



**MINISTERIO
DE RELACIONES
EXTERIORES**



UN-OHRLS

Workshop on the Participation of LLDCs in the Regime of the Area and the Benefit-Sharing Mechanism under UNCLOS



13 - 15 October 2026



**Santa Cruz de la Sierra,
Plurinational State of Bolivia**

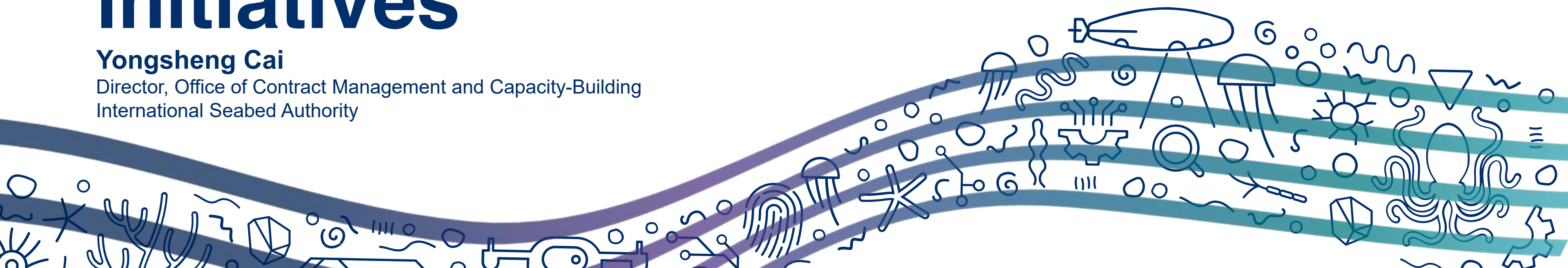




ISA capacity development programmes and initiatives

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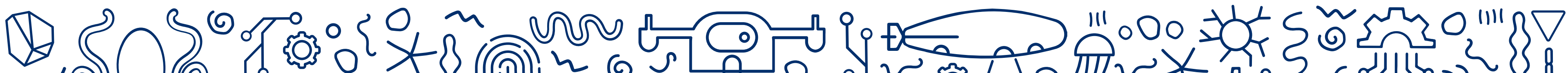
Introduction

ISA's mandate

Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the 1994 Agreement, the International Seabed Authority (ISA) is mandated, *inter alia*, to design and implement mechanisms that **build the capacity of developing States** to participate fully in activities in the Area.

The Capacity Development Strategy

Adopted in August 2022, the ISA Capacity Development Strategy is the Authority's formal framework for strengthening the capacities of developing States, especially least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS).



Historical background to the Strategy

2019

ISA reviewed all capacity-building programmes delivered since 1994, taking stock of more than two decades of activity.

Feb 2020

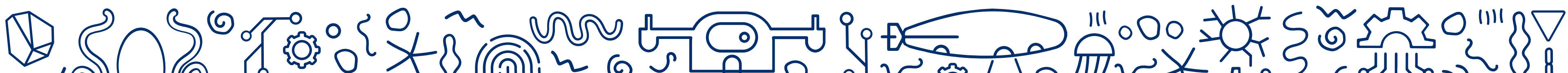
A dedicated workshop in Kingston identified the needs of member States, complemented by a survey on the priority needs of developing countries.

Dec 2020

The Assembly endorsed the programmatic approach to capacity development (ISBA/26/A/18) and invited members to nominate national focal points.

