



Press Release

Toulouse - 4 March 2024

High-Level Meeting - "Transforming Mercator Ocean into an Intergovernmental Organization"

The transformation of Mercator Ocean International into an intergovernmental organization (IGO) was announced during the One Ocean Summit in February 2022 through the Brest Declaration signed by France, Spain, Italy, Norway, Portugal, and the United Kingdom; its creation is now a scientific deliverable of the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC) to be held in Nice in June 2025.



Caption: On February 6, 2024, France hosted the six founding States (France, Spain, Italy, Norway, Portugal, and the United Kingdom) of the future intergovernmental organisation- Mercator Ocean International. Source : La direction générale des affaires maritimes, de la pêche et de l'aquaculture, LinkedIn page (DGAMPA, France).

The intergovernmental organization will be established to become the global leader in digital Ocean technology and Ocean prediction, supporting states and international organizations in their response to Ocean, climate, and biodiversity challenges.

Over two years, a Board of Delegates, composed of the six country delegations, led by France, has undertaken extensive technical work to develop a draft Convention close to

consensus. On February 6, a high-level meeting was held in Paris, bringing together high-level representatives from ministries and institutions of the six States. Chaired by Olivier Poivre d'Arvor French Ambassador at large for Polar and Maritime Issues, and Eric Banel, Director General of Maritime Affairs, Fisheries, and Aquaculture (DGAMPA, France), this high-level meeting recognised the work of the past two years. During the meeting progress was made in the Convention process, with plans for the signature and the initiation of the ratification process.

The delegations officially adopted the future name of the IGO - Mercator International Center for the Ocean (Mercator ICO), its official languages – English and French, and the location of its headquarters in Toulouse, France.

Furthermore, the delegations reaffirmed their collective ambition and common determination to officially establish this IGO at UNOC 2025 and swiftly facilitate the accession of new member states. Delegated by the European Union and governed directly by the Member States, the IGO will be tasked with providing a reliable and recognised information service to support decision-making and major international commitments surrounding the Ocean. This will be based on operational production infrastructures and top-tier digital services, including the digital twin of the Ocean, and the involvement of an international coalition of Ocean prediction stakeholders and community.

As an intergovernmental organisation, MOi builds on its success past success as a French civil society organization, and the IGO will take over all its past activities and continue development in Europe and worldwide. MOi was originally founded by the five major French institutions involved in operational oceanography: CNRS (National Center of Scientific Research), Ifremer (French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea), IRD (Institute of Research for Development), Météo-France and SHOM (Hydrographic and Oceanographic Service of the French Navy). The substantial success achieved by MOi today, along with its project to evolve into an IGO, can be attributed significantly to the invaluable contributions of its French shareholders and the steadfast support extended by the French government. It is thanks the combined and cooperative will of the six European State signatories that Mercator International Center for the Ocean will be unveiled as an IGO at UNOC 2025.

Links:

- [Transformation of Mercator Ocean International into an intergovernmental organisation](#)
- [The Declaration of Brest at the One Ocean Summit: Mercator Ocean International to become an Intergovernmental organisation](#)

About Mercator Ocean International

Mercator Ocean International (MOi) is a non-profit organization (in the process of transforming into an intergovernmental organization) committed to building a science-based digital Ocean to support the conservation and sustainable use of the Ocean.

MOi provides an operational digital description of marine environments worldwide and assists international organisations in implementing community and institutional programs, projects, and initiatives. MOi continually fosters interactions between scientists, policymakers, public and institutional decision-makers, and civil society.

Led by Director General Pierre Bahurel, MOi is based in Toulouse and has over 100 employees. Its ten current associate/shareholder entities are leading international scientific actors: CNR (National Research Council of Italy), CNRS (National Center of Scientific Research, France), Ifremer (French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea), IRD (Institute of Research for Development, France), Météo-France, SHOM (Hydrographic and Oceanographic Service of the French Navy), CMCC (Centro Euro-Mediterraneo sui Cambiamenti Climatici, Italy),

MetOffice (UK), NERSC (Nansen Environmental and Remote Sensing Center, Norway), and Puertos del Estado (Spain).

Contact

Contact: press@mercator-ocean.fr

Gratianne Quade, Communication and Outreach Manager gratianne.quade@mercator-ocean.fr, +33 6 30 66 15 96

- Website: <https://www.mercator-ocean.eu/en/>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MercatorOcean>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MercatorOcean>
- LinkedIn: <https://fr.linkedin.com/company/mercator-ocean>
- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/mercator_ocean/
- Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/MERCATOROCEAN>