs are aware of IOC/UNESCO's commitment to the YISAP and its high-level prioritization of meaningful youth inclusion allowing for transparency of IOC/UNESCO's commitment, inspiration and encouragement of others to prioritize meaningful youth inclusion, and to model a UN body adopting a new and progress way to include the next generation of leaders in an important initiative that affects the next generation.

TIER 1

I. **STRATEGY: IOC/UNESCO Explicitly Prioritizes Meaningful Youth Engagement in the Decade and Intentionally Aims for Equity and Accountability in so doing.**

For a recommended timeline of Tier 1 Strategy I & III dates/deadlines, see Fig. 2.

A. **Objective: Recognize youth 25 years and under as an official stakeholder group of the UN Ocean Decade.**

Actions:

1. Within 3 months of adoption of the YISAP:
 - a. Release a formal announcement to the public, partners, and partnering UN bodies that youth 25 and under are an official stakeholder group of the Decade, and share on Decade communications including website, social media and any newsletters being announced.
 - b. Amplify this further on social media and through other official Ocean Decade communications.
 - c. Add youth as stakeholders to all stakeholder language utilized by Decade, including Ocean Decade website, registration/sign-up forms/drop-down menus when referencing stakeholder groups, including updating Ocean Decade HiveBrite learning platform to acknowledge youth as a stakeholder group for registration and platform engagement.
 - d. Encourage National Committees to add language to their communications formally recognizing youth as a stakeholder group.
2. Youth as official stakeholders who have been underrepresented in the Decade gain access to what other underrepresented stakeholder groups have access to including relevant funding opportunities.

Why: To further youth engagement programs and prioritize youth involvement in ocean governance, and to ensure youth 25 and under are no longer underrepresented in the Decade nor feeling deprioritized.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**

1. Within 6 months of adoption of the YISAP:
 - a. **Social Media:** At least three posts and/or reels were made on Ocean Decade socials (1) announcing youth 25 and under are now an official stakeholder, and (2) regarding why highlighting the importance of including the next generation of leaders meaningfully and intentionally in the Decade.
 - b. **Newsletter:** At least three newsletters were sent reflecting language of social media announcements.
 - c. **Website and Virtual Platforms:** Language was updated across Ocean Decade website and affiliated platforms, including as HiveBrite, and official documents recognizing youth 25 and under as official Decade stakeholders.
2. Whether within 7 months, 50% of the National Committees added language to their communications formally recognizing youth as a stakeholder group.
3. Determine where youth 25 and under are *not* being held out authentically and genuinely as a stakeholder in the Decade, including by partners, and determine what may be the issue.

B. Objective: Formation of a dedicated role within the IOC/UNESCO's Decade Initiative to liaise with YIEWG Ocean Decade members to oversee implementation of this YISAP.

Actions:

1. **Within 3 months of adoption, establish a role within the IOC/UNESCO specifically to liaise with 1-2 members of the YIEWG Ocean Decade to form a team to oversee actions taken according to the objectives in this YISAP. Collectively, this oversight team is referred to as the Youth Inclusion Committee (YIC).**
 - a. **The YIEWG Ocean Decade is the substantive contributor of the YISAP, whereas the YIC is the implementation, evaluative and assessment team.**
2. Within 5 months of adoption, the YIC creates an accountability framework for the IOC/UNESCO's Decade initiative's actions align with its commitment to YISAP and the YISAP is implemented in a transparent and equitable way, including but not limited to:
 - a. Ensuring YISAP is publicly available, including on IOC/UNESCO's website;
 - b. Establishing the flow of information regarding youth inclusion in the Decade between all Decade coordination and implementation

- bodies and the YIC for clear, accurate and up to date information regarding the YISAP and actions taken or not taken accordingly;
 - c. Assessing challenges, successes and areas of improvements according to IOC/UNESCO and information gathered from partners and Member States;
 - d. Ensuring Metrics and measurements of success are utilized and data/information is recorded and maintained accurately in a repository accessible to the YIEWG Ocean Decade;
 - e. Meeting with the YIEWG Ocean Decade quarterly for the remainder of the Decade;
 - f. Ensuring opportunities for growth through feedback mechanisms and reviews of YISAP implementation in collaboration with the YIEWG Ocean Decade.
3. Every 6 months the YIC meets to evaluate and assess the impact of the YISAP.

Why: To ensure an active body within the IOC/UNESCO's Decade is overseeing actions according to objectives of this YISAP and communicating with the YIEWG Ocean Decade regarding such. Further it models for UN Member States and other UN governing bodies this important step in partnering with and including youth.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

1. The preparation of the accountability framework for the IOC/UNESCO's Decade initiative's actions was created within 5 months of adoption, and it aligns with this YISAP according to terms set forth in this Objective.
2. **Track and assess the following:**
 - a. Effectiveness of the accountability framework each year.
 - b. Number of meetings with YIC and YIEWG Ocean Decade.
 - c. YIC records/notes regarding challenges, successes and improvement to be made as well as Metric data of this YISAP compiled and maintained at a repository location available to YIEWG Ocean Decade.

C. Objective: Support and encourage National Committees (NCs) to form meaningful Youth Action Councils for the UN Ocean Decade (YACs Ocean Decade) and to actively support meaningful youth engagement in the Decade.

