



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

For the S.H.E. (“See Her Exceed”) Mentoring Programme
established under the Women in Deep-sea Research (WIDSR) project
to promote women empowerment and leadership in deep-sea research

Deadline for submission: 31 October 2023

BACKGROUND

1. On World Oceans Day on 8 June 2023, the pilot phase of the global deep-sea research mentoring project S.H.E. (“See her Exceed”) was launched under the umbrella of the Women in Deep-sea Research Project (WIDSR). The mentoring programme is catalysed by the International Seabed Authority (ISA) in partnership with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) and the other WIDSR partners. Over a 12-month period, eight mentors will share their experience and knowledge with a selection of mentees who are women scientists from developing States.
2. ISA is committed to contributing to women empowerment and leadership in deep-sea research. Since the 2017 UN Ocean Conference, ISA has steadily increased meaningful opportunities for women scientists from developing States to benefit from unique tailored training in deep-sea research, including through the WIDSR project.
3. At the programmatic level, this is operationalised through the Action Plan for Marine Scientific Research adopted by all members of ISA in 2020 in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (ISA MSR Action Plan).¹ The sixth strategic research priority of the MSR Action Plan encompasses the need to strengthen deep-sea scientific capacity of ISA Members, in particular developing States, as well as the need to advance women empowerment and leadership in deep-sea research. The latter is also embedded as a key result area in the ISA Capacity Development Strategy.²
4. The WIDSR project is offering a unique opportunity for women scientists specializing in deep-sea research to apply as mentees in the following three areas of specialty: i) marine geosciences, ii) marine deep-sea biology and ecology and iii) biological oceanography.

OBJECTIVES

5. The objectives of the mentoring programme are to:
 - i. facilitate personal development and career progression
 - ii. support the development of professional networks

¹ https://isa.org.im/files/documents/ISA_MSR_Action_Plan.pdf

² [ISBA/27/A/5](#)

- iii. assist in the development of professional skills, especially leadership skills
- iv. break down cultural barriers for women in deep-sea-related research and related careers
- v. facilitate contributions of women scientists to the ISA MRS Action Plan.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Candidates should be women from developing States up to 50 years of age. A post-graduate degree in a deep-sea related area is a requirement and in addition, a minimum of 5 years of work experience, acquired, for example, in scientific research agencies or institutes, where she would have had the opportunity to oversee or participate in deep-sea related projects is necessary.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Applicants should read the details and requirements for applicants set out in Annex I.
2. Applicants are required to complete the online application form here:
<https://forms.gle/A63DA93ZhekXh9iv9>
3. Additionally in the online application form the following files will need to be submitted:
 - a. a CV (in PDF)
 - b. a short video (max. 2 minutes) where the applicant should address the following:
 - Why are you a good fit for this mentoring programme?
 - What impact will it give on your marine science career?
 - How will it impact your specialist area of marine science?
 - What can you bring to the programme?
 - c. three reference letters.
4. It is the responsibility of the applicants to ensure that submissions reach ISA on or before the deadline.

Annex I. Guidelines for mentees of the S.H.E. (“See Her Exceed”) Mentoring Programme under the WIDRS project to promote empowerment and leadership of women scientists in deep-sea research

1. BACKGROUND

Since 2021, ISA in collaboration with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Islands States (UN-OHRLLS), has been implementing the Women in Deep-sea Research (WIDSR) project, which has mobilised more than 20 partners. A key achievement of this project was the first-ever gender mapping analysis report. It was launched in June 2022 and summarised critical barriers to women scientists from LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS in the field of deep-sea research.³ The report identified that one of the key challenges for women scientists from developing countries is the lack of career guidance and therefore identified mentoring as a critical measure to be implemented. It is in this context that WIDSR is launching on World Ocean Day on 8 June 2023, the pilot mentoring programme for women in deep-sea related research.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE MENTORING PROGRAMME

The mentoring programme has the following five objectives:

- i. facilitate personal development and career progression
- ii. support the development of professional networks
- iii. assist in the development of professional skills, especially leadership skills
- iv. break down cultural barriers for women in deep-sea-related research and related careers
- v. facilitate contributions of women scientists to the ISA MRS Action Plan.

3. DESCRIPTION

During the pilot phase of the project, 8 mentors will share their experience and knowledge with mentees, women scientists from developing States over a 12-month period. At the onset of the mentorship programme, the mentees will be selected through a competitive process and matched to mentors according to the relevance of their field of work and career pathway. The key outcome of the mentoring programme is the empowerment and enhanced leadership of women scientists in marine scientific research from developing States through increasing their role and participation in deep-sea research.

At the beginning of the initiation phase, a **mentorship agreement** will be signed in October 2023 at the latest. The mentee will put forward three goals for her personal, professional and scientific development related to the research priorities under the ISA MSR Action plan. Throughout the mentoring cycle, the mentor and mentee will work on the three goals in eight online sessions, including feedback loops to reflect and refine the needs and goals of the mentee. It is foreseen that halfway through the pilot programme, a mid-term workshop will be organized, possibly as a side event to an official United Nations meeting of the SIDS and/or LLDCs to allow for best practice exchange, facilitate networking opportunities between mentor-mentee pairs and connect mentors and mentees with other relevant stakeholders.