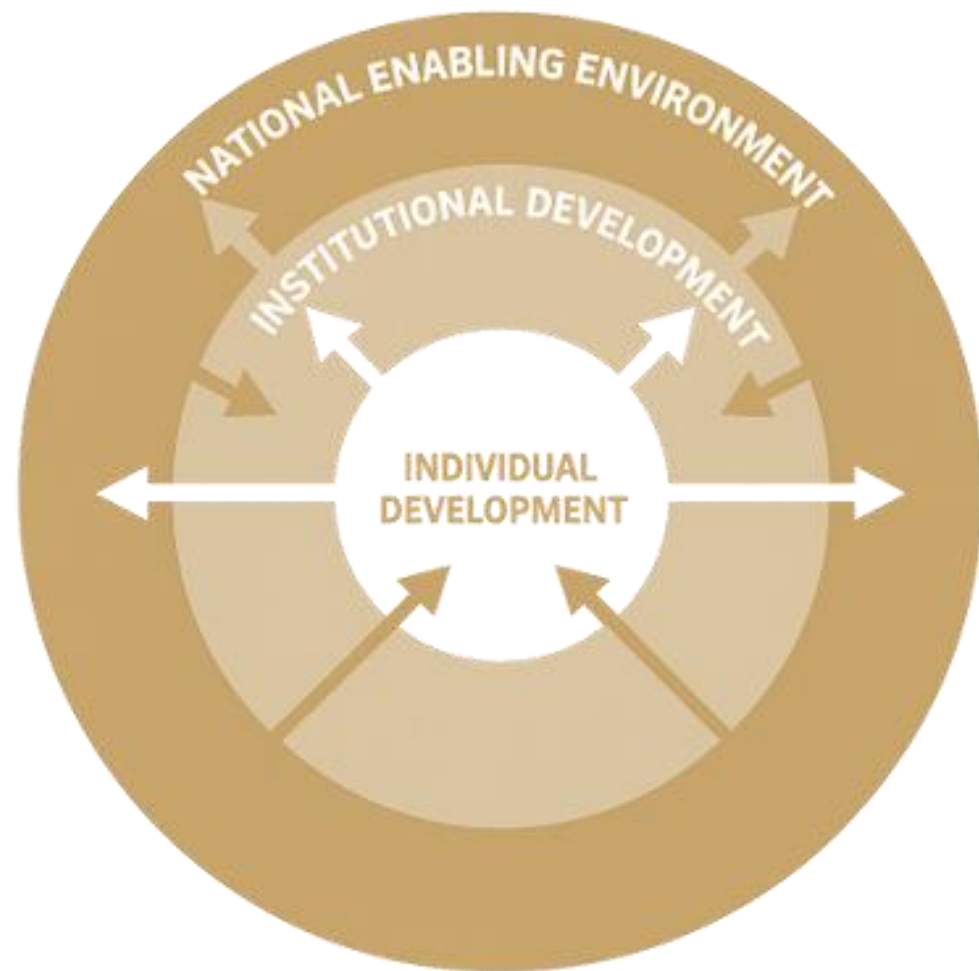
Aug 2022

The Assembly adopted the Capacity Development Strategy (decision ISBA/27/A/11; Strategy contained in annex I to ISBA/27/A/5).



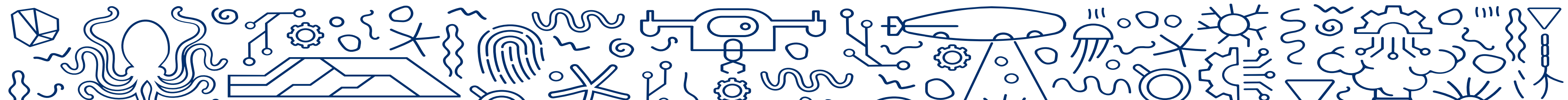
The Capacity Development Strategy

The Strategy sets high-level objectives and identifies five interrelated key result areas and three levels of capacity development.



