



Assembly

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Request for observer status in accordance with rule 82, paragraph 1 (e), of the rules of procedure of the Assembly on behalf of InterRidge

Note by the Secretariat

1. On 31 January 2012, InterRidge submitted a letter to the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority, requesting observer status in the Assembly of the Authority. The text of the letter with the additional information provided by the applicant is contained in annexes I and II to the present note.
2. In accordance with rule 82, paragraph 1 (e), of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, non-governmental organizations with which the Secretary-General has entered into arrangements in accordance with article 169, paragraph 1, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and other non-governmental organizations invited by the Assembly that have demonstrated their interest in matters under consideration by the Assembly, may participate as observers in the Assembly.
3. Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the same rule further provide that observers referred to in paragraph 1 (e) of that rule may sit at public meetings of the Assembly, and upon the invitation of the President and subject to the approval by the Assembly may make oral statements on questions within the scope of their activities, and that written statements submitted by observers referred to in paragraph 1 (e) of that rule within the scope of their activities that are relevant to the work of the Assembly should be made available by the Secretariat in the quantities and in the languages in which the statements are submitted.

Annex I

Letter dated 31 January 2012 from Bramley Murton, Chair, Jon Copley, Co-Chair and Debbie Milton, Coordinator of InterRidge to the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority

InterRidge would like to request the granting of observer status in the International Seabed Authority.

InterRidge promotes interdisciplinary, international studies of oceanic spreading centres by creating a global research community, planning and coordinating new science programmes that no single nation can achieve alone, exchanging scientific information and sharing new technologies and facilities. InterRidge is dedicated to reaching out to the public, scientists and Governments and to providing a unified voice for ocean ridge researchers worldwide. It has an office comprising a Chair, a Co-Chair and a Coordinator, which rotates among its principal members every three years. Its scientific activities are represented by its seven current working groups, and it regularly sponsors three to four international workshops and conferences each year. More detailed information is available on our website at www.interridge.org.

InterRidge has been in partnership with the International Seabed Authority Endowment Fund for the InterRidge student and postdoctoral fellowship programme since 2009. InterRidge has received \$75,000 in total from the Fund, for awarding to fellows from developing countries. Six fellows have been appointed, and we expect a further nine between 2012 and 2014.

InterRidge has links with other international research programmes (e.g. the Integrated Ocean Drilling Programme) and is affiliated with the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research.

In 2010, at the request of the International Seabed Authority, the InterRidge office polled members of the international mid-ocean ridge research community to provide details of hydrothermal vent sites that may require protection when considering licence applications for polymetallic sulphide exploration. These were communicated to the Legal and Technical Commission in 2011. With the continued commercial interest in mid-ocean ridges, we believe that InterRidge can contribute positively to the work of the Authority in bringing multidisciplinary research perspectives.

We respectfully request that InterRidge's application to be granted observer status in the International Seabed Authority be considered at its next session, in 2012. Please let us know if there are any other procedures we should follow in order to become an observer. If there is other information that you require, we would be pleased to provide it.

Thank you for considering this request.

(Signed) **Bramley Murton**
Chair

(Signed) **Jon Copley**
Co-Chair

(Signed) **Debbie Milton**
Coordinator

Annex II

International Seabed Authority observer status request

1. Name of organization

InterRidge

2. Address of current office

National Oceanography Centre

European Way, Southampton

UK SO14 3ZH

Tel: 44 (0) 23 8059 6263

Fax: 44 (0) 23 8059 6554

E-mail: Coordinator@interridge.org

Website: www.interridge.org

3. Name and address of proposed primary representative

Bramley Murton

Chair, InterRidge

National Oceanography Centre

European Way, Southampton

UK SO14 3ZH

Tel: 44 (0) 23 8059 6543

Fax: 44 (0) 23 8059 6554

E-mail: bramley.murton@noc.ac.uk

4. Aims and purpose of InterRidge

- Promote interdisciplinary, international studies of the ocean's spreading centres
- Coordinate scientific exchange (information, technology, facilities) between national research groups
- Provide a unified voice for ocean ridge researchers worldwide
- Encourage the protection and management of the oceanic ridge environment
- Promote communication between non-scientists, scientists, educators and policymakers
- Spearhead education outreach efforts to raise awareness of the oceanic ridge environment

5. History

InterRidge began at a meeting in France in 1990, after it was recommended that an international initiative be pursued. Following this, an interim steering group was formed and the first programme plan was produced in 1992. The first decade (1992-2003) of the organization produced a coordinated, international ridge community of member countries that had previously been working alone.