Actions:

1. Communicate directly to Decade NCs' Chairs regarding this YISAP and IOC/UNESCO's commitment to engaging youth meaningfully in the Decade through forming a YAC Ocean Decade that is designed intentionally to do so, and urge doing so by June 2026 aiming for 75% of the NCs so forming YACs for Ocean Decade.
2. Provide NCs with sample language to formally recognize youth as a stakeholder group in Decade communications and programming.
3. Organize and host a meeting, virtually or in-person, with NCs Chairs/ Decade Member State Delegations, to include YIEWG Ocean Decade members, regarding forming a YAC Ocean Decade to meaningfully include youth 25 and under in the Decade including:
 - a. Sharing the toolkit created by Heirs To Our Ocean for how to form a YAC Ocean Decade, and share that Heirs To Our Ocean (H2OO) may be engaged as a consultant;
 - b. Recommend a timeline that allows a newly-formed YAC Ocean Decade to be engaged for at least two years before the Decade concludes; and
 - c. Encourage YACs Ocean Decade formed to collaborate with already formed YACs Ocean Decade for youth globally to collaborate and network within the Decade.
4. Utilize Decade communication methods and create opportunities at Decade convenings and conferences to encourage formation of YACs Ocean Decade globally based upon U.S. model (successfully approaching its 6th Cohort in 2025) that *meaningfully* engages youth 16–25 years and sharing H2OO tool kit.
5. Feature the YAC Ocean Decade program model as a youth engagement tool for NCs at the 2027 UN Ocean Decade Conference.

Why: To offer a successful model of meaningfully including youth ages 16–25 years in the Decade and to reflect IOC/UNESCO's prioritization of meaningful youth engagement to Member States in the Decade, NCs, institutions and partners.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. Number of IOC/UNESCO Decade convenings wherein UN Member States, National Committee and Decade partners were encouraged to form YACs Ocean Decade.
 2. Percentage of NCs that successfully form YACs Ocean Decade by June 2026.

D. Objective: Add newly-created Challenge 11 to official Decade Challenges to reflect prioritization of meaningful inclusion of youth under 25 in the Decade.

Actions:

1. Within 3 months of adoption of the YISAP, form a “Challenge 11 Expert Working Group” to include the YIEWG Ocean Decade and Indigenous and traditionally underrepresented stakeholders in preparing the content language for the new Challenge 11 with more than 50% of the Challenge 11 Expert Working Group composed of a diverse body of youth leaders.
2. Within 8 months of adoption, Challenge 11 officially added to the Decade Challenges and IOC/UNESCO shares as widely and broadly on all communication channels including why it must happen for the well-being of our ocean and water planet in the long-term, engaging the next generation of decision makers beyond the conclusion of the Decade.
3. Within 11 months of adoption, announce a call for Challenge 11 Decade Actions aiming for 20 by the end of Decade.
4. Two months prior to the 2027 UN Ocean Decade Conference, an official white paper, or similar mechanism, is generated by the Challenge 11 Expert Working Group to ensure Challenge 11’s inclusion with Vision 2030 and is announced/presented at the 2027 UN Ocean Decade Conference.

Why: Take decisive action to highlight that we are at the midpoint of the Decade and must confront the areas where progress has lagged thus far. We can see clearly now, halfway through the Decade, that without an explicit prioritization of including the next generation of decision makers – youth 25 and under – in the Decade, they are excluded in every way and by every participant in every sector in the Decade. This must be resolved, and adding Challenge 11 will be an incredibly effective way to resolve it.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. Whether a “Challenge 11 Expert Working Group” was formed within 3 months including the YIEWG Ocean Decade and Indigenous and traditionally underrepresented stakeholders, with more than 50% composed of a diverse body of youth leaders, to prepare the content language for the new Challenge 11.

2. Was Challenge 11 officially added to the Decade Challenges, and did IOC/UNESCO share as widely and broadly on all communication channels within 8 months including why important.
3. Whether 20 Challenge 11 Decade Actions established before the end of the Decade.
4. Whether Challenge 11 white paper, or similar mechanism, was announced during a main session of the 2027 UN Ocean Decade Conference and fully incorporated into Vision 2030.

E. Objective: Uplift and amplify youth voices through effective strategic communications.

Actions:

1. Through sustained funding and support, GenOcean program continues through the conclusion of the Decade to further amplify and uplift youth voices and experiences in ocean conservation and governance.
2. Each year, NCs are encouraged to nominate up to 3 youth from their communities to be featured.
3. GenOcean is encouraged to do the following until the Decade concludes:
 - a. Feature one youth-led and youth-focused organization at least bi-monthly through digital media storytelling, ensuring diversity among the organizations and youth voices represented.
 - b. Feature one youth each week from the nominations received by NCs.
4. Bi-annually GenOcean campaign will provide a report to the YIC detailing key metrics on public engagement as well as highlights of additional accomplishments, partnerships, and engagement from NCs and Decade partners. This report will support transparency, foster collaboration, and help align youth engagement strategies with broader campaign goals.

Why: Featuring youth leaders through the Decade's digital media will inspire more youth to get involved in the Decade and in ocean science and conservation and diversify the Decade communication's audience.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following monthly through end of Decade:**
 1. Number of youth-led and youth-focused organizations featured each month and the diversity of those featured.
 2. Number of youth who were nominated by NCs featured each week.

F. Objective: Include teens and young adults in development of official Decade documents intended for the general public to increase accessibility.

Action:

1. In development of Decade documents that are intended for the general public, utilize an intergenerational collaborative approach including teens ages 14–17 and young adults.
2. Targeting teens and young adults as audience, create shorter versions, approximately 3–5 pages, of published key documents for the Decade using non-technical terms and available online/digitally.
3. Youth are supported in the process of document development with essential information for effective preparation.
4. Youth are informed about the drafting of new documents with ample notice to ensure sufficient time for their contribution.

Why: To ensure that youth, and the general public globally for whom English is non-native language, are able to understand key information regarding and disseminated by the Decade as well as opportunities available to them to equitably engage in Decade activities.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. Whether teens and young adults were engaged in document development.
 2. Shorter versions, approximately 3–5 pages, were created of published key documents using non-technical terms and available online/digitally.