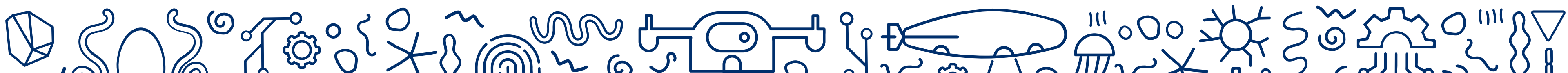
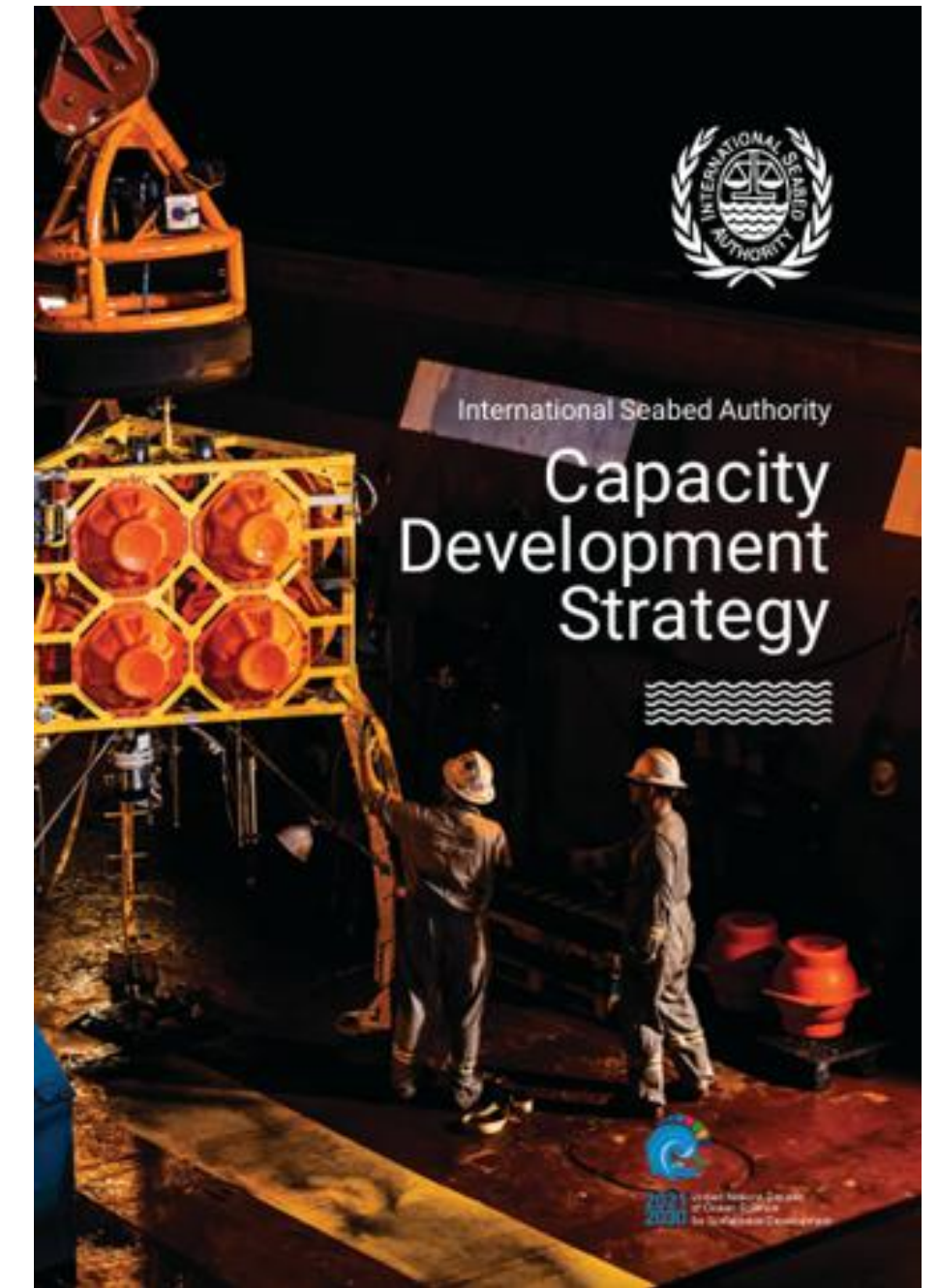
The strategy takes a programmatic approach to capacity development, which:

- Delivers synergistic, sector-wide results
- Keeps ownership with developing States



