

CENTRE FOR OCEAN LITERACY COLLABORATION



NATIONAL STRATEGY IMPACT REPORT 2025

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Canada is an ocean nation.

Welcome to the longest coastline in the world.

To the north, east, and west, the ocean surrounds us. Every community – inland and coastal – is connected by water. Wherever we are, freshwater rivers and salty shores tie us to nature, to each other, and to the world.

The vast majority of people in Canada (89%) say that ocean health is important. Yet even as we value it, ocean health is in decline.

The better we care for the ocean, the better it can care for all life on this planet.

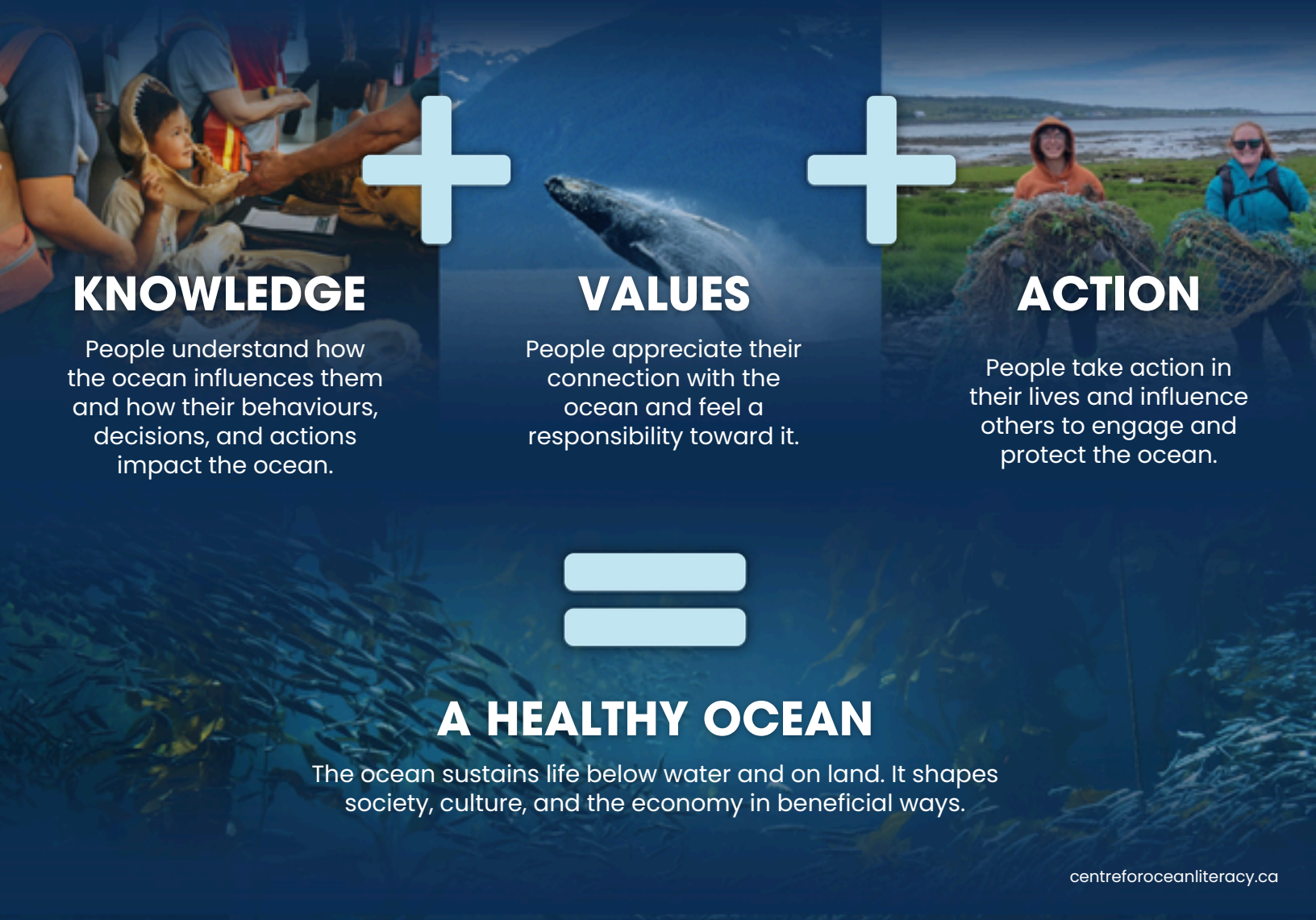


THE IMPORTANCE OF OCEAN-SOCIETY CONNECTIONS

Work by the Centre for Ocean Literacy Collaboration (formerly the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition) strengthens people in Canada's capacity for ocean connection and action.

