International Cable Protection Committee

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ICPC



Sharing the seabed and oceans in harmony

© International Cable Protection Committee Ltd
e-mail: icpcinfo@iscpc.org

ICPC Mission, Vision & Slogan

Mission: *The International Cable Protection Committee is the world's leading organisation promoting submarine cable protection and resilience.*

The ICPC works with its Members, governments, international organisations, other marine industries, and the scientific community to: mitigate risks of natural and human damage to cables; develop recommendations and best practices for industry and governments throughout the cable project life cycle; promote scientific research addressing how cables exist in the marine environment; and promote the rule of law for the oceans.

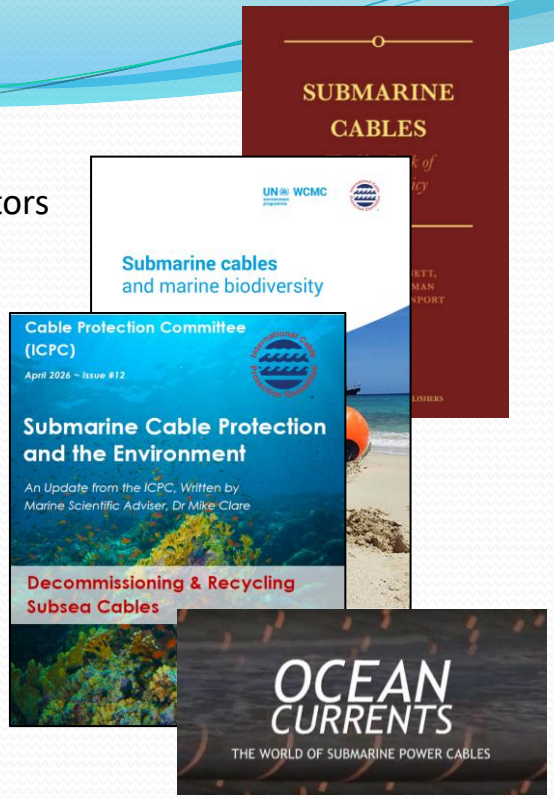
Vision: *The ICPC envisions a global network of reliable and resilient submarine cables that coexist with the marine environment*

Slogan: *Sharing the seabed and oceans in harmony*

The Global Role of the ICPC

- **Foster team-working relationships** with other seabed users, so that submarine telecommunications and power cables can operate *in harmony with other seabed activities*
- **Promote awareness** of submarine cables as critical infrastructure to governments, other users of the seabed as well as the public
- **Establish internationally agreed industry** recommendations for cable installation, protection and maintenance as well as publish a series of best practices related to submarine cable protection and security
- **Undertake publicly-available, peer-reviewed research** on environmental aspects of submarine cables
- **Monitor the evolution of international treaties and national legislation** as well as help to ensure all submarine cable interests are fully protected worldwide
- **Liaise with UN Bodies** including United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), International Seabed Authority (ISA), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), International Maritime Organization (IMO) and regional Cable Protection Committees

History & ICPC Highlights



- **1958:** The Cable Damage Committee was established, and Membership was open to submarine cable owners and operators
- **1967:** The name of the organisation was changed to the International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC)
- **1972:** The title 'Plenary' for the Main Committee first appeared
- **1973:** The first ICPC video is produced*: 'The Catch that Nobody Wants'*
- **1977:** The title 'Executive' for the Sub-committee was a firm decision of that year's Plenary meeting
- **1986:** First international fibre optic submarine cable system installed
- **1996:** First long-haul self-healing submarine cable ring network installed
- **2004:** First power cable operator joins the ICPC
- **2009**: ICPC/UNEP publishes *'Submarine cables and the oceans: connecting the world'*
- **2010:** ICPC opens up Membership to governments, ship operators, system suppliers, and survey companies
- **2012:** ICPC video: *'Keeping the World Connected'* is released
- **2013:** Associate Class of ICPC Membership is created
- **2014:** *'Submarine Cables—The Handbook of Law and Policy'* is published
- **2015:** Inaugural workshop with ICPC and the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs
- **2016:** ICPC Power Cable video is released
- **2017:** *'International Submarine Cables and Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, The Cloud Beneath the Sea'* is published
- **2018:** ICPC celebrates 60 years with a Diamond Jubilee Plenary
- **2019:** *'ISA Technical Study 24'* is published from the outcome of joint ISA/ICPC workshop
- **2020:** Call to Action to Protect Cables During COVID-19 Pandemic and *'Submarine Cable Protection and the Environment'* is first published to the public
- **2021:** ICPC published *'Government Best Practices for Protecting and Promoting Resilience of Submarine Telecommunications Cables'*
- **2023:** ICPC Welcomes New Marine Biodiversity Treaty, Calls on All Parties to Promote Regulatory Certainty and Network Resilience
- **2024:** Formed the International Advisory Body for Submarine Cable Resilience to strengthen the resilience of this vital telecommunication infrastructure along with The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and the United Nations Agency for Digital Technologies
- **2025:** Report by the ICPC and UN Environment Programme (UNEP)-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC): *Submarine cables and marine biodiversity*
- **2026:** Third ICPC Viewpoint issued: As fibre-optic sensing in submarine cables develops rapidly, governments should exercise restraint in regulating

