



ISA
Partnership
Fund

Call 2024-1.1

Call for expression of interest for the development of a data visualization platform of the Area for the benefit of humankind

1. Context

1. During its meeting of 29 January 2024, the Board of the International Seabed Authority Partnership Fund (ISAPF), endorsed the **Development of a data visualization platform of the Area for the benefit of humankind** (the project).
2. Pursuant to Article 143 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the International Seabed Authority (ISA) has the duty to coordinate the dissemination of the results of marine scientific research carried out in the seabed and ocean floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction (the Area).
3. Enhanced access to research outputs and data facilitates and enables further research, stakeholder participation and informed decision-making towards the conservation and sustainable use of deep-sea resources for the benefit of humankind. It also plays a key role in raising awareness of the deep sea and the work of ISA in ensuring effective management of seabed resources in the Area.
4. With the launch of its [DeepData](#) database in 2019, ISA has developed a repository to share all environmental data and information collected in the Area in an open and transparent manner. As of May 2023, DeepData contains over 10 terabytes of data collected in the Area. The ISA Secretariat has engaged in several strategic partnerships to enhance the findability, availability, interoperability and reusability (FAIR) of data and information contained in DeepData. The opportunity to engage with the wider community of data experts increased the international visibility of DeepData and served to stimulate greater usage of the database and to initiate dialogues with potential partners for new collaborations.
5. The [ISA Strategic Plan 2019-2025](#) and its associated [High-Level Action Plan](#) also recognize the need for ISA to raise awareness among stakeholders of its mandate and responsibilities for the Area including as it relates to the conservation and sustainable use of ocean resources and marine biodiversity and in global ocean governance and for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In particular, ISA committed to promote and

enhance the availability of and access to non-confidential information and to consider a wider dissemination of information related to its work.

6. Both the ISA [Capacity Development Strategy adopted in 2022](#) and the ISA [Marine Scientific Research Action Plan in Support of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science adopted in 2020](#) recognize the key priority of improving deep-sea literacy. Accordingly, ISA, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, has developed and implemented a series of activities focusing on raising awareness of the work currently undertaken by the international community, through ISA, to advance understanding of the deep seabed. To this end, attention has been given to developing tailored communication products and information materials for raising the awareness of the general public on the contribution of ISA to advancing global knowledge and understanding of the deep-seabed and its ecosystems functions, in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda.
7. With this background in mind, the ISAPF Board has endorsed a project to develop communication tools to enable non-experts to better visualise the scale and nature of activities carried out in the Area and engage more actively in the work of ISA.

2. Objectives

8. The overall goal of the project is to develop, with the support specialised experts, insightful visualization tools that could enhance the understanding of complex oceanographic datasets in the most remote areas of the world, enabling all stakeholders and, particularly, the general public to explore and grasp the intricate relationships between all data, and information gathered about the deep sea and its ecosystems. It is expected that through this project, ISA will be able to establish a global open access platform through which all interested users could visualise the scientific data gathered from various regions in a three-dimensional (3D) environment.

Furthermore, the project aims to undertake a feasibility study to develop additional data visualization tools, including 3D maps and models for enhanced understanding and use of data contained in DeepData.

9. The selected specialised company would be requested to develop:
 - (i) tailored communication products such as 3D videos and/or infographics (minimum of 15 in total including 4 products for each region showcasing different aspects of the ecosystems; final number to be agreed with the ISA Secretariat) based on selected datasets, to reflect the various environments associated with the mineral deposits under the mandate of ISA.
 - (ii) a specific interface to be placed on the ISA website to allow users to autonomously interact within selected exploration areas with a view to better visualize the work undertaken during exploration activities. To the extent possible, this interface should allow for a 360-degree view, and the ability to select different components or information to be visually represented to

understand the magnitude of the areas and the succession of environments at different depths.

10. The selected specialised company is also requested to conduct a feasibility study and further conceptualisation of the following activities:

- a) Supporting the [Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative](#) (SSKI) to better visualize the species which are being described in the Area. In particular, the study should focus on the development of two types of products:
 - (i) A 3D visualization of a contract area in which biological communities are shown. The visualization should aim at reproducing the content of a video taken by a contributing ISA contractor during an exploration activity. The original video should be synchronized with the 3D visualization.
 - (ii) A 3D visualization (with related video for communication purposes) of an area in which the species described under the SSKI are shown through high level photograms.
- b) Facilitating the understanding and use of data stored in the DeepData repository in the local, regional, and global context. The study should clearly outline how to facilitate the understanding and use of the data stored, including through 3D models in the form of digital maps of the ecosystems, spatial analyses of various environmental parameters in the Area, , time-series graphs to monitor the changes of environmental variables against various time scales, scenario modelling to visualise and predict how changes in different measured variables would impact the ecosystem, interactive maps, and collaborative tools.

