



# Assembly Council

Distr.: General  
15 May 2026

Original: English

## Thirty-first session

Kingston, 13–31 July 2026

Item 13 of the provisional agenda of the Assembly\*\*

### Adoption of the budget of the Authority

Agenda item 17 of the Council

### Budget of the International Seabed Authority

## Proposed budget for the International Seabed Authority for the financial period 2027–2028

### Report of the Secretary-General

## Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction and purpose of the proposal . . . . .	3
II. Strategic context and objectives of the biennium . . . . .	4
III. Presentation of the budget proposal . . . . .	5
IV. Overview of the proposed budget . . . . .	7
V. Phased implementation and medium-term outlook . . . . .	7
VI. Administrative expenditure of the secretariat . . . . .	8
A. Institutional and workforce support . . . . .	9
B. Administrative coherence and operational integrity . . . . .	12
C. Integrated administrative control systems and enterprise resource planning . . . . .	12
D. Building management, equipment and life-cycle continuity . . . . .	13
VII. Conference services . . . . .	14
VIII. Programme expenditure . . . . .	14
A. Development of the regulatory framework of activities in the Area . . . . .	14
B. Protection of the marine environment . . . . .	15

\* Reissued for technical reasons on 26 June 2026.

\*\* [ISBA/31/A/L.1](#).



C.	Data management (resources and environment) and data transformation and cybersecurity . . . . .	16
D.	Promotion and encouragement of marine scientific research in the Area . . . . .	17
E.	Strategic communications and global stakeholder engagement . . . . .	17
F.	Capacity development and technical cooperation . . . . .	18
G.	Mineral resources and mining technologies . . . . .	19
IX.	Contract management . . . . .	19
X.	Economic Planning Commission . . . . .	20
XI.	The Enterprise . . . . .	21
XII.	Scale of assessed contributions . . . . .	21
XIII.	Budget summary . . . . .	22
XIV.	Actions requested of the Finance Committee, the Council and the Assembly . . . . .	22

Annexes

I.	Proposed budget for the International Seabed Authority for the period from 1 January 2027 to 31 December 2028 . . . . .	24
II.	Estimated financing of the budget for 2027–2028 through assessed contributions, contractor overheads and miscellaneous income . . . . .	31
III.	Indicative alignment of the major budget sections and programme clusters with the Authority’s governance architecture . . . . .	32
IV.	Indicative phased and medium-term evolutionary outlook for selected enabling investments and projected budgetary requirements for the period 2027–2032 . . . . .	35
V.	Indicative office-level presentation of the proposed budgetary requirements for the financial period 2027–2028 . . . . .	40
VI.	Detailed justification for integrated administrative control systems and enterprise resource planning . . . . .	45
VII.	Executive summary of the records and information management assessment of the International Seabed Authority carried out by the Archives and Records Management Section . . . . .	48

## I. Introduction and purpose of the proposal

1. This proposed budget outlines a programme budget for the International Seabed Authority for the financial period 2027–2028, as presented by the Secretary-General.
2. This proposed budget is anchored in the Authority's evolving responsibilities under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (1994 Agreement).
3. The Authority must be prepared to transition from its exploration and research phase to the implementation and exploitation phase by optimizing its governance and operational structure. To this end, it is crucial to ensure that both institutional capabilities (skills, knowledge and expertise) and capacities (resources, time and available potential) are fully prepared to deliver on the complexity of the mandate given to the Authority. As governance, through a legislative framework consisting of rules, regulations and procedures, must precede exploitation activity, so institutional readiness must precede revenue flows.
4. Through the application of an evidence-based approach, this proposal is aimed at formulating an evolutionary budget approach based on a principle that is enshrined in the Convention, a principle that is essential for facilitating a smooth and effective governance and operational transition and for underpinning the necessary institutional preparedness. This proposal reflects the ambition required to transition the Authority from a norm-setting and exploration oversight body to a fully operational regulator of deep seabed activities in the Area. This leap includes selected enabling investments in integrated control systems, such as enterprise resource planning, which are necessary for ensuring fiduciary integrity, accountability and operational coherence as the Authority moves into an implementation-intensive regulatory phase.
5. It is worth revisiting key aspects of the evolutionary approach, endorsed in the 1994 Agreement. Its spirit is meant to ensure that new challenges can be addressed, and new approaches applied, as they arise, so that the work of the Authority's organs remains relevant to and suitable for the time and is not hindered by the inability to project into the future when negotiations took place several decades ago. These adaptations have a direct link to the ability of the Authority to optimize its ability to govern, regulate and operate effectively.
6. This proposal maintains the existing budget framework while enhancing it to better reflect the key dimensions of the Authority's governance architecture and the institutional strengthening that will be necessary over the next two years to realize a fit-for-purpose Authority.
7. Furthermore, the proposed budget is structured to support the organization in effectively, coherently and accountably fulfilling its responsibilities. This includes stronger regulatory support, improved administrative and operational systems, enhanced scientific and environmental backing and better compliance readiness and institutional coordination. It is also aimed at providing structured economic support, enhanced strategic communication and stakeholder engagement capabilities, and more ambitious and inclusive capacity-building initiatives. The proposed budget is also structured to encourage and enable member States to strengthen environmental protection in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Convention; to operationalize monitoring, inspection, compliance and enforcement mechanisms; and to develop practical synergies with broader ocean governance frameworks as they develop and mature, including with the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction.

8. The proposed budget also builds on the medium-term financial outlook previously presented by the Secretary-General in the report on financing of the International Seabed Authority and forecast budgetary requirements 2025–2030 (ISBA/28/FC/2). That report noted that, based on reasonably foreseeable scenarios, the Authority’s budgetary requirements are expected to gradually increase as its responsibilities evolve from an exploration-focused phase towards a more operational and regulatory phase.

9. A summary of the proposed budgets for the secretariat, the Economic Planning Commission and the Enterprise can be found in annex I of the present document.

## **II. Strategic context and objectives of the biennium**

10. The development of the proposed budget for the financial period 2027–2028 comes at an exciting and pivotal moment for the Authority’s institutional growth. Over the past three decades, the Authority has focused primarily on creating regulatory guidelines for research initiatives in the Area, managing exploration activities and supporting its intergovernmental and technical bodies. While these fundamental functions will continue to be mission-critical, they will also require ongoing enhancement in order to adapt to the evolving landscape of both the Authority as an institution and to that of global ocean governance writ large.

11. While acknowledging the ongoing discussions of the draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area (the mining code), the proposed budget also anticipates the significant expansion of the Authority’s responsibilities as a result of the transition from exploration to exploitation activities and that waiting until all decisions are made will put the Authority on the back foot with regard to readiness.

12. Looking ahead, it is important to recognize that the environment in which the Authority operates has become increasingly complex. The maturation of the regulatory framework, along with the growing need to increase, understand, connect and disseminate marine scientific research through fast-paced technological advancement to deliver robust environmental safeguards, highlights the significance of compliance and contract management functions. Furthermore, the potential introduction of new treaty-based mechanisms, alongside the demand for improved data and digital systems that can ensure real-time monitoring for inspection, compliance, eventual enforcement, and transparency, indicates that governance readiness is entering an exciting, but demanding, new phase.

13. This transition occurs against a broader international backdrop marked by heightened geopolitical uncertainty, ever-changing governance challenges, and threats to the very foundations of multilateral processes. Given these dynamics, the Authority’s institutional readiness, coherence and operational resilience have never been more critical. It must also be emphasized that the transition from exploration to exploitation requires active enforcement capacity.

14. In navigating this change, it is essential to strengthen the Authority’s institutional, operational and stakeholder engagement and external relations pillars. This means integrating core administrative and financial systems, which are vital in the United Nations common system for ensuring fiduciary control, transparency and accountability. The requirement to manage members’ contributions and resources related to the common heritage of humankind makes this focus particularly relevant. This baseline expectation is reflected across the United Nations system, where integrated administrative platforms constitute a core element of internal control environments supporting auditability, financial transparency and risk mitigation. In this context, the Authority’s proposed approach, which is based on a proportionate,

template-based solution leveraging shared United Nations system infrastructure, aligns with established system practice while maintaining cost discipline, implementation feasibility and fiduciary prudence.

15. The current budget exercise has revealed some structural capacity challenges that extend beyond the immediate financial period. The key priorities will include integrating operational and administrative controls systems, enhancing cross-functional alignment across crucial governance areas and ensuring a consistent focus on contract oversight, data management, strategic communications and stakeholder engagement, regulatory support and compliance readiness. These efforts will enhance the ability to respond more effectively to the Authority's evolving governance and oversight role.

16. Against this backdrop, the strategic aim of the proposed budget for 2027–2028 is to enhance the Authority's ability to function in a more integrated and operationally advanced phase of governance under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement. It should be emphasized that the proposed budget reflects the minimum institutional capability and capacity required for the Authority to fulfil its obligations under the Convention as it transitions into the exploitation era. That will be achieved only by strengthening the regulatory, operational and institutional frameworks; boosting scientific, environmental and data prowess; enhancing preparedness in compliance, oversight and contract management; advancing economic and financial governance; amplifying communications and stakeholder engagement; and building capacity-building initiatives within the governance structure.

17. This transformative journey can be embraced with confidence and enthusiasm, setting the stage for a future-ready Authority.

### **III. Presentation of the budget proposal**

18. The proposed budget is guided by broad strategic considerations supported by a documentary evidence base. Budget growth is aligned with the evolution of the Authority's mandate and institutional needs. The proposed budgetary requirements are structured and explained in a manner that promotes coherence across the principal dimensions of the Authority's governance architecture. Major enabling investments are, where appropriate, sequenced and presented through an evolutionary approach that supports sound prioritization, implementation discipline and financial prudence. The proposal also remains within the established budget framework of the Authority and is presented in a manner consistent with the respective roles of the Finance Committee, the Council and the Assembly.

19. The proposed budget for 2027–2028 is presented in accordance with the existing budget structure of the Authority: administrative expenditures of the secretariat; conference services; programme expenditures; contract management and capacity-building programmatic requirements; the Economic Planning Commission; and the Enterprise. This includes selected enabling measures, such as integrated administrative systems, which underpin control, integrity, transparency, auditability and institutional coherence across governance dimensions.

20. The proposed budget is presented through an additional strategic lens derived from the Authority's governance architecture, anchored in the obligations of its regulatory mandate. This lens helps to explain how the various sections of the budget support the principal dimensions of the Authority's work, namely, the institutional, operational, scientific, environmental, capacity-building, compliance, economic and strategic communications and engagement dimensions, with the regulatory dimension at the heart. It should be noted that, although these dimensions are listed in an order

due to the constraints of a narrative format, they are all interconnected and interdependent and the order is not meant to suggest priority or hierarchy. Rather, if any order may be attributed, it would be that of the Authority's chronological functioning, from its institutional and operational foundations through the specialized and technical work of science and capacity-building, to eventual regulatory responsibilities as implementation increases, and ending with strategic communications that support all functions. In this context, the proposed budget may be understood as supporting the following dimensions:

- (a) **Regulatory dimension**, including work on rules, procedures, standards, guidelines and related legal and policy support;
- (b) **Institutional dimension**, including the functioning of the organs of the Authority and the internal support structures of the secretariat, and United Nations System alignment;
- (c) **Operational dimension**, including integrated administrative systems, digital tools, internal workflows, records management and implementation capacity;
- (d) **Scientific dimension**, including the generation, review and use of scientific and technical knowledge relevant to activities in the Area. This dimension also informs the environmental dimension;
- (e) **Environmental dimension**, including environmental planning, monitoring, thresholds-related work, the development of regional environmental management plans, impact assessment support and related governance tools;
- (f) **Capacity-building dimension**, including ensuring inclusive participation, technical cooperation, knowledge development and implementation support for developing States;
- (g) **Compliance dimension**, including reporting, oversight, contract management, operational procedures and readiness for stronger implementation;
- (h) **Economic dimension**, including financial oversight, economic analysis and support for payment regime-related and treaty-based economic governance mechanisms;
- (i) **Communications and engagement dimension**, delivering cross-cutting functional support towards transparency, accountability, coherence and stakeholder understanding across all dimensions of the governance and operational framework.

21. This governance architecture approach gives the proposal a clearer internal approach by showing how the budget contributes to the Authority's evolving governance and operational responsibilities in an integrated way. It allows the proposed budgetary requirements to be read not only as a financial framework, but also as a practical expression of the Authority's institutional preparedness for the coming biennium. An indicative alignment of the major budget sections and programme clusters with the Authority's governance architecture is set out in annex III to the present report.

