

Secretary-General of the International
Seabed Authority
International Seabed Authority
ISBAHQ 2nd Floor, 14-20 Port Royal St
Kingston, Jamaica

World Resources Institute
10 G Street Northeast Suite 800
Washington, DC 20002
United States of America

4th April 2025

Dear Ms. Leticia Reis de Carvalho,

On behalf of World Resources Institute, I am writing to formally apply for non-governmental organisation observer status to the International Seabed Authority, in accordance with document ISBA/25/A/16.

World Resources Institute (WRI) is a global research organization working to improve people's lives, protect nature and halt climate change. Founded in 1982, WRI brings more than 40 years of experience turning evidence into action. As an independent research organization, we leverage our data, expertise and global reach to influence policy and catalyze change across systems including oceans, food, land, water, energy and cities. We work with a diverse range of stakeholders to develop pathways toward equitable, low-carbon, and resilient economies that are tailored to local contexts. We measure our success not by internal benchmarks but by visible progress in the world. Our 2,000+ staff work on the ground in more than a dozen focus countries and with partners in over 50 nations.

Of particular relevance to the work of the ISA, WRI's Ocean Program is dedicated to advancing the sustainable management of the ocean to benefit people, the planet, and the economy. Our mission is to support the transition to a sustainable ocean economy where protection, production, and prosperity go hand in hand. By leveraging data-driven insights, high-level partnerships, and innovative solutions, we aim to address the critical challenges facing the ocean, from overfishing and pollution to climate change and habitat loss.

WRI has a breadth and depth of expertise on a wide range of topics relevant to the work of the ISA, including energy, climate and equity. Because of our reputation as a trusted source of independent information and a convener of diverse stakeholders, we are enthusiastic to support the ISA's process of drafting deep-sea mining exploitation regulations, ensuring that these regulations are balanced, robust and enforceable.

Please find below our completed application form, for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Tom Pickerell
Global Director, Ocean Program
World Resources Institute

Application for Observer Status

A. Information about the organization

1. Name of organization: World Resources Institute.

2. Address of headquarters: 10 G Street, NE Suite 800, Washington, DC 20002 United States of America

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

Africa Office

Main Bole Road, Olympia roundabout, DRC Street
c/o UNDP, RSC for Africa
First Floor, P.O. Box 60130
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Brazil Office

Rua Claudio Soares, 72, Conjunto/Unit 1510
Pinheiros 05422-030 04578-000 São Paulo
São Paulo, Brazil

China Office

Rm K-M, 7/F, Tower A, The East Gate Plaza #9, Dongzhong Street
Dongcheng District 100027
Beijing China China

Europe Office

Bezuidenhoutseweg 105, 2594 AC
The Hague, Netherlands

India Office

WRI India 1st Floor, Godrej and Boyce premises
Gas Works Lane, Lalbaug, Parel Mumbai
400012 India

Indonesia Office

Wisma PMI 7th Floor Jl. Wijaya I No. 63, Kebayoran Baru
Jakarta Selatan 12170 Indonesia

London Office

3 Orchard Place
London
SW1H 0BF

Mexico Office

Belisario Domínguez #8 P.A. Col. Villa Coyoacán 04000
Mexico City, Mexico

4. Telephone number: +1 (202) 729-7600

5. Fax number: +1 (202) 280-1314

6. Email address: oliver.ashford@wri.org; tom.pickerell@wri.org

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

- a. Dr Oliver S. Ashford, Program Associate, Ocean Program, oliver.ashford@wri.org
- b. Dr Tom Pickerell, Global Director, Ocean Program, tom.pickerell@wri.org

8. Background information on the organization:

WRI is a global research organization working to improve people's lives, protect nature and halt climate change. WRI works to improve people's lives, protect and restore nature and stabilize the climate. As an independent research organization, we leverage our data, expertise and global reach to influence policy and catalyze change. Founded in 1982, our 2,000+ staff work on the ground in more than a dozen focus countries and with partners in over 50 nations.

WRI is focused on transforming the human systems that profoundly impact people, nature and the climate. This includes how we manage food, land and water; produce and use energy; and design and manage cities. To enable change at the pace and scale needed, we also work to shift the economic, finance and governance structures that shape people's decisions and behaviors.