G. Objective: Develop engaging webpages on Ocean Decade website(s) dedicated to youth ages 16–25.

Action:

1. Within 5 months, in collaboration with members of the YIEWG Ocean Decade, develop a webpage on the Ocean Decade's website and/or Conference website for youth ages 16–25 to include essential information for youth to effectively engage in the Decade including, but not limited to,:
 - a. The YISAP

- b. Youth engagement opportunities in the Decade with current, up to date opportunities
 - c. Any Decade documentation and Decade Challenges revised for youth ages 16–25
 - d. Digital media information
 - e. Youth-targeted information regarding upcoming Ocean Decade Conference and Ocean Decade side events.
2. The webpages are updated regularly to ensure up to date information with necessary and timely information.

Why: To support youth as they seek information to engage in the Decade. For the IOC/UNESCO to reflect on its website/webpages that youth are being prioritized and matter in its Decade Initiative will create more youth engagement and it will model for UN Member States and other UN bodies the importance of including the next generation of decision makers in important initiatives for our future.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. Decade's communication team collaboratively engages with YIEWG Ocean Decade members during the development of the website page before official launch to ensure the website is effective and engaging for youth audiences.
 2. Updates to the website occur regularly to ensure that the language remains accessible and that opportunities for youth regarding Conference funding, access, participation, and engagement are clearly communicated.

II. STRATEGY: 2027 UN Ocean Decade Conference (Decade Conference) is organized intentionally for meaningful inclusion of youth ages 16–25.

For a recommended timeline of Tier 1 Strategy II dates/deadlines, see Fig. 3.

- A. Objective: Integrate youth from YIEWG Ocean Decade meaningfully and strategically into every phase of the Conference — from strategizing and designing to planning to implementing/executing to evaluating/measuring success — with continuity.**

Actions:

1. The Conference will be designed by an intergenerational and diverse team, including at least 3 of the youth of the YIEWG Ocean Decade as well as local community youth and Indigenous leaders, who work in collaboration with the Decade Conference team. The collaboration is formed to begin work 1.5 years before the Conference.
2. The collaborative relationship continues through to the planning stage, Conference execution, and the evaluation phase, where the YIEWG Ocean Decade members are actively and intentionally engaged in all phases for continuity.
3. IOC/UNESCO directly funds 3–5 YIEWG Ocean Decade members who were most engaged in the process — strategy/design through implementation/execution — for Conference attendance considering their essential role including in the evaluation process.
4. Design should include an effective and timely feedback process post-Conference to ensure, without delay, thoughts, experiences, and ideas are effectively captured to determine whether this YISAP was effectively implemented, whether youth were, in fact, meaningfully engaged at the Conference, and to improve future Decade Conferences for youth participation.
5. Opportunities to capture this information should occur at Conference and after Conference via email newsblast, socials and on dedicated webpage(s). Additionally, surveys are sent to UN Member States Decade delegations and to Decade partners within one week of the Conference concluding.

Why: To foster inclusive and intergenerational engagement in the Conference design, planning and evaluation process in an effort to achieve an equitable Conference experience that is welcoming to participants from a range of backgrounds, ages, and geographic locations, and to ensure long-term impact of the Decade by meaningfully including, as co-creators, the next generation of decision makers.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. An intergenerational and diverse Decade Conference team, including 1–3 of the youth of the YIEWG Ocean Decade, as well as local community youth and Indigenous leaders, was formed and

included at initial Conference design and planning sessions collaborating with the Decade Conference Committee.

2. The team continued in collaboration through each and every phase of the Conference, including evaluation of the Conference's success according to this YISAP.
3. The members of the YIEWG Ocean Decade who collaborated with the Ocean Decade Conference team were funded to attend the Conference.
4. Increased attendance of 25% from one Conference to the next of diverse youth ages 16–25.

B. Objective: Youth ages 16+ have access to the Ocean Decade Conference.

Actions:

1. The official minimum age to attend a Decade Conference is set to 16 years at the time of the Conference (not at the time of registration), and the set minimum age is shared via IOC/UNESCO Decade communications widely on all communications means including social media, newsletter, and website.
 - a. In its communications, IOC/UNESCO includes:
 - i. Why the change: the need to engage youth pre-university, pre-graduate school, and pre-professional careers is essential to further the vision of the Decade beyond 2030; and
 - ii. The aim of a 25% increase from one Conference to the next of engagement of youth ages 16–25 years achieving diversity amongst youth attending.
2. Within a month of public announcement, UN Member States and NCs and Decade partners are informed of the news directly.
3. Seek both Date Of Birth and age during registration and maintain searchable data. Youth who register at 15 but will be 16 at the time of the Conference should have access to the Conference.

Why: To engage the greatest stakeholders of the Decade during the Decade, as that will create the most likelihood they will be informed, feel connected to the Decade, and be more likely to further Decade-inspired work into university and through their career paths.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**

1. Whether the official minimum age to attend a Conference was set to 16 years at the time of the Conference (not at the time of registration), and whether it was communicated broadly via all communication methods and to UN Member States, NCs and partners directly.
2. What percentage increase of youth 16–25 occurred from 2024 Conference to 2027 Conference and what diversity increase was achieved.
3. Social media engagement in Decade communications with youth ages 16+ after announcement.
4. How many youth 16–17 years of age successfully registered for the Conference.

C. Objective: Registration process is improved and optimized to ensure diverse youth ages 16–25 have the opportunity to attend the Ocean Decade Conference.

Action:

1. At least a year before the Conference, working with the local organizing committee and the YIEWG, develop an improved and optimized registration process where youth may:
 - a. Register for the Conference 6 months in advance of the Conference; and
 - b. Learn of their acceptance into the Conference no less than 4 months in advance of the start of the Conference.
2. To ensure youth between the ages of 16–25 are adequately prepared for opportunities at the Conference, they will be tagged in the Decade database. This will enable them to receive targeted information related to the Conference, including events, opportunities, and specific materials that are relevant to their age group.