22. The proposal also applies an evolutionary and phased budgetary approach. For analytical purposes, the proposed budget distinguishes between:

- (a) **Core recurring expenditure**, which covers the regular baseline functions of the Authority and the servicing of its organs and secretariat;
- (b) **Governance-Transition Expenditure**, covering those additions and reinforcements needed in the present biennium to strengthen readiness considering evolving governance and operational requirements; and

(c) **Special-Purpose or Enabling Investments**, covering selected administrative control systems, digital and information and communications technology (ICT) security capabilities, infrastructure or other transformation-oriented, future-proofing measures that support the broader governance and operational transition.

23. This distinction allows for strategic prioritization and sequencing and helps explain the proposal as a coherent institutional response to the Authority's next phase of development. It also allows the section-by-section narrative that follows to explain the proposed budgetary requirements, both within the Authority's established financial format and in relation to the governance and operational functions they help to sustain, reinforce and progressively develop. An indicative office-level presentation of the proposed budgetary requirements is provided in annex V to the present report.

#### **IV. Overview of the proposed budget**

24. The proposed budget for the financial period 2027–2028 is organized under the established sections of the budget of the Authority supported by documentary evidence as follows: administrative expenditures of the secretariat; conference services; programme expenditures; contract management and capacity-building programmatic requirements; the Economic Planning Commission; and the Enterprise.

25. The secretariat's administrative expenditures remain the principal component of the proposed budgetary requirements, followed by conference services and programme expenditures. This reflects the Authority's institutional character and the central importance of sustaining the administrative and intergovernmental machinery of the organization while strengthening support in areas such as compliance readiness, data systems, environmental support, economic governance and operational coordination.

26. The proposed budget may therefore be read as a budgetary expression of the Authority's evolving governance and operational framework. In this context, this proposal supports the progression from a budget centred primarily on the administration of an exploration regime towards a budget that more visibly sustains integrated governance and operational readiness across the principal dimensions of the Authority's work. The estimated financing of the proposed budget through assessed contributions and contractor overheads is contained in annex II to the present report.

#### **V. Phased implementation and medium-term outlook**

27. To enhance the clarity and effectiveness of the proposal, the budgetary requirements can be assessed through a phased implementation strategy. This approach offers an insightful framework for understanding how the Authority's financial needs align with various stages of institutional enhancement and operational preparedness.

28. Adopting a phased methodology is particularly advantageous for initiatives related to systems integration, digital optimization, contract management tools, security upgrades and other foundational investments whose benefits transcend a single financial period. The biennium 2027–2028 is framed as a critical foundational phase in the governance and operational transition. Foundational investments in integrated control infrastructure, including enterprise resource planning, are sequenced early in this phase to mitigate governance and fiduciary risk before

operational complexity and financial flows increase. This phase encompasses essential activities, such as fortifying the secretariat's administrative and operational framework; advancing the integration and effectiveness of systems with the implementation of a new enterprise resource plan, which will serve as a pivotal control mechanism to bolster financial integrity, auditability, fraud risk mitigation and institutional transparency; enhancing data and ICT security capabilities; improving contract management and operational processes; strengthening regulatory, institutional, operational, scientific, environmental, capacity-building, compliance, economic and strategic communications and engagement support functions. Moreover, it includes efforts to reinforce communication and capacity-building initiatives, as relevant, and preparations for the operationalization of additional treaty-based mechanisms, contingent upon necessary decisions. An illustrative phased outlook for selected enabling investments and associated budgetary needs is detailed in annex IV of this report. These initiatives are fundamental to advancing the governance and operational transition, not merely implementing optional modernization projects.

29. The subsequent phase, projected for 2029–2030, represents a period of operational consolidation and selective expansion. Depending on the decisions made by the Authority's governing bodies and the pace of development of activities in the Area, this phase may involve further enhancement of economic and financial governance support, the ongoing development of monitoring, inspection, compliance and enforcement frameworks, the deeper integration and evolution of operational and digital systems, expanded cross-functional support to the governance organs, and continued investments in capacity-building, technical cooperation and essential administrative, security and operational infrastructures.

30. The 2031–2032 period is envisioned as a phase focused on institutional consolidation and maturity. The Authority will prioritize the stabilization, refinement and maintenance of mechanisms, systems and support infrastructure established in prior financial periods. This may encompass further refinement of the regulatory and economic governance framework; increasingly advanced operational capability for monitoring, inspection, compliance and enforcement systems; continued consolidation of quality-managed operational systems and workflows; stabilization of communication and capacity-building support frameworks; and the renewal of select digital and physical assets according to life-cycle and resilience standards.

31. This medium-term outlook fosters a proactive planning perspective and contextualizes the current proposal within a broader vision of institutional growth, consistent with the evolutionary principles outlined in the 1994 Agreement and the medium-term expenditure trends previously identified by the Secretary-General. The proposed budget for 2027–2028 thus serves as a vital link between the Authority's current governance and operational transition phase and a subsequent phase characterized by more mature regulatory, institutional, operational, scientific, environmental, capacity-building, compliance, economic and strategic communications and engagement frameworks. The phased development of essential institutional and budgetary requirements beyond 2028 is set out in annex IV of this report.

## **VI. Administrative expenditure of the secretariat**

32. The proposed budget allocation for the administrative expenditure of the secretariat amounts to \$25,372,000 for 2027–2028 compared with an approved budget of \$17,193,000 in 2025–2026, representing an increase of \$8,179,000, or 47.6 per cent. Administrative expenditure remains the largest section of the budget and the

primary vehicle through which the Authority sustains its basic institutional capabilities and capacity.

33. In the present budget cycle, the administrative expenditure of the secretariat should be understood not simply as covering routine administration, but as supporting the institutional and operational dimensions of the Authority's governance architecture. This includes staffing; common staff costs; general services; conference services; training; travel; software and subscriptions; building management; audits; records; strategic communications and stakeholder engagement support; and systems modernization.

## A. Institutional and workforce support

34. The proposed budget allocation for the secretariat's administrative expenses represents 70 per cent of the secretariat's budgetary requirements, with an increase over the financial period of \$8,179,000. Of this amount, \$7,128,000 represents increases in staff costs, including staff costs from the Office of Contracts Management and Capacity-building, previously categorized under section 4; \$880,000 represents the cost of implementing a new enterprise resource plan; and the balance of the increase, \$171,000, is due to inflationary increases in the costs of goods and services procured locally and internationally.

35. To effectively carry out the Authority's complex and interconnected mandates, the secretariat needs a dynamic, responsive and adaptable workforce that is capable of performing the functions arising from the governance and operational transition. Furthermore, the operations of a regulator-ready organization will require more subject-matter expertise, as well as the higher levels of experience needed to deliver systems and cross-function thinking across various disciplines. Currently, the secretariat has 55 established posts. However, given the expanded responsibilities anticipated for 2027–2028, the existing team will not be enough to meet the challenges ahead. This is a make-or-break moment for the secretariat as it embarks on a growth trajectory, and it must be ensured that the secretariat is fully equipped to embrace the significant tasks that lie ahead and to fulfil the mission with efficiency and impact.

36. Relying on justifiable documentary evidence, the Secretary-General proposes the establishment of nine new posts and the reclassification of one post for the financial period 2027–2028.

37. The proposed new posts are as follows:

(a) **Director, Office of Contracts Management and Capacity-Building (D-1)**: the Director provides strategic leadership, operational oversight and institutional coordination for the effective delivery of the Authority's functions related to contract life-cycle management, compliance assurance, regulatory implementation support, capacity-building, training, stakeholder interface and cross-office coordination. The Director ensures that the Office works as a core implementation mechanism within the Authority's governance architecture, helping to translate applicable regulatory frameworks, decisions and institutional requirements into coherent operational systems, standardized procedures, quality-managed workflows and strengthened institutional readiness;

(b) **Senior Legal Officer (Regulatory Affairs) (P-5)**: this post will be based in the Office of Legal Affairs, reporting to the Director. The post is critical for ensuring that the Authority's transition to exploitation is supported by a coherent, enforceable and internationally legitimate regulatory framework, consistent with obligations under the Convention. As the Authority advances towards the adoption

and implementation of the exploitation regulations framework, there is a growing need for integrated legal and regulatory oversight, policy coherence and institutional risk management. The Senior Legal Officer (Regulatory Affairs) will serve as a central node linking legal interpretation, regulatory development and strategic governance;

(c) **Senior Capacity-Building Officer (P-5)**: this post will be based in the Office of Contracts Management and Capacity-Building, reporting to the Director. The post is intended to provide senior-level strategic leadership, programme oversight and institutional coordination for the Authority's expanding capacity-building and technical cooperation portfolio. As the Authority moves into a more governance- and implementation-oriented phase, capacity-building is becoming more complex, more operational and more central to inclusive participation in the regime, particularly for developing States. The Senior Capacity-Building Officer will provide strategic direction for the implementation of the capacity development strategy; oversee programme design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation; strengthen coordination with regional centres and external partners; and ensure greater coherence across training, digital learning, technical cooperation and partnership-based initiatives. The establishment of this post is justified by the growing scale, complexity and strategic importance of the Authority's capacity-building work and by the need for stronger senior oversight to ensure institutional coherence, programme effectiveness and results-based delivery;

(d) **Liaison Officer, Office of the Permanent Observer for the International Seabed Authority to the United Nations in New York (P-3)**: the New York Liaison Office is central to the Authority's engagement with member States and the wider United Nations system and is where most stakeholders and intergovernmental processes relevant to the Authority are based. As the Authority assumes expanded responsibilities under the mining code, engagement in New York has evolved from periodic outreach to sustained coordination and representation. The Officer will maintain high-level engagement with Permanent Missions, facilitate intergovernmental processes and represent the Office of the Secretary-General in politically sensitive contexts requiring independent judgment and professional representational authority. Establishing a P-3 Liaison Officer aligns capacity with the mandate and reflects prevailing United Nations practice for liaison functions of comparable scope. The proposed post is a targeted and proportionate investment to safeguard effective engagement, ensure timely intergovernmental coordination, maintain institutional visibility and support delivery of the Authority's regulatory mandate;

(e) **Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach Officer (P-3)**: this post will be based in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority. Within delegated authority, this post will manage and maintain institutional engagement and stakeholder relationship frameworks to ensure that the Authority is informed of, and responsive to, the needs of all parties. The role is designed to support the ability of the Executive Office to effectively and efficiently respond to change; maintain institutional relationships; be fully informed on the opportunities with, and the concerns of, all stakeholders, including member States and observers; and conduct analytical tracking in a manner that is responsive to the Authority's mandate and the expectations of senior leadership. The role also facilitates coordination across the secretariat to consolidate inputs, ensure consistency and timely delivery for the Authority's external engagements, including mission, bilateral and intergovernmental process preparation and follow-up. It should be noted that the administration of the previous Secretary-General also identified this as a core need, but at the P-4 level;

(f) **Security and Safety Officer (P-3)**: this post will be based in the Office for Administrative Services under the direct supervision of the Director of the Office. Its establishment responds to the findings of the Department of Safety and Security physical security assessment conducted in February 2026, which identified significant security vulnerabilities at the Authority's headquarters and the Jamaica Conference Centre requiring the implementation of mandated security risk management measures. As the Authority transitions to a regulatory role under the mining code, the scale, frequency and visibility of operations – including annual sessions and other high-level meetings involving member State delegations – are expected to increase, resulting in heightened security, safety and operational coordination requirements. Strengthening internal professional capacity is therefore necessary to ensure compliance with United Nations security management frameworks, effective coordination with the Department of Safety and Security and host country authorities, and appropriate security arrangements for staff, facilities and member State participants. The proposed post is a targeted and cost-effective measure to address an identified capacity gap and support the safe, secure and orderly conduct of the Authority's work in fulfilment of its mandate;

(g) **Associate Conference Management Officer (P-2)**: this post will be based in the Office of Legal Affairs. It is critical to the Authority, which currently lacks a dedicated conference management team, unlike similar international organizations that provide secretariat services to member States. The incumbent will track documentation and publications at each stage of the publishing workflow and ensure that documentation is formatted, proofread and published in the six official languages of the Authority. The incumbent will also oversee the preparation, submission, editing, translation and distribution of official documents in accordance with United Nations formatting standards. The incumbent will also support the work of legal officers who serve as secretaries during the meetings of the Assembly, the Council, the Legal and Technical Committee and the Finance Committee. The incumbent will also assist the Authority in ensuring that meetings follow established diplomatic protocols, including assisting delegates and secretariats with conference-related queries during sessions;

(h) **Associate Capacity Development Officer (P-2)**: reporting to the Programme Management Officer (Capacity-Building), the Associate Capacity Development Officer will support the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of capacity development programmes and activities aligned with the Authority's strategic plan and capacity development strategy. The post will also support coordination with regional centres and partners, strengthen programme monitoring and reporting and contribute to the delivery of regional workshops, digital learning initiatives and other capacity development activities. Its establishment is justified by the growing scale, complexity and operational demands of the Authority's expanding capacity development portfolio, which includes increased member State engagement, partnerships and programme implementation requirements. Dedicated programmatic support is necessary to ensure structured coordination, effective delivery and results-based management of capacity development activities;

(i) **Capacity Development Officer (NO-C)**: reporting to the Programme Management Officer (Capacity-Building), the Capacity Development Officer will manage, maintain and further develop the Authority's Deep Dive e-learning programme and related digital learning activities. The post will support content coordination, user engagement, programme delivery and continuous improvement of the platform, while ensuring alignment with the Authority's strategic plan and capacity development strategy and evolving member State needs. Its establishment is justified by the growing importance of digital learning within the Authority's expanding capacity development portfolio and increasing demand for accessible,

scalable and continuous learning opportunities for developing member States. Dedicated operational support is required to ensure sustainability, effective management and continued development of the Deep Dive platform and related digital learning initiatives.