WRI works with a diverse range of stakeholders to develop pathways toward equitable, low-carbon, and resilient economies that are tailored to local contexts. We work in settings ranging from UN climate negotiations to city halls. While we lead and support initiatives around the globe, many of our efforts are concentrated in countries with the most potential to unlock global transformation. These focus countries house many of the world's most vulnerable people, contain vitally important natural landscapes and produce significant greenhouse gas emissions — or will in the coming years as their economies and populations expand. We have country offices in Brazil, China, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Rwanda and the United States, as well as regional offices in Africa and Europe.

Our unique approach is built on:

- **World-class research:** Timely, independent analysis is WRI's cornerstone. All our research is peer reviewed and guided by a strategic plan for achieving positive impact. This ensures we assess every potential solution — and choose the right ones for the right places. For example, the State of Climate Action report we publish with partners is the world's most comprehensive roadmap to close the emissions gap and hold temperature rise to 1.5 °C.
- **Impact-driven data:** WRI is at the forefront of using data, technology and AI to drive change. Our Global Forest Watch platform, launched in 2014, was the first open-access portal to track deforestation in near-real time using satellite data; it's allowed governments, Indigenous groups and others to halt illegal deforesters in their tracks. As technology trends shift, we will redouble our use of AI and digital products to accelerate research and enable timely action.
- **Implementation support:** We work with stakeholders at all levels to understand and overcome local implementation challenges. Together, we develop tailored solutions that benefit people, nature and the climate simultaneously. In Africa, our Restore Local initiative is providing funding and technical assistance to thousands of landscape restoration projects that will improve livelihoods, boost biodiversity, build climate resilience and reduce emissions.
- **Mighty partnerships:** WRI's independent initiatives bring together governments, businesses, NGOs, civil society and more, forging lasting relationships that can help elevate solutions and raise global ambition. As secretariat of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, WRI has helped secure commitments from 18 heads of state to sustainably manage 100% of their national waters, collectively covering 37% of the world's EEZs.

- **Empowering others:** We offer individuals, organizations and communities the resources and training needed to scale their impact. Our Partnering for Green Growth (P4G) initiative helps early-stage climate businesses become investment-ready — while also working with national governments and the private sector to develop a stronger market for climate innovation.

Of particular relevance to the work of the ISA, WRI's [Ocean Program](#) is dedicated to advancing the sustainable management of the ocean to benefit people, the planet, and the economy. Our mission is to support the transition to a sustainable ocean economy where protection, production, and prosperity go hand in hand. By leveraging data-driven insights, high-level partnerships, and innovative solutions, we aim to address the critical challenges facing the ocean, from overfishing and pollution to climate change and habitat loss.

Our key objectives include:

1. Driving the adoption of Sustainable Ocean Plans (SOPs) to ensure 100% sustainable management of ocean areas under national jurisdiction.
2. Catalysing the development of ocean-based climate solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance resilience.
3. Advancing equitable, inclusive, and sustainable governance of ocean resources, ensuring benefits for coastal communities and economies.
4. Promoting global collaboration to protect biodiversity, restore marine ecosystems, and achieve global commitments such as SDG 14 and the 30x30 initiative.

Notable achievements of WRI's Ocean Program to date include:

- As the secretariat for the [High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy](#) (the 'Ocean Panel'), supporting 18 countries, collectively representing 37% of the world's EEZs, in committing to sustainably manage 100% of waters under their national jurisdiction.
- Playing a central role in developing the Sustainable Ocean Plan framework, guiding countries in integrating protection and sustainable use of ocean resources.
- Highlighting the role of ocean-based solutions in reducing the global emissions gap to limit temperature rise to 1.5C by up to 35% by 2050, driving increased attention and investment in these solutions.
- Fostering multi-stakeholder engagement in ocean planning, through the development of a social ocean accounting framework, ensuring diverse voices including those of local communities, women, and Indigenous Peoples are represented.
- Facilitating key partnerships across regions, including initiatives in the Pacific Islands, Latin America, and the Commonwealth, to expand sustainable ocean management globally.

We measure success by demonstrable change in the world, aligned with international accords like the Paris Agreement and UN Sustainable Development Goals. And we ensure all projects are guided by clear theories of change, designed to be equitable and inclusive, and include methods for tracking progress and learning from results — the key ingredients for maximum impact.