Ocean literacy includes awareness of how the ocean influences you and how you influence the ocean, but it goes beyond understanding to include actions and behaviour.

An ocean-connected society has a bond with the ocean that enables people to live and act in ways that ensure its health.



KNOWLEDGE

People understand how the ocean influences them and how their behaviours, decisions, and actions impact the ocean.



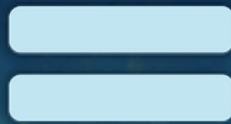
VALUES

People appreciate their connection with the ocean and feel a responsibility toward it.



ACTION

People take action in their lives and influence others to engage and protect the ocean.



A HEALTHY OCEAN

The ocean sustains life below water and on land. It shapes society, culture, and the economy in beneficial ways.



2025 IMPACT SUMMARY

CATALYSTS



1 national project office



10 action streams (as outlined in the National Strategy 2021)



5 Key Initiatives



\$1.6M+ invested in Ocean Literacy initiatives



114 community grants awarded totalling over **\$179,000**

ENGAGEMENT



897 partners



514 events



350,000+ participants engaged



12 MILLION ocean literacy messages delivered

SHIFTS



>60% of partners are from the Community, Arts & Culture, and Education sectors: the network's engagement engine



>60% new partners, making 2025 the biggest intake year

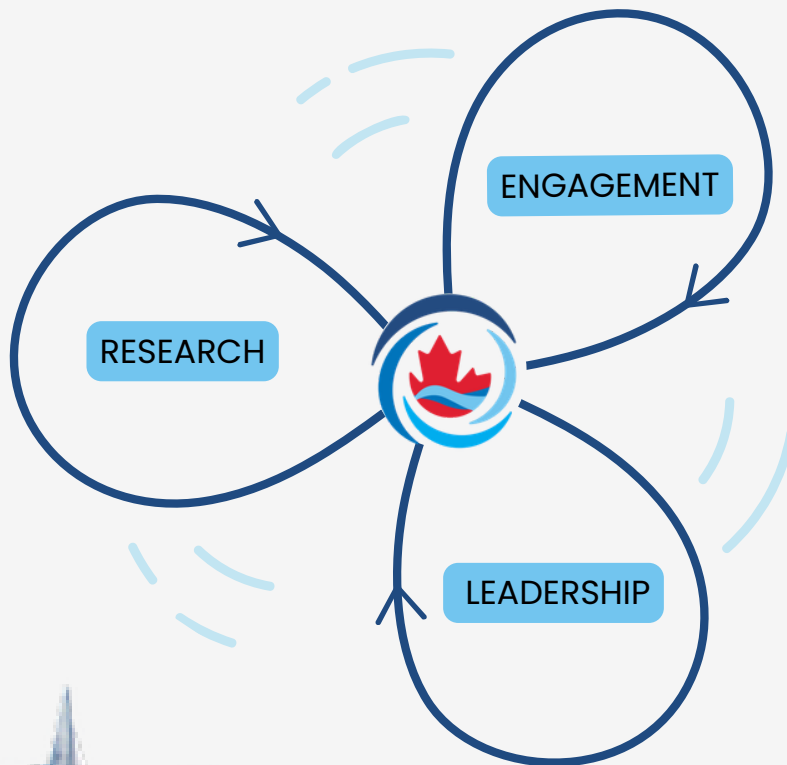




MOMENTUM

The Centre for Ocean Literacy Collaboration operates as a living lab dedicated to high impact public ocean engagement.

We identify catalysts for ocean literacy. We study the ways people engage with those catalysts. We track public perceptions to understand how people think about the ocean, their concerns, and their willingness to change activities, habits, or choices to benefit the ocean. Then we share all of this knowledge and insight with our community of partners.





HOW WE MEASURE IMPACT

Impact means growing an ocean-connected society. Impact flows from people learning something about the ocean, feeling a deeper connection to it, and carrying forward a clearer sense on how to care for it. That's why COLC's key initiatives focus on creating positive shifts in ocean knowledge, ocean values, and ocean actions.

