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Implementation of the strategic plan of the International Seabed Authority for the period 2019–2023

Implementation of the strategic plan of the International Seabed Authority: draft performance indicators for the period 2019–2023

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. At its twenty-fourth session, the Assembly adopted the strategic plan of the International Seabed Authority for the period 2019–2023 ([ISBA/24/A/10](#)).
2. As the next step in the development of the strategic plan, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a high-level action plan and to include key performance indicators and a list of outputs for the period 2019–2023, taking into account available financial and human resources (*ibid.*, para. 3). A draft high-level action plan ([ISBA/25/A/L.2](#)) will be submitted to the Assembly for consideration and adoption during the present session of the Authority.
3. The present report supplements the draft high-level action plan by providing draft performance indicators developed to assess the performance of the Authority towards implementing the strategic directions set out in the strategic plan (see annex). The draft performance indicators are accompanied by a short description of their rationale.

II. Development of the performance indicators

4. The strategic plan served as the foundation for the development of the performance indicators. The indicators set out in the annex thus relate to the priorities of the Authority under each of the strategic directions. Each performance indicator has been conceived to enable the monitoring and measurement of achievements under the strategic plan throughout its five-year span.
5. It is recognized that the performance indicators will continue to be refined and perhaps even reduced in number over time, as they are reported on and used by the

* [ISBA/25/A/L.1/Rev.1](#).



Authority. The performance indicators listed in the annex integrate changes made on the basis of the comments received from stakeholders during the one-month-long public consultation, in May 2019.

6. With regard to the monitoring and assessment of progress, it should be noted that the first assessment of all performance indicators for the year 2019 (for consideration by the Assembly in 2020) should form the baseline for monitoring possible improvements against the indicators. Therefore, the first assessment of the performance indicators at the end of 2019 will present the baseline data for the rest of the period under consideration.

7. Finally, it should be noted that the ongoing development of performance indicators is a long-term process, particularly in the wake of a recently adopted strategic plan. It is therefore appropriate that the performance indicators agreed upon at this stage should be kept under review and evaluated regularly to assess their ability to monitor progress towards implementing the strategic directions.

8. The annex to the present report contains the draft performance indicators, together with a rationale and an explanation of how the indicators will contribute to assessing progress in implementing the strategic directions.

Annex

Draft performance indicators and rationale

Strategic direction 1

Realize the role of the Authority in a global context

1. As stated in the overview of the context and challenges faced by the organization in the strategic plan, one of the challenges for the International Seabed Authority is to contribute to the timely and effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development), through the implementation of the economic, environmental and social mandate assigned to it under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982.

2. A specific indicator that will enable the Authority to assess its efficiency towards meeting this objective is to be found in the programmes and initiatives developed by the organization that contribute to the achievement of relevant goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (performance indicator 1.1).

3. Furthermore, the number of strategic alliances and partnerships established with regional and global organizations provide insights into the level of involvement of the Authority in the international efforts invested in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, including for improving cooperation in the conservation and sustainable use of ocean resources (performance indicator 1.2).

4. The ratification of the key founding legal instruments is the first step towards the realization of the full role of the Authority in a global context. Therefore, the number of States that have ratified or acceded to the Convention (performance indicator 1.3), the 1994 Agreement (performance indicator 1.4) and the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Seabed Authority of 1998 are also of particular importance (performance indicator 1.5). Monitoring the rate of ratification of and accession to those instruments will enable the Authority to track their development and, if agreed upon, to initiate specific activities to encourage such ratification and accession.

5. The number of member States that have deposited charts or lists of geographical coordinates of points that establish the limits of national jurisdictions, including the delimitation of the continental shelf extending beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines of the territorial sea, with the Secretary-General is also a valuable indicator (performance indicator 1.6).

6. The consideration of the aforementioned factors for measuring the implementation of strategic direction 1 has resulted in the identification of the following indicators:

Performance indicator

- 1.1 Number of programmes and initiatives overseen by the Authority that contribute to the achievement of relevant goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- 1.2 Number of strategic alliances and partnerships established with regional and global organizations to improve cooperation in the conservation and sustainable use of ocean resources

Performance indicator

- 1.3 Number of States that have ratified or acceded to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
 - 1.4 Number of States that have ratified the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982
 - 1.5 Number of States parties that have ratified the Protocol on Privileges and Immunity of the International Seabed Authority
 - 1.6 Number of member States of the Authority that have deposited charts or lists of geographical coordinates of points that establish the limits of national jurisdictions, including the delimitation of the continental shelf extending beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines of the territorial sea, with the Secretary-General
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7. The data for performance indicators 1.2–1.6 are available and can be reported. The data for performance indicator 1.1 will become gradually available, as they depend on the implementation of the programmes and initiatives by the Authority.

