



# International Copper Study Group

Ms. Leticia Reis de Carvalho  
Secretary-General  
International Seabed Authority (ISA)  
Kingston, Jamaica

7 March 2025

**Subject: Application for Observer Status in the International Seabed Authority (ISA)**

Dear Secretary-General Reis de Carvalho,

On behalf of the International Copper Study Group (ICSG), I am pleased to formally apply for Observer Status in the International Seabed Authority (ISA). As an intergovernmental organization dedicated to promoting market transparency, sustainable development, and responsible practices in the copper and broader metals sector, the ICSG believes that collaboration with the ISA will be mutually beneficial in addressing the challenges and opportunities related to seabed mining.

The ICSG plays a pivotal role in providing comprehensive data, analysis, and forecasts on the global copper market, ensuring transparency and informed decision-making for governments, industry stakeholders, and international organizations. Our work extends beyond market dynamics to address critical environmental and economic issues associated with mining and metals production, including resource efficiency, recycling, and the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Copper and its byproducts and coproducts, such as nickel, cobalt, and rare earth elements, are indispensable to the global technology and energy transition. Copper is a cornerstone of renewable energy systems, electric vehicles (EVs), energy storage solutions, and smart grid technologies. Its exceptional conductivity, durability, and recyclability make it a critical material for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and combating climate change. For instance, EVs require up to four times more copper than conventional vehicles, while renewable energy systems, such as wind and solar, rely heavily on copper for efficient energy generation and transmission.

Seabed mining represents a significant frontier in the global metals industry, with the potential to contribute to the sustainable supply of critical minerals, including copper and its associated byproducts. These resources are essential for meeting the growing demand for clean energy technologies and advancing global climate goals. However, seabed mining also poses unique environmental, social, and governance challenges that require careful management and international cooperation.

The ICSG is committed to promoting sustainable practices that minimize the environmental impact of mining activities, including those conducted in marine ecosystems. We recognize the importance of conserving marine biodiversity and ensuring that seabed mining is carried out in a manner that protects fragile underwater habitats. Through our expertise in data collection, analysis, and stakeholder engagement, the ICSG can contribute to the development of science-based policies and best practices that balance resource extraction with environmental preservation.



# International Copper Study Group

Specifically, the ICSG can support the ISA in the following areas:

**Data Sharing and Analysis:** Providing reliable data on copper and associated metals to inform environmental impact assessments and sustainable resource management strategies.

**Best Practices:** Sharing knowledge on responsible mining practices, including technologies and methodologies that reduce ecological disruption and promote ecosystem recovery.

**Stakeholder Collaboration:** Facilitating dialogue among governments, industry, and environmental organizations to develop balanced approaches to seabed mining that prioritize marine conservation.

**Research and Innovation:** Supporting research initiatives focused on minimizing the environmental footprint of seabed mining and exploring alternative solutions, such as enhanced recycling and circular economy models.

By granting the ICSG Observer Status, the ISA would enable us to actively participate in your deliberations, share insights from the copper and metals sector, and support the development of policies and frameworks that balance the economic potential of seabed mining with the need to protect marine ecosystems and biodiversity.

We look forward to the opportunity to work closely with the ISA and its member states to advance shared goals in sustainable resource management. Please refer to the attachment for further background information, and do not hesitate to contact me at [paul\\_white@ilzsg.org](mailto:paul_white@ilzsg.org) or +351 21 351 3873 if you require any additional information or documentation to support our application.

Thank you for considering our request. We are confident that this collaboration will strengthen the global effort to address the challenges and opportunities of seabed mining in a responsible and sustainable manner, while supporting the critical role of copper and its byproducts in the technology and energy transition and the fight against climate change.

Yours sincerely,

P.N.C.

Mr. Paul White  
Secretary-General  
International Copper Study Group (ICSG)







## International Copper Study Group

### Application for Observer Status with the International Seabed Authority

#### A. Information about the organization

##### 1. Name of organization

1 International Copper Study Group (ICSG)

##### 2. Address of headquarters

Rua Almirante Barroso, 38 – 6th  
1000-013 Lisboa  
Portugal

##### 3. Addresses of all branches and/or regional headquarters

NA

##### 4. Telephone number

00 351 213592420

##### 5. Fax number

00 351 213592429

##### 6. Email address

paul\_white@ilzsg.org

##### 7. Name, title and contact details of focal point

Mr. Paul White  
Secretary-General  
Tel: 00 351 213513873  
Email: paul\_white@ilzsg.org

##### 8. Background information on the organization

The International Copper Study Group (ICSG) was formally established as an autonomous inter-governmental organization in 1992. ICSG is the sole multi-lateral institution dedicated to issues affecting the copper market. Its activities, projects, and publications cover a wide range of issues, focusing on market transparency, market access, and sustainable development. To fulfil its mandate, the Study group has three objectives: promoting international cooperation on matters related to copper, such as health and the environment, research, technology transfer, regulations, and trade; providing a global forum where industry and governments can meet and discuss common problems/objectives; increasing market transparency and promoting an exchange of information on production, usage, stocks, trade, and prices of copper by forecasting production and usage and by assessing the present and future capacities of copper mines, plants, smelters, and refineries.

