



ISA  
Partnership  
Fund

# REPORT

## ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ISA PARTNERSHIP FUND IN 2023-2024

NOVEMBER 2024



2021  
2030 United Nations Decade  
of Ocean Science  
for Sustainable Development

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# BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

## The International Seabed Authority Partnership Fund

The International Seabed Authority Partnership Fund (ISAPF) is a multi-donor trust fund established on 3 August 2022 by the ISA Assembly at its twenty-seventh session<sup>1</sup> pursuant to financial regulation 5.5.<sup>2</sup> The ISAPF provides a transparent mechanism through which donors can support the implementation of strategic programmatic priorities, as set out in the ISA Capacity Development Strategy<sup>3</sup> and the ISA Action Plan in support of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (MSR Action Plan).<sup>4</sup> In particular, the ISAPF aims at promoting and encouraging marine scientific research in the Area for the benefit of humankind and at contributing to dedicated capacity development programmes and activities aligned with the priority needs identified by developing Members States of ISA.

The ISAPF is administered under the terms of reference adopted upon recommendation of the Finance Committee.<sup>5</sup> It supersedes the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area.<sup>6</sup>

The Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area was established by the Assembly in 2006 to promote and encourage the conduct of collaborative marine scientific research in the international seabed area for the benefit of humankind through two main activities

- by supporting the participation of qualified scientists and technical personnel from developing countries in marine scientific research programmes and activities and
- by providing opportunities for these scientists to participate in relevant initiatives.

Since its establishment, the Endowment Fund supported 145 young scientists or government officials from 50 countries, including representatives of all regional and special interest groups.<sup>7</sup>

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1 ISA. 2022. Decision of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority relating to financial and budgetary matters (ISBA/27/A/10). Available at: [https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ISBA\\_27\\_A\\_10-2212174E.pdf](https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ISBA_27_A_10-2212174E.pdf).

2 ISA. 2000. Decision of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority concerning the financial regulations of the International Seabed Authority (ISBA/6/A/3). Available at: [https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/isba-6a-3reiss\\_0.pdf](https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/isba-6a-3reiss_0.pdf).

3 ISA. 2022. Credentials of representatives at the twenty-seventh session of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority (ISBA/27/A/12). Available at: [https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ISBA\\_27\\_A\\_12-2212175E.pdf](https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ISBA_27_A_12-2212175E.pdf).

4 ISA. 2020. Decision of the Assembly relating to the action plan of the International Seabed Authority in support of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (ISBA/26/A/17). Available at: [https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ISBA\\_26\\_A\\_17-2017623E.pdf](https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ISBA_26_A_17-2017623E.pdf).

5 ISA. 2022. Terms of reference for the International Seabed Authority Partnership Fund (ISBA/ST/SGB/2022/1). Available at: [https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ISBA\\_ST\\_SGB\\_2022\\_1.pdf](https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ISBA_ST_SGB_2022_1.pdf).

6 ISA. Endowment fund. Available at: <https://www.isa.org.jm/capacity-development-training-and-technical-assistance/endowment-fund-2>.

7 ISA. 2006. Resolution establishing an endowment fund for marine scientific research in the Area (ISBA/12/A/11). Available at: [https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/isba12-a11\\_1.pdf](https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/isba12-a11_1.pdf).

# Objectives

The terms of reference of the ISAPF set the objectives at

- a) promoting and encouraging the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area for the benefit of humankind as a whole
- b) providing qualified scientists and technical personnel from developing States with opportunities to participate in international marine scientific research programmes, including training, technical assistance and scientific cooperation programmes
- c) contributing to the implementation of the MSR Action Plan
- d) contributing to the design, development and implementation of dedicated capacity development programmes and activities aligned with the priority needs identified by developing States members of the ISA
- e) enhancing the ISA's contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