Why: To remove obstacles and barriers for youth engagement and achieve equity. To allow youth sufficient time to consider funding and to do necessary planning as students, including apply for need-based scholarship, plan for accommodations and travel needs including obtaining a passport and/or visa, manage other important student opportunities including summer internships or organizing out of class time to attend, etc. This also allows essential time for youth to plan to contribute to and engage in the Conference. To improve and optimize the registration process is a doable way in which the IOC/UNESCO's

Decade Initiative can remove some barriers preventing students from attending Decade conferences.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. Secure data for each stakeholder group (e.g., NGOs, academia, Indigenous, youth) and report out with transparency allowing the data to serve as critical information to understand gaps in stakeholder engagement pre-conference, during Conference and post-conference.
 2. Increased attendance of 25% of diverse youth ages 16–25 from 2024 Decade Conference to the 2027 Conference after improvement of registration process.

D. Objective: In-conference youth-led, youth-focused, and youth-centered sessions and events are included conspicuously in the main Conference and without financial burden to youth.

Action:

1. In-conference youth-led, youth-focused and youth-centered sessions and events occur conspicuously and integrated intentionally into the main Conference demonstrating a commitment to an intergenerational approach in the Decade.
2. During the design and planning of the Conference, the registration and preparation component for youth is considered including what is communicated, by when, and what youth must do to submit a session or event in time to be considered for inclusion in the Conference. Also, include a means through which the number of youth 16–25 attending the sessions can be tracked.
3. Youth-led research, innovative projects and policy recommendations are showcased in an in-conference event.
4. Cost barriers for youth and youth-led organizations organizing and hosting sessions and events are removed.
5. For youth unable to attend in person, a livestream will be available to allow virtual viewing of youth-led and youth-focused sessions in real time.
6. More details of the sessions to be shared with youth with notification that their application for registration has been accepted 4 months in advance of the Conference.
7. The Decade's marketing and communications team share through digital media, including socials and newsletters, the official programming

including highlighting youth-led and youth-focused sessions and events, aiming for 10% of the Conference participants being youth ages 16–25.

8. Prepare and send a post-conference survey within 2 weeks after the Conference to garner information from Conference attendees regarding age at time of Conference if 30 and under, effectiveness of the location of the youth-centered sessions and events in-conference, including seeking information regarding intergenerational attendees and whether youth felt financial barriers were removed for accessibility purposes allowing their participation.

Why: To ensure the main Conference targets all audiences for equitable participation, including youth participants, and models an intention of intergenerational approach in the Decade initiative.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. Whether youth-led, youth-focused, and youth-centered sessions and events occurred daily in the main Conference.
 2. How many youth ages 16–25 attended the sessions.
 3. How many surveys were received back from session participants and whether 80% of youth participants 16–25 responded positively regarding Conference experience.

- E. Objective: Create two dedicated in-conference sessions that will intentionally foster collaboration between youth and youth-led organizations in furthering the goals of the Decade.**

Action:

1. In-conference sessions occur aimed at fostering collaboration between youth and youth-led organizations. Sessions should:
 - a. Offer networking and skill-building designed to foster partnerships, knowledge exchange, and collective action among youth and youth-led organizations.
 - b. Be designed to allow participants to introduce their work, share organizational missions, and identify common interests to achieve co-designing concrete collaborative initiatives, such as joint campaigns, policy proposals, or shared research projects.
 - c. Provide support for youth-led organizations to ensure they are connected to established networks for ongoing support and collaboration opportunities

- d. Be interactive and action-oriented where youth leaders can identify shared goals and align efforts across different regions and disciplines, share best practices, challenges, and lessons learned from youth-led ocean projects, and form coalitions to strengthen advocacy and funding opportunities.
 - e. Intentionally prioritize commitment to ideas generated at the session(s) through providing a template for follow-up steps.
 - f. Be in a space where the set up encourages connection, including round tables, a white board, and workshop materials.
 - g. Showcase youth-led research and initiatives through posters throughout session space.
2. Youth collaboration space and session(s) will be announced, with enthusiasm and creativity, 6 months in advance of the Conference, coinciding with the notification that applications for youth registration are open.
3. During the design and planning of the Conference, the registration and preparation component for youth is considered including what is communicated, by when, and what youth should do in preparation to attend ensuring youth can plan their contributions to the collaborative space. Also it should include a method through which the number of participants attending the sessions can be tracked.
4. More details of youth collaboration space and (sessions) to be shared with the notification that their application for registration has been accepted 4 months in advance of the Conference.
5. Youth who are tagged as “youth” during registration process receive a youth-dedicated newsletter, with announcement on relevant webpages, at this time and included with additional information and reminders to youth before the Conference.
6. The Decade's marketing and communications team to share through digital media, including socials and newsletters, through the official programming, and through any other marketing means the Decade utilizes before, during and after the Conference aiming for 10% of the Conference participants to be youth ages 16–25.
7. Prepare and send a post-conference survey to youth ages 16–25 seeking their insights and experiences of the sessions.

Why: The Decade will be more likely to thrive into the second half of the Decade and beyond if the IOC/UNESCO were to take steps to show their interest in youth ideas and support youth and youth-led organizations in convening meaningfully in the Decade at in-person conferences. Also, movement building will more likely

occur during the Decade with such commitments at Decade conferences and convenings and access for more funding for youth is more likely.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. Whether the sessions occurred twice in-conference.
 2. How many youth ages 16–25 attended the sessions.
 3. How many surveys were received back from session participants and what percentage of youth participants responded positively regarding their experience.

F. Objective: Create two dedicated mentor/mentee in-conference sessions intended to cultivate and drive on-going mentorship opportunities for youth.