Two functions of InterRidge were developed more fully in the second decade (2004-2013) of the organization:

(a) *Scientific working groups*

Scientific working groups are a key metric for success as to how InterRidge is delivering on its mission. These working groups are proposed by an international group of scientists, usually following a call for proposals issued by the InterRidge Office. Working groups in 2012 relate to arc-backarc systems, hydrothermal energy and ocean carbon cycles, mantle imaging, oceanic detachment faults, seafloor mineralization, south Mid-Atlantic Ridge targeted exploration and vent ecology.

(b) *Education and Outreach*

In 2008, InterRidge began offering fellowships for students' research projects, and in 2009 InterRidge began a partnership with the International Seabed Authority Endowment Fund (\$30,000) to expand the InterRidge student and postdoctoral fellowship programme. In December 2011, the International Seabed Authority awarded a further \$45,000 to support the programme.

In 2011, InterRidge began a "cruise travel bursary" scheme to enable early-career scientists to participate in research cruises.

6. Recent activities

InterRidge supports mid-ocean science through the formation of working groups (currently seven, see sect. 5 (a) above), and through financial support to international conferences and workshops. In 2011, InterRidge sponsored the following international conference and workshops:

January 2011	Geological Carbon Capture and Storage in Mafic and Ultramafic Rocks, Muscat
April 2011	Special session of the European Geosciences Union, Vienna
September 2011	Circum-Antarctic ridges workshop, Toulouse, France
October 2011	Ocean Mantle Dynamics: From Spreading Centre to Subduction Zone, Tokyo

7. Descriptive statement of the extent to which the purposes of InterRidge relate to those of the International Seabed Authority, in particular, what contribution can be made to the progress of the Authority

Commercial interest in mid-ocean ridges began a new phase in 2011, with the granting of exploration licences for polymetallic sulphides by the International Seabed Authority to China and the Russian Federation. InterRidge submitted

information from the scientific community about hydrothermal vent sites for consideration during this process. With its multidisciplinary interests, InterRidge is in a position to provide international, scientific perspectives to this evolving area of interest.

InterRidge is also committed to capacity-building, particularly in developing nations. Its outreach programme is well established, and it has been in partnership with the International Seabed Authority Endowment Fund since 2008. Six InterRidge/International Seabed Authority fellowships have been awarded, with a further nine expected between 2012 and 2014.

8. Structure

InterRidge has three officers — a Chair, a Co-Chair and a Coordinator. It has a steering committee composed of 17 members — two representatives for each principal member and one for each associate member, in addition to the officers. Each country has a national correspondent with whom the Office communicates on a regular basis. The Office rotates among the six principal members on a three-year cycle. Membership information is available at www.interridge.org/nations.

9. Membership

There are three levels of national membership, depending on the amount of annual subscription paid (principal, associate and corresponding). Individuals are also welcome to become members. In 2011, there were 6 principal members, 3 associate members, 23 corresponding members and more than 2,500 individual members.

10. Officers

InterRidge's officers in 2012 are:

Chair: Bramley Murton

Co-Chair: Jon Coplay

Coordinator: Debbie Milton

11. Relations with other non-governmental organizations

InterRidge has established relations with the Integrated Ocean Drilling Programme and the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research.

12. Finance

InterRidge is funded by national subscription. Its annual budget is approximately \$200,000.

13. Publications

- The InterRidge global database of active submarine hydrothermal vents, version 2.1, was developed by a former InterRidge coordinator, Stace Beaulieu.
- *InterRidge News* is an annual publication, which contains research results, national reports and outreach activities. A copy of *InterRidge News* 2011 is provided.

- An electronic newsletter is sent to members every two weeks.
- The InterRidge website (www.interridge.org) is regularly updated.

14. Remarks

In the light of our joint interest in hydrothermal vent environments along mid-ocean ridges, and in representing all nations, InterRidge believes that it can make a positive contribution to the work of the Authority in this regard.
