

Swiss want moratorium on deep-sea mining

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Switzerland said deep-sea mining in the international seabed area must be postponed until protection from the 'harmful effects' could be ensured.

Switzerland, a global commodities trading hub, decided Wednesday to push for a moratorium on commercial exploitation of the international seabed area, which has enormous mineral resources.

Bern said [deep-sea mining](#) in the area "must be postponed" until protection from the "[harmful effects](#)" could be ensured.

Switzerland will "support a [moratorium](#) on commercial exploitation of the area until there is more scientific knowledge of its impact and protection of the marine environment can be guaranteed", the government said in a statement.

Wildlife conservation group WWF said, "Switzerland is sending an important signal for the protection of the oceans and their biodiversity".

Meanwhile the Swiss-based International Union for Conservation of Nature said it was "fantastic news on deep sea mining".

Greenpeace called it a "success for the oceans".

Switzerland will take its position to the 28th session of the International Seabed Authority in Jamaica's capital Kingston next month.

The ISA organizes and controls all mineral resources-related activities in the international seabed, outside national territorial jurisdiction, "for the benefit of all humankind", it says.

It is mandated to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from the potentially harmful consequences of seabed extraction operations.

The deep seabed covers around 54 percent of the total area of the world's ocean floor.

"There is growing interest from certain states and companies who wish to commercially exploit the area's mineral resources, which are potentially useful for the transition to [renewable energy](#)," the Swiss

government said.

"Minerals such as cobalt and manganese are needed to manufacture electric vehicle batteries," it added.

However, most ISA member states think no commercial [seabed](#) mining should be allowed before regulations are in place, it said.

Some 15 countries have gone further and are opposed to any commercial use of the area, with or without regulations, Bern added.

Switzerland is a stronghold for commodity trading. It is home to large companies like Glencore—active in coal, metals and oil—or firms like Vitol or Trafigura, based in Singapore but with a large operations center in Geneva.

With a [net profit](#) of \$17.3 billion in 2022, Glencore is a juggernaut in the brokerage of metals, such as copper, zinc, nickel or cobalt.

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