# Activities eligible for funding

The activities financed by the ISAPF include

- a) the development and implementation of marine scientific research programmes in the Area, in line with the strategic research priorities identified in the MSR Action Plan, which will benefit qualified scientists and technical personnel as well as relevant national and regional institutions from developing countries and regions
- b) the development and implementation of training programmes in line with the decision of the Assembly relating to the implementation of a programmatic approach to capacity development, in particular addressing the priority needs for capacity development identified by developing States members of the ISA
- c) the development and implementation of technical assistance programmes and activities that will enhance the implementation of the strategic plan of the ISA for the period 2019-2023<sup>8</sup> and its High-Level Action Plan, the marine scientific research action plan and the programmatic approach to capacity development
- d) the engagement of multilevel partnerships on the conduct of marine scientific research programmes in the Area and dissemination and sharing of their results with interested Member States, contractors, relevant ocean industry sectors, the United Nations and its funds and programmes, relevant subregional, regional and international organizations, scientific communities and relevant civil society groups.

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8 ISA. 2018. Decision of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority relating to the strategic plan of the Authority for the period 2019–2023 (ISBA/24/A/10). Available at: [https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/isba24\\_a10-en.pdf](https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/isba24_a10-en.pdf). UNCTAD. 2020. The Least Developed Countries Report 2020. Available at: <https://unctad.org/publication/least-developed-countries-report-2020>.

# ISA Partnership Fund Board

The ISAPF provides strategic guidance and direction on implementing activities and endorses strategic priorities. In line with its terms of reference, the ISAPF consists of two representatives of the Secretariat, the Chairs of the Finance Committee and the Legal and Technical Commission and eight representatives of Member States, consisting of representatives of the major donors to the ISAPF and representatives of developing countries that may be beneficiaries of the activities of the Fund, including the least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, more appropriately dubbed Big Ocean States (BOS).

As of October 2024, the Board of the ISAPF is composed of the following members:



**Mr. José Dallo Moros**  
Director, Office  
of Environmental  
Management and  
Mineral Resources



**Dr. Marie Bourrel-  
McKinnon**  
Chief of Staff and  
Head of Strategic  
Planning Unit,  
Executive Office  
of the Secretary-  
General



**Rear Admiral Md.  
Kurshed Alam**  
Secretary (Maritime  
Affairs Unit), Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs, the  
People's Republic  
of Bangladesh,  
Chair of the Finance  
Committee



**Dr. Erasmo Lara  
Cabrera**  
Consul of Mexico in  
Berlin, Chair of the  
Legal and Technical  
Commission



**H.E. Mr. Duncan Laki**  
Permanent  
Representative of  
Uganda to the United  
Nations



**H.E. Mr. Dwight  
Gardiner**  
Permanent  
Representative of  
Antigua and Barbuda  
to ISA



**H.E. Marcelo Balbi  
Calvo**  
Permanent  
Representative of  
Argentina to ISA



**Dr. Mario Sprovieri**  
Director of the  
Institute for Marine  
Science, CNR, Italy



**Prof. Fang Yinxia**  
Director General of  
the Second Institute  
of Oceanography,  
Ministry of Natural  
Resources, China



**Dr. Wan-Hyun Choi**  
President, National  
Marine Biological  
Resources Centre, the  
Republic of Korea



**Mrs. Jorun Sigrid Nossum**  
Leader, Department  
for Climate and  
Environment, Section  
Oceans, Norwegian  
Agency for Development  
Cooperation

# Contributions to the ISA Partnership Fund

In 2022, under the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the ISA Assembly decided to authorize the Secretary-General to draw down an amount not exceeding USD400,000 per year from 2022 to 2026 from the capital and accumulated interest of the ISA Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research as a contribution to the ISAPF to be used exclusively for the purposes set out in the terms of reference.<sup>9</sup> It has also been recommended that any State, contractor, international organization, academic and scientific institution, private corporation, philanthropic entity or private individual can contribute to the ISAPF.