38. The post proposed to be reclassified is described below.

**Programme Officer (P-2 to P-3):** this post is based in the Office of Stewardship, Environment and Resources. The primary responsibility of the incumbent will be to implement initiatives and facilitate the science-policy interface related to environmental management of activities in the Area. This work includes providing policy inputs for strategic planning and implementation of activities on advancing deep-sea science; developing environmental management measures; and coordinating support for the Authority's collaboration with bodies under the relevant global and regional instruments and frameworks, especially the secretariat of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction on topics related to science and environmental protection.

39. In presenting the establishment and reclassification of the above posts, it is vital to clarify that staff-related increases represent more than just administrative growth; they are essential investments in the Authority's ability to execute increasingly integrated and technically complex governance functions. Any modifications to staffing are justified by functional necessity and are aligned with the Authority's institutional coherence. In addition, the functions of the above posts have been designed with thorough internal review by senior management, officially classified in the portal of the United Nations Global Centre for Human Resources Services and carefully aligned with the strategic objectives of each programme under the Authority's responsibility.

## **B. Administrative coherence and operational integrity**

40. The administrative expenditure of the secretariat also covers those non-post expenditures necessary for the orderly functioning of the Authority as an institution. These include training, official travel, communications technology, supplies, United Nations common system-related expenses, audit fees, miscellaneous services, building management and software subscriptions. Collectively, these items sustain the operational continuity, reliability and integrity of the secretariat.

41. In a budget related to the governance and operational transition, these expenditures are not residual administrative overhead, but part of the enabling framework that allows the entirety of the Authority's institutional, regulatory, scientific, environmental and compliance functions to operate effectively. Administrative expenditure also includes core investments in systems and control environments required to ensure institutional integrity, auditability, compliance, digital readiness and effective governance. In this context, administrative coherence depends increasingly on the availability of integrated system-based controls capable of supporting auditability, segregation of duties and the consistent application of United Nations rules, financial regulations and internal control standards.

## **C. Integrated administrative control systems and enterprise resource planning**

42. As the Authority transitions from an exploration-centred regime towards the implementation of the exploitation regulations, it is entering a new phase of its mandate, which will require it to function as a fully operational regulator that

manages and oversees all activities in the Area. This transition entails increased and sustained financial flows, more complex contractual and economic arrangements, enhanced monitoring, inspection, compliance and enforcement obligations and heightened scrutiny by member States and oversight bodies.

43. In this context, the strength of the Authority's internal control environment determines institutional integrity and credibility, anchored in accountability. Integrated enterprise resource planning systems are not discretionary administrative tools but rather constitute the baseline governance infrastructure required to ensure fiduciary control, auditability, transparency and effective risk mitigation. Across the United Nations system, integrated enterprise resource planning platforms form a core element of internal control frameworks, supporting compliance with international public-sector accounting standards, the prudent stewardship of assessed contributions and the mitigation of key institutional risks, including fraud.

44. At present, the Authority's administrative and operational processes remain fragmented and largely manual. While an off-the-shelf enterprise resource planning system is in place, only limited aspects of financial processing are system-enabled due to licensing and cost constraints. Core control functions – including human resources, procurement, payroll, budgeting and integrated reporting – remain partially or largely outside an integrated system environment. While manageable under an exploration-centred operating model, this configuration is no longer aligned with the Authority's evolving regulatory responsibilities.

45. The proposed implementation of an enterprise resource planning system should therefore be understood as foundational governance control infrastructure that enables regulatory decisions to be translated into structured, traceable and auditable operational processes. It constitutes the operational backbone through which regulatory, compliance, economic and institutional responsibilities are made enforceable in practice.

46. Following an assessment of options within the United Nations common system, the Authority proposes to implement an enterprise resource planning solution through the United Nations Development Programme's Quantum platform. This approach reflects a proportionate, system-aligned and risk-controlled choice. Quantum is designed in conformity with United Nations administrative, financial, human resources and procurement regulations and reflects governance arrangements endorsed by Member States within the United Nations system. Its use avoids the need for costly and risk-exposing re-engineering of United Nations rules and procedures that would otherwise be required when adapting commercial systems.

47. The implementation will follow a template-based approach, limited to core control functions, that enables accelerated deployment, minimized customization, reduced long-term maintenance burden and scalability, in line with the Authority's evolving governance needs. Further technical and system-level justification is provided in annex VI.

#### **D. Building management, equipment and life-cycle continuity**

48. The administrative expenditure of the secretariat contains expenditure lines for building management, equipment and furniture, information technology and maintenance. The current budgetary requirements are in the amount of \$1,138,000 for building management, \$74,000 for acquisition of equipment and furniture and \$81,000 for rental and maintenance of equipment and furniture over the biennium.

49. These items may usefully be presented through the logic of life-cycle continuity and operational resilience. They are intended to maintain continuity of operations,

reduce the risk of disruption and avoid the accumulation of deferred maintenance and obsolescence-related costs.

## **VII. Conference services**

50. Conference services are a vital element in fulfilling the budgetary needs of the Authority. For the 2027–2028 period, the budgetary requirements stand at \$4,530,000, which, compared with the 2025–2026 budget of \$3,407,000, represents an increase of \$1,123,000, or 33.0 per cent.

51. It is strategically crucial to view conference services as integral to the institutional and regulatory frameworks that underpin the Authority’s governance structure and enable the Authority’s organs to deliver effectively. The functionality of the Assembly, the Council, the Finance Committee, the Legal and Technical Commission and other related bodies all hinge on the provision of comprehensive conference services. Currently, the implementation of conference services is mainly manual, which consumes time, is vulnerable to human error and does not allow for efficient and continuous knowledge management between meetings. A majority of United Nations agencies utilize automated services, such as Indico, that allow for the effective management of conferences, meetings and workshops and eliminate the need to start from scratch for every event.

52. In this budget, interpretation services account for \$2,327,000, documentation services \$1,100,000 and the rental of the Jamaica Conference Centre \$411,000. These allocations underscore the fact that conference services are foundational for the effective intergovernmental and technical operations of the Authority.

53. The proposed increase in funding for conference services is not only a response to inflation and cost increases in interpretation and service contracts but also reflects the growing complexity and demands of the Authority’s work. As governance structures become more intricate, the need for dependable, high-quality meeting support becomes ever more critical.

## **VIII. Programme expenditure**

54. Programme expenditure is the principal means by which the proposed budget expresses the substantive dimensions of the Authority’s governance architecture. Current budgetary requirements for programme expenditures are \$5,335,000 for 2027–2028, which, compared with the 2025–2026 budget of \$3,465,000, represents an increase of \$1,870,000, or 54.0 per cent.

55. While the formal programme numbering is retained in annex I, the narrative presentation of programme expenditure is organized below through thematic clusters aligned with the governance architecture.

### **A. Development of the regulatory framework of activities in the Area**

56. The programme “Development of the regulatory framework of activities in the Area” remains central to the Authority’s work. The proposed budget allocation for this programme is \$1,299,000 in 2027–2028. This budget allocation operationalizes the core treaty obligations of the Office of Legal Affairs rather than discretionary programming. Further justifications for this allocation are as follows: (a) provision of secretariat and conference management services to the organs and committees of the Authority; (b) finalization and continuous updating of the draft mining code; (c) legal

and regulatory oversight of exploration contracts and their implementation; (d) development of liability and dispute resolution frameworks; and (e) targeted workshops on the draft exploitation regulation, environmental liability and compliance mechanisms.

57. This programme supports the regulatory dimension of the governance architecture, including the continuing development of the regulatory framework applicable to activities in the Area, work on standards and guidelines, and related legal, technical and analytical support. It is also noted that further progress may be made towards the operationalization of the Economic Planning Commission, the development of benefit-sharing arrangements and, in due course, consideration of institutional and administrative arrangements associated with a possible common heritage fund, all of which will require substantive preparatory support. In this context, the proposed budget allocation is intended to accelerate finalization of the draft exploitation regulations. The proposed budget allocation is further aimed at reducing compliance risk and enhancing legitimacy through inclusive participation in workshops by developing States.

58. The proposed budget for this programme, therefore, moves the Authority from normative development to operational readiness. By integrating legal, economic and financial mechanisms, it ensures that the exploration and future exploitation of seabed resources is not only regulated and legally robust, but also economically viable and capable of delivering equitable financial benefits to all member States, in accordance with the Convention.

## **B. Protection of the marine environment**

59. The proposed budget allocation for the programme “Protection of the marine environment” is \$1,060,000 for 2027–2028. It is one of the clearest substantive expressions of the environmental dimension of the Authority’s governance framework.

60. During the 2027/28 period, a heavy increase in the workload under this programme is envisioned due to the adoption and implementation of rules, regulations and procedures, as well as the ongoing development of the standards and guidelines, including new regional environmental management plans and thresholds, and the entry into force of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, which will require additional efforts to ensure coordination and coherence on the protection of the environment in areas beyond national jurisdiction, particularly in the establishment of Area-based management tools.

61. The expected outputs of this programme include the development of regional environmental management plans in the priority regions as identified by the Council, including the northern Mid-Atlantic Ridge and the Indian Ocean; effective implementation of the adopted regional environmental management plans, including priority activities recommended by the Legal and Technical Commission and the strategy for regional research and monitoring identified under the respective regional environmental management plans, in line with the standardized procedure for the development, establishment and review of regional environmental management plans (ISBA/30/C/21); the development of environmental thresholds and review of reports or further assessments of events and incidents during activities in the Area to assess potential harmful effects on the marine environment; studies on the interaction between activities in the Area and other marine industries, as well as cumulative impact assessments, in collaboration with relevant international organizations; scientific and technical collaboration and strategic dialogues with relevant institutions and frameworks, in particular the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas

beyond National Jurisdiction, for developing area-based management tools, conducting environmental impact assessments, and developing standards and procedures that will ensure effective coherence and coordination and robust environmental safeguards and baselines from which impact can be monitored and activities can be iterated and adapted as necessary to ensure protection of the marine environment.

### **C. Data management (resources and environment) and data transformation and cybersecurity**

62. The programmes on data management (resources and environment) and data transformation and cybersecurity should be considered together from a strategic perspective, although they remain distinct in the budget table. For 2027–2028, the proposed budget allocation for data management (resources and environment) is \$723,000, while the proposed allocation for data transformation and cybersecurity is \$536,000.

63. These programmes are a cornerstone of the Authority’s commitment to becoming a data-driven organization with an integrated digital ecosystem, with a view to ensuring that decisions are transparent, auditable and grounded in robust evidence. They operationalize the mandates of the Convention by promoting the systematic collection, sharing and integration of data from all activities in the Area.

64. The objectives of the programmes include the enhancement of data quality, consistency, comparability and accessibility by improving data collection and processing to support the Authority’s evidence-based decision-making in regulating activities and protecting the marine environment in the Area; the promotion of data standardization and the interoperability of DeepData with other relevant databases, including the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction clearing house mechanism; the development of innovative analytical tools and data products for enabling advanced technical analyses, visualization and modelling; the strengthening of data governance and security by implementing technical systems for the secure storage, management and sharing of data; the enhancement of data security architecture and capacity to adequately manage and process all data and information related to activities in the Area while ensuring that data is made available in accordance with the FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable) data principles.

65. It should be noted that the Archives and Records Management Section of the United Nations conducted an on-site assessment in Kingston from 9 to 12 February 2026. As indicated in annex VII, the Section identified strategic risks requiring immediate attention and stated that those gaps directly affect the Authority’s ability to safeguard institutional memory, support decision-making, respond to member State inquiries and demonstrate compliance with international norms, as outlined in the paragraph below.