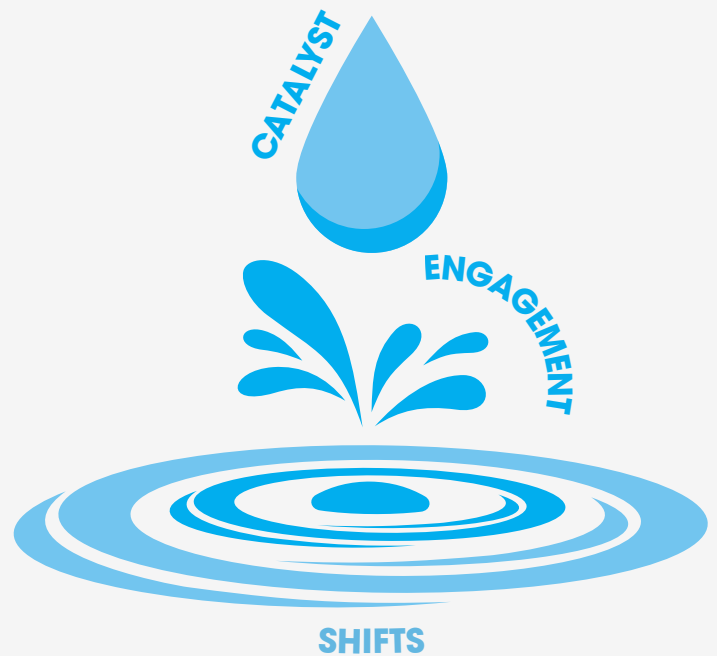
Shifts may occur across all scales, from individuals to organizations, communities, and sectors, each shaping and being shaped by the other. As ocean-society connections deepen, momentum builds, generating a wave of lasting change.

THE IMPACT MODEL

To initiate impact, ocean actors first create or circulate a **catalyst**. Catalysts are events, tools, experiences, resources, or funding opportunities that build knowledge and connections, and create opportunities for people to contribute to a healthy ocean.

People interact with a catalyst, increasing their understanding, appreciation, capacity, or willingness to act. The frequency and depth of these interactions is measured by **engagement** metrics, such as participation and usage.

By examining these approaches and the shifts they create, we gain insights into what makes for effective public ocean engagement.





REPRESENTATION AS PART OF IMPACT

When measuring impact, COLC also looks at representation amongst both catalysts and the participants in order to better understand the depth and potential longevity of the impact.

Representation measures essential to ocean literacy efforts in Canada include:

AGE



GEOGRAPHY



LANGUAGES



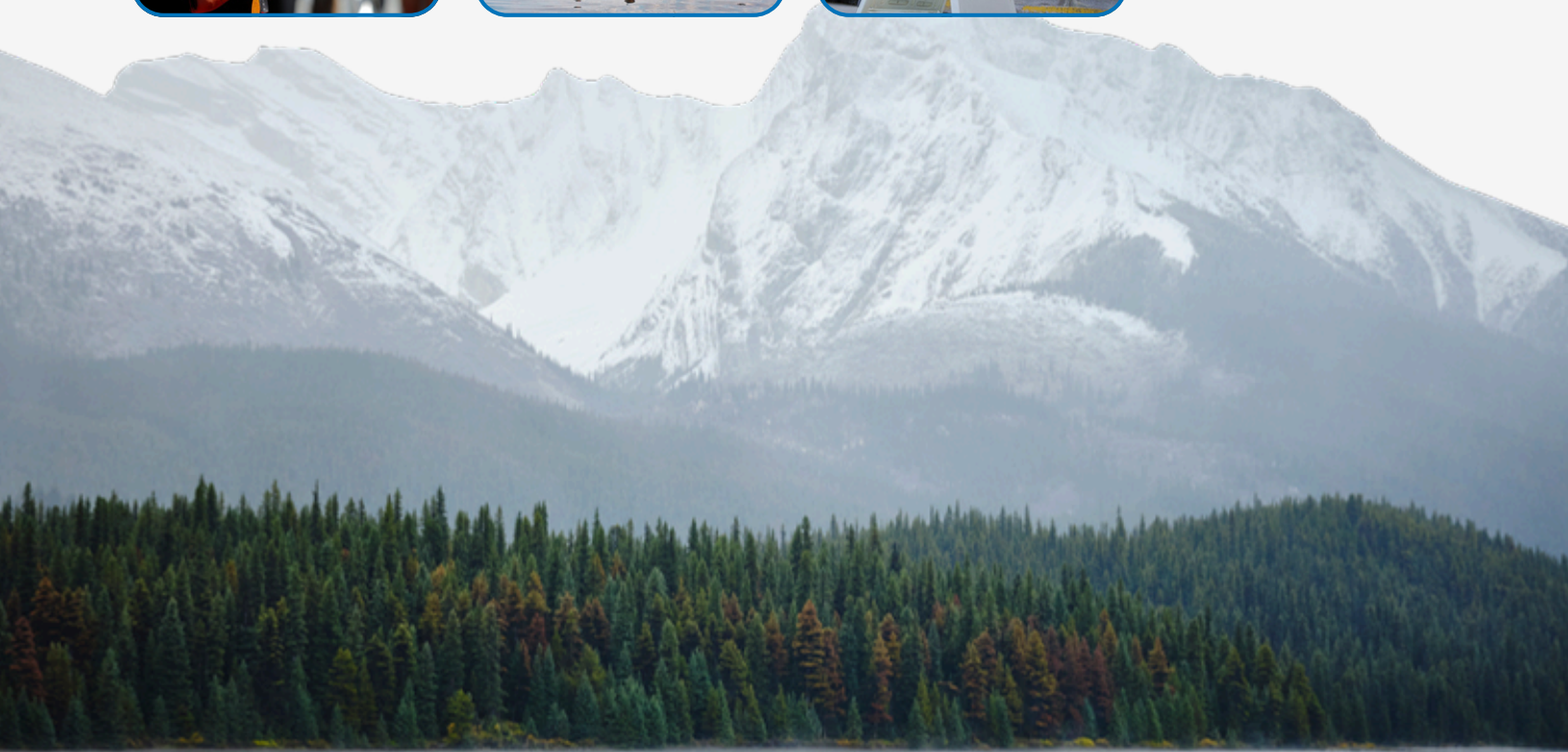
INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP



FRESHWATER CONNECTIVITY



SECTOR PARTICIPATION





PRIORITY AREAS IN 2025



ENGAGEMENT

How we create impact:

Creating inclusive opportunities to strengthen emotional connections, share knowledge, and enable community-led action.

With who:

Families, youth, educators, and community groups

Key Initiatives:

- 1: Ocean Week Canada
- 2: Ocean Literacy Community Grants
- 3: Blue Learning



RESEARCH

How we create impact:

Using public ocean perceptions research and impact measurement to turn awareness into action.

With who:

Ocean sector professionals, researchers, policy-makers, and nonprofit organizations

Key Initiatives:

4. Public Ocean Perceptions Research



LEADERSHIP

How we create impact:

Sharing key research and engagement insights across broader networks of ocean actors. Building the foundation for coordinated, effective, national and global action.

With who:

Ocean sector leaders, governments and policy-makers, international ocean and research associations

Key Initiatives:

5. Leadership and Knowledge Mobilization



KEY INITIATIVE #1: OCEAN WEEK CANADA



Ocean Week Canada is a public celebration of the ocean from coast to coast to coast. The annual festival takes place June 1-8. It is the largest national ocean engagement event of its kind.

Ocean Week Canada is both a celebration and a living lab. Through collaboration with our regional hub and event host partners, Ocean Week Canada helps us understand what activities and approaches help to grow an ocean-connected society.

Three catalysts this year helped to create engagement experiences that resulted in positive shifts in ocean knowledge, ocean values, and ocean actions: the Ocean Week Canada national program of events, a new toolkit for regional hubs, and the high-impact event resource for hosts - all found at oceanweek.ca.



318
events



558
partners



\$615,791
investment



166,275
uses of digital resources



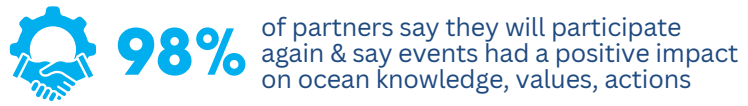
2,500
media stories



143,704
digital community members



12 MILLION
social media and ad impressions



98%

of partners say they will participate again & say events had a positive impact on ocean knowledge, values, actions

[Read the Ocean Week Canada 2025 Impact Report](#)

oceanweek.ca







KEY INITIATIVE #2: OCEAN LITERACY COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Community Grants Program provides accessible funding opportunities to help community organizations and artists mobilize ocean knowledge, build ocean connections, and celebrate ocean culture.