Action:

1. Organize two intentional networking sessions in-conference with specific guidance and allocated time/space for young people to connect with at least 30 established professionals who are ocean science experts, policymakers, artists, communicators, and industry leaders.
 - a. One is “Lunch with Mentors” to ensure sit down, focused time for youth and experts to meet and speak and to do so at a time when professionals are needing a break and less tied up with other main Conference sessions.
 - b. Develop method to track the number of participants including whether a mentor with a certain background and youth including ages.
 - c. Aim for the number of mentors to increase throughout the Decade in conjunction with the aim to increase youth Conference participation set forth herein the YISAP.
2. Organize the event with an emphasis on academic and career opportunities to support youth interested in pursuing research, innovation, and other ocean-related careers.
3. When youth are informed that they are successfully registered to attend the Conference, 4 months in advance of the Conference, information of the in-conference mentorship sessions are communicated to ensure the opportunity is not missed.

4. IOC/UNESCO's Decade should facilitate and promote mentorship sign-ups and actively promote the opportunity through UN channels and social media.
5. Through the HiveBrite platform, showcase a virtual mentorship network that allows youth to meet seasoned professionals with mentorship as an intended goal. Offer information for how to join this network platform during the event.
6. Prepare and send a post-conference survey to mentor professionals and youth who attended the Conference sessions seeking their insights and experience.

Why: To hold an intentional space where youth can connect with professionals will facilitate mentorship of the next generation of decision makers during the Decade, and it will help youth feel more comfortable and connected in high-level spaces where they are an important stakeholder. Mentorship establishment is intended to last 1 year or more through the remainder of the Decade.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. Whether at least 30 mentors from diverse backgrounds participated in organized mentor/mentee in-conference session(s) to support youth attendees.
 2. How many surveys were received back from session participants and what percentage of professionals and youth participants responded positively regarding their experience.

G. Objective: In alignment with the objectives of this YISAP, execute an effective and timely feedback mechanism post-conference for attendees to provide feedback regarding youth engagement at the Conference.

Action:

1. Execute during Conference and immediately following the Conference the feedback mechanism designed in advance by the YIEWG Ocean Decade, YIC, and IOC/UNESCO's Decade Conference team to ensure, without delay, thoughts, experiences, and ideas are effectively captured to determine whether this YISAP was effectively implemented, whether youth were, in fact, meaningful engaged at the Conference, and to improve future Decade conferences for youth participation. Survey is written using

accessible language for all participants to share experiences with Conference organizers.

2. The execution of the mechanisms seeking feedback should occur over a month-long, 30-day period, after the Conference concludes.
3. Within 60 days after the Conference concludes, the YIEWG Ocean Decade members meet with the YIC and representative(s) from the Decade Conference team to debrief and review the feedback noting adjustments/improvements to implement for future conferences.

Why: To gather essential information while it is still available, and to establish a system of transparency and accountability so future events can be improved to effectively engage youth stakeholders.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. What percentage of surveys were prepared by youth ages 16–25.
 2. Did 85% of the youth express experiencing at the Conference:
 - a. Equitable participation?
 - b. Meaningful engagement?
 - c. Spaces and activities that fostered intergenerational collaboration and engagement?
 3. What percentage of youth ages 16–25 attended the Conference?
 4. YIC and YIEWG Ocean Decade review all and propose actionable recommendations for future conferences and events to be implemented.

H. Objective: Funding is made available to youth ages 16–25 and small youth-led organizations to attend Decade Conference.

Actions:

1. Budgeting and planning for Conference includes:
 - a. Establishing a fund at least 8 months before the Conference, for the Conference, to support 15 underserved, traditionally marginalized and frontline youth to attend Conference through receiving need-based scholarships that cover all travel costs including visas.
 - b. An accessible and inclusive funding application process to attend Conference is in place at least 6 months before the Conference to

- support youth to secure funding with ample time before the Conference.
 - c. Youth learn of whether they received funding when they learn of their successful registration acceptance, at least 4 months before the Conference.
 - d. IOC/UNESCO to ensure funding for 3–5 small youth-led organization representatives whose missions are aimed at youth engagement, leadership and ocean conservation science and climate protection and who are addressing intersectional social and ecological crises.
2. Implement a structured feedback process for funding recipients to share their insights and experiences following the Conference.

Why: To reduce barriers for youth to participate including from traditionally marginalized backgrounds and frontline and fenceline communities and for those actively engaged in difficult youth-led work. More so, this ensures the Decade is diversifying and recognizing issues of intersectionality.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. Whether 15 youth each year from developing countries, marginalized and frontline communities, and diverse backgrounds receive funding to cover costs to attend Conference.
 2. Whether 6 months before the Conference an accessible and inclusive application process was created and effectively supported youth to secure funding with ample time to plan to attend the Conference.
 3. 85% of feedback from funding recipients reflects positive experiences in the funding application and Conference registration process.

III. STRATEGY: Ocean Literacy is Intentionally Furthered through Utilizing Technology and Marketing Resource Availability.

For a recommended timeline of Tier 1 Strategy I & III dates/deadlines, see Fig. 2.

- A. **Objective: By December 2027, the Decade’s virtual educational platforms are optimized to more intentionally and effectively engage students and**

educators through engaging, accurate and diversity-oriented content aimed to achieve ocean literacy.