Since its establishment, the ISAPF has received contributions from



France  
USD229,405



Russia  
USD90,024



Greece  
USD52,520



China  
USD40,000



Monaco  
USD74,047



Ireland  
USD21,440



Mexico  
USD10,000



Spain  
USD4,756

Some contributions have been earmarked to specific projects and activities, including the Seabed Sustainability Knowledge Initiative<sup>10</sup>, the Women in Deep-Sea Research Project (WIDSR)<sup>11</sup> and the Secretary-General Award<sup>12</sup> for Excellence in Deep-Sea Research, while others have been allocated by the ISAPF Board to innovative activities to catalyse marine scientific research in the Area and to develop the capacities of ISA Member States.

As of October 2024, the income of the ISAPF amounted to USD1,722,192.

9 ISA. 2022. Decision of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority relating to financial and budgetary matters (ISBA/27/A/10). Available at: [https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ISBA\\_27\\_A\\_10-2212174E.pdf](https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ISBA_27_A_10-2212174E.pdf).

10 SSKI: <https://www.isa.org.jm/sski/>

11 WIDSR: <https://www.isa.org.jm/capacity-development-training-and-technical-assistance/widsr-project/>


12 SG Award: <https://www.isa.org.jm/isa-voluntary-commitments/sgs-award-for-excellence-in-deep-sea-research/>


# ISAPF ACTIVITIES IN 2023

The ISAPF Board held its first meeting on 1 June 2023, discussing the development of guiding criteria for the selection of projects and activities to streamline its work in the endorsement of strategic priorities and determination of proposed grants in line with the terms of reference. The ISAPF Board also endorsed the implementation of three projects for a total amount of USD327,000:

## Enhancing capacity and knowledge-sharing in meiofauna research through the establishment of a “MeioScool”

 In partnership with Ifremer

 Funding allocated: USD172,000

 Project status: a grant agreement with Ifremer is being finalized

Meiofauna is one of the most abundant and diversified components of biological communities found on sea floor habitats from coastal to deep-sea environments. In 2013, Ifremer, France, created the MeioScool, a series of workshops and summer schools. The main objective of MeioScool is to bring together several meiofaunal experts to increase awareness of the fundamental role of meiofauna in marine ecosystems by training students and researchers in several complementary disciplines and stimulating a new generation of meiobenthologists. The project aims to enhance capacity and knowledge-sharing by strengthening north-south and triangular cooperation. MeioScool provides capacity development and technology transfer from the developed to the developing countries, considering the existing infrastructures of the selected region. By training individuals and new mentors from developing countries, MeioScool will be able to form new generations of meiobenthologists, expanding national, regional and global networks of trainees and mentors.

Since its first edition, MeioScool has been a wellspring of cooperation and the formation of new research groups and projects revitalizing international collaborations. Meioscool will produce a “Training kit,” including a benthic imaging device, as well as digital materials and technological tools (e.g. web-based platform for image analysis), allowing post-event interactions and continued collaborations.

## Development of a training course on environmental impact assessment for activities carried out in the Area

 Funding allocated: USD100,000

 Project status: under implementation

Under Article 145 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), ISA is responsible for taking the measures necessary to ensure effective protection of the marine environment from the harmful effects that may arise from activities in the Area. The 1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of UNCLOS, Part XI, reaffirms those responsibilities by stating that between the entry into force of UNCLOS and the approval of the first workplan for exploitation, ISA shall concentrate on, inter alia, the “adoption of rules, regulations and procedures incorporating applicable standards for the protection and preservation of the marine environment.” Based on UNCLOS, Part XI and the 1994

Agreement, ISA has developed detailed and substantive provisions, regulations and recommendations related to the assessment of possible environmental impacts arising from exploration for marine minerals in the Area, which define the sort of activities that require environmental impact assessments (EIAs), the form and content of such EIAs when required, as well as guidance on baseline studies, monitoring and reporting.

As EIAs are a key component of the environmental management of activities in the Area, especially in the context of the exploitation of mineral resources, the training course aims at developing the capacity of developing countries to meaningfully participate in all its phases, from screening to stakeholder consultation.