Community Grants are a key component of our living lab, allowing COLC to identify high impact approaches to knowledge mobilization and public engagement, test ideas, and develop insights that benefit all ocean actors.

Seven grant streams this year helped to strengthen ocean-society connections: Blue Creator Grants, Ocean Week Canada Community Event Grants, Ocean Week Canada Regional Hub Grants, Ocean Week Canada Youth Ambassador Grants, UNOC3 Travel Grants for Early Career Ocean Professionals, Blue Schools Experiential Learning Grants, and Water Rangers Mini Ocean Week Canada Grants.



centreforoceanliteracy.ca/grants





KEY INITIATIVE #3: BLUE LEARNING



The Blue Learning initiative supports formal and community educators helping to create experiences that strengthen ocean knowledge, connections, and action. The initiative includes Blue Schools Canada, the Giant Floor Map program, and the Blue Learning Lab.

Blue Schools Canada is a community of practice for K-12 and informal community educators to connect and share knowledge, resources, and innovative ideas on ways to incorporate ocean-water-climate learning into their everyday teaching practice. It is the national hub of the Blue School Global Network. In 2025, twelve members received Blue Schools Experiential Grants to fund immersive marine and freshwater education experiences with their students.

The Ocean, Freshwater, and Us Giant Floor Map and the accompanying Augmented Reality (AR) App are instructional tools for immersive learning. They are used in formal education settings and at public engagement events to spark curiosity about marine conservation efforts in Canada. Twenty-two maps are in circulation across the country, in addition to a digital interactive version.

Giant Floor Maps can be requested from the **Blue Learning Lab**. The Blue Learning Lab also hosts a curated collection of engaging resources and live learning opportunities to help students learn more about the ocean. These resources are produced by leading ocean education partner organizations across Canada.



176
events



331
partners



\$218,600
investment



19,522
event attendees



16,514
users of digital resources

centreforoceanliteracy.ca/our-work/engagement/blue-schools-canada





KEY INITIATIVE #4: PUBLIC OCEAN PERCEPTIONS RESEARCH



In collaboration with partners, COLC studies how people connect with the ocean, what they care about, what motivates them, and what stands in their way. We refine our evidence-based insights through real-world testing, leading to public engagement campaigns, policy guidance, publications, and shareable strategic frameworks.

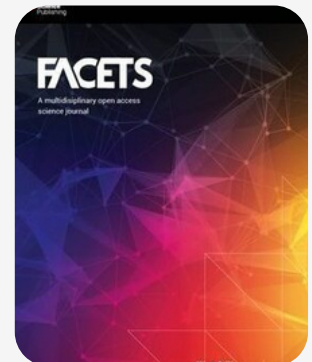
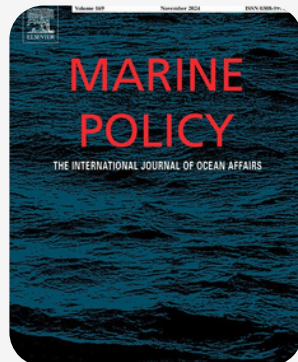
Our central public perceptions research initiative is the Ocean and Society Survey – a collaboratively designed global tool launched in 2025. The Survey helps researchers answer two questions about public perceptions:

1. How do people around the world connect with and value the ocean?
2. What influences peoples’ interests and concerns with the ocean, and their willingness and capacity to take action?

Canada was the first country to implement the Survey, and 13 other countries have since administered it. Survey results are used to shape policy and ocean sector priorities in each country, and the results are shared on a public dashboard. Look for the Canadian insights toolkits for scientists, media, and policy-makers in Summer 2026.

 50 partners	 \$171,500 investment	 1,022 people in Canada surveyed
 14 countries engaged in public perceptions research	 4 publications	 10,164 uses of digital resources

centreforoceanliteracy.ca/our-work/research/public-ocean-perceptions-research





KEY INITIATIVE #5: **LEADERSHIP AND KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION**

With the longest coastline in the world, we believe that institutions in Canada have a unique responsibility to help strengthen society-ocean connections. What we do here informs what happens globally.