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

No.

##### 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





## International Copper Study Group

The International Copper Study Group (ICSG) is an independent legal entity. ICSG shares the same secretariat with the International Nickel Study Group (INSG) and the International Lead and Zinc Study Group (ILZSG). The three Groups co-headquarters in Lisbon, Portugal.

### *12. List of publications and/or other relevant documentation*

The International Copper Factbook  
ICSG Copper Bulletin (monthly publication)  
ICSG Directory of Copper Mines, Smelters and Refineries  
The Mineral Composition and Regulation of Copper Concentrates, Smelters and Refineries  
The Chinese Copper Smelter and Refining Industry  
North American Semi-Manufactured Copper Products Capacity, Output and Perspectives  
European Semi-Manufactured Copper Products Capacity  
Solid Wastes in Base Metal Mining, Smelting and Refining: A Comprehensive Study for the Copper, Lead and Zinc and Nickel Industries  
Smelting and Hydrometallurgy Treatment for Copper Sulphide Ores and Concentrates  
Copper Use in Fabrication in Japan, Korea, Taiwan (China) and Vietnam  
Industrial Use of Refined Copper and Scrap in Fabrication in China  
Manufacture and Use of Semi-Fabricated Copper in Latin America/Canada  
China Copper Mining Industry  
Social Acceptance for Mineral and Metal Projects  
The By-Products of Lead, Zinc, Copper and Nickel  
Fabrication and Copper Use in Indian Subcontinent, ASEAN, and Oceania  
Survey of Brass Mills, Copper Products and Foundries in China  
Cobalt as a By-Product of Copper and Nickel  
Taxation, Royalties and Other Fiscal Measures Applied to the Non-Ferrous Metals Industry

### **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.*

The Study Group's main mandate is to promote market transparency and provide a forum in which stakeholders including governments, industry, and NGOs can discuss issues of common concern and interest such as commodity market trends and environment, health and safety issues related to resource extraction and metal production, international trade and usage. The Study Groups are the sole multilateral mechanisms set up by governments dedicated to issues related to the production, usage, and trade of copper. The Study Group has been informing and will continue to inform government delegations and their industrial representatives about the development and issues related to seabed mining.

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

Production, usage, stocks, trade, and prices of minerals and metals, present and future capacities of mines, plants, smelters/refineries, environment, health and safety issues are all contemplated and continuously deliberated at the Study Groups. Similar issues related to seabed mining need to be addressed as that of terrestrial mining, there therefore exists an opportunity for the ISA and the Study Groups to cooperate.

*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.*

The Study Groups have accumulated a huge amount of data regarding copper. These data could be shared with ISA on a reciprocal basis. Measuring seafloor mineral resources, responsible and sustainable exploitation of the seafloor minerals, complementary effects of seabed mining and terrestrial mining, deployment of advanced pyro and hydrometallurgical processes in extracting metals, and many other issues related to minerals and metals could be shared topics at the Study Groups meetings. The Industrial Advisory Panel of the Study Groups could be a potential conduit between the industry and the ISA.





## International Copper Study Group

*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.*

The Study Group has well-established working relationships with government delegations to the Study Group. These government delegations are responsible for policy development in the field of minerals/metals in their respective countries, seabed minerals resources of some of the Study Group's member countries may become a factor of consideration in policy formulation. Collaboration between the Study Groups and the ISA could help policymakers make better-formed decisions relating to minerals and metals.

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

The Study Group has extensive networks within the minerals and metals sectors through their members across Asia, Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Oceania. They have cooperated on various projects in the developing world in advancing the production and use of minerals and metals, sometimes with funding support from the Common Fund for Commodities in past years. The Secretariat, in consultation with member governments, will be able to assist in the identification of areas in the developing world, least developed countries, and small island countries where capacity could be developed and enhanced in order to maximize resource endowment potential.

Paul White  
Secretary-General  
International Copper Study Group (ICSG)  
International Lead and Zinc Study Group (ILZSG)  
International Nickel Study Group (INSG)