

Organization and Governance

OceanSITES is the international network of sustained open-ocean time series sites.

It is part of the Global Ocean Observing System and an Action Group of the Data Buoy Cooperation Panel of the JCOMMOPS body. The rationale and requirements for OceanSITES, and current set of sites participating in the system, are explained in separate documents and figures found on the website www.oceansites.org.

The organizational structure of OceanSITES comprises a Steering Committee (SC) and a Data Management Team (DMT), led and represented by an Executive Committee (EC) and Chairs.

The Steering Committee and Executive Committee are supported by a Technical Coordinator and IT staff who are based at the JCOMMOPS Project Office in Brest, France. It is the responsibility of OceanSITES to raise the funds to support people at JCOMMOPS who work on OceanSITES. At present, this is the only financial responsibility of OceanSITES. Participation in the OceanSITES bodies is voluntary and without compensation, and the supporting functionality of OceanSITES global data assembly centers have been provided by organizations involved in OceanSITES. OceanSITES does not directly fund installation or maintenance of time series.

Terms of Reference

Chair, Vice-Chair, and Post-Chair

A Chair and Vice-Chair lead OceanSITES and chair the Steering and Executive Committees. They have day-to-day oversight of the activities of the Technical Coordinator and the Project Office. They are responsible to set agendas and organize meetings for OceanSITES committees. They nominate external members of the Executive Committee after consultation with the EC.

They are supported and advised by a Post-Chair. All three Chairs together represent OceanSITES in discussions and joint planning with stakeholders and related organizations including other elements and partners of the Global Ocean Observing System.

Typically, there will be progression from Vice-Chair to Chair to Post-Chair with terms in each role of up to a maximum of 3 years. In exceptional cases, based on recommendation of the Science Team, a 2nd term can be held. Meetings of the Chairs will involve all three persons whenever possible, and decisions should be by consensus if possible, otherwise by the Chair following consultation with the Vice-Chair and Post-Chair.

Nominations for the position of Vice-Chair come from within the Steering Committee membership. Persons that are external to the Steering Committee but that have special expertise or professional qualifications relevant to the position, can also be nominated (by the EC). The Steering Committee will be asked to rank nominated candidates (who have agreed to be available for this role), in order of preference in a secret ballot. The top three choices will be forwarded to a Committee of Stakeholders, who will make the final selection after consultation with the current Chairs.

It is the responsibility of the Chair and Vice-Chair to each year oversee raising the funds to support OceanSITES staff, from funding agencies, institutions, and other organizations. Those that contribute will be identified as stakeholders (see below).

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (EC) provides scientific oversight, initiates strategic, operational and administrative activities. The EC is responsible for the establishment and oversight of working groups. It meets monthly by teleconference and conducts face-to-face meetings on an ad-hoc basis.

The OceanSITES EC is dedicated to developing synergies between all members, and to enhance international cooperation and links to other relevant programs in ocean observation. The EC has the responsibility to provide vision, advice and guidance on issues related to attracting and maintaining new OceanSITES and making sure the community follows the OceanSITES objectives. The EC also reviews applications for new sites to be added to OceanSITES, and forwards those that it deems as qualifying to the SC for final vote. The EC is responsible for the governance and conduct of special projects undertaken by OceanSITES. The EC also provides guidance and oversight regarding the OceanSITES website which is maintained by the Project Office. The EC will work with the Chairs to identify sources of support for OceanSITES, both for the funding for the JCOMMOPS staff and also for special projects, such as DeepT/S.

The EC consists of the Chairs, the DMT Chair, and 5-7 members that are nominated and elected from within the Steering Committee to include broad representation of the different OceanSITES across ocean basins and disciplines. The Chairs can also nominate up to two external members. Members have a term of 3 years (with an option to be renewed once). Members of the EC are expected to help sustain the momentum and management of OceanSITES. EC members who can not participate typically in at least half the teleconferences and in-person meetings, and who can not provide input by email if they are unavailable, may be replaced by a new member – this would be evaluated and initiated by the Chairs.

Steering Committee

The OceanSITES Steering Committee (SC) is made up of principal investigators or designated representatives conducting and supporting an OceanSITE or a collection of OceanSITES. The SC works under the guidance of the Executive Committee. Members of the SC can also be part of the Data Management Team (DMT).

The SC members are considered “members” of OceanSITES and are expected to advocate for and work to develop a network of sustained ocean time series observations. Members of OceanSITES agree to open and free sharing of data, whenever possible making data available in near-real time. Members of OceanSITES agree to use (or act as) Data Assembly Centers (DACs) who format the data in agreed upon netCDF formats and to provide the necessary metadata. Members of OceanSITES, through the DACs, will submit their data to one of two Global Data Assembly Centers (GDACs).