66. The report notes that the Authority’s decentralized information environment poses material risks to institutional continuity, regulatory integrity and scientific credibility and that “each office maintains its own records and data which lead to various risks ... including loss of records and information”. Key vulnerabilities include:

- (a) No centralized records function and inconsistent practices across offices;
- (b) High-value scientific data (DeepData) stored without backup, replication or long-term preservation planning;

(c) Reliance on personal drives and OneDrive, risking permanent loss of unique records when staff depart;

(d) No organization-wide taxonomy, metadata standard or retention schedule, limiting transparency and accountability;

(e) No off-site disaster-recovery capability, despite the fact that Jamaica is exposed to hurricanes and seismic events;

(f) SharePoint migration without retention controls, creating uncontrolled digital growth and cost exposure.

#### **D. Promotion and encouragement of marine scientific research in the Area**

67. The proposed budget allocation for the programme on promotion and encouragement of marine scientific research in the Area is \$414,500 for 2027–2028. The programme supports the scientific dimension of the governance architecture and contributes to the knowledge base required for informed institutional, environmental and regulatory decision-making.

68. The programme is focused on advancing the implementation of the Authority’s action plan for marine scientific research, adopted by the Assembly in 2020. The expected outputs of the programme include new scientific knowledge, including species descriptions, that will enhance environmental studies; advanced scientific models and frameworks for supporting environmental monitoring and cumulative impact assessments in the Area; methodologies and procedures to support standardized biological sampling and processing efforts, further enabling research collaboration on deep-sea biological and genetic studies with the secretariat of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction; integrated capacity-building efforts in all marine scientific research initiatives of the Authority, especially for developing States and women, including the development of training materials and the organization of training workshops, especially through institutional collaboration; and identification of priority knowledge needs to support effective protection of the marine environment in the Area, in support of coordinated research agendas at various levels and optimized use of existing resources.

#### **E. Strategic communications and global stakeholder engagement**

69. The proposed budget allocation for the programme on strategic communications and global stakeholder engagement, which was presented as outreach activities in the 2025–2026 budget, is \$416,000 for 2027–2028. It should be noted that the description of this programme has been modified from “communications and outreach” to “strategic communications and global stakeholder engagement” to better reflect the evolution of the function under the new administration of the Authority. Put simply, general communications are focused on the tactical, daily distribution of information (press releases, social media posts, internal updates, newsletters) to keep stakeholders informed. Strategic communications are purposeful, long-term and evidence-based and are designed to direct the narrative, influence sentiment, bring coherence to both internal and external messaging, increase understanding and encourage meaningful engagement to power high-level organizational goals. Outreach relates to messaging, whereas global engagement fosters inclusive two-way involvement and participation. Communications is frequently measured by output (e.g. number of releases), whereas strategic communications is measured by outcomes and impact (e.g. shifts in

perception). While both are needed, the latter involves a more comprehensive approach.

70. Furthermore, this programme should be understood more broadly as a cross-cutting enabling dimension. It contributes to transparency, accountability, stakeholder understanding (including by building ocean governance literacy among the media and the public), access to information, institutional coherence and confidence in the governance and operational role of the Authority. It supports the clarity and effectiveness of all dimensions by amplifying them. A core function is also providing the necessary messaging and outreach tools so that senior management can more effectively communicate across targeted stakeholder groups.

71. Reframed in this way, the programme supports not only public communication activities but also amplifies the importance of the Authority's regulatory work, the accessibility of and engagement with scientific and environmental information, the visibility of and participation in capacity development opportunities, and the broader legitimacy of the regime for a widening audience.

## **F. Capacity development and technical cooperation**

72. The proposed budget allocation for capacity development and technical cooperation for 2027–2028 is \$506,500. The programme supports inclusive participation in the international seabed regime and implementation of the common heritage of humankind by strengthening the capacity of developing States to participate effectively in the work of the Authority.

73. Guided by the capacity development strategy (ISBA/27/A/11) and strategic directions 5 and 6 of the strategic plan, the programme will expand capacity-development efforts through targeted training, regional cooperation, digital learning and strategic partnerships. During the biennium, five regional workshops will be organized for landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America, with participation from least developed countries and geographically disadvantaged States. The workshops will strengthen understanding of the legal and regulatory framework governing activities in the Area, support marine scientific research and promote knowledge and technology transfer.

74. The programme is developed under a broad and long-term vision relating to capacity development for developing States, in particular as it concerns the transition towards a more structured and impact-oriented framework through the expanded use of regional centres and partnerships, including the African Academy for Deep-Sea Diplomacy and Joint Training and Research Centres, with significant emphasis on legal, scientific, technological and data-related readiness. The secretariat will redouble its efforts to enhance and strengthen its planning, coordination and implementation of the activities of those programmes, initiatives and centres. With continued extrabudgetary support, the Authority-China and Authority-Egypt Joint Training and Research Centres will continue supporting technical capacity-building for developing member States in marine scientific research and fostering participation in activities in the Area. Building on this foundation, the secretariat will promote the establishment of a joint training and research centre between the Authority and the University of the West Indies, in partnership with Antigua and Barbuda, to strengthen human and technological capacity across the Caribbean Community and, potentially, the wider Latin American and Caribbean region. The centres will support marine scientific research, deep-sea literacy, data management and opportunities for women in deep-sea-related disciplines. In parallel, the Authority will expand digital learning through the Deep Dive e-learning platform and establish an Authority capacity

development alumni network portal to support continuous learning, knowledge exchange and long-term impact monitoring.

75. To strengthen programme effectiveness and responsiveness to member States' needs, two consultancy studies are proposed: (a) an evaluation of the Authority capacity-building initiatives, including training programmes, internships and fellowships; and (b) a needs assessment of developing member States in light of the evolving regulatory and scientific landscape of activities in the Area.

76. Non-post resources include consultants, travel and workshops. Consultancy provisions amount to \$35,000 in 2027 and \$37,500 in 2028 to support impact evaluations, survey design, data analysis and needs assessments. Travel provisions of \$75,000 in 2027 and \$77,000 in 2028 will support participation in regional workshops, international conferences and global ocean governance processes relating to capacity development for developing States, as well as coordination with regional centres and partner institutions.

77. Workshop activities remain a central component of the programme, with allocations of \$129,000 in 2027 and \$153,000 in 2028. Overall, the programme will strengthen the Authority's capacity to deliver measurable and inclusive outcomes and support the informed and equitable participation of developing States in the Authority's regulatory, scientific and institutional processes.

78. Overall, capacity development and technical cooperation for the biennium 2027–2028 will ensure the continuity and growth of the Authority's capacity development efforts while fostering inclusivity, accountability and innovation. With the addition of dedicated staff and the strengthening of monitoring frameworks, the Authority will be better positioned to deliver measurable results and uphold its commitment to ensuring that the benefits of activities in the Area are shared equitably for the benefit of all humankind. In this regard, capacity development and technical cooperation should be understood not only as a capacity development function, but also as an enabling mechanism for the more inclusive, informed and equitable participation of developing States in the Authority's evolving regulatory, scientific and institutional processes.

## **G. Mineral resources and mining technologies**

79. The proposed budget allocation for the programme on mineral resources and mining technologies is \$380,000 for 2027–2028. The programme supports the Authority's understanding of technological and resource-related developments relevant to the governance of activities in the Area.

80. The expected outputs of the programme include workshops on the innovation of technologies relating to seabed mining, effective monitoring and metal processing, including smart solutions to support low-footprint activities in the Area; the compilation and dissemination of information on existing and emerging technological solutions related to activities in the Area, especially for low-footprint activities; studies and knowledge products on geoscientific assessments, biodiversity and technologies; and knowledge products on artificial intelligence-based modelling of mineral resources and geological mapping of the Area.

## **IX. Contract management**

81. The proposed budget allocation for contract management for 2027–2028 is \$661,000, which covers travel, workshops, consultancy services, equipment and printing costs. Compared with the 2025–2026 budget of \$1,758,000, this represents a

decrease of \$1,097,000, or 62.4 per cent. The reduction reflects a change in budget presentation, as salaries and common staff costs previously included under this section are now reflected under the administrative expenditure of the secretariat.

82. During the 2027–2028 biennium, the programme will support the Authority's transition towards a more implementation-oriented regulatory framework by strengthening contractor performance oversight, operational procedures and implementation support arrangements. Key activities include the continued development of the Seabed Mining Register, annual contractors' meetings, on-site performance monitoring and the development of standard operating procedures and implementation-readiness tools.

83. Proposed non-post resources include \$297,000 for consultancy services, \$186,500 for travel and \$147,500 for workshops. These resources will support strengthened oversight, standardized contract management processes and improved institutional traceability and operational readiness. The Seabed Mining Register will function as a core operational tool for contract life cycle management, records management and future compliance-readiness.

84. The programme will also strengthen contractor-facing workflows and quality-managed operational arrangements, including standard operating procedures and related workflow tools, to improve consistency, traceability and reliability across contract management and implementation support functions. These measures will enhance institutional preparedness under the Authority's evolving regulatory framework.

85. The programme will support these measures to establish the institutional foundation for more structured implementation, compliance, and oversight arrangements under the Authority's evolving governance framework, including the potential future development of inspection and enforcement functions, subject to decisions of the organs of the Authority.

## **X. Economic Planning Commission**

86. On 18 July 2025, the Council requested ([ISBA/30/C/17](#)) the Finance Committee to provide a report ([ISBA/31/FC/6](#)) during the second part of its thirty-first session regarding the financial implications of establishing the Economic Planning Commission. A comprehensive analysis of these implications has been included in the proposed budget.

87. The Commission is expected to begin its mandate on 1 January of the year following the election by the Council of its members (see [ISBA/31/LTC/4](#)). According to the indicative timeline provided in the present proposed budget, the Commission is set to begin its work on 1 January 2028.

88. The report outlines a proposed budget allocation of \$939,500 for the Commission in 2028. The indicative budget covers costs associated with secretariat support, which includes three staff positions: Director, Policy Officer, and Administrative Assistant. In addition, it accounts for non-post costs related to Commission meetings held during Authority sessions, provisions for technical and analytical studies, and expenses associated with outreach and inter-organizational coordination.

89. The budget proposal provides for a Director position at the D-1 level, a Policy Officer at the P-4 level and an Administrative Assistant at the GS-6 level. This classification aligns with the secretariat's standard budget policy for all General Service positions, irrespective of their specific post classification.

90. In the proposed budget, the Commission is understood as part of the economic dimension of the governance architecture. Any budgetary provision for the Commission should therefore be presented as supporting the initial operationalization of this treaty-based mechanism and the strengthening of economic and financial governance within the Authority.

91. At the same time, the approach should remain prudent and phased. The purpose of the proposed provision is to support the initial functioning of the Commission, rather than to imply the immediate establishment of a fully mature permanent structure. In the medium-term perspective, the progressive maturation of the Commission may also be expected to contribute to future arrangements relating to economic planning, benefit-sharing and any institutional mechanism established to support the operationalization of a common heritage fund.

## **XI. The Enterprise**

92. The Enterprise continues to be presented in the context of progressive and treaty-based institutional development. Budgetary requirements are in the amount of \$1,038,500 for 2027–2028, including salaries and common staff costs of \$624,000, travel of \$76,000, workshops of \$200,000, ICT of \$14,000, training of \$5,000 and indirect support costs of \$119,500, which, compared with the 2025–2026 total budget of \$604,000, represents an increase of \$434,500, or 71.9 per cent.

93. The Secretary-General underscores the importance of continued dialogue on the future operationalization of the Enterprise as envisaged under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement. As the Authority advances its work to develop the regulatory framework for exploitation in the Area, consideration may appropriately be given to the pragmatic evolution of the Enterprise, considering current financial, technological and institutional circumstances. The Secretary-General emphasizes that such considerations would not entail the immediate establishment of a fully independent commercial entity; rather, they should reflect a careful and gradual process aimed at ensuring the Enterprise's relevance within the evolving regulatory framework for activities in the Area.

94. An evolutionary approach for the operationalization of the Enterprise may include, inter alia: (a) the gradual strengthening of administrative capacities within the secretariat relating to the functions of the Enterprise; (b) the identification of potential capacity development workshops and seminars with developing States; and (c) the conducting of workshops on test mining, particularly during the Enterprise's present transitional form, through the secretariat. Such initiatives will illustrate the practical and incremental operationalization of the Enterprise without immediately transforming it into a full commercial mining entity. Accordingly, the Secretary-General invites the Council and the Assembly to provide guidance on the phased institutional development of the Enterprise.

## **XII. Scale of assessed contributions**

95. In accordance with the Convention and the 1994 Agreement, the administrative expenses of the Authority are to be met by assessed contributions of members of the Authority until the Authority has sufficient funds from other sources to meet those expenses.