Strategic direction 2**Strengthen the regulatory framework for activities in the Area**

8. The primary means by which the Authority is required to organize, carry out and control activities in the Area on behalf of mankind as a whole is to adopt and uniformly apply rules, regulations and procedures. Furthermore, it is stipulated in the 1994 Agreement that rules, regulations and procedures relating to the conduct of activities in the Area are to be adopted as those activities progress. However, as stated in the strategic plan (ISBA/24/A/10, para. 11), if regulations governing exploration have been adopted, the challenge now is to adopt sound and balanced regulations for exploitation. Therefore, the first indicator for tracking the performance of the Authority in strengthening the regulatory framework for activities in the Area should be the adoption of the rules, regulations and procedures, as well as standards and guidelines, that will cover all phases of mineral exploration and exploitation (performance indicator 2.1).

9. In addition, three other indicators are considered important. The first is the number of sponsoring States that have enacted deep seabed-related laws that govern and administer contractors' activities in the Area (performance indicator 2.2). The second is the number of technical workshops, including virtual workshops held through online collaborative tools, convened to support member States in the implementation of the legal regime governing deep seabed activities in the Area (performance indicator 2.3). The third is the number of programmes and initiatives implemented by the Authority that contribute to addressing the specific challenges faced by developing States in implementing effectively relevant international legal instruments governing activities in the Area (performance indicator 2.4).

10. The consideration of the aforementioned factors for measuring the implementation of strategic direction 2 has resulted in the identification of the following indicators:

Performance indicator

- 2.1 Adoption of rules, regulations and procedures for the conduct of activities in the Area and progress towards the adoption of the associated standards and guidelines necessary for their effective implementation
 - 2.2 Number of sponsoring States that have enacted deep seabed-related laws that govern and administer contractors' activities in the Area
 - 2.3 Number of technical and targeted workshops, including virtual workshops held through online collaborative tools, convened to support members States in the implementation of the legal regime governing deep seabed activities in the Area
 - 2.4 Number of programmes and initiatives of the Authority that contribute to addressing the specific challenges faced by developing States in implementing effectively relevant international legal instruments governing activities in the Area
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11. The data for all performance indicators currently proposed under strategic direction 2 are available and can be reported.

Strategic direction 3
Protect the marine environment

12. Ensuring effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from activities undertaken in the Area, through the development of rules, regulations and procedures, is a core component of the Authority's mandate. Accordingly, the 1994 Agreement provides that the adoption of rules, regulations and procedures incorporating applicable standards for the protection and preservation of the marine environment (1994 Agreement, annex, sect. 1, para. (5) (g)) is one of the matters on which the Authority needs to concentrate during the time between the entry into force of the Convention and the approval of the first plan of work for exploitation.

13. The performance of the Authority in achieving this goal will therefore be assessed through its capacity to adopt an adaptive, practical and technically feasible regulatory framework for the environmentally responsible management of activities in the Area, as well as the associated environmental standards and guidelines (performance indicator 3.1).

14. The number of regional environment management plans that are adopted and implemented will also provide an important indication of the performance of the Authority in fulfilling its mandate and responsibilities, as reflected in the Convention and the 1994 Agreement (performance indicator 3.2). In the same spirit, monitoring the number of areas of particular environmental interest that are established after being identified on the basis of the best available scientific information in the context of the design and adoption of regional environment management plans will provide a good indication of performance (performance indicator 3.3).

15. The Authority is also committed to ensuring the collaborative and transparent collection and sharing of environmental data. A relevant performance indicator will lie in the capacity of the Authority to ensure public access to environmental information (performance indicator 3.4).

16. The consideration of the aforementioned factors for measuring the implementation of strategic direction 3 has resulted in the identification of the following indicators:

Performance indicator

- 3.1 Adoption of adaptive, practical and technically feasible regulatory framework for the environmentally responsible management of activities in the Area, as well as of the associated environmental standards and guidelines
 - 3.2 Number of regional environmental management plans adopted and implemented
 - 3.3 Number of areas of particular environmental interest established after being identified on the basis of the best available scientific information
 - 3.4 Availability of environmental information to the general public
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17. The data for all performance indicators currently proposed under strategic direction 3 are available and can be reported.

Strategic direction 4

Promote and encourage marine scientific research in the Area

18. The focus of strategic direction 4 is the duty for the Authority to promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area, as well as the coordination and dissemination of the results of such research and analysis, when available (art. 143 (2) of the Convention). This necessarily involves the need to improve coordination among relevant stakeholders, including through the adoption of strategies designed to increase synergies and mobilize adequate resources. Consequently, the number of strategic alliances and partnerships that contribute to the achievement of strategic direction 4 will be monitored (performance indicator 4.1). Another important indicator will be the number of such strategic alliances and partnerships that contribute effectively to enhancing and expanding the sharing of data and information (performance indicator 4.3).

19. In addition, the ability of the organization to disseminate research results and analyses through its database should also be considered as a key performance indicator (performance indicator 4.2).

20. The consideration of the aforementioned factors for measuring the implementation of strategic direction 4 has resulted in the identification of the following indicators:

Performance indicator

- 4.1 Number of strategic alliances and partnerships that contribute to the promotion and encouragement of marine scientific research in the Area
 - 4.2 Number of research results and analyses, including from contractors, disseminated through the Authority's database
 - 4.3 Number of strategic alliances and partnerships that contribute to enhancing and expanding the sharing of data and information
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21. The data for all performance indicators currently proposed under strategic direction 4 are available and can be reported.

Strategic direction 5

Build capacity for developing States

22. Strategic direction 5 focuses on the role of the Authority in ensuring that capacity-building measures are developed and implemented effectively and that they

meet the needs of developing States, identified through transparent processes in which such States are fully involved (performance indicator 5.1).

23. As such, the performance of the Authority in implementing strategic direction 5 will be monitored through a series of indicators. The numbers of qualified personnel from developing States who have participated in the capacity-building activities of the Authority will of course provide an important indication of the overall performance of the programmes implemented by the Authority (performance indicator 5.2). However, it will also be important to identify the percentage of capacity-building activities with long-term impact for the receiving States (performance indicator 5.3).

24. The number of women from developing States who have participated in the Authority capacity-building programmes will also be a critical indication of the commitment of the organization to addressing the existing gender gap (performance indicator 5.4).

25. Particular attention will also be given to the number of qualified personnel who have benefited from training funded through the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area (performance indicator 5.5). Given that performance against such indicators will depend on the availability of funds in the Endowment Fund, the number of members and non-members of the Authority that have contributed to the Endowment Fund will also be monitored (performance indicators 5.6 and 5.7).

26. The consideration of the aforementioned factors for measuring the implementation of strategic direction 5 has resulted in the identification of the following indicators:

Performance indicator

- 5.1 Identification of specific capacity-building needs of developing States by developing States identified
 - 5.2 Number of qualified scientists and technical personnel from developing States who have participated in the capacity-building programmes of the Authority
 - 5.3 Percentage of capacity-building activities with long-term impact for the receiving member States
 - 5.4 Number of female qualified personnel from developing States who have participated in the capacity-building programmes of the Authority
 - 5.5 Number of qualified personnel who have benefited from training funded through the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area
 - 5.6 Number of members of the Authority that have contributed to the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area
 - 5.7 Number of non-members of the Authority that have contributed to the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area
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27. The data for performance indicators 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5–5.7 are available and can be reported. Data for performance indicators 5.3 and 5.4 need to be generated.

Strategic direction 6

Ensure fully integrated participation by developing States

28. An important part of the mandate of the Authority is to promote the participation of developing States in the activities undertaken in the Area. The first step towards

meeting that goal is to address the specific challenges faced by developing States in attending and participating in meetings of the Authority. It is therefore necessary to monitor the total number and rate of attendance of developing States members of the Authority, including landlocked and geographically disadvantaged States, small island developing States and least developed States, at official meetings of the Authority (performance indicator 6.1).

29. Dedicated voluntary trust funds have been established for the purpose of defraying the cost of participation of members of the Finance Committee, the Legal and Technical Commission and the Council. Monitoring the number of members of these organs who have benefited from such funds every year will provide a useful indication of the impact and necessity of such funds (performance indicators 6.2 and 6.3). Accordingly, monitoring the numbers of contributors, whether members of the Authority or not, to these funds will be a good indication of the efforts of the Authority in encouraging members, observers and other stakeholders to contribute to those funds (performance indicators 6.4 and 6.5).

30. Another mechanism listed in the strategic plan to ensure a fully integrated participation of developing States in activities in the Area is the identification of possible approaches to the independent operation of the Enterprise (ISBA/24/A/10, strategic direction 6.5), including the procedures and criteria for the establishment of joint ventures. Considering the importance of such a strategic objective, it should be the subject of a specific indicator (performance indicator 6.6).