## **Building and developing capacities of LDCs in deep-sea-related sciences, technology and innovation in support of the sustainable development of blue emerging economies**

 in partnership with the United Nations Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries

 Funding allocated: USD55,000

 (i) three-month deployment of two experts from LDCs

Project status: deployment completed

 (ii) three-month fellowship of two experts from LDCs

Project status: fellowship to be completed by the end of 2024

According to the Least Developed Countries Report 2020 issued by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, LDCs are among the world's most vulnerable economies. This is reflected in the Economic Vulnerability Index, which indicates that LDCs are 30 per cent more vulnerable than other developing countries and that they face the risk of being left further behind as the technological gap widens between them and more technologically-advanced countries. The Doha Programme of Action (DPoA) for the LDCs for 2022-2031 calls for strengthened commitments between LDCs and their development partners. It emphasizes the need that the United Nations System organizations, including specialized agencies, provide financial, technical and policy support to LDCs. The DPoA identifies six key focus areas, including capacity-building, leveraging science and technology and addressing climate change. In line with these goals, the United Nations Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries (UNTBLDC) has partnered with ISA to design and implement joint activities aimed at building the capacities of LDCs. This partnership focuses on two DPoA priority areas of the DPoA:

- investing in people in LDCs: eradicating poverty and building capacity to leave no one behind and
- leveraging the power of science, technology and innovation to fight against multidimensional vulnerabilities and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To help meet such goals, the ISAPF has sponsored the deployment and fellowship of four experts from LDCs within the ISA Secretariat.






# ISAPF ACTIVITIES IN 2024

The ISAPF Board held its second meeting on 29 January 2024 and endorsed the guiding criteria for the selection of projects, adopted a set of sub-criteria for the evaluation of activities to be supported and considered and adopted a framework for application to the ISAPF by external stakeholders, which is intended to regulate the participation of ISA stakeholders in the calls for project proposals.



At the same meeting, the ISAPF Board endorsed the implementation of the following projects:

## African Academy for Deep-Sea Diplomacy<sup>13</sup>

-  In partnership with the International Research Institute of Cameroon
-  Funding allocated: USD170,000
-  Project status: discussions on the final programme are ongoing

In July 2023, the ISA Assembly approved a memorandum of understanding between ISA and the International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC), a governmental entity established to deliver classes for African diplomats in both English and French. The memorandum of understanding foresees the creation of a dedicated curriculum on the law of the sea for African diplomats to be jointly managed by ISA and IRIC to support the development of enhanced knowledge and expertise in African countries. With the support provided by the ISAPF, ISA and IRIC have established the African Academy for Deep-Sea Diplomacy that will provide an online and in person training.

## Development of a data visualization platform of the Area for the benefit of humankind

-  Funding allocated: USD125,000
-  Project status: under implementation

Under UNCLOS, Article 144, ISA has a duty to coordinate the dissemination of the research results carried out in the Area. With the launch of its DeepData database in 2019, ISA has developed a repository to share all environmental data and information collected in the Area in an open and transparent manner.

The ISA Strategic Plan 2019-2025 and its associated High-Level Action Plan also recognize ISA needs to raise awareness among stakeholders of its mandate and responsibilities for the Area, including as it relates to the conservation and sustainable use of ocean resources and marine biodiversity. To this end, attention has been given to developing tailored communication products and information materials for raising public awareness about the contribution of ISA to advancing global knowledge and understanding of the deep-seabed and its ecosystem functions in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda. In this context, the implementation of this project will provide a visualization of available data collected by contractors to




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13 <https://www.isa.org.jm/capacity-development-training-and-technical-assistance/african-academy-for-deep-sea-diplomacy/>

- a) value the importance of the knowledge and information generated by exploration activities through the collection of unique data
- b) familiarize the public with the scale of activities carried out in the Area and
- c) increase engagement in discussions and the work of ISA based on accurate facts and figures.