COLC was created to develop the Canadian Ocean Literacy Strategy – the first of its kind in the world. Today, that strategy benefits people in communities across Canada. It has also inspired other countries to follow suit, engaging in processes to develop their own national strategies, including Wales (2025), and the United Kingdom, Scotland, and the United States all in progress.

The ocean is the foundation for life on Earth. The “ocean sector” includes people doing all types of work – policy and science, tourism and transportation, industry and innovation, culture and community. COLC plays an essential role in ensuring knowledge and insights are being shared across a wide range of disciplines and that collaboration is taking place.

Look for an updated Canadian Ocean Literacy Strategy in September 2026!



4
publications



34
partners



20
major presentations



\$235,800
investment



17,222
uses of digital resources



58,594
people in the digital community



47 ocean actors consulted for
the National Strategy 2.0

centreforoceanliteracy.ca/our-work/leadership

Here are a few examples of COLC's influence across Canada and globally:



COLC led, co-hosted, and presented at 4 official side-events during the UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France in June 2025.

COLC's Executive Director serves on the IOC-UNESCO Group of Experts for Ocean Literacy, and on the Canadian Commission for UNESCO Ocean Decade Working Group.



COLC convenes an international 'insights exchange' working group between Canada-Wales-England-Scotland on the development, implementation, and impact measurement of national ocean literacy strategies.



COLC's Executive Director was invited to be an expert at the Sao Paulo School of Advanced Science on Ocean Literacy in August 2025.





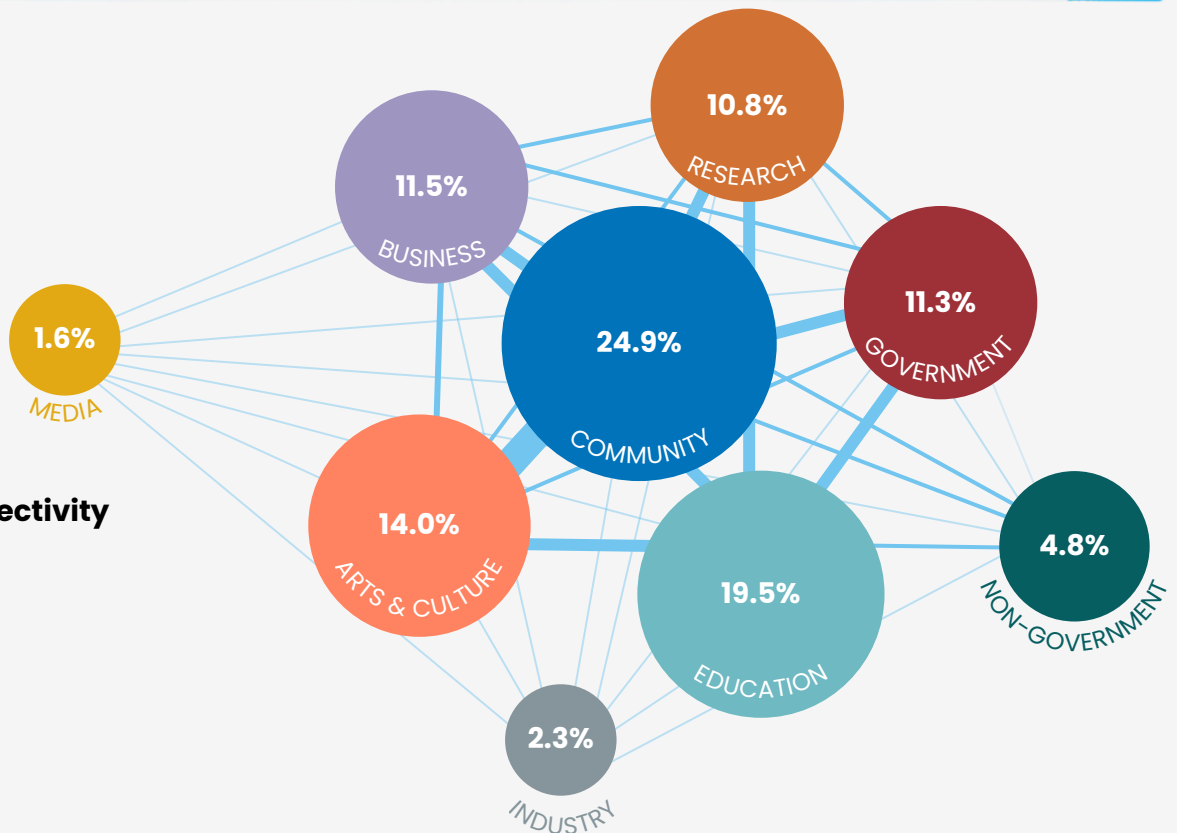
PARTNERS

In 2025, there were 897 unique partners, including organizations and individuals. Together these partners were essential to creating impact. They co-create and support key initiatives, generate and facilitate engagement in their communities, and build ocean-society connections. At the end of 2025, in collaboration with Limnology Research, COLC’s research and impact team conducted a network analysis of partner organizations (n=566, no individuals).