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:

Since 1989, WRI has had special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC), facilitating active engagement with UN processes, meetings and conferences. Amongst broader activities, WRI is engaged in the planning of the UN Ocean Conference through direct communications with France in the context of the Ocean Panel (please see below).

WRI acts as the Secretariat of the Ocean Panel, a unique global initiative by serving world leaders that is working to build momentum for a sustainable ocean economy in which effective production, sustainable production and equitable prosperity go hand in hand. The Ocean Panel aim to facilitate a better, more resilient future for people and the planet, by enhancing humanity's relationship with the ocean, bridging ocean health and wealth, working with diverse stakeholders, and harnessing the latest science and knowledge.

Co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Norway and the President of the Republic of Palau, the Ocean Panel consists of 18 heads of government and state and is supported by the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean. Ocean Panel members are: Australia, Canada, Chile, Fiji, France, Ghana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Namibia, Norway, Mexico, Palau, Portugal, Seychelles, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom.

The Ocean Panel Secretariat works closely with the Ocean Panel Co-Chairs and their nominated representatives to manage initiatives, communications and outreach, and coordinate research activities.

12. List of publications and/or other relevant documentation:

Select publications include:

- [‘What Role for Ocean-Based Renewable Energy and Deep-Seabed Minerals in a Sustainable Future?’](#)
- [‘What We Know About Deep-Sea Mining — and What We Don’t’](#)
- [‘Transformations for a Sustainable Ocean Economy: A Vision for Protection, Production and Prosperity’](#)
- [‘Critical Minerals for India’s Clean Energy Transition’](#)
- [‘Environmental and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of Offshore Wind Energy Projects in India’](#)
- [‘Ocean Solutions that Benefit People, Nature and the Economy’](#)
- [‘100% Sustainable Ocean Management: An Introduction to Sustainable Ocean Plans’](#)
- [‘The Ocean as a Solution to Climate Change: Updated Opportunities for Action’](#)
- [‘Ocean Finance: Financing the Transition to a Sustainable Ocean Economy’](#)
- [‘The Human Relationship with Our Ocean Planet’](#)
- [‘Critical Habitats and Biodiversity: Inventory, Thresholds and Governance’](#)
- [‘Integrated Ocean Management’](#)
- [‘Technology, Data and New Models for Sustainably Managing Ocean Resources’](#)
- [‘The Future of Food from the Sea’](#)
- [‘State of Climate Action: Assessing Progress toward 2030 and 2050’](#)
- [‘Just Transitions Monitoring Guide’](#)
- [‘Paying for the Paris Agreement: A Primer on Government Options for Financing Nationally Determined Contributions’](#)
- [‘Mining Is Increasingly Pushing into Critical Rainforests and Protected Areas’](#)

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:

WRI is an independent, not-for-profit research organisation focussed on moving society towards a future that protects Earth's environment and its capacity to provide for the needs and aspirations of current and future generations. We believe we can positively contribute to the work of the ISA, as demonstrated by the below answers to questions 14-17.

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

The self-stated primary aims of the International Seabed Authority are to:

- Organise and control all mineral-resources-related activities in the Area for the benefit of humankind as a whole.
- Ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from deep-seabed-related activities.

WRI has significant overlap in purpose and activities with these objectives. WRI's Ocean Program is dedicated to realising a sustainable ocean economy to the equitable benefit of people, the planet, and the economy. Our research outputs, such as listed in item A12 above, data-driven insights, high-level partnerships, and innovative solutions, aim to address the critical challenges facing the ocean, from overfishing and pollution to climate change and habitat loss. For example, as the Secretariat to the Ocean Panel, WRI's Ocean Program coordinates research activities such as the [production of Blue Papers](#), and manages initiatives and outreach such as the [100% Alliance](#), working closely with governments to progress action towards a sustainable ocean economy where effective protection, sustainable production and equitable prosperity go hand in hand.

Critical minerals in a focus area for the [WRI Polsky Center for the Global Energy Transition](#). WRI seeks to address the grand challenge of meeting the world's need for energy transition minerals both in time and in ways that protect people, nature and climate. This relates well to the aims of the International Seabed Authority. We work on both incentives and enablers to scale responsible minerals production, as well as advance circularity to reduce our dependency on mining. Through this work, WRI can bring insights on the demand for critical minerals by the energy transition, and supply from terrestrial sources – both mining and recycling, to inform decisions on deep sea mining.