## Enhancing and leveraging the knowledge of African experts in deep-sea research through the establishment of the ISA-Egypt Joint Training and Research Centre<sup>14</sup>






-  In partnership with the National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries
-  Funding allocated: USD100,000
-  Project status: completed

At its twenty-eighth session, the ISA Assembly approved a memorandum of understanding between ISA and the National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries of Egypt concerning the establishment of a joint training and research centre (JTRC) to provide training programmes in marine science and technology and techniques for marine scientific research designed to facilitate the full participation of developing States in activities in the Area.

The contribution received through the ISAPF will finance a series of tailored activities to be implemented under the ISA-Egypt JTRC to

- a) build capacity of African researchers with a focus on on-board training of research vessels
- b) design and implement dedicated training activities, including workshops on remote sensing marine applications
- c) design and implement dedicated training activities, including workshops on modelling, observations and forecasting
- d) design and implement dedicated training activities, including workshops on data acquisition, data processing, interpretation and data archiving
- e) design and implement dedicated training activities, including workshops on eDNA and deep-sea biology
- f) design and implement dedicated training activities on deep-sea literacy.

## Promoting deep-sea research in the Indian Ocean to advance knowledge and understanding in support of exploration for seabed minerals

-  In partnership with Indian Ocean Rim Association
-  Funding allocated: USD52,500
-  Project status: Discussions on a suitable date for the workshop ongoing with IORA

Given the limited understanding of the seabed in the Indian Ocean and its crucial implications for the future of surrounding countries, BOS and LDCs need to deepen their knowledge of the seabed and its environment. This includes enhancing research efforts, providing training, improving maritime information and developing innovative methods to anticipate the potential impacts of climate change on the blue economy. The seabed exploration activities and their efforts towards environmental baseline studies, seabed mapping and

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.isa.org.jm/capacity-development-training-and-technical-assistance/isa-egypt-joint-training-and-research-centre/>


general ocean assessment are key to proceeding to knowledge-based decisions and anticipating the future of the region.

Regional workshop on law of the sea, deep-sea science and environmental management planning for Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Member States is a critical initiative aimed at fostering responsible seabed exploration, environmental protection and knowledge-sharing in the Indian Ocean region. The workshop seeks to advance sustainable development, benefit-sharing and the active participation of all stakeholders through collaboration and capacity-building, ensuring a more equitable and prosperous future for the region.

Key issues to be addressed in the workshop include

- a) building together and advancing the SDGs and taking into consideration the particularity of BOSs and LDCs
- b) the regional dimension: benefit-sharing mechanism for economic and non-financial benefits derived from seabed knowledge
- c) protection and preservation of the marine environment
- d) marine scientific research and database development
- e) increasing the participation of the BOS and LDCs in the implementation of the regime of the Area and the work of ISA
- f) increased awareness of women legal experts and scientists from IORA Member States qualified in the law of the sea matters and deep-sea related research activities
- g) increased participation of women scientists from IORA Member States in deep-sea-related research.

## Advancing Caribbean blue economy through the Centre for Excellence for Oceanography and the Blue Economy

 In partnership with University of West Indies, Five Island Campus

 Funding allocated: USD100,000

 Project status: under implementation

As a key factor in the achievement of SDGs, particularly SDG 14, Life Below Water, ISA is willing to contribute to the development of institutional and technical capacity in the Caribbean region by focusing on three main areas: strengthening deep-sea research in the Caribbean region, advancing technology and innovation to support sustainable development of deep-sea mineral resources and empowering Caribbean women in deep-sea research.

To this end, and with the financial contribution of the ISAPF, ISA is organizing two workshops in the Caribbean region in partnership with the University of the West Indies, Five Island Campus, Antigua and Barbuda. The first aims to assess the immediate capacity needs of Caribbean countries in the field of marine scientific research in the Area. The second is concerned with the development of a curriculum to advance deep-sea research in the Caribbean region. It is anticipated that this workshop will enable participants to gain a better understanding of the critical elements relating to the conduct of marine scientific research and how the results of such research can effectively benefit sponsoring States. The workshop will include lectures on the legal regime governing the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area, data-collection and management, the contribution of deep-seabed mineral resources to sustainable ocean economies with a specific focus on the case of small island developing States and on the equitable sharing of non-monetary benefits from activities in the Area. The workshop will also include the launching of a regional meeting of the See Her Exceed mentoring programme.