96. The Secretary-General estimates that the amount to be financed through assessed contributions for the financial period 2027–2028 will consist of the total

proposed budget for the period, less contractor overhead, and the agreed contribution of the European Union.

97. The contractor overhead charge applicable to exploration contracts will continue to contribute to the financing of the administrative expenses of the Authority in accordance with decisions of the Council and Assembly.

98. A detailed table showing the proposed financing of the budget through assessed contributions and other income is contained in annex II to the present report.

### **XIII. Budget summary**

99. The proposed budget seeks to ensure that the Authority is adequately equipped, in regulatory, institutional, operational, scientific, environmental, capacity-building, compliance, economic, and communications and engagement dimensions to respond to the demands of its evolving governance and operational phase under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement.

100. The proposed budget for the secretariat, the Economic Planning Commission and the Enterprise for the financial period of 2027–2028 is in the amount of \$37,876,000, consisting of \$18,877,750 for 2027 and \$18,998,250 for 2028, as detailed in annex I.

101. The proposed budget is designed as an evolutionary framework to facilitate governance and operational transition and bolster institutional preparedness. It retains the established budget sections of the Authority while providing a clearer narrative that aligns with the key aspects of the Authority’s governance structure. In addition, the proposed budget introduces an indicative medium-term outlook aimed at guiding future planning for subsequent financial periods, particularly regarding economic governance, benefit-sharing frameworks, the Common Heritage Fund and mechanisms related to inspection, compliance and enforcement.

102. Accordingly, the objective of the proposed budget is to ensure that the Authority is well-equipped – whether in terms of regulatory frameworks, institutional capacity, operational readiness, scientific guidance, environmental stewardship, capacity-building implementation, compliance measures, and economic and strategic communications and stakeholder engagement support – to meet the demands of its advancing governance phase under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement.

### **XIV. Actions requested of the Finance Committee, the Council and the Assembly**

103. The Finance Committee is invited to recommend to the Council and to the Assembly that they:

(a) Approve the proposed budget of the secretariat for the financial period 2027–2028 in the amount of \$35,898,000, including the approval of new proposed and reclassified staff posts and selected enabling investments required to maintain fiduciary control, transparency, accountability and institutional readiness during the governance transition;

(b) Approve the proposed budget of the Economic Planning Commission for the financial period 2027–2028 in the amount of \$939,500;

(c) Approve the proposed budget of the Enterprise for the financial period 2027–2028 in the amount of \$1,038,500;

(d) Authorize the Secretary-General to establish the scale of assessments for 2027 and 2028 based on the scale of assessments for the regular budget of the United Nations adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution [79/249](#), considering that the maximum assessment rate shall be 22 per cent and the minimum assessment rate 0.01 per cent;

(e) Authorize the Secretary-General, for 2027 and 2028, to transfer between sections, subsections and programmes up to 15 per cent of the amount of each section, subsection or programme as may be necessary for the efficient implementation of the budget;

(f) Urge members of the Authority to pay their assessed contributions to the budget on time and in full.

## Annex I

## Proposed budget for the International Seabed Authority for the period from 1 January 2027 to 31 December 2028

Table 1

### Proposed budget for the International Seabed Authority for the period from 1 January 2027 to 31 December 2028

(United States dollars)

<i>Section</i>	<i>Budget line</i>	<i>Approved for 2025–2026</i>	<i>Proposed 2027</i>	<i>Proposed 2028</i>	<i>Total, 2027–2028</i>	<i>Variance</i>
<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Administrative expenditure of the secretariat</b>					
	Established posts	9 123 000	6 766 000	6 818 000	13 584 000	4 461 000
	Common staff costs	5 089 000	3 821 000	3 935 000	7 756 000	2 667 000
	General temporary assistance	46 000	25 000	25 000	50 000	4 000
	Overtime	31 000	16 000	17 000	33 000	2 000
	Consultants (non-programme)	39 000	19 000	20 000	39 000	–
	Training	145 000	75 000	80 000	155 000	10 000
	Official travel (non-programme)	200 000	125 000	125 000	250 000	50 000
	Communications technology	191 000	98 000	102 000	200 000	9 000
	Library books and supplies	140 000	60 000	60 000	120 000	(20 000)
	External printing	14 000	–	–	–	(14 000)
	Supplies and materials	148 000	78 000	78 000	156 000	8 000
	Official hospitality	17 000	9 000	10 000	19 000	2 000
	Information technology	125 000	39 000	34 000	73 000	(52 000)
	Acquisition of equipment and furniture and other	133 000	37 000	37 000	74 000	(59 000)
	Rental and maintenance of equipment and furniture	47 000	55 000	26 000	81 000	34 000
	United Nations common system	255 000	130 000	135 000	265 000	10 000
	Miscellaneous services and costs	198 000	119 000	124 000	243 000	45 000
	Audit fees	42 000	24 000	24 000	48 000	6 000
	Building management	961 000	636 000	502 000	1 138 000	177 000
	International Public Sector Accounting Standards/enterprise resource planning	85 000	760 000	120 000	880 000	795 000
	Software licences and subscriptions	164 000	104 000	104 000	208 000	44 000
	<b>Total, section 1</b>	<b>17 193 000</b>	<b>12 996 000</b>	<b>12 376 000</b>	<b>25 372 000</b>	<b>8 179 000</b>

<i>Section</i>	<i>Budget line</i>	<i>Approved for 2025–2026</i>	<i>Proposed 2027</i>	<i>Proposed 2028</i>	<i>Total, 2027–2028</i>	<i>Variance</i>
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Conference services</b>					
	Printing and supplies	2 000	1 000	1 000	2 000	–
	Miscellaneous conference service costs	184 000	242 000	242 000	484 000	300 000
	Rental of Jamaica Conference Centre	174 000	193 000	218 000	411 000	237 000
	Temporary assistance (meetings)	130 000	65 000	65 000	130 000	–
	Rental of equipment	57 000	15 000	15 000	30 000	(27 000)
	Local transportation	14 000	10 000	10 000	20 000	6 000
	Interpretation services	1 460 000	1 122 000	1 205 000	2 327 000	867 000
	Documentation	1 360 000	528 000	572 000	1 100 000	(260 000)
	Reception	26 000	13 000	13 000	26 000	–
	<b>Total, section 2</b>	<b>3 407 000</b>	<b>2 189 000</b>	<b>2 341 000</b>	<b>4 530 000</b>	<b>1 123 000</b>
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Programme expenditure</b>					
<b>Programme 3.1</b>	<b>Development of the regulatory framework for activities in the Area</b>					
	Consultants	326 000	505 000	305 000	810 000	484 000
	External printing	10 000	–	–	–	(10 000)
	Travel	60 000	40 000	48 000	88 000	28 000
	Workshops	154 000	178 000	223 000	401 000	247 000
	<b>Subtotal, programme 3.1</b>	<b>550 000</b>	<b>723 000</b>	<b>576 000</b>	<b>1 299 000</b>	<b>749 000</b>
<b>Programme 3.2</b>	<b>Protection of the marine environment</b>					
	Consultants	326 000	288 000	208 000	496 000	170 000
	External printing	22 000	–	–	–	(22 000)
	Travel	114 000	57 000	57 000	114 000	–
	Workshops	271 000	160 000	290 000	450 000	179 000
	<b>Subtotal, programme 3.2</b>	<b>733 000</b>	<b>505 000</b>	<b>555 000</b>	<b>1 060 000</b>	<b>327 000</b>
<b>Programme 3.4</b>	<b>Data management (resources and environment)</b>					
	Consultants	163 000	95 000	71 000	166 000	3 000
	External printing	10 000	–	–	–	(10 000)
	Travel	49 000	24 000	25 000	49 000	–
	Workshops	147 000	36 000	51 000	87 000	(60 000)

<i>Section</i>	<i>Budget line</i>	<i>Approved for 2025–2026</i>	<i>Proposed 2027</i>	<i>Proposed 2028</i>	<i>Total, 2027–2028</i>	<i>Variance</i>
	Information technology	32 000	102 000	117 000	219 000	187 000
	Maintenance and support	163 000	88 000	114 000	202 000	39 000
	<b>Subtotal, programme 3.4</b>	<b>564 000</b>	<b>345 000</b>	<b>378 000</b>	<b>723 000</b>	<b>159 000</b>
<b>Programme 3.5</b>	<b>Promotion and encouragement of marine scientific research in the Area</b>					
	Consultants	152 000	34 000	4 000	38 000	(114 000)
	External printing	17 500	–	–	–	(17 500)
	Travel	82 000	52 000	62 000	114 000	32 000
	Workshops	163 000	138 250	124 250	262 500	99 500
	<b>Subtotal, programme 3.5</b>	<b>414 500</b>	<b>224 250</b>	<b>190 250</b>	<b>414 500</b>	<b>–</b>
<b>Programme 3.6</b>	<b>Strategic communications and global stakeholder engagement</b>					
	Consultants	135 000	94 000	97 000	191 000	56 000
	External printing	56 000	–	–	–	(56 000)
	Travel	70 000	35 000	35 000	70 000	–
	International Day of the Deep Seabed	–	25 000	25 000	50 000	50 000
	Workshops	6 000	15 000	15 000	30 000	24 000
	Marine scientific research and capacity-building amplification	–	35 000	35 000	70 000	70 000
	Equipment	17 500	2 500	2 500	5 000	(12 500)
	Training	10 000	–	–	–	(10 000)
	<b>Subtotal, programme 3.6</b>	<b>294 500</b>	<b>206 500</b>	<b>209 500</b>	<b>416 000</b>	<b>121 500</b>
<b>Programme 3.7</b>	<b>Capacity development and technical cooperation</b>					
	Consultants	38 000	35 000	37 500	72 500	34 500
	External printing	38 000	–	–	–	(38 000)
	Travel	125 000	75 000	77 000	152 000	27 000
	Workshops	190 000	129 000	153 000	282 000	92 000
	<b>Subtotal, programme 3.7</b>	<b>391 000</b>	<b>239 000</b>	<b>267 500</b>	<b>506 500</b>	<b>115 500</b>
<b>Programme 3.8</b>	<b>Mineral resources and mining technologies</b>					
	Consultants	141 000	112 000	12 000	124 000	(17 000)
	External printing	10 000	–	–	–	(10 000)

<i>Section</i>	<i>Budget line</i>	<i>Approved for 2025–2026</i>	<i>Proposed 2027</i>	<i>Proposed 2028</i>	<i>Total, 2027–2028</i>	<i>Variance</i>
	Travel	60 000	33 000	33 000	66 000	6 000
	Workshops	207 000	61 000	129 000	190 000	(17 000)
	<b>Subtotal, programme 3.8</b>	<b>418 000</b>	<b>206 000</b>	<b>174 000</b>	<b>380 000</b>	<b>(38 000)</b>
<b>Programme 3.9</b>	<b>2025 United Nations Ocean Conference</b>					
		100 000	–	–	–	(100 000)
	<b>Subtotal, programme 3.9</b>	<b>100 000</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>(100 000)</b>
<b>Programme 3.10</b>	<b>Data transformation and cybersecurity</b>					
	Consultants	–	78 000	108 000	186 000	186 000
	External printing	–	–	–	–	–
	Travel	–	24 000	17 000	41 000	41 000
	Workshops	–	26 000	27 000	53 000	53 000
	Information Technology	–	70 000	70 000	140 000	140 000
	Maintenance and support	–	62 000	54 000	116 000	116 000
	<b>Subtotal, programme 3.10</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>260 000</b>	<b>276 000</b>	<b>536 000</b>	<b>536 000</b>
<b>Total, section 3</b>		<b>3 465 000</b>	<b>2 708 750</b>	<b>2 626 250</b>	<b>5 335 000</b>	<b>1 870 000</b>
<b>Section 4</b>	<b>Contract management</b>					
	Salaries	1 000 000	–	–	–	(1 000 000)
	Common staff costs	473 000	–	–	–	(473 000)
	Travel	69 000	90 000	96 500	186 500	117 500
	Workshops	56 000	77 000	70 500	147 500	91 500
	Consultants	136 000	286 000	11 000	297 000	161 000
	Equipment and printing	24 000	15 000	15 000	30 000	6 000
<b>Total, section 4</b>		<b>1 758 000</b>	<b>468 000</b>	<b>193 000</b>	<b>661 000</b>	<b>(1 097 000)</b>
<b>Total, sections 1 to 4</b>		<b>25 823 000</b>	<b>18 361 750</b>	<b>17 536 250</b>	<b>35 898 000</b>	<b>10 075 000</b>
<b>Section 5</b>	<b>Economic Planning Commission</b>					
	Salaries and common staff costs	–	–	654 500	654 500	654 500
	Session costs	–	–	100 000	100 000	100 000
	Consultants	–	–	150 000	150 000	150 000

