

Statement by InterRidge

InterRidge is an independent scientific organization affiliated to SCOR, the Scientific Committee of Oceanic Research, itself linked to the International Council of Science. InterRidge has the Observer Status to the International Seabed Authority for more than a decade. Our goal is to promote scientific research by international collaboration on mid-ocean ridges *sensu largo*, i.e. including the whole ocean floor that has been created at mid-oceanic ridges. The ocean is big and our knowledge, although increasing, is still limited. In the past, InterRidge has shown that only joint efforts allow us to tackle some huge tasks, such as starting the mapping and scientific exploration of the Southwest Indian Ridge, to cite only one example. A peculiarity of InterRidge is its pluridisciplinarity and the participation of scientists from all nations.

InterRidge is delighted to note that last year's so called "Belgian non-paper" resulted in the document ISA25C10 that is discussed today. InterRidge presently hosts and maintains a list of several thousand scientists who, we are sure, will be the happiest to provide independent expertise on topics related to solid earth sciences, oceanography, ecology and biology, if asked for. Science is not having clear-cut answers and we underline the need to consider a variety of experts with different backgrounds, origins, and specialties. Again, diversity of points of view should be seen as richness on which fully enlightened decisions can be taken.

In the past, InterRidge has already collaborated with the ISA. As scientists and citizen of the World, we are willing to do so again, for instance in helping the ISA to access the international scientific community in its diversity. In any case we support the proposed increasing involvement of scientists in this process.