

MR. MICHAEL W. LODGE
Secretary-General
International Seabed Authority
Kingston, Jamaica

Dear Secretary-General:

On behalf of Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA), I would like to express our sincere gratitude for your leadership in serving as the chair of the ISA Secretariat, and leading the discussions around the future regulation of mining activity in the Area for the benefit of all mankind and the effective protection of the marine environment. As the mining code negotiations are at a critical point in 2023, SOA seeks to attain observer status to ensure that the voice of future generations is reflected and considered in the process, in accordance with article 169 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, rule 82, paragraph 1 (e), of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority and the guidelines for observer status of non-governmental organizations with the International Seabed Authority.

SOA is a 501c(3) non-profit organization established in 2014 in San Francisco, California, United States of America, with the mission to activate young people, develop and implement innovative solutions, and mobilize an ocean workforce to help restore the health of our oceans. Founded in 2014, SOA has cultivated the world's largest network of next-gen leaders, entrepreneurs, advocates, mentors, and partners—all working to create solutions for the largest challenges facing our ocean.

Since 2014, SOA has built a network of over 7,000 leaders in 165 countries, including scientists, entrepreneurs, and global youth working on a wide variety of ocean issues. SOA's network also comprises Regional Representatives from Africa, Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe and Lusofonia.

Thus far, SOA has supported three young leaders from Perú, France, and Trinidad and Tobago to participate in the ISA meetings in affiliation with our partners at DSCC, Earthworks, and TBA-21. SOA aspires to provide a similar opportunity to participate in ISA proceedings to additional young marine scientists, future policy makers, and entrepreneurs from our network moving forward; this can help ensure transparency and inclusion.

SOA is actively working to protect marine resources and biodiversity, as well as the coastal communities that are often affected by industrial activities in the high seas. In this regard, SOA advocates for improved national and international policies to ensure the sustainable use of marine resources. SOA currently supports initiatives for youth leaders globally to promote science-based decisions and the precautionary approach when considering and evaluating deep-seabed mining.

SOA believes that our experience and the global community of work we have developed in the past 9 years will be an important contribution to the current discussions around the Mining Code regulation at the ISA.



Emily Tewes, Science and Policy Adviser
Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA)

APPLICATION FOR OBSERVER STATUS

A. Information about the organization

1. Name of organization:

- Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA)

2. Address of headquarters:

- 1160 Battery St, San Francisco, CA 94111, USA
Suite 100

3. Addresses of all branches and/or regional headquarters

- N/A

4. Telephone number:

- +1 816-308-0839
- +1 202-776-8410

5. Fax number

- N/A

6. Email address: emily@soalliance.org

7. Name, title and contact details of focal point

a. Primary point of contact: Emily Tewes, Science and Policy Adviser, Email: emily@soalliance.org.

b. Secondary point of contact: Brandon Levy, Program Director. Email: brandon@soalliance.org

8. Background information on the organization

- SOA is a 501c(3) non-profit organization established in 2014 in San Francisco, California, United States of America, with the mission to activate young people, develop and implement innovative solutions, and mobilize an ocean workforce to help restore the health of our oceans. Founded in 2014, SOA has cultivated the world's largest network of next-gen leaders, entrepreneurs, advocates, mentors, and partners—all working to create solutions for the largest challenges facing our ocean. Since then SOA has grown into two flagship programs and has built an extensive network of over 7,000 young ocean leaders & Early Career Ocean Professionals (ages 18-35). Beyond SOA's [Ocean Solutions Hubs](#), leaders enter the SOA “ecosystem” through our [microgrants program](#), global and regional events, or through our [Ocean Solutions Accelerator Program](#). For active community members with policy experience, SOA also recently completed our second cohort of the [Youth Policy Advisory Council](#) that was working on core organizational Global Policy campaigns. This class of the Youth Policy Advisory Council made a second iteration of a Global Blue New Deal and completed a youth survey analyzing the global views of over 1,000 youth on deep-seabed mining.

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

- SOA is a member of the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC). SOA has coordinated with partner organizations - Earthworks, DSCC, and TBA-21- to enable SOA Representatives to attend previous ISA meetings.

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?

- No.

