



07/02/2023.

Secretary General Michael W. Lodge

c/o Mr. Yongsheng Cai,

Senior Legal Officer International Seabed Authority

[REDACTED]

RE: Te Ipukarea Society Application for Observer Status at the International Seabed Authority

Dear Secretary General,

On behalf of Te Ipukarea Society, a registered environmental non-government organisation in the Cook Islands, I am writing to request observer status at the International Seabed Authority (ISA). This would fall under rule 82 of the ISA Rules of Procedure, and the Guidelines for observer status of non-governmental organizations with ISA (Annex, ISBA/25/A/16)

Te Ipukarea Society was formed in 1996. We cover a wide remit of environmental areas, and the health of the Pacific Ocean is one of our main concerns. While primarily a national NGO, we have conducted activities in several Pacific Island countries. Our staff and board members have extensive experience throughout most of the countries of the Pacific.

We have submitted the application (see annex) in the required under the guidelines for observer status of non-governmental organizations with the International Seabed Authority (ISBA/25/A/16, annex), more than three months before the opening of the twenty-eighth session of the Assembly, in July 2023.

Alanna Matamaru Smith

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Director

Te Ipukarea Society



ISBA/25/A/16 4/5 19-13155

A. Information about the organization

1. Name of organization

[Te Ipukarea Society](#)

2. Address of headquarters

[Main Road, Tupapa, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, PO Box 649](#)

3. Addresses of all branches and/or regional headquarters

[This is the only branch](#)

4. Telephone number: 682 21144

5. Fax number: None

6. Email address: info@tiscookislands.org Copy to: te.ipukarea.society.inc@gmail.com

7. Name, title and contact details of focal point

[Alanna Matamaru Smith, Director. Email: a.smith@tiscookislands.org](#)

[Copy to te.ipukarea.society.inc@gmail.com](#) Tel. 682 72199

8. Background information on the organization

[Te Ipukarea Society is a society incorporated with the Cook Islands Ministry of Justice. It was formed in 1996. It is an environmental non-government organisation, and is the only one registered with the Cook Islands National Environment Service under the Environment Act 2003.](#)

[Our society is funded through support from our corporate members as well as from project funding for proposals we submit to various partners.](#)

[Our mission is to champion an environmentally resilient, sustainably developed and bio-diverse Cook Islands. We will achieve our mission through action, advocacy and education, incorporating traditional knowledge and practices where possible.](#)



9. Is the organization a member of, affiliated to or otherwise associated with another organization that has been granted observer status with the Authority?

Yes, we communicate regularly with other organisations that have observer status at the ISA, including the DSCC, the Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC), the Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and IUCN

10. Is the organization affiliated to consultants of the Authority, contractors with the Authority, entities in connection with the law of the sea, the offshore and deep-sea mining industry, research institutes or the mineral marketing and processing industry?

We maintain a relationship with the Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority and communicate with the Cook Islands three exploration licensed mining companies: Cook Islands Cobalt, Moana Minerals and CIIC/GSR a joint venture company which has exploration blocks within the CCZ.

11. Relationships with intergovernmental organizations

We are a member of BirdLife International and IUCN. We are in the process of being accredited with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as not for profit civil society organisation

12. List of publications and/or other relevant documentation

Deep-sea mining, Environmental Issues associated with deep-sea minerals exploitation (May 2015, IUCN CEM.

Ocean Health is Our Wealth. 2021. (Cook Islands Brochure)

Deep Conversations Documentary – Cook Islands Indigenous perspectives on Deep Sea Mining - [\(9\) Deep Conversations on Deep Seabed Mining in the Cook Islands - YouTube](#)

B. Interest in matters under consideration by the Assembly

13. Briefly outline how your organization intends to demonstrate its interest in matters under consideration by the Assembly, including by answering questions 14 to 17 and by providing any other relevant information related to the application for observer status.

Te Ipukarea Society intends to participate at the ISA as an observer both virtually and – when possible – in Kingston at ISA. We will follow the progress of the environmental regulations process at the LTA meetings and the ISA sessions. We will also encourage our Government participants to push for stringent environmental regulations to ensure, if mining goes ahead, it will not result in significant damage to the environment



14. Briefly outline whether and how the purposes or activities of the organization relate to the work of the Authority.

We are a very active environmental NGO attempting to provide a balanced view on the potential future impacts of deep-sea mining. Our messaging is based on scientific information to ensure our communities can take informed positions on matters related to ISA's work. One of our main focal areas is ecologically sustainable development. We wish to play a part in ensuring any deep seabed mining that goes ahead is not causing significant damage to the marine ecosystems. We also hope to have more indigenous representation participate as observers at the ISA.

15. Briefly outline whether and how your organization intends to contribute to the work of the Authority, for example by providing specialized information, advice or expertise, or by identifying or helping to procure the services of experts or consultants.

We will monitor the ISA procurement page and notify any potential consultants we are aware of about relevant opportunities (in fact we already do this). We have experience in working closely with local communities and understand those ties to indigenous knowledge and culture. Ensuring indigenous values are considered within potential industry such as deep seabed mining needs to be considered within the work of the Authority.

16. Briefly outline whether and how your organization has the expertise and the capacity to contribute, within its field of competence, to the work of the Authority, in particular in connection with the law of the sea, the protection of the marine environment, the offshore and deep-sea mining industry, technology, minerals processing and marketing, activities in the Area and marine scientific research in the Area.

As an environmental NGO, with experience in marine conservation, we are best placed to assist with input into the protection of the marine environment. We have among our current staff qualifications which include 1 PhD and 2 Masters, as well as undergraduates in the environmental and marine sector. Our society is represented on the Technical Advisory Group of our Marae Moana MPA and has assisted in the collection of Marine Spatial Planning data. We have worked in policy related to plastic pollution as well as the regulations for the Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Act 2019.

Our Director, Alanna Matamaru Smith, has undertaken deep sea ecology training at the University of Hawaii, has a Masters in Conservation Biology and works closely with indigenous communities



17. Briefly outline whether and how your organization intends to contribute to the capacity-building programmes and initiatives of the Authority (e.g., Secretary General's award, voluntary commitments of the Authority).

We would widely disseminate the announcement of the Secretary General's award and encourage young people in the Cook Islands, and the Pacific region, to apply. Platforms that we would use to disseminate this information include our active social media pages i.e., our YouTube channel – Conservation Cook Islands

Facebook – Te Ipukarea Society – TIS

Instagram – [te_ipukarea_Society](#)

Thank you for your time and consideration

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alanna Matamaru Smith'.

Alanna Matamaru Smith, Director
Te Ipukarea Society
Rarotonga
Cook Islands
www.tiscookislands.org