The SC meets every 1-2 years at venues voluntarily proposed by its members, along with occasional meetings via teleconference if needed. Meeting attendance should be funded via the programs/agencies that operate the sites in the system. The SC votes on new sites to be included in OceanSITES, after an application is reviewed by the OceanSITES Executive Committee who presents it to the SC for decision within one month.

The SC members:

- maintain a collaborative, multi-disciplinary worldwide system of long-term, full-depth fixed reference stations recording diverse measurements from the sea floor to the atmosphere in key regions of the globe
- promote high-quality, multidisciplinary sustained timeseries
- secure sustained support for and provide long-term operation of existing OceanSITES stations
- share platforms, ship time, sensors, and expertise where feasible
- provide continuous upgrades of sensors and development and implementation of new sensors, enabling a cross-discipline comparative approach
- support the implementation of new OceanSITES in key regions of the oceans where long-term records are to be collected for the first time
- enable high frequency data acquisition from multiple integrated platforms (e.g., moorings, virtual mooring, gliders, station-keeping wavegliders, frequent ship visits, cables)
- promote and facilitate the sharing of efforts, funding, platforms, best practices, experience, hardware, and ship-time for timeseries work across disciplines and countries

- promote sustained ocean observations with key elements of networking, data-brokerage, scientific publications and increased engagement with users
- actively enhance international cooperation with key organizations on a global scale.
- intend, through these activities, to be an attractive partner for cooperation in the marine community.

Committee of Stakeholders

The committee of stakeholders will include representatives of those funding agencies or groups of institutions which make regular (or large one-time) financial contributions to the OceanSITES project office or to shared use instrument resources averaging to at least 5k\$/year; and a representative of the GOOS Steering Committee.

Data Management Team

The OceanSITES Data Management Team (DMT) is responsible for ensuring the long-term usability and quality of OceanSITES data.

The DMT works with two Global Data Assembly Centers (GDACS), one at the NOAA National Data Buoy Center, United States, and one at Coriolis at IFREMER, France, ensuring data from the sites flow in common format and are made publically available.

The DMT:

- develops content standards, data format specifications, file name conventions
- develops and maintains technical documents on the OceanSITES data format specification, quality control and quality assurance best practices, and data submission to GDACS
- agrees on the structure of the data served by the GDACS, and on data dissemination channels
- helps to implement products and indicators that the SC agrees on
- develops content for the OceanSITES website
- provides advice on the contents, quality and timeliness of the various data streams to ensure scientific and operational requirements are met
- provides advice for rapid distribution of data streams over the Web for use by the OceanSITES members, the larger scientific community and the public.

The DMT meets in conjunction with the SC, and via monthly teleconferences.

The DMT has a Chair that is selected by the Executive Committee.

Technical Coordinator (TC) and Project Office

The JCOMMOPS Technical Coordinator (TC) works with OceanSITES members to plan and track activities of the OceanSITES community involving marine data coordination, dissemination and generation of observation system monitoring products. The duration of the Technical Coordinator position is 1 year with an option by the TC or OceanSITES EC to renew annually.

Responsibilities of the TC are, by priority, to:

- assist in the planning, implementation and operations of the OceanSITES network in close consultation with the Chairs, Executive Committee, Steering Committee, and Data Management Team by: 1) obtaining and continually updating information about the sites; 2) maintaining technical documentation; 3) updating the JCOMMOPS database and maps, and; 4) providing other information based on emerging needs, findings and discussions of the OceanSITES community
- monitor, communicate and resolve all action items as identified during OceanSITES sessions and report on resolved/ongoing/outstanding action items at before, during, and after meetings
- organize meetings, take notes, prepare meeting reports
- report to the regular OceanSITES meetings on the status and plans for observing platforms, data communications, and on other tasks charged to the OceanSITES community
- serve as a representative of OceanSITES, as directed, at relevant technical or scientific meetings, and prepare OceanSITES input (reports, presentations) for such meetings
- assist members of OceanSITES by providing technical advice on collecting and distributing quality controlled, real-time, observational platform data
- perform administrative duties and support to the Committees and Teams as required.
- in collaboration with the Executive Committee, assist with ensuring timely submission of data to the GDACs. Review, monitor use and compliance, and relay feedback, on the scientific and public use of observing platform data.
- support and promote initiatives to improve international dialogue, both online and offline, between national and international communities of OceanSITES.