# THE ISAPF AND THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF ISA






At its second meeting, the ISAPF Board decided to open a special call for project proposals to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of ISA. This call for proposals is aimed at showcasing the unique contribution provided by ISA to ocean governance, knowledge and protection. In line with the four pillars of the ISA mandate and the peculiar importance ISA attaches to the promotion of increased participation of women in ocean affairs, the ISAPF also accepts project proposals on the

- a) regulation and management of mineral-related activities in the Area
- b) marine scientific research in the Area
- c) protection of the marine environment in the Area
- d) equitable sharing of benefits deriving from activities in the Area
- e) contribution of ISA to the empowerment of women, especially from LDCs, LLDCs and BOSs, in ocean affairs, including ocean governance and deep-sea research.

ISA Member States, competent regional and international organizations, academic and scientific institutions, non-governmental organizations and private foundations were invited to present project proposals under category 1 (up to USD20,000), category 2 (up to USD50,000) and category 3 (up to USD100,000). For category 2 and 3 projects, applicants were required to contribute the same amount requested by the ISAPF (in-kind or financially). The ISAPF Board received 18 project proposals. After careful evaluation, at its third meeting in July 2024, it endorsed the following activities to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of ISA:






## From surface to depth: fostering deep-sea literacy in Mozambique's Early Career Ocean Professional Network Programme

-  In partnership with the Early Career Ocean Professional Network Programme (Mozambique) and Centro de Pesquisa e Tecnologias Marinhas de Moçambique
-  Funding allocated: USD20,000
-  Project status: Grant agreement with the implementing partner is being finalized

The project aims to enhance deep-sea literacy and build capacity among early career ocean professionals in Mozambique. By focusing on education, mentorship and diversity, the project seeks to empower students and early career professionals, contributing to sustainable ocean governance and equitable sharing of benefits derived from marine resources. Over a six-month period, the project will carry out a series of activities, starting with the development of educational materials and outreach to early career professionals. The workshops and training sessions will cover topics such as deep-sea ecosystems, marine resource management and sustainable ocean practices. The mentorship programme will connect early career professionals with experienced marine scientists, providing guidance and fostering collaboration.

## Women in blue: training opportunities in ocean science




-  In partnership with the Italian National Research Council
-  Funding allocated: USD98,000
-  Project status: under implementation

This initiative has been developed within the framework of the ISA-Egypt JTRC and as part of the WIDSR. It is articulated in two phases.

The first phase of the training is attending the winter school on marine geology, "Deep Sea Frontiers," organized by the Institute of Marine Sciences, one of the leading branches of the Italian National Research Council (CNR), from 27 to 31 January 2025 in Bologna, Italy, under the patronage of the most important Italian scientific societies and IODP-Italia. This advanced course offers an in-depth exploration of geological processes in the deep ocean, covering the entire life cycle of the oceanic lithosphere. Topics will include a thorough examination of abyssal regions, exploration of mid-ocean ridges, sediment analysis and the study of marine biogeology in extreme environments. The programme will also emphasize the use of cutting-edge exploration technologies, offering participants hands-on experience with state-of-the-art tools and methodologies.




Upon successful completion of the winter school, trainees will have the opportunity to participate in a research cruise on-board Gaia Blu, the research vessel owned and managed by CNR, during the second phase. The cruise will last for one week. It is scheduled to take place in March 2025. The definite date will be identified based on the cruise calendar of the Gaia Blu vessel. The cruise will be an opportunity to apply several methodologies and skills acquired during school.

