



Agreement under the United Nations Convention  
on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and  
Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity  
of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction

## Overview





I. Marine genetic resources, including the fair and equitable sharing of benefits



### III. Environmental impact assessments

An environmental impact assessment is a process which aims to identify and evaluate the potential impacts of an activity with a view to informing decision-making. Such assessments are used to prevent, mitigate and manage the impacts of planned activities on the environment. The Agreement elaborates on the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on impact assessments by establishing detailed processes, thresholds and other requirements for conducting and reporting assessments in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Parties are required to conduct a screening of a planned activity under their jurisdiction or control that takes place in areas beyond national jurisdiction when that activity may have more than a minor or transitory effect on the marine environment, or when the effects of the activity are unknown or poorly understood. If there are reasonable grounds for believing that the activity may cause substantial pollution of or significant and harmful changes to the marine environment, an environmental impact assessment must be conducted in accordance with the process set out in the Agreement, which includes obligations related to public notification and consultation.

Decisions on whether an activity may proceed or not following an environmental impact assessment will be made by the State with jurisdiction or control over the activity rather than by an international body. However, other States may register their concerns with the Party that authorized the activity and with the Scientific and Technical Body established under the Agreement. Monitoring, reporting and review of authorized activities are foreseen by the Agreement.

Parties are also to consider conducting strategic environmental assessments, which are broader assessments for plans and programmes to be conducted in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

## DEEP DIVE

### Mining in the international seabed area

Mining in the international seabed area (the Area) is governed by a specific regime set out in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea under which the [International Seabed Authority](#) is mandated to organize and control activities in the Area, particularly with a view to administering its resources. It acts on behalf of humankind and work is ongoing under its auspices to develop regulations for exploitation of minerals in the Area, including measures to protect the marine environment from harmful effects which may arise from activities in the Area.

Some of the provisions of the Agreement may impact how seabed mining is conducted, including the provisions on environmental impact assessments. The Agreement includes specific provisions and foresees additional mechanisms to ensure coordination with the measures taken by relevant instruments, frameworks and bodies, such as the International Seabed Authority.



© Katerina Katopis, Ocean Image Bank– The Ocean Agency





and pollution, and to meet various ocean-related global goals, including Sustainable Development Goal 14.

As thU st s



What are the benefits to becoming

---

