

*IOI Seminar Series on Issues of  
Contemporary Importance to Ocean Governance*  
***Breaking the Stalemate: The Role of Ocean Literacy  
in Catalysing Progress on SDG 14 and Beyond***

*07 December 2023      09.30 - 11.00hrs CET*

*In-person and Webcast*

*During the IOI Training Programme on Regional Ocean Governance  
for the Mediterranean, Black, Baltic and Caspian Seas, Malta*

***Message from the Class of 2023***

*IOI Training Programme on Regional Ocean Governance for the Mediterranean,  
Black, Baltic and Caspian Seas*

**BREAKING THE STALEMATE: HOW CAN OCEAN LITERACY CATALYSE ON  
SDGs AND BEYOND**

**READ BY:** IONA MUSCAT AND MANAR SHIBLY

*“Life below water.” “The Blue Economy.” “Decade of Ocean Science.”  
“Sustainable Development Goals...”*

For all of us that are gathered here, these words resonate frequently. They have become staple terms in our line of work, and they somehow define our very own endeavours towards this subject which we hold dear. Yet, let us all admit that these terms alone mean very little unless backed up by concrete action. It is high time we realise that paying lip service to ocean literacy will not help break the stalemate that our precious planet finds itself in.

To achieve ocean literacy is to understand the ocean’s influence on us and, in return, our own impact on the ocean. It means moving away from our oblivious and naive view of the ocean as a sink, where we have been washing down our industries, and throwing our waste. Our sink is getting clogged up, and it is failing to make up for our shortcomings. True ocean literacy is when policymakers are able to make informed and responsible decisions regarding the ocean, and when well-informed citizens start to adopt a collective sense of ownership towards it. We believe that this shall happen only when the formal education system integrates ocean literacy across its curricula and adopts a transformative rather than an informative approach. We acknowledge that this might be easier said than done.

In the face of these challenges, let us shift our focus to informal education as a means of reaching out to our civil communities and in the hope of bridging some gaps. We ought to communicate the realities concerning the status of our oceans in a simple way, ensuring that

the bigger picture is accessible to all. Two ways of doing so are community involvement in immersive ocean-related experiences and leading our younger citizens by example.

Achieving our SDGs necessitates urgent collective effort from all disciplines to produce and communicate knowledge. We must strive to display clear signs with directions for citizens to follow, showing them how and where they can contribute to the process. We need to convince them that their contributions truly matter. Earth systems and human systems are interconnected and interdependent, so whether we are addressing poverty, climate, or economic growth, we are sure to impinge on ocean sustainability, to some degree. Thus, rather than settling for loosely applied terms such as “blue economy”, we ought to consider adopting ocean literacy as an underlying and fundamental element within each Goal. We urge policymakers to consider the relevance of ocean welfare in *all* the seventeen SDGs and beyond. Afterall, essentially everything is either coming from the ocean, or ending up in it.

In conclusion, please allow us to recommend a thinking process whereby “green” and “blue” approaches are presented, not as separate pathways but as a unified and interconnected means towards a common end. Let us, therefore, not categorise our actions into mere colours, lest we lose sight of the entire spectrum that makes up our goals.

### **IOI Training Programme on Regional Ocean Governance for the Mediterranean, Black, Baltic and Caspian Seas, Malta - Class of 2023**

ALY Walid; EGYPT

AVAKOVA Mariam; GEORGIA

BORG Ashton; MALTA

CICINE Agne; LITHUANIA

DARMANIN Kristina; MALTA

DURDYEVA Guljemile; TURKMENISTAN

ELHUSSIENY ELASHWAH Mohamed; EGYPT

ELSHALLAQAMY Sally; EGYPT

FARAHNASAB Amir; IR IRAN

GAPRINDASHVILI Mariam; GEORGIA

JOUDAR Imane; MOROCCO

MAKHARADZE Marika; GEORGIA

MIZZI Sandro; MALTA

MUSCAT Iona; MALTA

SEHLI Oifa; TUNISIA

SHIBLY Manar; SYRIA

<https://www.ioinst.org/>

<https://www.ioinst.org/ioi-alumni/alumni-cpd/>

<https://courses.ocean.mt/ioicourse/>

<https://www.ioinst.org/ioi-ocean-academy-1/>



This event is organised by the  
**International Ocean Institute**  
 with the support and collaboration of the  
**European Commission Representation in Malta**