Notable Activities and Participation

- With the goal to strengthen digital infrastructure and resilience in Indonesia, ICPC signed a Joint Initiative Statement for Subsea Connectivity Ecosystem Development in Indonesia
- Collaboration between ICPC and UN Environment Programme (UNEP)-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) to produce the report *Submarine cables and marine biodiversity*
- Updated MoU with SubOptic Association in a continued effort to stay coordinated as leading industry organisations in the submarine cable industry
- The Valentia Island Subsea Cable Security and Resilience Symposium at the historic Valentia Island Transatlantic Cable Station, in Co. Kerry, Ireland
- ICPC presented 'ICPC and Industry Cable Protection Initiatives' at the inaugural International Submarine Cable Resilience Summit in Abuja, Nigeria
- Participation at ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) Seminar Series: Submarine Cables
- ICPC launched ***'Government Best Practices for Protecting and Promoting Resilience of Submarine Telecommunications Cables'*** to assist governments in developing laws, policies, and practices to foster the development and protection of submarine telecommunications cables, the infrastructure of the internet.

Notable Activities and Participation

- ICPC published its bi-annual, marine-focused newsletter titled ***'Submarine Cable Protection and the Environment.'*** The publication—written by ICPC's Marine Scientific Adviser—is a reference for all seabed users, the science community, and the general public who share the same vital goal as the ICPC
- ICPC called on governments and industry to facilitate and expedite the deployment, operation, and repair of submarine fibre optic cables during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to protect increasingly important broadband internet connectivity and the governance, health, education, and commerce activities that depend on connectivity
- ICPC was awarded **Consultative Status at the United Nations** as the first (and only) submarine cable organisation
- ICPC membership lobby Governments to support **United Nations** approval of an *Omnibus Resolution on the Oceans and Law of the Sea*
- Centre for International Law **(CIL)** Workshops I & II **ASEAN:** Singapore (organised by CIL and ICPC)
- **APEC**–ICPC engage the Telecommunications and Trade & Investment forums to increase awareness of submarine cable issues and best practices
- ICPC Memorandum of Understanding with **International Seabed Authority** **(ISA)** enabling workshops of practical solutions to issues such as deep-sea mining and cables
- ICPC Member of **ITU/UNESCO-IOC/WMO Joint Task Force** on submarine cables and climate monitoring

Notable Activities and Participation

- **Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific** (CSCAP) proposed measures for moving forward at a regional level to protect submarine cables, reduce the risks to submarine cables, and improve repair
- Granted Observer status with the **OSPAR Convention**
- International workshop on **HVDC power Cables** in the context of international submarine cables and pipelines and the **ABNJ**
- Produced videos '***Ocean Currents -The world of submarine power cables'*** and '***The ICPC-Keeping the world connected'***
- Ghana Cable Awareness Workshop
- Inaugural workshop with ICPC and the Indonesian **Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs**
- ICPC and **International Seabed Authority (ISA)** joint workshop: *'Submarine Cables and Deep Seabed Mining—Advancing Common Interest and Addressing UNCLOS 'Due Regard' Obligations' resulting in 'ISA Technical Study 14'*
- ICPC Memorandum of Understanding with SubOptic , ISA, **European Subsea Cables Association** (ESCA) **and International Hydrographic Organization** (IHO)
- ICPC Side Event BBNJ Prep Com 2nd Session at the United Nations

Membership Details

Over 255 Member Organisations

from 77 nations

- **1958:** Established for Owners and Operators of submarine cables
- **2010:** Membership opened up to Governments, Ship Operators, System Suppliers and Survey Companies
- **2013:** Associate Membership class created for industry supporters
- **Government Observer Members include** Australia, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, France, India, Indonesia, Malta, Singapore, The Netherlands and UK

How Do Submarine Cables Underpin the Global Economy?

- **International telecommunications links** are predominantly provided by submarine cables because of low latency and scalability. Satellites are limited by physics and the Sun
- **Financial transactions** affect all aspects of the economy, (not only banks), typically involving many billions/trillions of US dollars each day, dependent upon the individual country
- **Major events impacting multiple cables** can effectively isolate a country's economy and other countries relying upon the financial services provided by that country
- Many companies and institutions **rely on offshore processing of financial transactions**

ICPC and the Environment

- The ICPC **works in the marine environment** and is a responsible steward
- **Joined UN Environment Programme (UNEP)** regarding research on cables and the marine environment
- Facilitated research on the **interactions of whales and cables** *(peer-reviewed paper)*
- Assisted graduate research on **the carbon footprint** of the cable industry *(MSc. thesis)*
- Ongoing long-term university **research on leaching** from submarine cables *(1 report)*
- Pioneering research published in peer review journals on **turbidity currents** triggered by Tsunamis and typhoons *(3 peer-reviewed papers)*
- Alert for opportunities to **partner with marine scientists and graduate students** on environmental issues and cables *(1 PhD thesis, 1 peer-reviewed paper)*
- **Publishes the *Environment Update*** (a newsletter for ICPC Members to improve global awareness)

International Submarine Cables: The Challenge of Change

- **Decision making and policy development** with limited facts on submarine cables
- Rapid development of **offshore renewable energy** and **deep-sea mining**
- Increased incidence of damage caused by **shipping**
- **Seabed** becoming crowded in some areas
- Need to **maintain harmony** with other seabed users
- Need to ensure **harmony with seabed environment**
- Need to improve the **security of submarine cables**

International Cable Protection Committee

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ICPC



Thank you,
ICPC Chairman

Sharing the seabed and oceans in harmony

© International Cable Protection Committee Ltd
e-mail: icpcinfo@iscpc.org