

Ocean Literacy

Overview of OFI Activities: Ocean literacy is defined as “an understanding of the ocean’s influence on you and your influence on the ocean” and has been part of OFI’s mission since inception. Recently, this concept also became a thematic cornerstone for the upcoming United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). Aligning with these efforts, OFI strives to develop and implement innovative approaches to foster ocean literacy among diverse audiences in Canada and globally.

Pillars of Engagement: We wish to discuss the following strategic areas:

- 1. Communicating Ocean Science Concepts:** The core mission of OFI is to improve our collective understanding of the ocean for the safe and sustainable development of the ocean frontier. A key aspect of this mission is to effectively communicate the information obtained through our research to Canadians, making ocean knowledge more transparent and inclusive.
- 2. Data Visualization:** We are living through an unprecedented data revolution, and the availability of novel data streams from robotic, satellite, and animal-borne sensors is increasing exponentially. A critical deliverable of ocean literacy efforts in this new age is to make these data, and their applicability, more widely understood.
- 3. Youth engagement:** Better tools and approaches for engaging young audiences are needed in Canada’s ocean literacy landscape. Youth engagement has been a pillar of OFI’s Ocean School Program from the beginning, focusing on audiovisual resources for elementary and middle school children (ages 11-15).
- 4. International collaborations and leadership:** While OFI maintains a regional focus on the northwest Atlantic and Arctic gateway, we will also work across scales, building collaborations with partners in Canada and other countries and work under the auspices of the UN Decade to help lead implement comprehensive ocean literacy efforts worldwide.

Relevant programs and resources

Ocean School was launched by OFI and the National Film Board of Canada as a free online resource providing inquiry-based learning tools for schools and life-long learners. It has formed a core of OFI ocean literacy work and is currently partnering with Phase 2 research projects,

The *Beaty Centre for Marine Biodiversity* is developed in partnership with the OFI, Dalhousie and the Discovery Centre to house ocean exhibits and promote experiential hands-on learning.

The *Ocean Ambassador Program* was launched in 2020 to engage leading investigators in OFI to partake in the communication of science in an outward facing capacity.

The *OGEN Graduate Program* will provide opportunities for collaboration among graduate students interested in ocean data. Furthermore, an ocean literacy outreach training program will be established to help build capacity in science communication.

The following questions should help guide the Workshop discussions:

1. What current OFI activities align with the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development?
2. With whom would an alignment support a stronger presence under the UN Decade?
3. Looking forward, what further actions might OFI take or lead, in this area?
4. Identify who would be appropriate to work with OFI to take these actions forward.