Further to this, WRI has significant in-house expertise in achieving equitable development, including understanding the impacts of terrestrial mining on local populations and Indigenous Peoples, and how such communities can be effectively involved in decision-making processes. WRI's Center for Equitable Development has expertise in advancing the integration of equity priorities and the rights of marginalised people, and strengthening implementation of environmental laws and policies with respect to impacts of mining and mineral extraction.

WRI has earned a reputation as a trusted source of independent information and a convener of diverse stakeholders. Our holistic view that considers people, nature and climate aligns well with the mandate of the ISA to benefit humankind as a whole and protect the marine environment. WRI's work is guided by principles of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity. Our research

and tools are publicly accessible and designed to support informed decision-making at all levels, aligned with international best practices and environmental governance standards. We are enthusiastic to support the ISA's process of drafting deep-sea mining exploitation regulations, ensuring that these regulations are balanced, robust and enforceable.

WRI does not take an advocacy position for or against specific ocean uses, including deep-seabed mining. Instead, our focus is on ensuring that decisions are grounded in robust, transparent science, and informed by the social, environmental, and economic implications, in alignment with the ISA's mandate for sustainability and equity.

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:

WRI intends to contribute to the work of the ISA through the provision and communication of detailed, specialised information, and through providing expertise as would be valuable. For example, WRI is able to provide expertise on topics including potential environmental impacts on deep-sea ecosystems, governance systems, equitable sharing of monetary benefits, social impacts, and critical mineral demand and the circular economy. We are also able to communicate this expertise to a diversity of audiences. Please see the example publications list above for further detail.

Further to this, WRI's reputation as a convener of stakeholders and experts can help to support the aims of the ISA. WRI has a strong track record of facilitating constructive dialogue among governments, the private sector, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and civil society to address complex environmental governance challenges. This multi-stakeholder approach can contribute to ISA's goals by fostering inclusive, informed discussion on seabed governance. We would be interested in organising engagement sessions to convene a wide range of stakeholders to promote discussion, increase understanding and reduce polarisation. These would be organised to complement the work and timetable of the ISA.

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:

[WRI's Ocean Program](#) includes PhD-educated marine ecologists with expertise in sampling deep-sea environments; human impacts on deep-sea habitats; the description of deep-sea species; marine tenure and the inclusion of local and Indigenous communities in decision making; the development of sustainable ocean plans; ocean-climate relationships; and marine restoration.

[WRI's Polsky Center for the Global Energy Transition](#) includes PhD-educated researchers with expertise in social and environmental impact assessment for marine renewables; the development of an efficient circular mineral economy; demand for critical minerals; and the scaling of responsible minerals production.

[WRI's Center for Equitable Development](#) includes PhD-educated researchers with expertise in advancing the integration of equity priorities and the rights of marginalised people, and

strengthening implementation of environmental laws and policies with respect to impacts of mining and mineral extraction.

[WRI's Finance Center](#) includes PhD-educated researchers with expertise in promoting environmental ambition at development finance institutions, including multilateral development banks, national development banks, and the International Monetary Fund.

As an independent, non-partisan organization, WRI is committed to evidence-based research and transparent, peer-reviewed analysis. Our neutrality and scientific rigor have earned us the trust of governments, industry actors, and civil society across a broad range of environmental and development issues.

Crucially, this expertise is paired with understanding of how to communicate complex information to non-specialist audiences.

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):

WRI is in a position to offer in-kind contributions (e.g. mentorship, supervision, assessment of applications for awards or initiatives) to support individuals engaged in the myriad of capacity-building programmes and initiatives of the International Seabed Authority.

We further note overlapping 'Priority Actions' of Ocean Panel members, as communicated in the [Transformations Agenda](#), with capacity-building objectives of the International Seabed Authority. Specifically:

- *Initiate an international research agenda to improve understanding of the environmental impacts and risks of seabed mineral activities (especially regarding deep ocean ecosystems).*
- *Promote the participation of scientists from developing countries in research, and make the results from research and the analysis of research findings publicly available, including through the International Seabed Authority.*