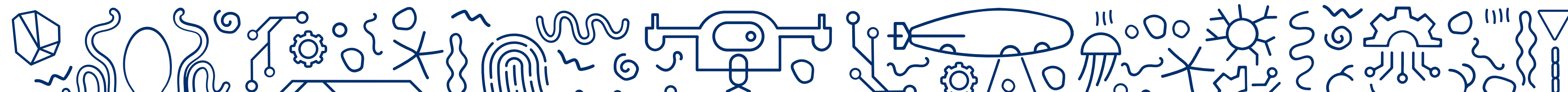
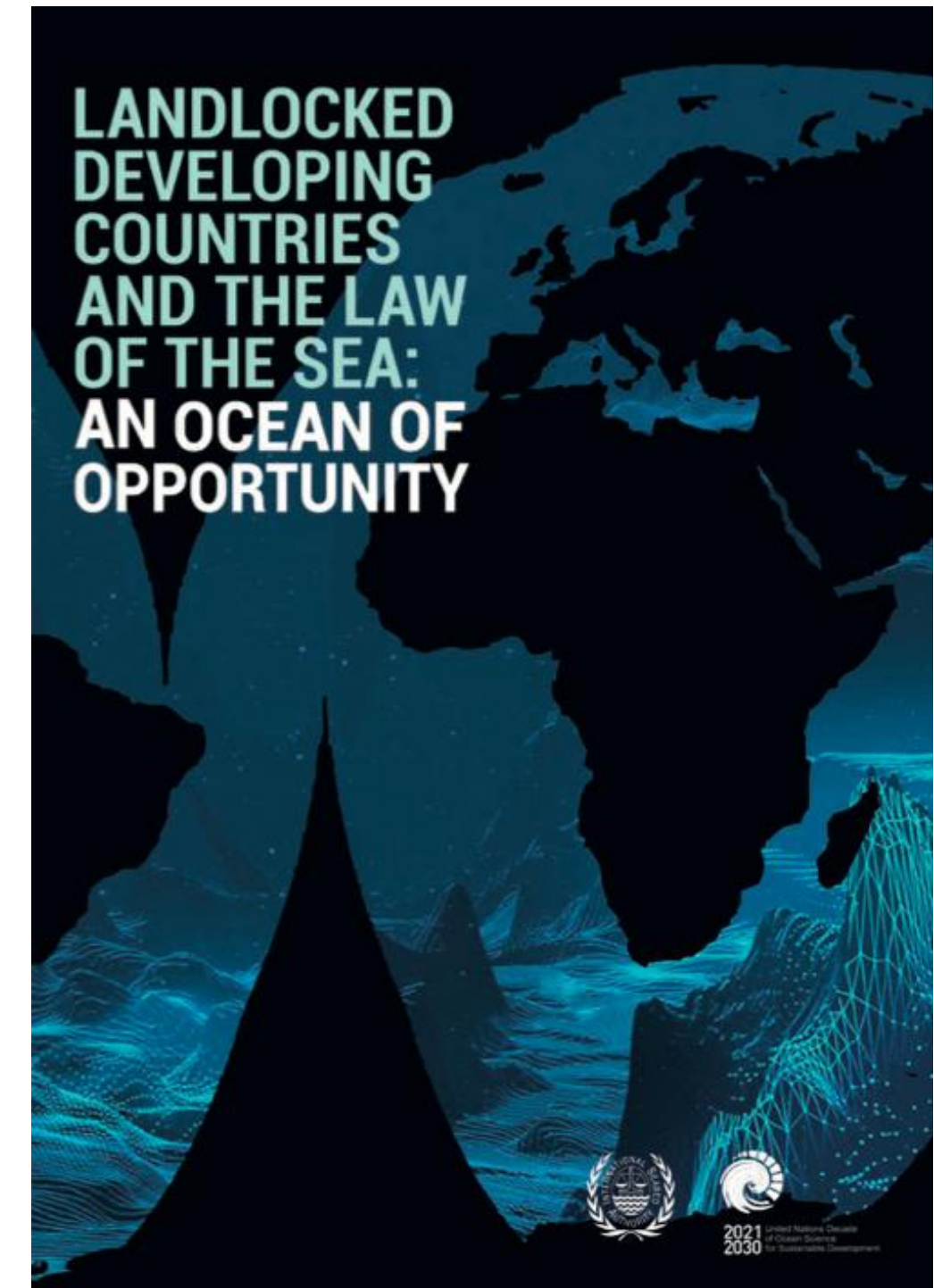
Key result areas