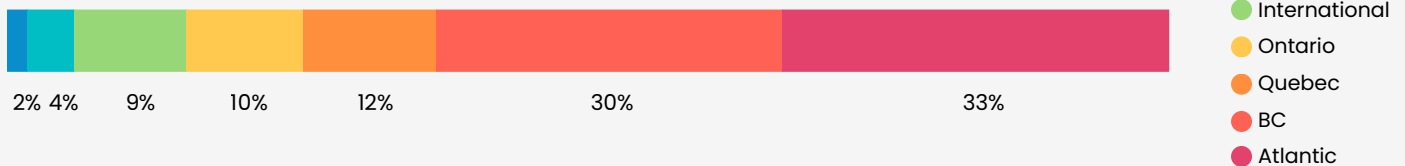
Key Findings:

- In 2025, COLC saw the largest annual intake of new organizational partners in our history (347).
- Ocean Week Canada is the primary engagement vehicle, with 85% of partners contributing to the annual celebration.
- A stable core of operational, research, and implementation partners provides the backbone for our living lab.

Partner connectivity by sector



Partner network by region





THANK YOU PARTNERS

Advancing ocean literacy in Canada is not possible by any one organization, level of government, or region. Collaboration is essential and requires both a national coordinating and community-led approach. The COLC project office team remains inspired to be working alongside so many diverse and dynamic partners across the country and globally.

Our work would not be possible without the active engagement of the following core operational partners:



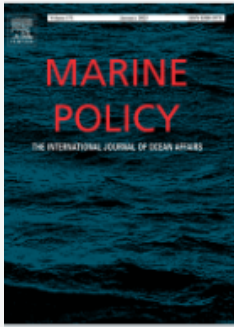
Since COLC's inception in 2018 we have collaborated with nearly 1,000 unique partner organizations. These include implementation and engagement partners, research partners, and operational partners. Ocean Week Canada, our flagship public engagement initiative, attracts the largest share of partners.

Sample of Ocean Week Canada Partners





2025 PUBLICATIONS



Human–Ocean Relationships: Exploring Alignment and Collaboration Between Ocean Literacy Research and Marine Conservation

Journal of Marine Policy, January 2025

[Read More](#)



Ocean Decade Challenge 10 Underscores Social Dynamics in Marine Sciences as Critical to Transforming Human–Ocean Relationships

International Journal of Marine Science, March 2025

[Read More](#)



Advancing Public Ocean Perceptions Research: A Guiding Approach to Strengthen Collaboration for Ocean Health

Facets, June 2025

[Read More](#)



The Ocean & Society Survey: A Global Tool for Understanding People–Ocean Connections and Mobilizing Ocean Action

Ocean & Society, July 2025

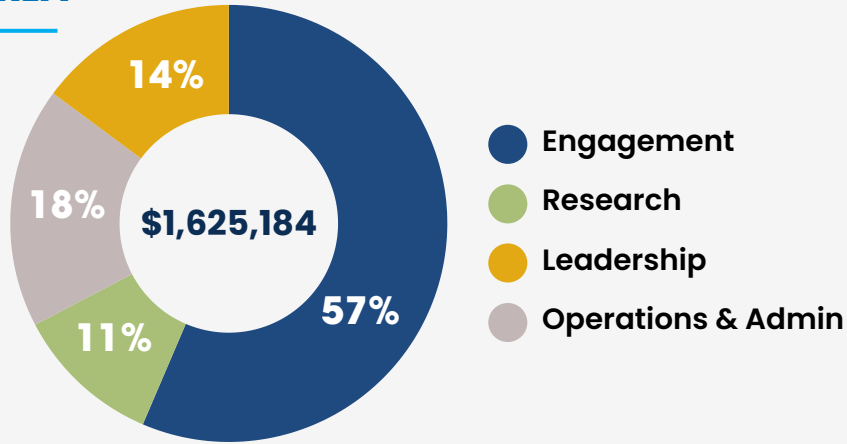
[Read More](#)