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*"In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand.  
 And we will understand only what we are taught."*

Baba Dioum, IUCN Triennial, New Delhi, 1968

## Seminar Programme

09.00	Registration and Welcome Coffee
09.30 – 09.40	<b>Moderator: Antonella Vassallo</b> , Managing Director, IOI <b>Welcome and Introduction to the Seminar</b> <b>Awni Behnam</b> , Honorary President, IOI; Course Director, Training Programme on Regional Ocean Governance
09.40 – 09.50	<b>The IOI Ocean Academy: Improving global Ocean Literacy through online, easily accessible, free-to-all Ocean knowledge modules anchored in local contexts</b> <b>Antonella Vassallo</b> , Managing Director, International Ocean Institute
09.50 – 10.00	<b>The Ocean Decade: How Literacy Contributes to Sustainability</b> <b>Vladimir Ryabinin</b> , Executive Secretary, IOC of UNESCO, Assistant Director General, UNESCO
10.00 – 10.10	<b>Building a Sustainable Ocean Economy: How Ocean Trade Data and Ocean-Related Regulatory Outcomes Contribute to Filling Gaps in Ocean Literacy</b> <b>David Vivas Eugui</b> , Chief of Section, Trade, Environment, Climate Change & Sustainable Development Branch, UNCTAD
10.10 – 10.20	<b>Recent developments in international law, diplomacy and the Ocean</b> <b>Nilufer Oral</b> , Director, Centre for International Law National University of Singapore; Member of the International Law Commission
10.20 – 10.30	<b>Taking Ocean Literacy to the Next Level Through the Use of Cutting-Edge Technology</b> <b>Alan Deidun</b> , Ocean Ambassador for Malta, Course Manager, Training Programme on Regional Ocean Governance
<p><i>Questions and Discussion: moderated panel discussion.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Message by the Class of 2023 of the Training Programme on Regional Ocean Governance for the Mediterranean, Black, Baltic and Caspian Seas</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Closure of Session, Awni Behnam</i></p>	
<p><b>Graduation Ceremony and Award of Certificates of Class of 2023</b>          Training Programme on Regional Ocean Governance for the          Mediterranean, Black, Baltic and Caspian Seas, Malta</p>	

## Concept

This year's Special Seminar focuses on the pivotal role of Ocean Literacy in fostering the advancement of the SDGs, especially SDG 14, and the underlying themes of Ocean protection and conservation, and aims to serve as a platform for insightful discourse and collaborative exploration of key overlapping concepts.

In the face of current challenges of Ocean degradation, increasingly unpredictable Ocean-climate modulation, and potential biodiversity collapse, distinguished experts shall examine how knowledge-based institutions such as the IOI can contribute to achieving effective solutions that meet the global SDGs and ambitions, while also considering the role that Ocean literate communities can play in accelerating this transition.

With a primary emphasis on the critical need for heightened public awareness and understanding of Ocean issues, the seminar aims to emphasise the significant impact of Ocean Literacy on fostering responsible and effective Ocean Governance practices amongst all stakeholders.

Inspired by the quotation in caption, the Seminar shall underscore the transformative power of Ocean Literacy in creating a global community that not only comprehends but cherishes the Ocean and appreciates its critical role as supporter of life on this planet. By nurturing a deeper understanding and respect for our Ocean, humankind can collectively chart a course towards a sustainable future where human activities are in harmony with the intricate web of the Ocean's ecosystems, ensuring their vitality for generations to come.

This Seminar seeks to catalyse a mindset change among stakeholders, policymakers, educators, and the public to prioritise Ocean literacy as a means to comprehend and manage human-Ocean interactions and impacts to promote a sustainable and prosperous future, one in which our Ocean remains a vital source of life.