- 1 Ensuring capacity development programmes and activities are meaningful, tangible, efficient, effective and targeted at the needs of developing States as identified by them
- 2 Establishing and furthering strategic partnerships in support of capacity development
- 3 Strengthening institutional capacities through technology transfer and technical assistance
- 4 Advancing women's empowerment and leadership in deep-sea-related disciplines through targeted capacity development activities
- 5 Improving deep-sea literacy through better awareness and understanding of the legal regime of the Area and the role and mandate of the Authority



Strengthening Capacities for LLDCs

- 1 The Area and its minerals are a common heritage of humankind
- 2 LLDCs can participate in ISA knowledge transfer initiatives and benefit from equitable sharing arrangements
- 3 Strengthening institutional capacities through technology transfer and technical assistance
- 4 LLDCs member States play a key role in leveraging their legal rights into practical opportunities through knowledge, partnership and sustained participation



Participation of LLDCs in ISA programmes

Contractors' Training Programme (CTP)

1994–June 2026 · Total training placements: 585

1.7% of CTP training placements went to LLDCs

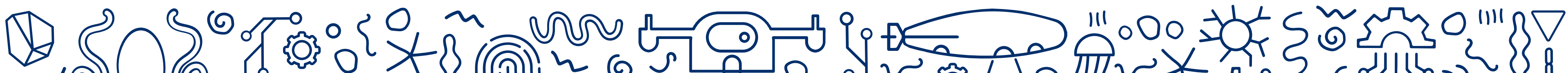
Category	Placements	% of total
LLDC	6	1.0%
LDC/LLDC	4	0.7%
Combined LLDC participation	10	1.7%

ISA capacity development programmes

Total participants: 1,273

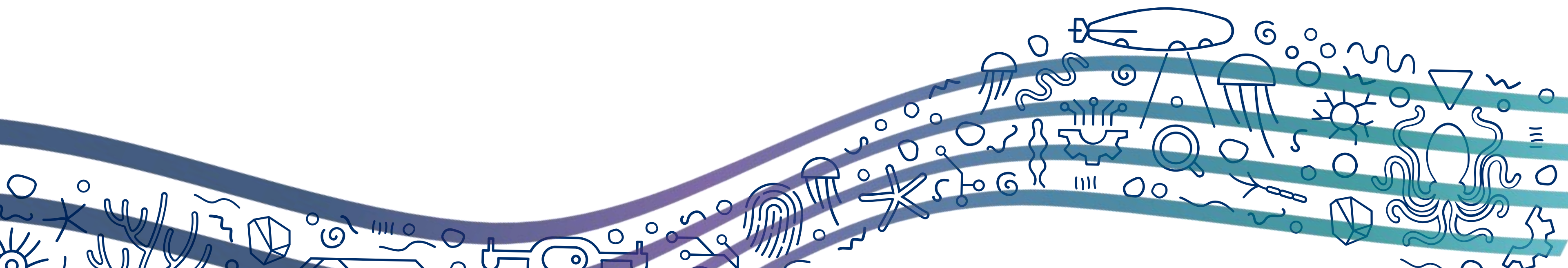
0.9% of participants were from LLDCs

Category	Participants	% of total
LLDC participants	11	0.9%





Overview of flagship programmes



Contractors' Training Programme



42%

At-sea training



19%

Internships and
theoretical training



14%

Fellowships



14%

Online/virtual modality



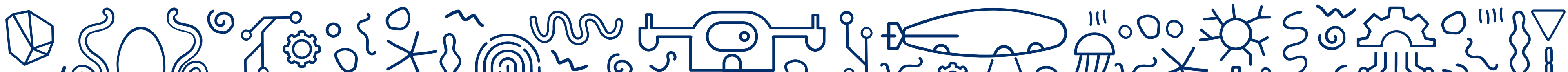
7%

Workshops/seminars



4%

Engineering



ISA–China Joint Training and Research Centre (JTRC)

Established in 2020 and hosted by the National Deep Sea Center in Qingdao, China, ISA's first joint training and research centre supports capacity-building and marine scientific research.