## Women in science expedition

-  In partnership with the Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority
-  Funding allocated: USD100,000
-  Project status: the grant agreement with the implementing partner is being finalized

The initiative, developed within the framework of the WIDSR, consists of a research expedition led by women scientists to a never-before-studied zone in the Area in the southwest Pacific. The cruise will increase the capability of the trainees to develop their knowledge for the assessment of mineral resources in the deep sea. This will directly contribute to raising the ability of their States to develop the sustainable use of marine resources in areas under national jurisdiction.

## A methodology for adaptive management of deep-sea mining sediment plumes

-  In partnership with At depth LLC
-  Funding allocated: USD100,000
-  Project status: the grant agreement with the implementing partner is being finalized

Sediment plumes associated with deep-sea mining activities are critical factors to consider when assessing the indirect environmental impacts of these operations. The physics behind these plumes is complex, multi-scale and varies significantly based on technology, operational conditions and environmental factors. Development, integration and implementation of modelling strategies are essential, as the way data is processed and interpreted directly influences the accuracy of these assessments. This project aims at developing a detailed methodology for adaptive management that addresses the following key items:

- scoping of the role of modelling versus empirical measurements from sensors, including consideration of likely variability of plumes and key drivers of variability (e.g. sediment type, micro bathymetry, speeds-pressures, currents)
- identifying the minimum recommended monitoring assets (sensors, mobile platforms and fixed platforms) required to obtain the data needed to characterize the sediment plume caused by the deep-sea mining activity and any associated activity
- suggesting protocols to determine the monitoring strategy, deployment locations, operational parameters, data acquisition processes, etc., which will also describe how to deploy, manage and maintain the monitoring assets as a function of the type of mining activities and associated sediment plume
- suggesting protocols to implement effective numerical modelling of the sediment plumes associated with the mining activity, including the various phases of evolution of the plume from the self-driven near-field plume to the passively transported far-field plume
- recommending methodology needed to integrate the monitoring data and modelling system in order to create an effective adaptive management system
- recommending the metrics and key performance analytics to assess operationally as part of the adaptive management strategy, including best practices for the processing, storage and reporting of the adaptive management system data
- developing guidance for contractors in line with current leading practices.

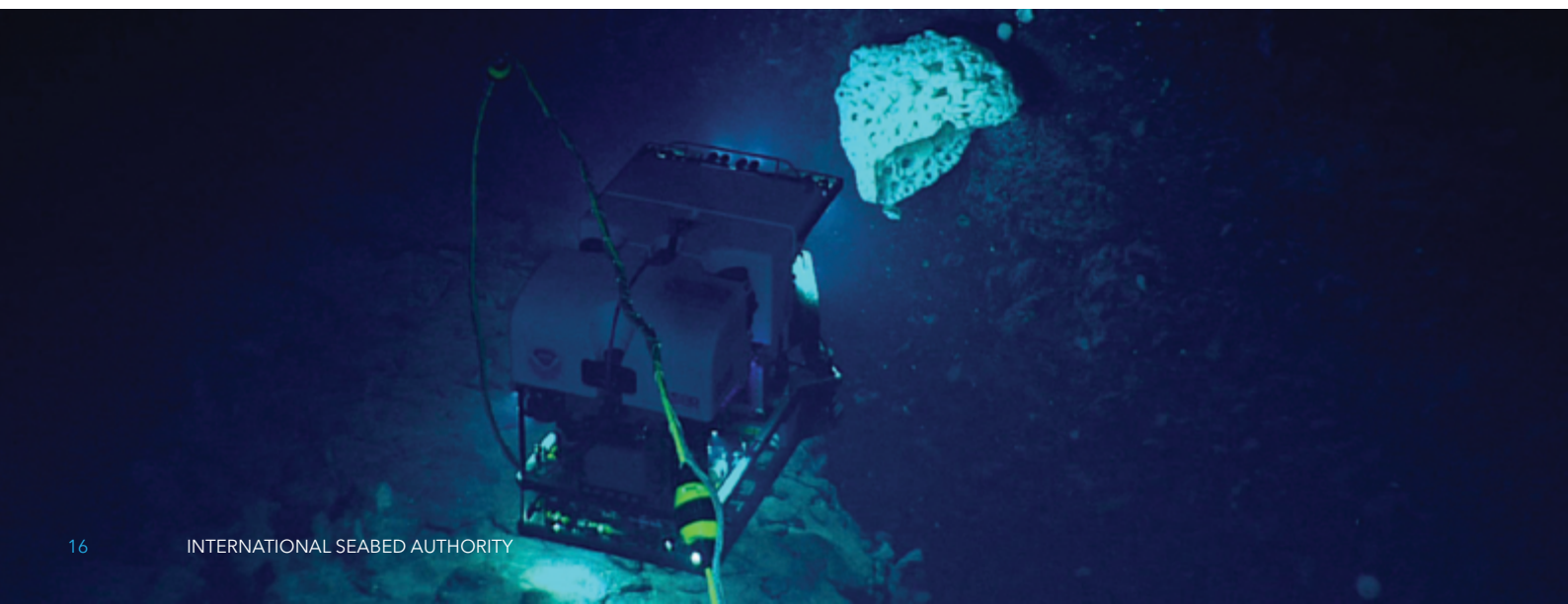
# SUMMARY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS ENDORSED BY THE ISAPF BOARD