11. Relationships with intergovernmental organizations

- SOA has worked with the United Nations to support youth engagement at major UN Conferences. SOA co-organized the UN Ocean Conference Youth and Innovation Forum in Lisbon in 2022 with UN Global Compact, and SOA is currently partnering with the French and Costa Rican governments to co-organize youth engagement in the 2025 UN Ocean Conference in France. Through this partnership, SOA hopes to continue to expand youth engagement and representation throughout the UN Ocean Conference programming.
- In addition, as of February, the committee on NGOs at its 2023 regular session has recommended SOA for special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). The decision regarding final endorsement will be received in June 2023.
- SOA is a UNEP Finance Initiative [Member](#)

12. List of publications and/or other relevant documentation

- [Global Blue New Deal](#)
- [World Economic Forum Media](#)
- [Forbes - SOA Ecopreneur Network](#)
- [Tech Crunch - SOA Ecopreneur Network](#)
- [Biz Women Interview with SOA Founder](#)
- [Peru Deep-Seabed Mining Blog](#)
- [UN Ocean Conference Youth and Innovation Forum](#)

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.

- In 2022, SOA's Youth Policy Advisory Council surveyed over 1,000 youth from over 60 countries to gauge their understanding of and perspectives around the issue of deep-seabed mining.
- SOA has been working closely with the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, as well as other non-profit organizations, to build awareness around the emerging industry of deep-seabed mining and the negotiation of the mining code regulations, which is a topic of interest to our global community.
- Deep-seabed mining broadly remains a little-known and understood activity, which is why SOA has been organizing programming on this topic since 2019, which has included communication campaigns to raise awareness among the general public and key decision makers around the world – especially in Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa, and the Pacific Islands. SOA also has supported regional art campaigns and informational webinars for scientists, artists, and policy makers to come together to discuss the issue of deep-seabed mining. The SOA community is deeply invested in the ISA proceedings, discussions, and ultimate decision-makings. Hence, SOA has a deep interest and valuable insights to bring when actively participating in the ISA meetings.

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

- SOA is committed to supporting ocean tech entrepreneurs and young leaders that are working on both for-profit and grassroots solutions to ocean challenges. SOA has young professionals tackling ocean challenges from a variety of perspectives, from working on blue carbon mitigation to advocating for national and international policies at fora such as the UNFCCC and The BBNJ Treaty process at the United Nations in New York. SOA provides our partners with

incomparable access to a global network of young biologists, policy experts, entrepreneurs and communicators.

- SOA supports effective environmental management for marine and coastal ecosystems. Thus far, SOA has supported 200+ grants working to restore mangroves, clean up our oceans and waterways from marine litter and agricultural waste, run ocean literacy campaigns, and a wide range of other projects.
- In addition, SOA has supported 15+ grants for early career professionals (ages 18 – 35) to complete research and spread awareness about deep-seabed mining and the work of the International Seabed Authority. Within our network, SOA has young professionals that are lawyers, scientists, and policy experts that have been researching the key policy questions that the Authority and the membership currently are considering – including the “what if” scenario. Last year, SOA’s Youth Policy Advisory Council Surveyed over 1,000 youth from around the world to hear their perspectives on deep-seabed mining and developed a policy brief, complete with recommendations. SOA also recently supported a [Deep Sea Mining Simulation](#) - which puts users in an interactive role-playing scenario as if they are one of various stakeholders at the ISA. This game is aimed at building awareness and understanding of the ongoing negotiations.

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.

- SOA aims to support the development of regulations that effectively incorporate the precautionary approach as a leading principle to minimize the impacts of mining activity on marine ecosystems and coastal communities worldwide.
- SOA’s intent is to contribute an intergenerational perspective to the negotiations around the mining regulations.
- SOA has a wide network of marine scientists, policy makers, and experts – which we can employ as experts throughout the negotiation process.

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.

- SOA’s global community has proven expertise in marine environmental protection, ocean technology, international ocean policy, and deep-sea science.
- SOA combines education and alliance-building with promoting and accelerating ocean tech start-ups. Within SOA’s start-up community 45 companies have been accelerated into a Series A funding round and beyond - tackling issues like producing alternative fish protein, aquaculture, plastic alternatives, engineering artificial reefs, etc. All using the latest/newest technology and promoting blue economy solutions.
- Within SOA’s mentor network and in the last Youth Policy Advisory Council cohort, SOA maintains access to various international ocean policy experts, many having attended some of the world’s top universities in the U.S., UK, and around the world.

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).

- SOA brings nearly 10 years of experience in running capacity building programmes and initiatives, which involve training young professionals in a wide variety of marine related topics. SOA has organized major global youth events and hackathons including at the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon and 5 Our Ocean Youth Leadership Summits in the U.S., Indonesia, Malta, and Norway. SOA can contribute to the ISA's capacity building programs with our network and expertise.