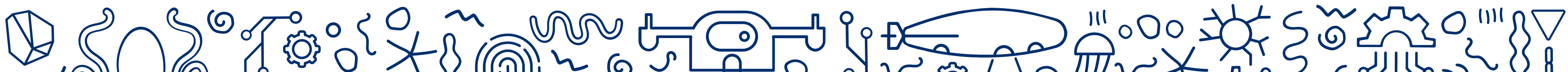
Four workshops held between 2022 and 2026, covering:

- Survey and assessment of mineral resources and deep-sea ecosystems
- Marine science and technology
- Marine spatial planning
- Cumulative impact assessment



120+

professionals from developing countries trained

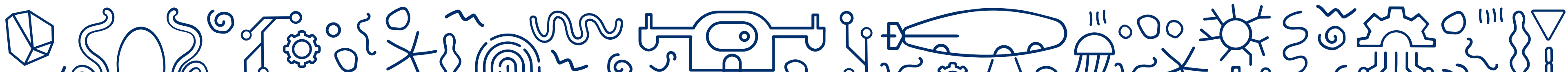


ISA–Egypt Joint Training and Research Centre (JTRC)

Established in 2023 and hosted by the National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (NIOF) of Egypt, the Centre supports capacity-building and marine scientific research.

Activities to date:

- Workshop on environmental impact assessment (2024)
- Training session on the scientific and technical aspects of regional environmental management planning in the Area, with a focus on the Indian Ocean (2026)



African Academy for Deep Sea Diplomacy (ADSEA)

A joint initiative with the International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC), training African diplomats in the law of the sea, with particular reference to the regime of the Area under Part XI of UNCLOS.

Online Deep Dive component (October–December 2025), followed by in-person training in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 19 to 23 January 2026.

26

participants selected

16

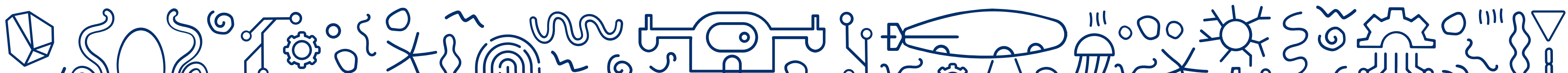
countries

50%

women (13 of 26)

Participating countries

- Burkina Faso
- Cameroon
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Egypt
- Equatorial Guinea
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Madagascar
- Morocco
- Namibia
- Nigeria
- Sao Tome and Principe
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone
- Sudan
- United Republic of Tanzania

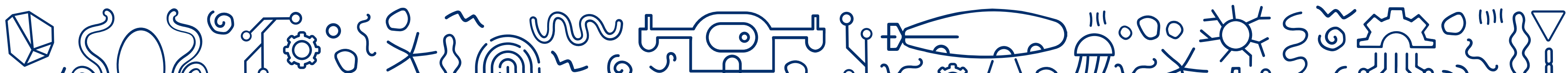


See Her Exceed (SHE) Mentorship Programme



- Addresses the underrepresentation of women in marine and deep-sea sciences, particularly women from developing countries
- Supports the career advancement and personal development of women working in deep-sea research by pairing mentees with experts through structured online programmes
- The first cohort provided mentorship to eight young women scientists and led to the launch of the SHE Gender Charter, a framework for the safe, inclusive and equitable participation of women in at-sea activities

Next cohorts: In the coming months, the Secretariat will launch a call for nominations of women experts to join the new cohorts of SHE Law of the Sea and SHE Science. SHE Law of the Sea will target policymakers from developing countries seeking to strengthen their involvement and expertise in deep-sea-related policymaking, while SHE Science will target women scientists seeking to enhance their methodological knowledge and skills in cumulative impact assessment.