<i>Section</i>	<i>Budget line</i>	<i>Approved for 2025–2026</i>	<i>Proposed 2027</i>	<i>Proposed 2028</i>	<i>Total, 2027–2028</i>	<i>Variance</i>
	Travel	–	–	20 000	20 000	20 000
	Submission of Economic Planning Commission reports	–	–	15 000	15 000	15 000
<b>Total, section 5</b>		–	–	<b>939 500</b>	<b>939 500</b>	<b>939 500</b>
<b>Section 6</b>	<b>The Enterprise</b>					
	Salaries and common staff costs	546 000	309 000	315 000	624 000	78 000
	Information and communications technology	13 000	7 000	7 000	14 000	1 000
	Travel	45 000	38 000	38 000	76 000	31 000
	Workshops	–	100 000	100 000	200 000	200 000
	Training	–	2 500	2 500	5 000	5 000
	Indirect support costs	–	59 500	60 000	119 500	119 500
<b>Total, section 6</b>		<b>604 000</b>	<b>516 000</b>	<b>522 500</b>	<b>1 038 500</b>	<b>434 500</b>
<b>Total, sections 1 to 6</b>		<b>26 427 000</b>	<b>18 877 750</b>	<b>18 998 250</b>	<b>37 876 000</b>	<b>11 449 000</b>

Table 2  
Staffing table

<i>Functional title</i>	<i>Professional and higher</i>	<i>National Professional Officer</i>	<i>General Service</i>
<b>Executive Office of the Secretary-General</b>			
Secretary-General	1 (USG)		
Deputy to the Secretary-General/Chef de Cabinet	1 (D-2)		
Senior Digital Transformation Officer	1 (P-5)		
Communications Specialist	1 (P-4)		
Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach Officer	1 (P-3)		
Liaison Officer, Office of the Permanent Observer for the International Seabed Authority to the United Nations in New York	1 (P-3)		
Associate Copy Editor	1 (P-2)		
Office Manager	1 (P-2)		
Senior Liaison Assistant, Office of the Permanent Observer for the International Seabed Authority to the United Nations in New York			1
Senior Communications Assistant			1
Administrative Assistant			1
Staff Assistant			1
<b>Office of Contracts Management and Capacity-Building</b>			
Director	1 (D-1)		
Senior Capacity-Building Officer	1 (P-5)		
Chief, Compliance Assurance and Regulatory Management Unit	1 (P-5)		
Quality Assurance and Compliance Officer	1 (P-4)		
Environmental Audit Officer	1 (P-4)		
Contract Management Officer	1 (P-3)		
Programme Management Officer (Capacity-Building)	1 (P-3)		
Training Coordinator	1 (P-2)		
Associate Capacity Development Officer	1 (P-2)		
Capacity Development Officer		1	
Administrative Assistant			1
<b>Office of Legal Affairs</b>			
Director/Legal Counsel	1 (D-1)		
Senior Legal Officer	1 (P-5)		
Senior Legal Officer (Regulatory Affairs)	1 (P-5)		
Legal Officer	1 (P-4)		
Legal Officer (Regulatory Affairs)	1 (P-4)		
Legal Officer	1 (P-3)		
Knowledge Management Officer (Legal)	1 (P-3)		
Associate Legal Officer	1 (P-2)		
Associate Conference Management Officer	1 (P-2)		
Documentation and Conference Management Officer		1	
Administrative Assistant			1
Administrative/Library Assistant			1
<b>Office of Stewardship, Environment and Resources</b>			
Director	1 (D-1)		

<i>Functional title</i>	<i>Professional and higher</i>	<i>National Professional Officer</i>	<i>General Service</i>
Scientific Affairs Officer (Marine Geologist)	1 (P-4)		
Environmental Coordinator	1 (P-4)		
Programme Coordinator (Marine Scientific Research)	1 (P-4)		
Programme Manager (Marine Environment)	1 (P-4)		
Scientific Officer (Geographic Information System)	1 (P-3)		
Database Manager	1 (P-3)		
Programme Officer	1 (P-3)		
Senior Information Management Assistant			1
Administrative Assistant			1
<b>Office for Administrative Services</b>			
Director	1 (D-1)		
Head of Finance	1 (P-4)		
Budget Officer	1 (P-4)		
Head of Human Resources	1 (P-4)		
Communications and Information Technology Manager	1 (P-3)		
Security and Safety Officer	1 (P-3)		
Associate Procurement Officer	1 (P-2)		
Associate Security and Facilities Officer		1	
Senior Budget and Treasury Assistant			1
Senior Finance Assistant			1
Administrative Assistant			1
Budget Assistant			1
Communications and Information Technology Assistant			1
Travel and Human Resources Assistant			1
Human Resources Assistant			1
Procurement Assistant			1
Finance Assistant			1
Driver/General Services Assistant			2
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Economic Planning Commission</b>			
Director	1 (D-1)		
Policy Officer	1 (P-4)		
Administrative Assistant			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The Enterprise</b>			
Interim Director General	1 (P-5)		
Research Assistant			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>1</b>

*Abbreviation:* USG, Under-Secretary-General.

**Annex II****Estimated financing of the budget for 2027–2028 through  
assessed contributions, contractor overheads and  
miscellaneous income**

(United States dollars)

	<i>2027–2028</i>
Proposed budget	37 876 000
Less: income	
Estimated overhead charges to be received from contractors	(6 200 000)
<b>Subtotal, income</b>	<b>(6 200 000)</b>
<b>Total net contributions required</b>	<b>31 676 000</b>
Less: European Union assessment for 2027–2028	(300 000)
<b>Total assessed contributions for 2027–2028</b>	<b>31 376 000</b>
<b>Total assessed contributions per year</b>	<b>15 688 000</b>

## Annex III

### Indicative alignment of the major budget sections and programme clusters with the Authority's governance architecture

1. The present annex provides an indicative mapping of the major budget sections and programme clusters against the principal dimensions of the Authority's governance architecture.
2. It is intended to complement the section-based presentation of the proposed budgetary requirements by showing, in a concise and structured manner, how the proposed budgetary requirements support the Authority's institutional, regulatory, operational, scientific, environmental, compliance, capacity-building, communications and engagement, and economic functions.
3. The annex is indicative only. It does not alter the legal or institutional basis of the budget, nor does it replace the formal budget sections. Its purpose is to strengthen the coherence, intelligibility and strategic legibility of the proposed budgetary requirements.

#### Indicative alignment matrix

<i>Budget section/ programme cluster</i>	<i>Primary governance dimensions supported</i>	<i>Indicative governance contribution</i>	<i>Examples of existing Authority functions</i>
Administrative expenditures of the secretariat	Operational; institutional	Provides the operational and administrative backbone of the Authority and sustains the internal support structures, staffing profile, systems, records, finance, human resources, procurement and continuity arrangements required for the effective functioning of the secretariat. Includes integrated administrative systems (enterprise resource planning) supporting financial control, auditability, compliance, fraud risk mitigation, transparency and cross-functional coordination.	Secretariat administration; staffing; enterprise resource planning; audit; building management; software and subscriptions; operational support services
Conference services	Institutional; regulatory	Supports the functioning of the organs of the Authority and the intergovernmental processes through which the Authority exercises its mandate and includes meeting servicing, interpretation and documentation.	Assembly, Council, Finance Committee and Legal and Technical Commission meeting support; interpretation; documentation; conference facilities
Programme: development of the regulatory framework of activities in the Area	Regulatory; compliance; economic; institutional	Supports the continuing development and implementation readiness of the regulatory framework through, inter alia, standards and guidelines, legal coherence, institutional development, benefit-sharing-related work and compliance-related arrangements.	Mining code-related work; standards and guidelines; legal drafting and review; Economic Planning Commission-related preparatory work; benefit-sharing and compliance-related support

<i>Budget section/ programme cluster</i>	<i>Primary governance dimensions supported</i>	<i>Indicative governance contribution</i>	<i>Examples of existing Authority functions</i>
Programme: protection of the marine environment	Environmental; scientific; compliance	Supports environmental governance through regional environmental management plans, thresholds-related work, scientific review and analysis, and related tools required for informed governance of the Area.	Regional environmental management plans; thresholds-related work; environmental review and analysis; expert consultations and workshops
Programmes: data management (resources and environment) and data transformation and cybersecurity	Operational; scientific; compliance; environmental	Supports the Authority's data and digital governance infrastructure, including through evidence-based decision-making, interoperability, data integrity, ICT security and institutional traceability.	DeepData; data transformation; ICT security; maintenance and support; data governance tools
Programme: promotion and encouragement of marine scientific research in the Area	Scientific; environmental	Supports the generation and use of scientific and technical knowledge relevant to activities in the Area and contributes to the evidence base required for regulatory, environmental and institutional decision-making.	Marine scientific research support; scientific workshops; technical cooperation; expert inputs
Programme: strategic communications and global stakeholder engagement	Communication; institutional	Supports communication by strengthening transparency, stakeholder understanding, access to information, institutional visibility and confidence in the Authority's governance role.	Outreach activities; website management and content; publications; public information; stakeholder-facing communication; International Day of the Deep Seabed support
Programme: capacity development and technical cooperation	Capacity- building; institutional; economic	Supports inclusive participation in the regime, particularly by developing States, and contributes to more equitable access to knowledge, cooperation, technical support and institutional participation.	Capacity-building activities; workshops; technical cooperation; travel and related support
Programme: mineral resources and mining technologies	Scientific; operational	Supports the Authority's understanding of technological and resource-related developments relevant to the governance of activities in the Area.	Technical studies; workshops; travel; expert and consultant inputs on mineral resources and technologies
Contracts management	Compliance; operational	Functions as the practical support platform for contract management, contractor performance oversight, standardized procedures, Seabed Seabed Mining Register development, and implementation readiness arrangements.	Contractor performance oversight; annual contractors' meetings; on-site performance monitoring; development of standard operating procedures; Seabed Mining Register-related support

<i>Budget section/ programme cluster</i>	<i>Primary governance dimensions supported</i>	<i>Indicative governance contribution</i>	<i>Examples of existing Authority functions</i>
Economic Planning Commission	Economic; institutional	Supports the initial operationalization of the Economic Planning Commission as a treaty-based mechanism contributing to the Authority's broader economic governance architecture.	Economic Planning Commission support costs; session costs; consultants; travel; submission of Commission reports
The Enterprise	Economic; institutional; operational	Supports the progressive and treaty-based development of the Enterprise through an evolutionary approach while maintaining prudence with respect to the pace of institutional and budgetary development.	Interim Director-General support; travel; ICT; training; indirect support costs

*Abbreviation:* ICT, information and communications technology.

4. The mapping above shows that several budget sections and programme clusters support more than one governance dimension. This reflects the integrated nature of the Authority's work and the increasing interdependence between its regulatory, operational, scientific, compliance, environmental, institutional, communication, economic and capacity-building functions.

5. In particular, the economic, compliance, strategic communications and engagement and capacity-building dimensions are expressed across several parts of the proposed budgetary requirements and are not confined to a single section or programme cluster.

6. The present annex is intended to assist in demonstrating that the proposed budgetary requirements for 2027–2028 are not merely a compilation of administrative and programme lines, but rather a more integrated budgetary expression of the Authority's governance architecture.

**Annex IV****Indicative phased and medium-term evolutionary outlook for selected enabling investments and projected budgetary requirements for the period 2027–2032**

1. The present annex provides an indicative phased and medium-term planning perspective to complement the Authority’s proposed budget for the financial period 2027–2028.
2. It is presented in keeping with the evolutionary approach referred to in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (1994 Agreement) and the report entitled “Financing of the International Seabed Authority and forecast budgetary requirements 2025–2030” (ISBA/28/FC/2 and ISBA/28/FC/2/Corr.1), in which the Secretary-General identified the importance of planning for future scenarios and of aligning future budgetary development with the functional needs of the Authority at various stages of activities in the Area.
3. This annex is indicative only. It does not establish approved budgetary requirements for future financial periods, nor does it prejudice future decisions of the organs of the Authority. Its purpose is to assist in situating the proposed budget for 2027–2028 within a broader medium-term evolutionary pathway, while also showing the phased progression of selected enabling investments and transition measures reflected in, or associated with, the present proposal.

