

International Platform for Ocean Sustainability Call for Experts – Hybrid Working Group (IPOS Action Request)

The International Platform on Ocean Sustainability (IPOS) is seeking experts from various disciplines or with relevant experience to join an IPOS Hybrid Working Group (HWG) to strengthen evidence-based decision-making on key ocean challenges. The selected experts will work closely with the IPOS Secretariat to prepare the Action request outputs, gathering diverse knowledge systems.

Deadline for the call: January 4th, 2026.

Topic:

Enabling a whole-of-society approach in South Africa's marine spatial planning and biodiversity actions to inform the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, South Africa). Global Ocean Sustainability targets: GBF Target 1, GBF Target 21, GBF Target 22, GBF Target 23.

Key ocean challenges: Marine biodiversity loss, Marine protected areas (MPAs), Marine spatial planning (MSP), Blue economy development, Stakeholder conflict, Inclusive stakeholder engagement and participation.

Context:

The IPOS is launching a new knowledge-based support process in response to a request from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of the **Republic of South Africa**.

This request seeks to strengthen evidence-based decision-making on the implementation of a whole-of-society approach in South Africa's marine spatial planning and biodiversity actions to inform the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, in line with IPOS's mission to **translate the best available ocean knowledge into actionable solutions for sustainability**.

In this context, IPOS is assembling a **Hybrid Working Group (HWG)** composed of leading experts and knowledge holders from different disciplines and knowledge systems to prepare and validate the synthesis and outputs of this request.

About the IPOS Hybrid Working Group:

The HWG will bring together scientific, policy, technical, and local expertise and experience to produce a set of knowledge-based deliverables that are credible, inclusive, and relevant to decision-makers. "Hybrid" reflects the combination of **scientific and other forms of knowledge**, the richness of **various backgrounds** (academic, IPLC, civil society, private sector and finance) and the **hybrid working mode** (in-person and virtual collaboration) that IPOS employs. Deliverables will undergo **independent peer review** and will be made publicly available once validated by the IPOS Acting Knowledge Committee and endorsed by the requesting State(s).

Call for Experts:

IPOS invites applications from qualified experts to contribute to this HWG. We seek individuals with relevant expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- Marine Spatial Planning
- Marine Social Science

- South African Ocean governance
- Participatory Facilitation
- Fisheries and Blue Economy
- Gender inclusion
- Capacity building
- Coastal Indigenous and Local Communities
- Modelling and Scenario development

In addition to disciplinary expertise, IPOS encourages participation from experts representing **different knowledge systems**, including social sciences, economics, traditional and local knowledge, private sector and practice-based experience.

Roles and Expectations:

Selected experts will:

- Contribute actively to the **analysis, synthesis, and review** of available and emerging knowledge relevant to the request;
- Participate in **meetings and virtual working sessions**
- Develop, review and refine deliverables in collaboration with the IPOS Secretariat and Acting Knowledge Committee;
- Ensure that findings are **accurate, balanced, inclusive, and solution-oriented**;
- Comply with IPOS's **Conflict of Interest and Ethics Guidelines**.
- Comply with IPOS's **Values Charter**

Expected workload, timeline and compensation:

The workload will be up to 10-18 working days in total over a period of 10 months from January 2026 to November 2026.

- **Call for experts:** January 4, 2026
- **Selection and notification:** Mid to end January 2026
- **Working period:** January to November 2026

This is a **compensated contribution** based on comparable international practices. Experts will be acknowledged in the final report (unless they prefer to remain anonymous).

Eligibility and Selection Criteria:

Candidates should demonstrate:

- Proven **expertise in the topic area(s) or geography** relevant to the request;
- Experience in **knowledge synthesis, science-policy interface, or interdisciplinary collaboration**;
- Commitment to IPOS principles of scientific integrity, inclusivity, and actionable knowledge;
- Availability during the project period (January to November 2026).
- Selection will be based on expertise, diversity (disciplinary, geographic, gender, and knowledge systems), and absence of conflicts of interest with the requesting State(s).

Application Process:

Interested experts are invited to submit the following materials by **4 January 2026** to victoire.provost@ipos.earth with the subject line *"Call for Experts – IPOS HWG on inclusive MSP in South Africa"*:

1. A short **expression of interest (max 1 page)** describing your motivation and relevant experience;
2. A **CV (max 3 pages)** highlighting relevant work, publications or roles;

3. A list of relevant networks, initiatives, or projects you are involved in.

Shortlisted candidates may be contacted for clarification or confirmation of availability.

For further information, please contact:

victoire.provost@ipos.earth