Action:

1. The Decade Ocean Literacy Team, DCU, and DCO collaborate with the YIEWG Ocean Decade to assess and improve current platforms and content to further optimize user experience.
2. Update the Decade's HiveBrite platform to feature a variety of modules that can be accessed free of charge by students, formal/informal educators, and interested members of the public.
3. Develop new comprehensive modules.
4. A test period of two months for students and educators to test the new modules on the platform and provide concrete feedback before official launch.
5. Modules content:
 - a. **Age-range specific content:** Learning modules should target specific age ranges within secondary education.
 - b. **Developing Ocean Literacy and Decolonizing Ocean Knowledge:** Different versions of each module should be developed to include basic, intermediate, and advanced information and coursework and include ocean science, Indigenous ocean knowledge, and marine cultural heritage to create an interdisciplinary learning opportunity.
 - c. **UN Ocean Decade:** Develop a course specific to learning about the UN Ocean Decade to introduce the Decade, its goals and challenges, Vision 2030, and how individuals can support or engage in Decade Actions.
 - d. **Online Community:** Create a forum where module participants can ask questions and share feedback with organizers. Re-evaluate each year based on intentional feedback process, developments in the ocean science sector, new opportunities available, new information, etc.
 - e. **Multiple languages:** Modules should be available in as many languages as possible.
6. Decade communications announce launch of new modules across Decade communication channels within one week of official launch.
7. The IOC/UNESCO will communicate with NCs, Decade partners, and other UN bodies regarding the modules to ensure that youth across the Decade are informed of the newly available opportunities within one week of official launch.

Why: Support ocean literacy development globally by increasing accessibility to ocean science and information about the Decade to those who would otherwise not have access to this information, inspiring the next generation of informed ocean stewards and scientists.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. Whether at least 3 YIEWG Ocean Decade members were engaged with the Ocean Literacy Team.
 2. Whether diversity was achieved with the youth and educators engaged in the test period.
 3. What was the module content launched and what ages were targeted
 4. Whether Decade communications shared the content launch and announcement broadly and encouraged NCs and Decade partners to share.
 5. Whether HiveBrite platform is effectively utilized to optimize engagement and reach of youth and educators on the platform.

ATTACHMENT A

TIMELINE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A YOUTH INCLUSION STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Tier 1



ATTACHMENT B

TIMELINE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A

YOUTH INCLUSION STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Tier 1, Strategy II



TIER 2

I. STRATEGY: IOC/UNESCO Explicitly Prioritizes Meaningful Youth Engagement in the Decade and Intentionally Aims for Equity and Accountability In so doing.

Objective: Improve Decade Challenges by incorporating diverse youth perspectives.

Action:

1. Improve Decade Challenges by including diverse youth perspectives in all Challenges through:
 - a. Review the Decade Challenges toolkit prepared by youth leaders of the U.S. Youth Action Council for the UN Ocean Decade, which includes youth perspectives on the current language of the Decade Challenges.
 - b. Seek comprehensive feedback from youth leaders globally, especially those on the frontlines of ocean challenges, utilizing Ocean Decade communication channels.
 - c. Encourage NCs to engage youth in their individual countries to submit youth perspectives of Decade Challenges.
 - d. Offer the opportunity for youth to share perspective:
 - i. In writing when they register to attend the 2027 Ocean Decade Conference, and
 - ii. Offer a workshop opportunity at the Conference in partnership with the YIEWG Ocean Decade.
 - e. Compile all youth perspectives received to update the Challenges and officially release updated Challenges in September 2027, perhaps for UNESCO's International Day of Literacy 2027.

Why: Youth ages 16–25 represent the next generation of decision makers as they prepare to enter university, post-graduate courses and their early careers. Imperative to have a more holistic and accurate vision of the Challenges as presented is to include their perspective if, in fact, Vision 2030 is intended to continue on beyond the conclusion of the Decade. This also highlights IOC/UNESCO's commitment to inclusion of youth ages 16–25 in the Decade at a higher decision-making level and demonstrates IOC/UNESCO's perspective that their voices matter.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. Number of individual youth perspectives submitted and the geographical diversity represented.
 2. Number of NCs that actively engage youth in their countries to submit perspectives.
 3. Whether 3-5 youth perspectives were incorporated into each updated Decade Challenges including representation of geographical diversity.
 4. Whether youth perspectives from each habitable continent was shared across the Decade Challenges.

Objective: Ocean Decade's criteria for a country to host its conferences would explicitly include, as set forth on the Expression of Interest form, a location (1) generally safe for attendees, (2) more accessible for youth traditionally excluded through lack of accessibility and geographical location, and (3) foster a more diverse collective of attendees.

Action:

1. IOC/UNESCO to create accessibility criteria for Conference locations that will achieve:
 - a. Equity in geography by identifying Conference locations across the northern, southern, eastern, and western hemispheres, with consideration of access to visas for young persons situated on the frontlines and with consideration of low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) or countries that have been historically underrepresented in global forums.
 - b. Safety for females, 2SLGBTQIA+ and persons of color
 - c. inclusiveness considering water bodies connected to the ocean, such as lakes, rivers, and other inland waterways
 - d. As least prohibitive travel costs as possible
2. Plan future conferences according to the accessibility criteria

Why: To achieve diversity in representation, attendance, and participation by reducing barriers related to geography, cost, and access.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. Conference location selection reflects a commitment to accessibility criteria.

2. 50% increase in participation from youth in traditionally underrepresented or marginalized communities.

Objective: Effectively apply the broadening of the Decade’s definition of “Ocean Science” to include *all* Sciences, including Indigenous Ocean Knowledge, Natural Science, Social Science, ensuring adequate integration into all programs, initiatives, and convenings.

Actions:

1. Integrate Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge and practices related to ocean health into the Ocean Decade’s “science” framework and communications.
 - a. Recommending to implement in collaboration with the Cultural Heritage Framework Programme.
2. Integrate different science disciplines into Ocean Decade’s “science” framework and communications including natural science and social science.
3. Announce the integration of all science, and what specifically, into the Ocean Decade’s “science” framework with communications on all Decade Communications and sharing why.
4. At least one Indigenous-led organization, program, or research initiative is featured in official Decade communications each quarter until the end of the decade.
5. Decade communications highlight natural science and social science researchers throughout the year equally with “hard” science researchers.
6. Encourage partners and institutions to include youth-led research projects in all areas of the sciences, as broadly defined.
7. Update Decade Challenges to reflect the acknowledgement of broadly defining science to include traditional ecological knowledge, natural sciences, and social sciences.
8. At the 2027 Ocean Decade Conference, hold an interactive participatory session on this important subject – what is ocean science – appealing to a wide range of audiences and ensuring panelists reflect the various disciplines and forms of sciences.

