

Ocean Webguide to International Instruments and Actors — OceanWebguide —

Background and Purpose

Whether professionals or laymen, interested users all too often find it difficult to pin down and/or make effective use of the vast quantity of relevant information that exist about the relationship between treaties, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society organizations that are involved in maritime activities or the sustainable management and development of marine and coastal resources.

Most of this information is scattered among a multitude of sources on the Internet or is to be found in voluminous and expensive library publications. Although many multilateral agreements, international organizations, and other major actors have their own web sites, the information they contain is often too specialized, or lacks important details, or is presented in a cumbersome form (e.g., full text of treaties) that make it difficult and time-consuming to find and extract what is needed.

There thus exists a need to present this kind of information in up-to-date summaries within a standardized and comprehensive format. The format should assist the reader to extract easily basic information from the entry of a specific instrument or organization. It should also allow for easy navigation between the entries so as to ensure quick comparisons between the information contained in each entry and in other reliable sources on the Internet. Finally, such a guide should also be edited with an eye to provide independent and authoritative documentation—enabling the user to apply the information for his/her own purposes. To ensure a wide audience, professional jargon should be avoided.

Objectives

To fill this need Ocean Futures proposes to create an *Ocean Webguide to International Instruments and Actors (OceanWebguide)* that has the following objectives:

- give professionals, policy-makers, and the general public a guide to major instruments and actors affecting activities, management, and sustainable development of the oceans, the sea bed, and the polar regions;
- provide independent, reliable, applicable, user-friendly, unique, and up-to-date information;
- contribute to the building of knowledge among users who are affected by, engaged in, or seek to influence policy-making in the area covered by the guide.

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