Deep Dive E-Learning Platform

Nine cohorts completed to date, with more than 60 lessons and electives across five modules:

- UNCLOS and governance of the Area
- Marine mineral resources
- Marine scientific research
- Protection of the marine environment
- Technology development of the Area

Certified divers by regional group:

- African Group: 154
- Asia-Pacific Group: 93
- Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC): 28
- Western European and Others Group (WEOG): 28
- Eastern European Group: 8

Certified Males versus Females: M – 176; F - 135



362

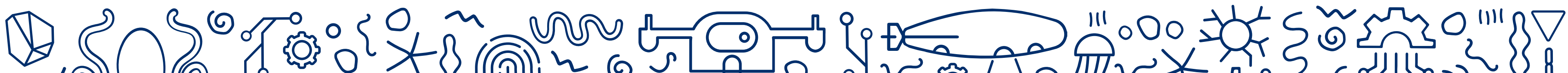
divers enrolled

311

divers certified

86%

certification rate

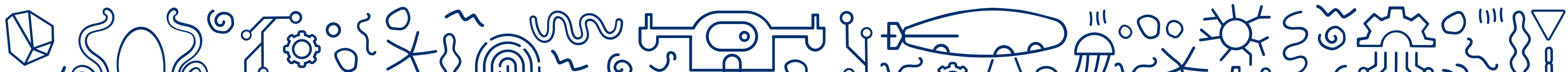


CaribISA Roadmap

A 5-year programme following a 2024 workshop held in partnership with the University of West Indies – Five Island Campus (UWI), the Centre of Excellence for Oceanography and the Blue Economy (COBE) and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda

Focuses on building the capacity of CARICOM BOSs in the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area with a view to understanding the deep ocean environment and its benefits through active participation.

Implementation of the roadmap is underway, with a workshop scheduled for May 2027



ISA Partnership Fund (ISAPF)

A multi-donor trust fund established at the 27th session of the ISA Assembly, financing marine scientific research and capacity development activities under the ISAPF Terms of Reference and Administrative Instructions. **The ISAPF Board has approved 16 projects to date.**

1st Board Jun 2023

- Training course on environmental impact assessment in the Area
- Building LDC capacities in deep-sea science, technology and innovation for blue economies
- Feasibility study on early-warning signals for deep-sea ecosystem resilience
- “MeioScool”: meiofauna research and knowledge-sharing centre

2nd Board Jan 2024

- Data visualization platform of the Area for the benefit of humankind
- African Academy for Deep Sea Diplomacy (ADSEA)
- ISA–Egypt Joint Training and Research Centre for African experts
- Promoting deep-sea research in the Indian Ocean for minerals exploration
- Caribbean Centre of Excellence for Oceanography and the Blue Economy

3rd Board Jul 2024

- Women in Blue: training opportunities in ocean science
- Surface to Depth: deep-sea literacy for Mozambique’s early-career ocean professionals
- Women in Science Expedition (WISE)
- Adaptive management methodology for deep-sea mining sediment plumes

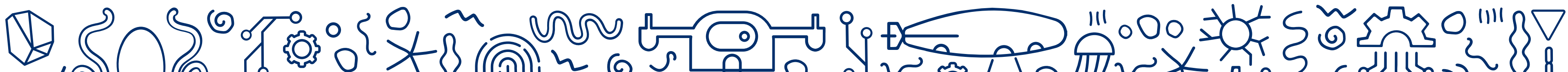
4th Board 2024

- Reviewed existing projects
- No new projects approved

5th Board Dec 2025

- Integrated capacity development on science for REMPs
- Digital transformation of ISA web platforms for marine scientific research and capacity-building
- P-SIDS Initiative for Blue Economy

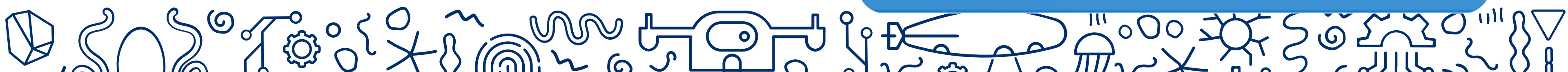
6th Board Dec 2026



National focal points for capacity development

- All member States are encouraged to nominate national focal points for capacity development (NAFOPs).
- NAFOPs are **strongly encouraged to participate in the Capacity Development Needs Assessment Survey disseminated by the Secretariat.**

International Seabed Authority
Capacity Development Needs
Assessment Survey - 2026



The role of national focal points

- 1

Disseminate information nationally on ISA capacity development opportunities
- 2

Act as the liaison point between the Secretariat and the member State on all capacity development matters
- 3