Projects endorsed by the ISAPF Board and their contribution to the ISA Capacity Development Strategy and the ISA MSR Action Plan<sup>15</sup>

	Project	Budget (in USD)	Partner	Status	ISA Action Plan for Marine Scientific Research						ISA Capacity Development Strategy				
					SRP 1	SRP 2	SRP 3	SRP 4	SRP 5	SRP 6	KRA 1	KRA 2	KRA 3	KRA 4	KRA 5
1	Enhancing capacity and knowledge-sharing in meiofauna research through the establishment of a "MeioScool"	172,000	Ifremer	Grant agreement under negotiation	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	
2	Development of a training course on EIA for activities carried out in the Area	100,000	DHI Waters	Under implementation	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
3	Building and developing capacities of LDCs in deep-sea-related sciences, technology and innovation in support of the sustainable development of blue emerging economies in partnership with the UNBLDC	55,000	UNBLDC	The first part of the activity concluded	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
4	African Academy for Deep-Sea Diplomacy	170,000	IRIC	Negotiations ongoing							●	●	●	●	
5	Development of a data visualization platform of the Area for the benefit of humankind	125,000	Nine North	Under implementation	●	●			●			●		●	
6	Enhancing and leveraging the knowledge of African experts in deep-sea research through the establishment of the ISA-Egypt JTRC	125,000	National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries of Egypt	Partially concluded	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	

<sup>15</sup> SRP and KRA, available here: [https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/ISBA\\_26\\_A\\_4-2007068E.pdf](https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/ISBA_26_A_4-2007068E.pdf)  
[https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ISBA\\_27\\_A\\_5-2209799E.pdf](https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ISBA_27_A_5-2209799E.pdf)

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					SRP 1	SRP 2	SRP 3	SRP 4	SRP 5	SRP 6	KRA 1	KRA 2	KRA 3	KRA 4	KRA 5	
7	Promoting deep-sea research in the Indian Ocean to advance knowledge and understanding in support of exploration for seabed minerals	52,500	IORA	Negotiations ongoing								●	●			●
8	Advancing Caribbean blue economy through the Centre for Excellence for Oceanography and the Blue Economy	100,000	University of the West Indies, Five Island Campus	Under implementation			●		●	●	●	●	●			●
9	From surface to depth: fostering deep-sea literacy in Mozambique's Early Career Ocean Professional Network Programme	20,000	Instituto Oceanográfico de Moçambique	Grant agreement under negotiation					●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10	Women in blue: training opportunities in ocean science	98,000	CNR	Under development	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●
11	Women in science expedition	100,000	Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority	Negotiations ongoing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
12	A methodology for adaptive management of deep-sea mining sediment plumes	100,000	At depth LLC	Grant agreement under negotiation	●	●	●	●	●			●				







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