**Indicative phased and medium-term outlook**

<i>Area/function/ enabling measure</i>	<i>2027–2028</i>	<i>2029–2030</i>	<i>2031–2032</i>	<i>Indicative remarks</i>
Regulatory implementation support	Foundational implementation readiness support for regulations, standards, guidelines and related legal and policy work	Deeper implementation support, review and selective adjustment of the regulatory framework with consideration given to the practice and decisions of the organs	Maintenance, periodic refinement and targeted updating	Reflects the continued transition from regulatory development towards implementation support as a primary governance requirement
Institutional support to organs and Secretariat structures	Reinforcement of support arrangements for the organs of the Authority and related internal support structures of the secretariat	Consolidation and selective reinforcement of institutional support architecture	Stabilization and refinement of support arrangements	Reflects the need for sustained institutional capacity as governance functions become more complex
Operational and administrative backbone	Foundational strengthening of secretariat staffing, administrative coherence, workflow integrity and	Consolidation and selective reinforcement of operational support structures and internal coordination arrangements	Stabilization, continuity and selective refinement	Supports the Authority’s ability to function in a more integrated and operationally mature phase of governance

<i>Area/function/ enabling measure</i>	<i>2027–2028</i>	<i>2029–2030</i>	<i>2031–2032</i>	<i>Indicative remarks</i>
	operational support arrangements			
Scientific and technical support	Reinforcement of scientific analysis, technical review, modelling support and knowledge inputs relevant to activities in the Area	Consolidation of cross-functional scientific support to decision-making and deeper integration with regulatory, environmental and operational work	Mature and sustained scientific support arrangements, with selective refinement	Reflects the growing importance of robust scientific and technical inputs to informed governance
Environmental stewardship and monitoring support	Regional environmental management plans, thresholds-related work, environmental review, impact-assessment support and related monitoring tools	Consolidation of implementation and monitoring-related support and greater integration with scientific and compliance functions	Continued refinement and sustained environmental support	Consistent with the projected increase in environmental governance demands as the Authority's work matures
Capacity-building and technical cooperation	Strengthening of capacity-building support, technical cooperation and inclusive participation initiatives, particularly for developing States	Consolidation and selective expansion of structured capacity-building and participation support arrangements	More mature and sustained capacity-building architecture aligned with governance needs	Capacity-building is treated as a distinct governance dimension in the present proposal
Compliance, contract management and oversight readiness	Strengthening of contractor oversight, reporting workflows, standard operating procedures and implementation readiness arrangements	Consolidation of structured oversight functions, deeper embedding of procedures and selective expansion of support functions	More mature and regularized oversight support arrangements	Supports the progressive strengthening of compliance-related and contract-management functions
Economic governance and treaty-based mechanisms	Initial provision for economic and financial governance support, including preparatory work relating to treaty-based mechanisms	Further strengthening of economic governance support and possible expansion of institutional, legal and administrative arrangements	More mature and regularized operation, subject to decisions of the organs	Reflects the progressive development of the Authority's economic dimension

<i>Area/function/ enabling measure</i>	<i>2027–2028</i>	<i>2029–2030</i>	<i>2031–2032</i>	<i>Indicative remarks</i>
Communication and stakeholder understanding	Strengthening of core communication, transparency and stakeholder understanding functions	Consolidation of more structured communication and stakeholder support arrangements	More mature communication architecture supporting legitimacy, coherence and public intelligibility	Communication is treated as a distinct governance dimension in the present proposal
Enterprise resource planning and integrated administrative control systems	Initial implementation of enterprise resource planning and integration of core administrative functions	Consolidation, optimization and wider functional integration	Maintenance, refinement and selective upgrading	Supports fiduciary control, auditability, fraud risk mitigation and institutional transparency, while ensuring proportionate, scalable system integration aligned with the Authority’s evolving governance requirements
Digital governance, DeepData and ICT security	Strengthening of data systems, interoperability, ICT security and maintenance support	Further integration of digital tools into governance, reporting, review and oversight-related functions	Stabilization, maintenance and selective renewal	Supports evidence-based governance, data integrity and operational readiness
Seabed Mining Register	Continued development and operationalization of the Seabed Mining Register	Broader institutional embedding in contractor oversight and operational workflows	More mature operational use and refinement	Supports transparency, traceability and contract-related operational readiness
Quality-managed operational procedures	Continued development of the standard operating procedures and related workflow architecture	Consolidation and operational embedding across relevant support, oversight and contractor-related functions	Mature application, maintenance and refinement in support of readiness and inspection-related arrangements	Supports quality-managed operational procedures across the secretariat
Common Heritage Fund and related mechanism	Preparatory conceptual, legal and institutional work linked to benefit-sharing arrangements	Possible establishment of institutional, legal and administrative mechanisms, subject to decisions of the organs	Progressive maturation and possible regularized operation, subject to decisions of the organs	Best understood as an evolutionary economic governance measure rather than an immediately fully formed structure

<i>Area/function/ enabling measure</i>	<i>2027–2028</i>	<i>2029–2030</i>	<i>2031–2032</i>	<i>Indicative remarks</i>
Inspection, compliance and enforcement architecture	Preparatory groundwork and readiness measures, including links to operational procedures, operationalization of the Seabed Mining Register and oversight of contractors	Possible initial operationalization and development of related support functions	More mature operation and refinement	Supports the progressive development of functions related to inspection, compliance and enforcement
The Enterprise	Continued step-by-step institutional development and support to the Interim Director-General	Further consolidation, subject to decisions of the organs and institutional need	Greater institutional stability and refinement, subject to future decisions	Consistent with the evolutionary approach to the development of the Enterprise
Security, facilities and life-cycle asset renewal	Initial priority measures where required	Selective replacement and stabilization measures	Longer-term renewal of assets and infrastructure	Supports operational resilience, continuity and institutional readiness
Information technology infrastructure and life-cycle asset renewal	Initial priority measures only where necessary	Selective replacement of priority assets	Longer-term renewal of servers, end-user systems and related infrastructure	Supports continuity of operations and compatibility with integrated systems
External coordination and practical synergies with related ocean governance processes	Initial coordination and practical synergies where appropriate and within mandate, including selected areas of external institutional interface	More structured coordination and selective operational follow-up where decisions of the organs or practical needs so require	Mature, clearly delimited support arrangements consistent with the Authority's mandate	May include practical synergies, where appropriate, with broader developments in ocean governance, including implementation of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction

4. The matrix above is intended to illustrate that certain investments included in, or connected to, the proposed budgetary requirements for 2027–2028 are best understood not as isolated biennial costs, but as components of a broader sequence of institutional strengthening, operational consolidation and eventual maturity.

5. In this regard, the financial period 2027–2028 may be understood as a foundational phase focused on establishing or reinforcing the core systems, procedures and support functions necessary for governance transition. A subsequent phase may be expected to emphasize consolidation and selective expansion, while a later phase may focus on maintenance, renewal and refinement of the mechanisms, systems and assets progressively established in earlier periods.

6. This annex is therefore intended to support a more legible and disciplined reading of selected enabling investments and medium-term budgetary requirements and to assist in linking the 2027–2028 financial period to a broader pathway of institutional development consistent with the Authority’s evolutionary approach.

## Annex V

### **Indicative office-level presentation of the proposed budgetary requirements for the financial period 2027–2028**

1. The present annex is provided for internal transparency, traceability and management purposes. It is intended to complement the section-based and governance-architecture-based presentation of the proposed budgetary requirements in the main proposal. It also supports a more operational reading of the medium-term financial evolution previously identified in the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Financing of the International Seabed Authority and forecast budgetary requirements 2025–2030” (ISBA/28/FC/2 and ISBA/28/FC/2/Corr.1) by showing how projected governance requirements are translated into office-level functions, systems and support arrangements.

2. The annex provides an indicative office-level presentation of proposed requirements to show how office submissions may be aligned with the main elements of the Authority’s governance architecture and with the distinction between core recurring requirements, governance transition requirements and special-purpose or enabling investments.

#### **A. Executive Office of the Secretary-General, including strategic communications and global stakeholder engagement**

3. The Executive Office of the Secretary-General provides the strategic direction, coordination and institutional coherence necessary for the effective functioning of the secretariat as a whole. Within the Authority’s governance architecture, the Executive Office primarily supports the institutional dimension, while also playing an important role in relation to the regulatory, operational, communications and economic dimensions through strategic alignment, prioritization, inter-office coordination and external representation. The Office helps ensure that the secretariat’s work is guided in a coherent manner and that support to the organs remains timely, coordinated and consistent with the Secretary-General’s priorities.

4. The strategic communications function, working within the broader institutional direction of the Executive Office, supports the strategic communications, outreach and global stakeholder engagement dimensions of the Authority’s governance architecture. In the present proposal, this programme is understood as a distinct functional dimension supporting brand-building, high-level narrative development and messaging coherence, transparency, accountability and deepening stakeholder understanding of and participation in the work of the Authority across all its functions across the governance framework. This programme also involves the management of the development and implementation of strategic events that are part of Assembly proceedings and initiatives that help to raise the awareness of the public and the media of the importance of the Authority’s work. In this regard, strategic communications activities contribute to public understanding of the Authority’s work, improve access to information, strengthen institutional credibility and support the broader visibility of the Authority’s role in ocean governance.

5. Within the secretariat-wide assessment and alignment process, the Executive Office plays a central coordinating role. It helps ensure that office-level activities, systems and priorities are aligned with institution-wide objectives and that the secretariat’s support to the intergovernmental and technical organs remains coherent and strategically guided. Communications complement this function by strengthening

the intelligibility, accessibility and consistency of the Authority's work, both internally and externally.

6. For 2027–2028, the principal priorities of the Executive Office may include strategic oversight of the secretariat's alignment process; institutional coordination across offices; support to high-level engagement and policy coherence; maintenance of clear support interfaces with the organs; and communication support for annual sessions, stakeholder engagement, digital presence and public understanding. Communications priorities may include support for daily bulletins, press releases, website upgrades, publications, media engagement, outreach material and to the Secretary-General in conferences and events.

7. The proposed budget allocation for the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and communications should therefore be understood as supporting the institutional coherence, strategic direction and communication capacity necessary for the secretariat to function as a coordinated governance support architecture.

## **B. Office of Legal Affairs**

8. The Office of Legal Affairs is central to the Authority's ability to discharge its mandate under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (1994 Agreement). Within the Authority's governance architecture, the Office primarily supports the regulatory dimension, while also contributing significantly to the compliance, institutional, economic and, where relevant, communications and engagement dimensions through legal interpretation, procedural consistency, institutional design and support to implementation readiness.

9. Within the secretariat-wide assessment and alignment process, the Office of Legal Affairs helps ensure that legal, institutional and procedural elements remain coherent across the secretariat's support to the organs. It provides legal analysis, interpretation and procedural consistency, particularly in relation to regulatory development, contracts, institutional mandates, compliance-related frameworks and treaty-based mechanisms.

10. The Office operates both as a specialist legal office and as an institutional enabling office. It provides legal advice, drafting, review of instruments, support to regulatory development, assistance in contractual and institutional matters, and support to intergovernmental documentation and processes. For 2027–2028, the Office's work is expected to continue expanding across several interdependent workstreams, including the implementation readiness of the mining code, the development of standards and guidelines, preparatory work relating to the Economic Planning Commission, benefit-sharing arrangements under the Common Heritage Fund, and the development of compliance and oversight frameworks.

11. For the biennium, the principal priorities of the Office of Legal Affairs may include regulatory and contractual affairs; support to standards and guidelines; legal support to institutional development and Economic Planning Commission-related work; benefit-sharing arrangements; compliance and oversight frameworks; intergovernmental and conference support; and targeted workshops and consultations to support informed participation by members, particularly developing States.

12. As discussed above, the Office of Legal Affairs' proposed budget allocation is aimed at fulfilling essential treaty obligations, such as providing secretariat services, finalizing the mining code, overseeing exploration contracts and creating frameworks for liability and dispute resolution. The initiative also stresses the importance of

regulatory governance and establishing potential Common Heritage Fund arrangements that will require preparatory support. Ultimately, this budget transition is designed to ensure legal coherence, institutional readiness and economic viability for the exploitation of seabed resources, in alignment with the principles of the Convention.

13. The proposed budget allocation for the Office of Legal Affairs should, therefore, be understood as supporting the legal and institutional backbone of the Authority's evolving governance framework. It helps sustain the regulatory dimension as the leading dimension of the present proposal, while also reinforcing institutional readiness and coherence across other dimensions of the Authority's work.

### **C. Office of Stewardship, Environment and Resources**

14. The Office of Stewardship, Environment and Resources supports the Authority's work principally in the scientific, environmental and parts of the operational dimensions of the governance architecture. It also contributes to the regulatory and compliance dimensions insofar as the sound governance of activities in the Area depends on robust scientific knowledge, technically credible environmental review, reliable data systems and effective support to evidence-based decision-making.

15. Within the secretariat-wide assessment and alignment process, the Office plays a key role in strengthening the scientific, environmental and technical foundations of governance. It is responsible for coordinating scientific, environmental and technical analysis, including data management through DeepData and related systems.