3. Expected outcomes

11. This project aligns with two programmatic documents of ISA, i.e. the ISA Marine Scientific Research Action Plan and the [Capacity development Strategy](#). In particular, it aims at advancing scientific knowledge, and understanding of ecosystems, including biodiversity and ecosystems functions, in the Area while improving deep-sea literacy through better awareness and understanding of the legal regime of the Area and the role and mandate of ISA.

4. Instructions for expression of interest

12. Expressions of interest must be submitted in English, should be concise but thoroughly and sufficiently demonstrate/provide:

- a) the competence and expertise of the potential proponent to develop a data visualisation platform in line with section 2 of this Call.
- b) an outline of the methodology for the development of the products and of the feasibility study as determined in section 2 of this Call.
- c) a summary of proposed communication products to be developed (minimum of 15 in total including 4 products for each region showcasing different aspects of the

- ecosystems; final number to be agreed with the ISA Secretariat) as well as a description of the concept of the interface to be hosted on the ISA website.
- d) an indication of necessary equipment for the implementation of the project, if any.
 - e) a CV (if more than one proponent, include one for each proponent).
13. Along with their expression of interest, proponents must complete and submit **Annex A**.
14. Proponents are to send requests for clarifications and the documents in support of the expression of interest **not later than 12 April 2024** via email: isapf@isa.org.jm.
15. It is the responsibility of the proponent to ensure that the necessary documents reach ISA on or before the deadline.
16. ISA implements a zero-tolerance policy on fraud and other proscribed practices, including corruption, unethical practices and obstruction. ISA is committed to preventing, identifying and addressing all such acts and practices against ISA and third parties involved in its activities.
17. ISA requests that every proponent prevents and avoids conflicts of interest by disclosing clearly to ISA any involvement or possible conflict of interest.

5. Timeline

18. Expressions of interests shall be communicated to ISA by **12 April 2024** and will be thereafter evaluated by a selection committee. Selected proponents will be required to sign a grant agreement, stick to the general conditions of contracts for the services of consultants and individual contractors and sign a non-disclosure agreement.
19. All proponents will be informed about the outcome of the selection.
20. Selected proponents shall commit to be able to produce all communication products agreed with the ISA Secretariat by 31st August 2024 and to finalize other deliverables according to the schedule agreed upon ISA, but not later than 31st December 2024.

6. Eligibility criteria

21. Proponents should meet the following eligibility criteria:
- (i) Being an individual expert, a company or an institution. If the proponent is a company or an institution, a track record shall be included in the expression of interest.
 - (ii) A minimum of 5 years of proven previous professional experience in the field of development of data visualization products.
 - (iii) Record of previous experience in design and production of 3D data visualization products.
 - (iv) Excellent written and oral communication skills (English).
 - (v) Good level of familiarization with the work of ISA is desired.

(vi) Ability to deliver outputs against tight deadlines.

7. Budget

22. The budget allocated by the ISAPF Board to this project is 125,000.00 USD. As per recommendation of the ISAPF Board, 5% of the total grant will be deducted to support communication products by the ISA Secretariat.

8. Monitoring

23. As the administrator of the Partnership Fund on behalf of the donors, ISA will enter into a grant agreement with recipients consistent with the purposes of the ISAPF and on the terms and conditions set forth. The ISA Secretariat will be responsible for the supervision of the activities and deliverables carried out as per the term of the contract.

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ANNEX A – PROPONENT INFORMATION FORM

Date: (day, month, year)

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1. Full name:
2. Legal address:
3. E-mail address:
4. Provide detail on a minimum of 5 years of proven previous professional experience in the field of development of data visualization products.
4. Provide details on record of previous experience in design and production of data visualization products.
5. Provide detail on good level of familiarization with the work of ISA
6. Confirm that the expression of interest comprises: <input type="checkbox"/> Proof of competencies as per paragraphs 2 and 4 of the Call for expression of interest

- A methodology for the development of data visualization products and feasibility study
- A summary of proposed communication products to be included in the platform hosted on the ISA website
- Curriculum vitae of the proponent(s)
- Copy of national ID passport or track record of the company as appropriate

7. Provide any additional information considered key in meeting/exceeding the requirements:

8. Are there any indicting circumstances of which the ISA should be aware?

Please provide details:

DECLARATION

By submitting this application, I confirm that I am able to commit to the terms and conditions set out in the Call for expression of interest.

I acknowledge that the personal information supplied to ISA is done voluntarily to facilitate the processing of this application. I furthermore acknowledge that the information provided by me, is to the best of my knowledge both true and correct, and any incorrect or inaccurate information or documentation submitted may adversely affect the processes my application.

9. Date and Signature:

