



Secretariat

14 September 2022

Secretary-General's bulletin

To: Members of the staff

From: The Secretary-General

Subject: **Terms of reference for the International Seabed Authority Partnership Fund¹**

1. The International Seabed Authority Partnership Fund is created as a multi-donor trust fund pursuant to regulation 5.5 of the Financial Regulations of the International Seabed Authority.

Objectives

2. The objectives of the Partnership Fund are to:

(a) Promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area for the benefit of humankind as a whole;

(b) Provide qualified scientists and technical personnel from developing States with opportunities to participate in international marine scientific research programmes, including through training, technical assistance and scientific cooperation programmes;

(c) Contribute to the implementation of the action plan of the Authority in support of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development;

(d) Contribute to the design, development and implementation of dedicated capacity development programmes and activities aligned with the priority needs identified by developing States members of the Authority;

(e) Enhance the Authority's contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

¹ During the twenty-seventh session, the Assembly, in its decision relating to financial and budgetary matters (ISBA/27/A/10), decided to authorize the Secretary-General to establish the International Seabed Authority Partnership Fund as a trust fund of the Authority pursuant to financial regulation 5.5 for the purposes set out in the terms of reference.



Activities

3. The activities to be financed by the Partnership Fund could include:

(a) The development and implementation of marine scientific research programmes in the Area, in line with the strategic research priorities identified in the action plan of the Authority in support of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, which will benefit qualified scientists and technical personnel as well as relevant national and regional institutions from developing countries and regions;

(b) The development and implementation of training programmes in line with the decision of the Assembly relating to the implementation of a programmatic approach to capacity development, in particular addressing the priority needs for capacity development identified by developing States members of the Authority;

(c) The development and implementation of technical assistance programmes and activities that will enhance the implementation of the strategic plan of the Authority for the period 2019–2023 and its high-level action plan, the marine scientific research action plan and the programmatic approach to capacity development;

(d) The engagement of multilevel partnerships on the conduct of marine scientific research programmes in the Area and dissemination and sharing of their results, with interested member States, contractors, relevant ocean industry sectors, the United Nations and its funds and programmes, relevant subregional, regional and international organizations, scientific communities and relevant civil society groups.

Eligible expenditures

4. For Authority-executed activities, the Partnership Fund may be used to finance:

- (a) Staff costs (excluding short-term consultants and temporaries);
- (b) Short-term consultants and temporaries;
- (c) Contractual services;
- (d) Equipment and office premises lease costs;
- (e) Media, workshops, conferences and meetings;
- (f) Travel expenses.

5. For purposes of this paragraph, “staff costs (excluding short-term consultants and temporaries)” includes salaries and benefits charged to the Partnership Fund as applicable under the policies and procedures of the Authority; and “short-term consultants and temporaries” includes fees charged to the Fund as applicable under the policies and procedures of the Authority.

6. For recipient-executed activities, the Partnership Fund may be used to finance eligible expenditures in accordance with the applicable policies and procedures of the Authority.

Indicative results framework

7. An indicative results framework for the activities financed by the Partnership Fund prepared by the secretariat, in consultation with the donors, will be available on the Partnership Fund website. This framework may be revised from time to time in consultation with the donors and will be used for monitoring and evaluation purposes only.

Indicative budget

8. The Authority will provide indicative budget information for the Partnership Fund on the Fund website, which may be updated periodically by the secretariat in consultation with the donors. This information is for information purposes only.

Accounting and financial reporting

9. The secretariat will maintain separate records and ledger accounts in respect of the funds deposited in the Partnership Fund and disbursements made therefrom. Accounting, internal control and audit will be in accordance with the financial regulations and rules of the Authority.

Grants to recipients

10. As the administrator of the Partnership Fund on behalf of the donors, the Authority will enter into grant agreements with recipients consistent with the purposes of the Fund and on the terms and conditions set forth in the grant agreements. Such agreements may be entered into up to the maximum amount of the contributions that all donors have agreed to make available under the administration agreements between the secretariat and the donors. The secretariat will be responsible for the supervision of the activities financed under any grant agreement.

Governance

11. A Partnership Board will be established to:

- (a) Provide strategic guidance and direction on the implementation of the Partnership Fund activities and endorse strategic priorities;
- (b) Endorse annual work plans and budgets presented by the secretariat;
- (c) Review progress reports provided by the secretariat on the basis of the indicative results framework described in paragraph 7.

12. The Partnership Board will be expected to meet annually as convened by the secretariat. Meetings may be conducted physically or virtually, with decisions made by consensus. The secretariat may agree to hold ad hoc meetings of the Partnership Board at the request of its members.

13. The Partnership Board will comprise the following members designated by the Secretary-General:

- (a) Two representatives of the secretariat;
- (b) The Chairs of the Finance Committee and the Legal and Technical Commission;
- (c) Eight representatives of member States, consisting of representatives of the major donors to the Partnership Fund and representatives of developing countries that may be beneficiaries of the activities of the Fund, including the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

14. Each member State representative may be accompanied by a technical expert as an observer. Donors contributing to other Authority-administered trust funds that, at the discretion of the secretariat, support the achievement of the objectives of the Partnership Fund may also be invited by the secretariat to participate in the discussions of the Partnership Board.

15. The secretariat may, in consultation with the donors, invite other relevant stakeholders, including technical experts, partner countries and institutions, such as

the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Maritime Organization and other relevant United Nations and international organizations, to attend meetings of the Partnership Board.

16. The secretariat will endeavour to make arrangements with universities, scientific institutions, contractors and other entities for opportunities for scientists from developing countries to participate in marine scientific research activities in the Area. This will include arrangements for the reduction or waiver of fees for training. The secretariat will publish a list of such institutions from time to time for the information of members.

(Signed) Michael W. **Lodge**
Secretary-General