Why: To be inclusive with regard to “science” in the Decade, considering science discipline and forms such as traditional ecological knowledge, natural science and social science, will create a more inclusive body of participants within the Decade including youth. Currently the majority of the convenings and language

regarding science in the Decade does not fully integrate all forms of science and therefore is exclusive in the realm of ocean science.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following**
 1. Whether traditional ecological knowledge and practices related to ocean health was integrated into the Ocean Decade’s “science” framework and communications and done in collaboration with the Cultural Heritage Framework Programme.
 2. Whether different science disciplines, such as natural science and social science, was integrated into Ocean Decade’s “science” framework and communications.
 3. Whether announcements regarding the Decade sciences definition broadening occurred timely and on all Decade communications channels.
 4. Whether Decade Challenges were updated to reflect the acknowledgement of science to include traditional ecological knowledge, natural sciences, social sciences.
 5. At the 2027 Ocean Decade Conference, was an interactive participatory session on *what is ocean science* with panelists who reflect the various disciplines and forms of sciences.

II. STRATEGY: Members of the YIEWG Ocean Decade are included through intergenerational collaboration in all stages of 2027 Ocean Decade Conference, including design pre-conference and evaluation post-conference.

Objective: In-conference Youth Internship Program (ICYIP) providing youth ages 18-30 with hands-on experience in international dialogues, Conference facilitation, and logistics.

Action:

1. In collaboration with YIEWG Ocean Decade, develop and implement an in-conference Youth Internship Program (ICYIP) whereby selected and diverse youth are given roles providing them with firsthand experience in international dialogues and Conference logistics as they shadow and be mentored by a professional.
2. Mentors include Conference organizers, rapporteurs, moderators, policymakers, and scientists who will provide guidance and training.

3. As a part of the registration process, youth ages 18-30, including students, young professionals, and early-career scientists with a passion for ocean conservation and sustainability, may apply for the YIP.
4. Youth selected are notified 3-4 months before the Conference, and as soon as possible they are paired with their mentor in their respective role.
5. During the Conference, interns will actively contribute and post-conference interns will submit a report, participate in debriefing sessions, and receive certificates of completion.
6. A post-conference feedback survey is offered to youth interns and mentors regarding the Program to evaluate its effectiveness in providing Conference support as well as evaluation skills gained and overall experience.

Why: To provide youth with hands-on opportunities in event and project management to support the execution of Conference to ensure youth have the skills they need to effectively enter into this field.

Metrics and Success Measurement:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. Number of applications received and diversity of selected interns (geographical representation, gender balance, academic/professional backgrounds)
 2. Type, number and quality of intern contribution (including reports, session summaries, social media content produced, and more)
 3. Data received from the feedback survey to youth interns and mentors.

Objective: Offer youth registrants pre-conference a live virtual and inclusive Youth Conference Participation Workshop (YCPW) through an interactive platform.

Action:

1. In collaboration with the YIEWG Ocean Decade, develop a virtual training session designed to equip youth attendees with essential information to participate meaningfully in the Conference, including about the Conference, its structure and intention, its governing body, strategies for network and partnership development including in funding/philanthropy, ways to participate in the Conference, and best practices for impactful advocacy.

2. The YCPW is offered twice to support a diverse range of global time zones, ensuring inclusivity, and it occurs 4 months before the Conference allowing youth participants time to seek funding and participation opportunities at the Conference as opportunities are announced.
3. Upon receiving notification that their application was accepted to attend the Conference, youth receive information regarding when the YCPW, including what it is, when and how it is occurring, and how to register to attend.
4. The YCPW would be facilitated by adults and youth of YIEWG Ocean Decade, as youth inspire youth.
5. Prepare a post-YCPW survey, launched at the workshop when it concludes, to determine the effectiveness of the workshop.
6. Prepare a feedback survey to send to youth Conference participants within two weeks after the Conference concludes to gauge participants' experiences and whether or not the workshop actually assisted them in their Conference experience.

Why: To provide youth registrants an opportunity to engage in the Conference as optimally as possible and have time to understand funding opportunities to attend.

Metrics and Success Measurement:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. Registrants for the YCPW vs attendance at workshop.
 2. Attendance at the workshop vs attendance at the Conference.
 3. Percentage of YCPW attendees who shared at the conclusion of the workshop that they felt prepared for the Conference.
 4. Percentage of YCPW attendees who attended the Conference and the YCPW felt the workshop effectively prepared them for the Conference.

Objective: Launch a Ocean Decade Innovation Competition for Youth (ICY) before Ocean Decade Conference(s) through which youth submit solutions to ocean and waterway challenges with fresh, innovative ideas and those selected showcase at the upcoming Conference.

Action:

1. 1 year before a Ocean Decade Conference, in collaboration with the YIEWG Ocean Decade, develop a Ocean Decade Innovation Competition

for Youth (ICY) that encourages youth to address ocean and waterway challenges by offering an innovative solution(s).