16. The Office operates through closely connected workstreams, including protection of the marine environment, regional environmental management plans, environmental thresholds and related scientific support, environmental review, data management, DeepData, marine scientific research, modelling, and technical understanding of resources and technologies relevant to activities in the Area. These workstreams contribute directly to informed governance and to the Authority's ability to exercise its responsibilities in a coherent and technically grounded manner.

17. For 2027–2028, the Office's priorities may include the continued development and implementation of regional environmental management plans; environmental thresholds and related scientific support; environmental data synthesis and completeness review of environmental submissions; strengthening DeepData, data resilience and interoperability; support to marine scientific research and region-wide observations; modelling and biodiversity tools; and maintenance of technically robust understanding of resources and technologies relevant to governance in the Area.

18. The proposed budget allocation for the Office of Stewardship, Environment and Resources should therefore be understood as sustaining the scientific, environmental and data-related foundations of informed governance and as reinforcing the Authority's ability to support regulatory, compliance and institutional processes with sound technical and scientific inputs.

### **D. Office of Contracts Management and Capacity-Building**

19. The Office of Contracts Management and Capacity-Building supports the Authority's work primarily in the compliance, operational and capacity-building dimensions of the governance architecture. It also contributes to the economic, institutional and, where relevant, communication dimensions by supporting contractor-related processes, technical cooperation and more inclusive participation in the regime.

20. Within the secretariat-wide assessment and alignment process, the Office contributes to stronger contractual oversight, operational procedures, economic and operational data flows, and capacity-building linked to governance readiness. It acts as a key interface between the secretariat and contractors while also supporting practical participation by members, especially developing States, through structured capacity-building and technical cooperation.

21. The Office operates both as a contract management office and as a governance participation office. On the one hand, it oversees contractor reporting workflows, supports contract oversight, develops and implements standard operating procedures, advances the operationalization of the Seabed Mining Register and supports contractor meetings and on-site follow-up. On the other hand, it coordinates capacity-building and technical cooperation activities aimed at helping members engage more effectively with the regime and at strengthening their understanding of the Authority's evolving governance framework.

22. For 2027–2028, the Office's priorities may include stronger contract management and contractor performance oversight; further development of the Seabed Mining Register; standard operating procedures and related operational workflows; contractor meetings and on-site performance monitoring; and targeted capacity-building initiatives linked to the governance needs of the Authority. This will require stronger senior-level leadership and coordination of the Authority's expanding capacity-building and technical cooperation portfolio, including regional centres, digital learning and partnership-based delivery.

23. The proposed budget allocation for the Office of Contracts Management and Capacity-Building should therefore be understood as supporting both the Authority's practical oversight readiness and its commitment to more inclusive and effective participation in the regime. In this regard, the Office gives operational expression to the compliance and capacity-building dimensions of the present proposal.

## **E. Office for Administrative Services**

24. The Office for Administrative Services serves as the administrative and fiduciary backbone of the secretariat and, by extension, supports the Authority's ability to discharge its responsibilities under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement. Within the Authority's governance architecture, the Office plays a central role in supporting the operational, institutional and economic dimensions of governance by providing the administrative coordination and control framework necessary for the effective, accountable and continuous functioning of the Authority.

25. In addition to supporting day-to-day administrative operations, the Office increasingly functions as the institutional platform through which governance, internal control and accountability are operationalized across the secretariat. Its responsibilities include financial management and budgeting, human resources administration, procurement, payroll, information and communications technology, security, facilities and transport management, records and asset management, and compliance with applicable United Nations administrative, financial and oversight frameworks.

26. As the Authority transitions towards a more operational and implementation-oriented regulatory phase, the scale and complexity of administrative processes are expected to increase significantly. This transition will place greater demands on the Office in areas including financial oversight, procurement coordination, workforce administration, reporting obligations and institutional compliance. The Office must

therefore ensure that administrative systems and controls evolve in parallel with the Authority's expanding operational and governance responsibilities.

27. A central feature of the proposed budgetary requirements for 2027–2028 is the strengthening of the Authority's administrative and operational control framework, with the Office playing a pivotal role. In this context, the planned implementation of an integrated enterprise resource planning system constitutes a foundational enabling measure for the secretariat, supporting the integration of finance, human resources, procurement, payroll, budgeting and reporting functions within a more structured, traceable and auditable administrative platform.

28. The principal priorities of the Office for the 2027–2028 biennium therefore include strengthening integrated finance, budget and administrative control functions; sustaining human resources and procurement services within enhanced control frameworks; selected security and facilities measures; and support for institutional transparency, workflow integrity and audit readiness across the secretariat. The proposed budget allocation should therefore be understood as an investment in the Authority's administrative resilience, fiduciary credibility and operational effectiveness during a period of institutional transition.

## Annex VI

### **Detailed justification for integrated administrative control systems and enterprise resource planning**

#### **A. Governance and operational transition and institutional context**

1. For more than three decades, the International Seabed Authority has operated primarily under an exploration-centred regime, focused on the administration of exploration contracts, the development of regulatory instruments and the servicing of its intergovernmental and technical bodies. As member States move towards the adoption and implementation of the mining code, the Authority is entering a fundamentally new phase of its mandate.
2. Under an exploitation-ready framework, the Authority is expected to operate as a fully operational regulator, overseeing all activities in the Area, administering increasingly complex contractual and economic arrangements, managing increased and sustained financial flows, and ensuring compliance with regulatory, environmental and economic obligations.
3. This shift represents a structural transition between governance regimes, rather than an incremental expansion of existing administrative practices.
4. The credibility of the emerging regime will depend not only on the substantive robustness of the mining code, but on the Authority's capacity to operationalize regulatory decisions through enforceable, transparent and traceable processes embedded within a credible governance architecture.

#### **B. Enterprise resource planning as a core element of governance and internal control**

5. Within the United Nations system, integrated enterprise resource planning platforms constitute a core component of internal control and risk-management frameworks. They underpin compliance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), support effective segregation of duties, enable comprehensive audit trails and provide preventive and detective controls that mitigate key institutional risks, including fraud.
6. For organizations entrusted with the stewardship of public resources, such systems are regarded as baseline governance infrastructure, rather than discretionary administrative enhancements. In a regulatory context characterized by increased financial exposure, compliance obligations and external scrutiny, the absence of integrated control systems constitutes a material fiduciary and governance risk.

#### **C. Current system limitations and governance risks**

7. The Authority currently operates an off-the-shelf enterprise resource planning system. However, due to licensing and cost constraints, only limited aspects of financial processing are system-enabled. Core administrative control functions, including human resources management, procurement, payroll, budgeting and integrated reporting, remain partially or largely manual and outside an integrated system environment.
8. While this configuration was manageable under an exploration-centred operating model with limited financial flows and operational complexity, it is no

longer aligned with the Authority's evolving regulatory responsibilities. Fragmented systems constrain auditability, complicate segregation of duties, increase the exposure to error and fraud risk and reduce the timeliness and coherence of reporting to member States.

#### **D. Assessment of system options within the United Nations context**

9. The Authority assessed available options within the United Nations common system. The Umoja platform was examined; however, the Authority was advised by the United Nations Secretariat, including the Office of the Controller, that Umoja is disproportionately complex and costly relative to the Authority's size, scale and evolving regulatory profile.

10. In parallel, transitioning the existing SAP configuration to a modern, cloud-based architecture would require a full reimplementation rather than an upgrade, involving extensive customization, new licensing arrangements, high implementation and ongoing maintenance costs, extended timelines and increased operational risk. For an organization of the Authority's size, this approach is neither proportionate nor risk-efficient.

#### **E. Rationale for utilization of the Quantum platform of the United Nations Development Programme**

11. The proposed partnership with the United Nations Development Programme through the Quantum enterprise resource planning platform reflects a deliberate, system-aligned and risk-controlled decision. Quantum is designed and operated in conformity with United Nations administrative, financial, human resources and procurement regulations, reflecting governance arrangements that member States have themselves established within the United Nations system.

12. This intrinsic alignment avoids the need to retrofit United Nations rules, policies, procedures and approval hierarchies onto commercial systems. Instead, Quantum enables seamless integration with existing United Nations governance frameworks, ensuring consistency across finance, procurement, human resources, payroll, budgeting and reporting, and coherence with United Nations oversight and audit practices.

#### **F. Template-based and proportionate implementation approach**

13. The proposed implementation will follow a template-based approach, limited to core administrative and control functions. This approach prioritizes standardized United Nations system processes, minimizes customization, reduces implementation timelines and costs, and lowers long-term maintenance burdens.

14. System-wide experience within the United Nations indicates that template-based implementation supports improved scalability, operational consistency and governance reliability, while avoiding the risks associated with bespoke system development.

#### **G. Timing, risk mitigation and institutional readiness**

15. The timing of the enterprise resource planning implementation is critical. Deferring the establishment of integrated control infrastructure as the Authority enters

a more operational and compliance-intensive phase would increase fiduciary exposure and institutional risk, while further entrenching fragmented processes that are costly to unwind.

16. The enterprise resource planning should therefore be understood as a preventive and stabilizing governance measure, strengthening auditability, mitigating fraud risk and enabling timely, reliable transparency to member States during the Authority's governance transition.

## **H. Conclusion**

17. This enterprise resource planning implementation is not a technology-driven modernization initiative. It represents the foundational administrative and control backbone required to support the Authority's transition between governance regimes, enabling regulatory decisions to be operationalized through auditable, enforceable and transparent processes. As such, it forms an integral component of the Authority's governance architecture.

## Annex VII

### **Executive summary of the records and information management assessment of the International Seabed Authority carried out by the Archives and Records Management Section**

1. The International Seabed Authority is entering a period of rapid institutional expansion as it prepares for the transition from exploration to exploitation of deep-sea mineral resources. This shift significantly increases the Authority's obligations of transparency, scientific stewardship, regulatory oversight and institutional accountability. However, the Authority currently lacks a centralized, modern records and information management framework, which is essential for meeting its mandate and maintaining credibility with member States, contractors and global stakeholders.
2. The Archives and Records Management Section conducted an on-site assessment in Kingston from 9 to 12 February 2026 at the Authority's request. The Authority explicitly stated its intention to align its practices with the standards of the United Nations Secretariat. The assessment identifies critical risks and provides a road map for building a sustainable, organization-wide information governance programme.

#### **A. Strategic risks requiring immediate attention**

3. The Authority's decentralized information environment poses material risks to institutional continuity, regulatory integrity and scientific credibility. The report notes that "each office maintains its own records and data which lead to various risks ... including loss of records and information". Key vulnerabilities include:
  - (a) No centralized records function and inconsistent practices across offices;
  - (b) High-value scientific data (DeepData) stored without backup, replication or long-term preservation planning;
  - (c) Reliance on personal drives and OneDrive, risking permanent loss of unique records when staff depart;
  - (d) No organization-wide taxonomy, metadata standard or retention schedule, limiting transparency and accountability;
  - (e) No off-site disaster-recovery capability, despite the fact that Jamaica is exposed to hurricanes and seismic events;
  - (f) SharePoint migration without retention controls, creating uncontrolled digital growth and cost exposure.
4. These gaps directly affect the Authority's ability to safeguard institutional memory, support decision-making, respond to member State inquiries and demonstrate compliance with international norms.

#### **B. Why investment is urgent and of high value**

- (a) To protect high-value scientific and other substantive data, including the more than 10 terabytes of DeepData, which the report identifies as sensitive and mission-critical;

- (b) To ensure continuity of operations in the face of natural disasters, a risk highlighted after Hurricane Melissa in 2025;
- (c) To support transparency and trust among member States and contractors;
- (d) To enable efficient oversight of the forthcoming Seabed Mining Register, a core regulatory function;
- (e) To align the Authority's practices with United Nations Secretariat standards, reinforcing legitimacy and operational maturity.

### **C. Priority actions requiring resourcing**

- (a) Establish an information management team led by a P-3 Information Management Officer with digital records expertise, supported by two local staff members and integrated into the Information Technology Unit, which could possibly be headed by a P-5 (as information technology core functions cannot be provided solely by consultants);
- (b) Develop core governance tools, such as standard operating procedures, taxonomy, metadata standards and retention schedules for application across all Authority offices;
- (c) Review, digitize and preserve approximately 27 linear metres of high-value paper archives, including records of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Office of Legal Affairs, and preserve historical records in paper form;
- (d) Implement long-term preservation of DeepData, including evaluation of specialized bathymetric systems;
- (e) Upgrade Microsoft 365 licences from E3 to E5 to enable analytics and artificial intelligence capabilities;
- (f) Create a centralized SharePoint repository for authoritative non-scientific records (to be done within existing resources);
- (g) Establish off-site data backup and disaster-recovery arrangements through Office of Information and Communications Technology data centres in Brindisi, Italy, or Valencia, Spain.