Help identify potential national partners for training and capacity development initiatives
- 4

Raise awareness across national ministries and agencies of ISA’s mandate under the Convention
- 5

Help identify national and regional needs for technical assistance
- 6

Support building a network of institutions to implement the Strategy

Annex

ISBA/26/A/18

Terms of reference for national focal points in charge of liaising with the secretariat on matters relating to capacity development

1. Capacity-building and capacity development are essential aspects of the mandate of the International Seabed Authority under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982. The duty of the Authority to ensure that a variety of capacity-building mechanisms are developed is recognized in the strategic plan of the Authority for the period 2019–2023.¹ Such mechanisms should be aimed not only at facilitating the transfer of technology to developing States² but also at ensuring the expansion of opportunities for their participation in activities in the Area.³ In the light of the foregoing, members of the Authority have identified that the challenge lies in the identification of appropriate mechanisms, including tailored programmes and initiatives, to ensure the fully integrated participation of developing States in activities in the Area at all levels. Strategic direction 5 (Build capacity for developing States) and strategic direction 6 (Ensure fully integrated participation by developing States) are aimed at accomplishing this objective.

2. Pursuant to the request by participants in the workshop on capacity development, resources and needs assessment held by the secretariat in Kingston in February 2020 to develop terms of reference for national focal points in charge of liaising with the secretariat on matters relating to capacity development, the role and responsibilities of such focal points are established as follows:

(a) To facilitate dissemination at the national level of information on capacity development programmes and activities to be implemented by the Authority;

(b) To act as point of liaison between the secretariat and the member of the Authority on any matters relating to capacity-building and capacity development;

(c) To help to identify potential partners at the national level with which the Authority could develop, in close cooperation, initiatives for training and capacity development;

(d) To raise awareness among national ministries and other relevant agencies of the mandate of the Authority under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement in relation to capacity-building and capacity development;

(e) To help to identify needs for technical assistance by the Authority in order to support national or regional initiatives relevant to the mandate of the Authority;

(f) To support the work of the secretariat in establishing a network of institutions that could contribute to the implementation of the dedicated strategy of the Authority for capacity development.

3. The secretariat shall keep national focal points up to date on activities undertaken in cooperation with national focal points for capacity-building and capacity development.

¹ ISBA/24/A/10, annex.

² United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, arts. 144, 273 and 274.

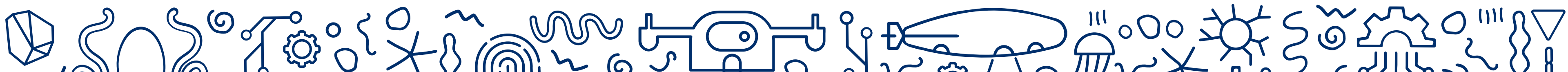
³ Ibid., art. 146.

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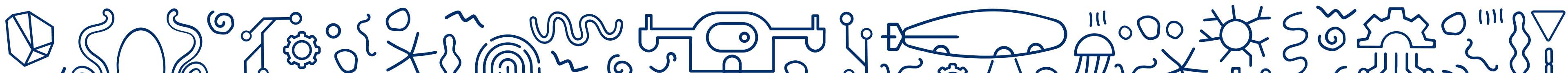
Upcoming opportunities



NEXT STEPS

Upcoming capacity development opportunities

Oct–Dec 2026	Ifremer (PMN) Environmental Studies Internship (1 placement)	Apr 2027	Taxonomy Regional Workshop
Nov 2026	See Her Exceed Mentorship Programme, Phase 2	Apr–May 2027	ISA–China JTRC Training Session ISA-Egypt JTRC Training Session
1 Jan 2027	Deep Dive, Cohort 11	Aug–Oct 2027	Ifremer (PMS) Practical Onboard Training (2 placements)
Jan–Mar 2027	National Expert Deployments on Regional Environmental Management Plans (REMPs)	Ongoing	Contractors’ Training Programme and internship programmes
Feb 2027	African Academy for Deep Sea Diplomacy (ADSEA)		





Thank you