4. GOVERNANCE

The governance and implementation of the mentorship programme will be carried out at three levels:

1. The mentoring programme coordinator

The coordinator will oversee the management of the mentoring programme and coordinate its implementation. Dr. Samantha Smith, CEO of Blue Globe Solutions, has accepted to champion the pilot mentoring programme as coordinator.

2. The advisory committee (AC)

The advisory committee (AC) will provide external feedback and advice to ensure the smooth running of the programme. The AC will review mentee applications and advise on matches to ensure they are suitable. The AC will consist of four members.

³ https://www.isa.org/im/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Empowering_Women_WIDSR_Report_Web.pdf

3. Implementing agency

ISA will act as the implementing agency and will support the programme coordinator. A consultant will be hired to assist ISA in the mentoring programme implementation.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The mentoring programme will be guided by 3 principles:

1. Mentee-centred approach

The mentee plays a key role in setting the goals and agenda for the mentoring sessions. This approach enables the mentee to drive the sessions and also reflects the fact that mentees are ultimately responsible for their professional development.

2. Development in focus

The mentoring programme focuses on the personal and professional development of the mentee. The definition of development in the context of a deep-sea research related mentoring programme is wide and includes, for example, the development of leadership and subject-specific skills, a strong professional network, an empowering “can-do” attitude and “big dreams”, and self-confidence.

3. Emphasis on feedback and continuous communication

The importance of continuous, two-way communication and feedback loops between mentor and mentee for the success of the mentoring programme cannot be overstated. Effective interpersonal communication is necessary for progress between the phases of the programme, to indicate feelings and thoughts, and to develop the mentor-mentee relationship.

6. MENTEE PROFILE

Women mentees from developing States up to 50 years of age and from all fields of deep-sea-related research disciplines and careers are invited to apply. Educated to post-graduate level in a deep-sea related area, the mentee will typically have a minimum of 5 years of work experience, acquired, for example, in scientific research agencies or institutes, where she would have had the opportunity to oversee or participate in deep-sea related projects.

It is expected that mentees will maximize their engagement, learning, and career development within the mentoring programme by i) demonstrating a strong commitment to the mentoring programme and actively participating throughout its duration while maintaining professional conduct and ethics in all interactions, ii) identifying personal, professional and scientific goals in the field of deep-sea research related to the research priorities under the ISA MSR Action plan, iii) preparing for mentoring sessions by setting an agenda, identifying specific questions, and seeking advice on challenges or areas of interest, iv) maintaining open and honest communication with the mentor, sharing thoughts, concerns and progress regularly, and v) participate in evaluation processes, surveys or interviews to contribute to programme improvement.

7. BENEFITS FOR THE MENTEES

Mentees have the opportunity to receive personalized guidance, advice and support from experienced mentors in the field of deep-sea research while gaining insights into effective research practices, enhancing their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, and developing their leadership and communications skills. As participants in the S.H.E. mentoring programme, mentees will benefit from recognition and visibility given through ISA communication products that will feature the mentoring programme. Moreover, ISA will facilitate and stimulate the participation of the mentees in the overall ISA scientific programmes, including research projects in the framework of the MSR Action Plan. After successful completion of the mentoring programme, mentees will become ISA Alumni and benefit from opportunities open to this unique network of experts.

8. DELIVERABLES

The mentoring programme has the following three outputs:

- i. Establishment of a community of practice of women scientists in deep-sea research especially targeting developing countries
- ii. Advancement of key strategic research priorities of the global research agenda for deep-sea research adopted through ISA (ISA MSR Action Plan in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development).
- iii. Increased career opportunities and leadership of women scientists qualified in deep-sea related disciplines from developing States, particularly those from LDCs, LLDCs and SIDs.

9. TIMELINE

The kick-off meetings between mentors and the selected mentees are foreseen to take place in October 2023. From then onward, the mentoring programme will run for one year.

Annex 1. Overview mentor-mentee timeline, including activities under the different phases.

Phase	Activity	Responsibility	Timeline
Initiation	Session #1: Introduction	Mentor and mentee	Month 1
	Identification of goals and setting the agenda for the mentoring cycle	Mentor and mentee	
	Signing of mentorship agreement	Mentor and mentee	
Cultivation	Working on goal #1 Session #2	Mentor and mentee	Months 1/2
	Working on goal #1 Session #3	Mentor and mentee	Months 3/4
	Mid-term evaluation of mentoring cycle and feedback loop Refinement of needs and goals	Mentor and mentee	Month 5
	Working on goal #2 Session #4	Mentor and mentee	Month 6
	Midterm workshop Collective expert career training for the mentees Mid-term programme questionnaire	ISA, local consultant, collaboration mentors, mentees and dedicated experts	Month 6
	Working on goal #2 Session #5	Mentor and mentee	Month 7
	Feedback loop / refinement of needs and goals	Mentor and mentee	Month 7
	Working on goal #3 Session #6	Mentor and mentee	Month 8
	Potential short-term internships	ISA supported by donors	Month 9
	Working on goal #3 Session #7	Mentor and mentee	Month 10
	Capabilities assessment (mentee)	ISA, local consultant and mentor and mentee	
Maturity/ closing	Session #8: Wrap-up meeting & feedback	Mentor and mentee	Months 11/12
	Final report	ISA, mentor and mentee	
	Programme evaluation survey	ISA	
	Concluding webinar lessons learned and the way forward	Local consultant, ISA, programme coordinator	Month 12
	Write-up policy brief or scientific paper	ISA	Month 25