

Explained in 60 Seconds: The IAU National Outreach Coordinators (NOCs) Network

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The IAU National Outreach Coordinators (NOCs) are a network composed of astronomy outreach-related professionals active in national and local public engagement. With communication and accessibility at the core of the IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach (OAO)¹, this network is actively committed to bringing astronomy to everyone through the IAU-led outreach actions.

The NOC is the principal outreach national representative appointed under the IAU outreach structure, coordinated by the IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach (OAO). The primary role of the NOC is to encourage astronomy outreach activities in their country. The three key tasks of the NOCs are to (1) implement the IAU outreach initiatives at the national level, (2) disseminate information nationally and (3) bridge the IAU with local/national outreach communities (e.g. amateur astronomers, science centres, etc.).

In 2019, the IAU celebrated one hundred years, and with it, the world united “under one sky” in a truly global celebration of astronomy. With the IAU OAO network in place, and with a focus on representativeness and localisation to increase impact at local and regional levels, the NOCs and their National Committees composed by professional and amateur astronomers, outreach professionals and formal educators to increase reach and impact, were a focal point for the high visibility and impact of this IAU milestone.

In the next decade, the role of the NOC will continue to be paramount in implementing the IAU strategic vision² for astronomy communication and outreach, engaging with the amateur astronomy groups within each country, helping to spread the word about the dark and quiet sky initiatives and to promote citizen science projects in their communities. The IAU envisions the IAU

National Outreach Coordinators as bridge-builders, facilitating access to astronomical information across communities, from professional astronomers to the general public, and continuing the IAU pursuit of taking astronomy to all in years to come.

Notes

¹ The IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach (OAO) is a joint venture between the International Astronomical Union (IAU) and the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan (NAOJ) and is primarily responsible for coordinating the IAU's communication and outreach initiatives and to manage the international network of IAU Outreach National Coordinators in more than 130 countries.

² IAU Strategic Plan 2020-2030: https://www.iau.org/static/administration/about/strategic_plan/strategicplan-2020-2030.pdf

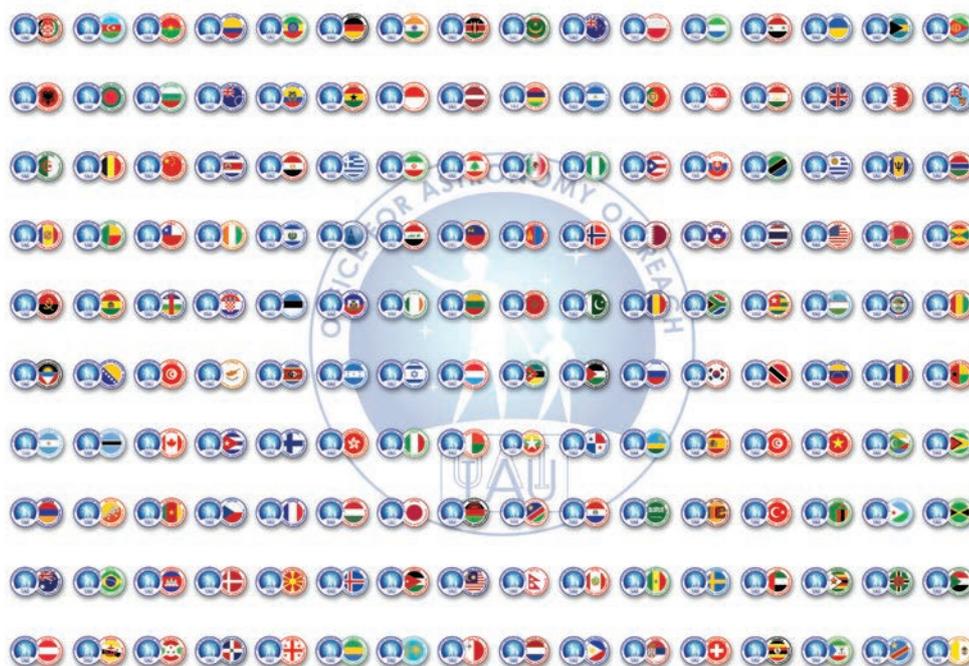


Figure 1. Mosaic of all NOC logos, with the OAO logo at its centre. Credit: IAU OAO