All publications are available online at centreforoceanliteracy.ca/our-work/research/publications/

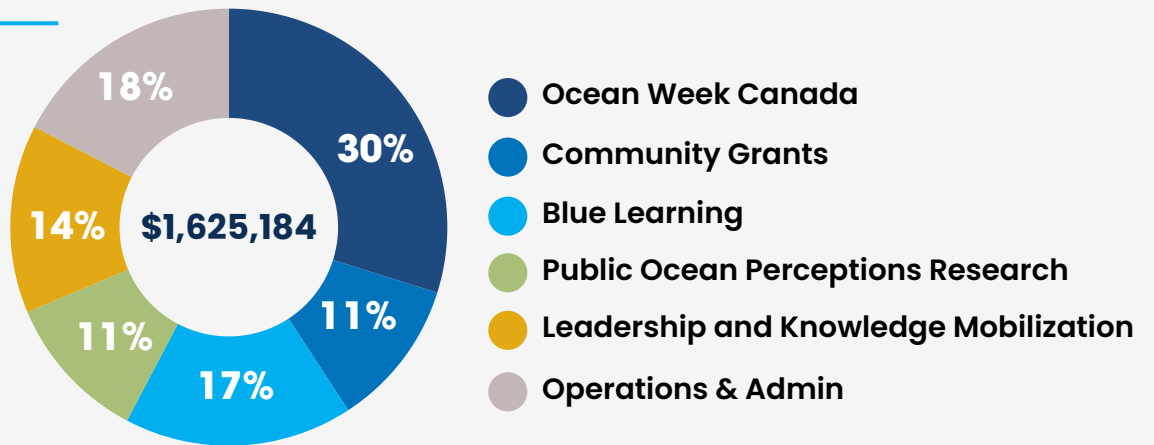


2025 BUDGET BREAKDOWN

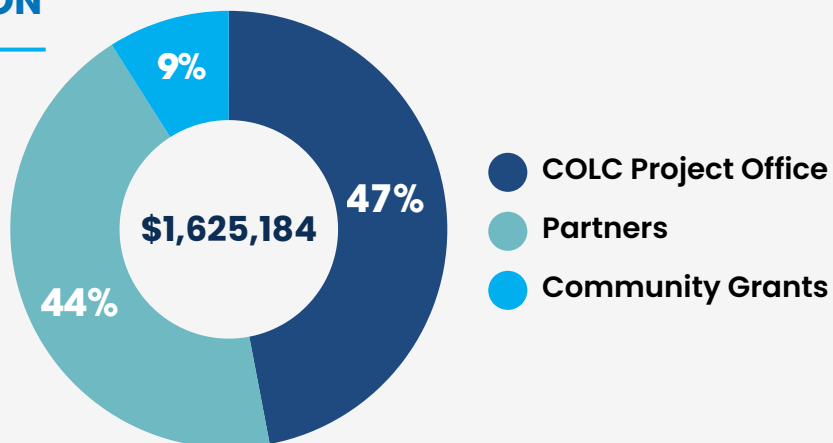
BY PRIORITY AREA



BY KEY INITIATIVE



BY DISTRIBUTION



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is published by the Centre for Ocean Literacy Collaboration (COLC). COLC is a living lab for high impact public ocean engagement. We work with partners and communities to mobilize research and knowledge into collaborative action.

Launched in 2018, and formerly known as the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition, COLC is a nationally and internationally recognized leader in ocean literacy collaboration and innovation. COLC is administratively housed at Ocean Frontier Institute at Dalhousie University.

Entremission, a Montréal-based social enterprise working in close partnership with COLC, developed the impact measurement framework in 2021 and has been collecting and analyzing impact data ever since.

Funding for the advancement of the National Strategy and the impact measurement program was made possible by a contribution from Fisheries and Oceans Canada through the Oceans Management Contribution Program.

With these ongoing evaluation, impact measurement, and reflection efforts, we hope to fuel an ongoing dialogue about how to best build an ocean-connected society.



THANK YOU!

More information about COLC's work, initiatives under the National Strategy, the impact measurement program, and ways to get involved is available at centreforoceanliteracy.ca