2. The development of the ICY should also include:
 - a. the way in which the selected submissions will be showcased at an upcoming Conference;
 - b. information regarding those youth attending in-person including funding information;
 - c. mentorship and network access and opportunities.
3. Six months prior to the Ocean Decade Conference, and ahead of the registration period, announce the ICY across global platforms, including the Decade's digital media, Ocean Decade website(s), in-person convenings, and through outreach to Decade partners, funder networks, affiliated university networks, national coordinators (NCs), affiliated NGOs, and key Conference stakeholders to maximize visibility.
 - a. The announcement should also require youth submitting solutions to register for the Conference. Clear instructions on how to register, along with key dates, including when applicants will be notified about the acceptance of their solutions for showcasing, should be provided.
4. Submission deadline for youth is 4 months before the Ocean Decade Conference.
5. No later than 3.5 months before the Ocean Decade Conference, the YIEWG Ocean Decade and IOC/UNESCO's Decade representatives determine the submissions that will be showcased at the Conference.
6. 8-10 youth are selected who represent diversity in geography, cultural background and thought/ideas and are invited to present their solutions at the Conference.
7. YIEWG Ocean Decade members are not eligible to apply due to their involvement in the selection process.
8. No later than 3 months before the Ocean Decade Conference, youth are informed of whether they have been successful with the ICY and their project selected to be showcased at the Conference or whether, due to the number of impressive submissions, they are not selected to showcase at this upcoming Conference. In the same communication, selected youth are informed of the Conference registration process and next steps to take to secure Conference access.
9. The showcasing of the youth's work is done conspicuously in-conference.

Why: To harness the innovative and fresh ideas of youth, to garner their perspective and ideas for solutions to challenges, and to encourage youth

proactively engaging in the Decade while giving them a sense of ownership in the Decade leading to more likelihood of furthering the Decade beyond 2030. More so, this would highlight the IOC/UNESCO's prioritization of youth ages 16–25 and reflect valuing their thoughts and ideas, which is then modeled for UN Member States and NCs for partners and for other UN bodies.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. A group of 8-10 diverse youth presented their solutions at the Conference.
 2. Whether the process to engage 8-10 diverse youth was effective and efficient.
 3. Whether the showcasing of the youth's work was done conspicuously in-conference.
 4. Whether the funding pool for youth increased after the Conference.

III. STRATEGY: Ocean Literacy is Intentionally Furthered through Utilizing Technology and Marketing Resource Availability.

Objective: Encourage UN Member States engaged in the Decade to prioritize furthering the development of community-based and culturally relevant ocean literacy and education programs to be made widely available on-line.

Action:

1. IOC/UNESCO explicitly encourages Decade NCs to prioritize creation of nationally/regionally-specific ocean literacy and education programs in collaboration with local communities, NGOs, educators, and youth leaders, with a focus on front line communities, to ensure accessibility to youth across the country or region through an online platform.
 - a. DCU facilitates online workshops to offer guidance, support, assistance to, and receive feedback from, NCs and organizations supporting the objective.
2. NCs are encouraged to collaborate with local educators and elders to integrate social and historical perspectives, TEK, and other important aspects of local cultural heritage into the curriculum. All NCs should be tasked with this objective to ensure youth are educated around marine cultural heritage and communal/regional connections to marine systems.

3. IOC/UNESCO shares intention and plan to NCs by early 2026 so NCs can organize their education task forces in time to share action items and successes achieved at the 2027 UN Ocean Decade Conference.
4. Funding provided from IOC/UNESCO to NCs in low income countries/regions to fund community-based programs focused on ocean literacy, environmental education, cultural heritage, knowledge exchange, and intergenerational engagement.

Why: At present, across the globe, the next generation is not being offered the knowledge of our one shared water system nor has the knowledge and tools to support their local natural water environments. Doing so, with meaningful integration of cultural and local knowledge, is essential to ensure the generation is prepared to protect our world's ocean and all waters connecting to it.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following:**
 1. A minimum of 10 effective programs achieved by 2030 in a range of diverse geographic locations including funding made available to achieve 4 of 10 from low income countries or regions..
 2. Youth engagement in the Decade increases by 50% each year from 2027 to 2030.

IV. STRATEGY: Engage youth consistently in the Decade through showcasing their work as ocean and water conservationists.

Objective: Establish an Annual Youth Ocean Impact Award.

Action:

1. Establish an annual Youth Ocean Impact Award to recognize and reward young changemakers who have or are currently working to address have furthered Decade Challenges and impacted ocean conservation.
2. 8 Award categories to include Young Scientist, Indigenous Youth Leader, Coastal Youth Leader, Waterway Leader, Policy & Advocacy Leader, and Blue Economy Innovator.
3. Criteria is developed by YIEWG Ocean Decade, H2OO and DCU.
4. Announce 3 months in advance of submission deadline with regular reminders through communications and partners.
5. Youth can be nominated or submit themselves for the award.
6. IOC/UNESCO holds an annual virtual ceremony.

- a. The ceremony is highly marketed on all Decade communication channels/methods at least 6 weeks before the event and consistently running up to the event.
7. Winners are announced at upcoming Conference or convening including Ocean Decade side events at another Conference.

Why: To inspire more youth to engage with marine and waterway conservation-related careers.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following annually:**
 1. Number of youth involved in the award program by monitoring nominations per category.
 2. Whether award applicants and recipients represent a broad range of geographic regions, and increase every year.
 3. Diversity of organizations, academic institutions, and Decade partners engaged.
 4. Turn out for the virtual award ceremony as well as its marketing.
 5. Whether and the way in which youth were showcased at an upcoming Conference or Ocean Decade side event at another Conference.

Objective: Establish a Youth Ocean Innovation Fund to support youth-led projects and start-ups focused on ocean conservation, technology and sustainability.

Action:

1. Create a dedicated fund to support youth-led projects and startups focused on ocean conservation, technology, and sustainability which will support grants, mentorship, and resources to young innovators who are developing solutions to Decade Challenges.
2. Establish funding pool and grant opportunities to be announced at the 2027 UN Ocean Decade Conference.
3. YIEWG Ocean Decade are included in the launch, application review, and decision-making processes.

Why: To support and empower young people to translate their ideas into actionable projects connecting resources to innovators to facilitate change-making.

Optional Metrics for Measuring Success:

- **Track and assess the following annually:**
 1. Number of funded projects.
 2. Number of successfully completed and functional projects due to access to the funding. If projects were not completed nor seemingly functional, determine what resources or support was needed to have improved the project.
 3. Whether there is sustained or increased funding for the Fund.