31. The consideration of the aforementioned factors for measuring the implementation of strategic direction 6 has resulted in the identification of the following indicators:

Performance indicator

- 6.1 Number and percentage of developing States members of the Authority attending the meetings of the Authority (by meetings) including landlocked and disadvantaged States, small island States and least developed States
 - 6.2 Number of members of the Finance Committee and the Legal and Technical Commission from developing States who have benefited from the voluntary trust fund
 - 6.3 Number of members of the Council from developing States who have benefited from the voluntary trust fund
 - 6.4 Number of members of the Authority that have contributed to the voluntary trust funds (by fund)
 - 6.5 Number of non-members of the Authority that have contributed to the voluntary trust funds (by fund)
 - 6.6 Identification of possible approaches to the independent operation of the Enterprise, including procedures and criteria for the establishment of joint ventures
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32. The data for all performance indicators currently proposed under strategic direction 6 are available and can be reported.

Strategic direction 7

Ensure equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits

33. Strategic direction 7 focuses on the obligation for the Authority to adopt rules, regulations and procedures for the equitable sharing of financial and other economic

benefits derived from activities in the Area (art. 140 (2) of the Convention), as well as potential benefits that may be received (art. 82 (4)). The capacity of the organization to discharge this obligation will be assessed through the adoption of a mechanism that will provide for the equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits.

34. The consideration of the aforementioned factors for measuring the implementation of strategic direction 7 has resulted in the identification of the following indicator:

Performance indicator

7.1 Adoption of a mechanism for providing for the equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits

35. The data for this performance indicator are available and can be reported.

Strategic direction 8
Improve the organizational performance of the Authority

36. The purpose of strategic direction 8 is to enhance the performance of the organization as a whole, including that of the Authority's organs and subsidiary bodies and of the Secretariat. This will be assessed through the successful completion of outputs by the target date (performance indicator 8.1).

37. Assessing the overall effectiveness of the Authority also covers processes and services, as well as human and financial resources. With regard to processes and services, the development and implementation of a strategic plan, completed by a high-level action plan and other relevant workplans and planning documents necessary for the achievement of the Authority's mandate, will be a critical indicator of performance for the organization (performance indicator 8.2).

38. It will also be necessary to monitor the financial health of the Authority. This will be assessed by measuring the collection rate of annual contributions against assessed contributions (performance indicator 8.3). Monitoring the percentage of unpaid contributions by members will also be key (performance indicator 8.4). As the organization follows a more programmatic approach in the delivery of its activities, two factors will be assessed. First, to ensure that all planned activities, including capacity-building activities, are carried out, it will be of utmost importance to mobilize the necessary resources (performance indicator 8.5). Second, consideration will need to be given to developing a diverse donor base in order to reduce the risk of a funding shortfall (performance indicator 8.6).

39. The consideration of the aforementioned factors for measuring the implementation of strategic direction 8 has resulted in the identification of the following indicators:

Performance indicator

8.1 Number of outputs completed by the original target date

8.2 Adoption and implementation of the strategic plan, the high-level action plan and other relevant workplans necessary for the achievement of the Authority's mandate

8.3 Percentage of assessed contributions received from members (collection rate)

8.4 Percentage of unpaid contributions by members

Performance indicator

8.5 Percentage of extrabudgetary contributions to the budget, as well as number of new donors

8.6 Percentage of contributions provided by top-five donors

40. Data for all the performance indicators currently proposed under strategic direction 8 are in the process of being collected within the organization and can be reported.

Strategic direction 9
Commit to transparency

41. Transparency is an essential element of good governance and, therefore, a fundamental guiding principle of the Authority in the conduct of its activities. The performance of the organization in implementing strategic direction 9 will be assessed by means of four indicators. First, the number of outreach activities undertaken by the Authority to raise awareness among relevant stakeholders of its mandate and responsibilities for the Area (performance indicator 9.1). Second, the number of initiatives launched by the Authority to receive stakeholder inputs will certainly provide a good indication of the performance of the organization in implementing strategic direction 9 (performance indicator 9.2). A third indicator will be the number of official documents made available to the general public through the website of the Authority (performance indicator 9.3). Lastly, the adoption and implementation of a communications and stakeholder engagement strategy will provide an essential indication of the action of the Authority to ensure an open and meaningful dialogue with all stakeholders (performance indicator 9.4).

42. The consideration of the aforementioned factors for measuring the implementation of strategic direction 9 has resulted in the identification of the following indicators:

Performance indicator

9.1 Number of outreach activities undertaken by the Authority to raise awareness among relevant stakeholders of its mandate and responsibilities for the Area

9.2 Number of initiatives launched by the Authority to receive stakeholder inputs

9.3 Number of official documents made available to the general public through the website of the Authority

9.4 Adoption and implementation of a communications and stakeholder engagement strategy

43. Data for all the performance indicators currently proposed under strategic direction 9 are in the process of being collected within the organization and can be reported.