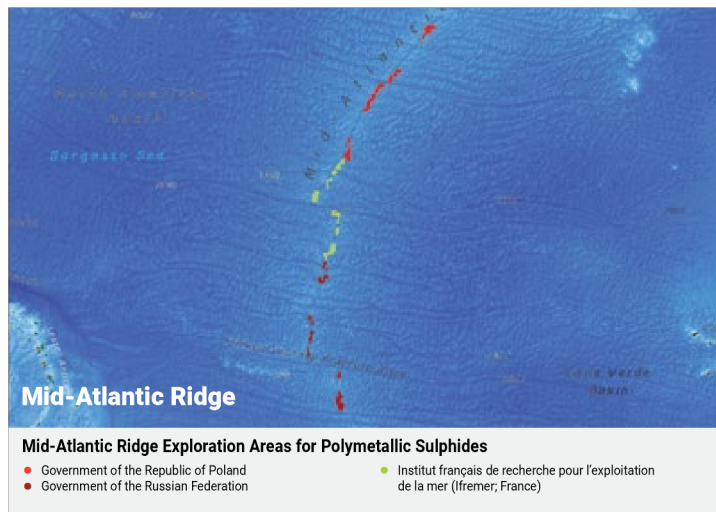


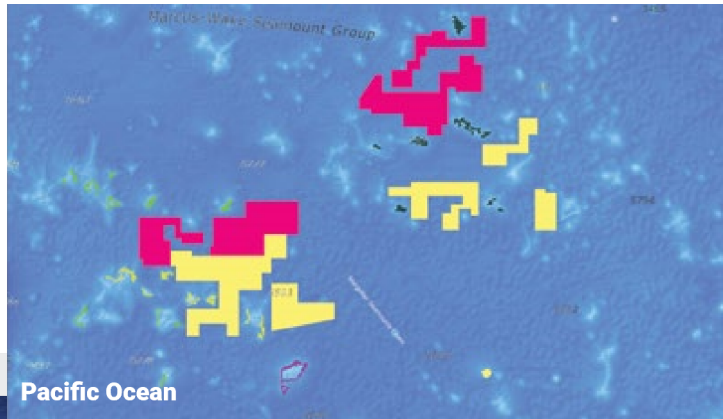
4 STATUS OF CONTRACTS FOR EXPLORATION IN THE AREA



Photo: Image courtesy of the DeepCCZ expedition

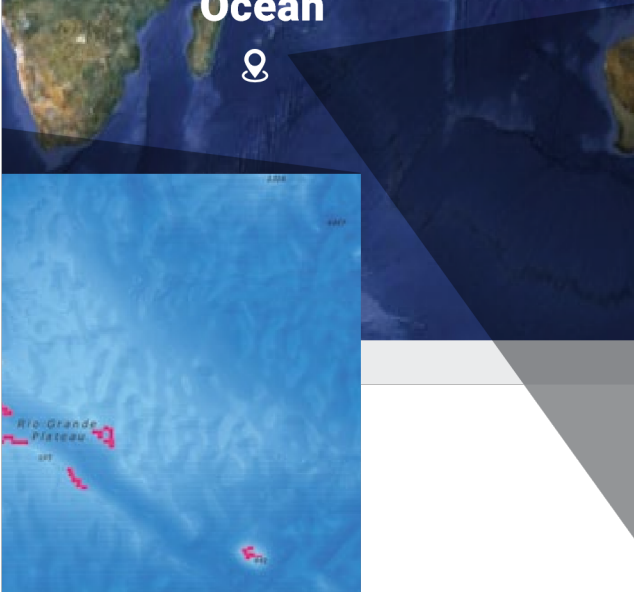
Who is exploring where, for what?



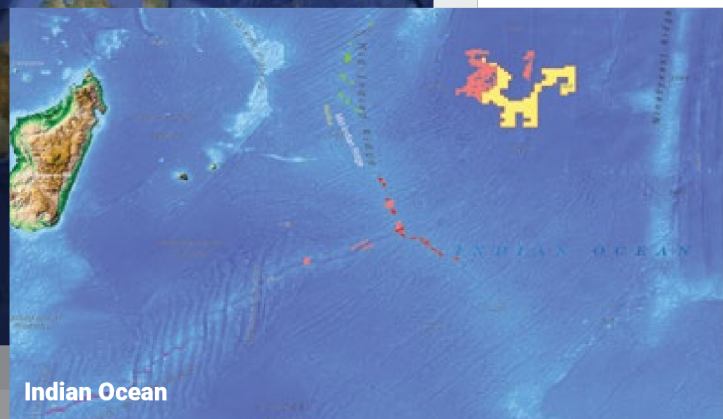


Pacific Ocean Exploration Areas for Polymetallic Nodules (PMN) & Cobalt-rich Ferromanganese Crusts (CFC)

- China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association (COMRA; China; CFC)
- Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation (JOGMEC; Japan; CFC)
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation (CFC)
- Government of the Republic of Korea (CFC)
- Beijing Pioneer H- Tech Development Corporation (BPHDC; China; PMN)
- Reserved Areas



or Cobalt-rich Ferromanganese Crusts



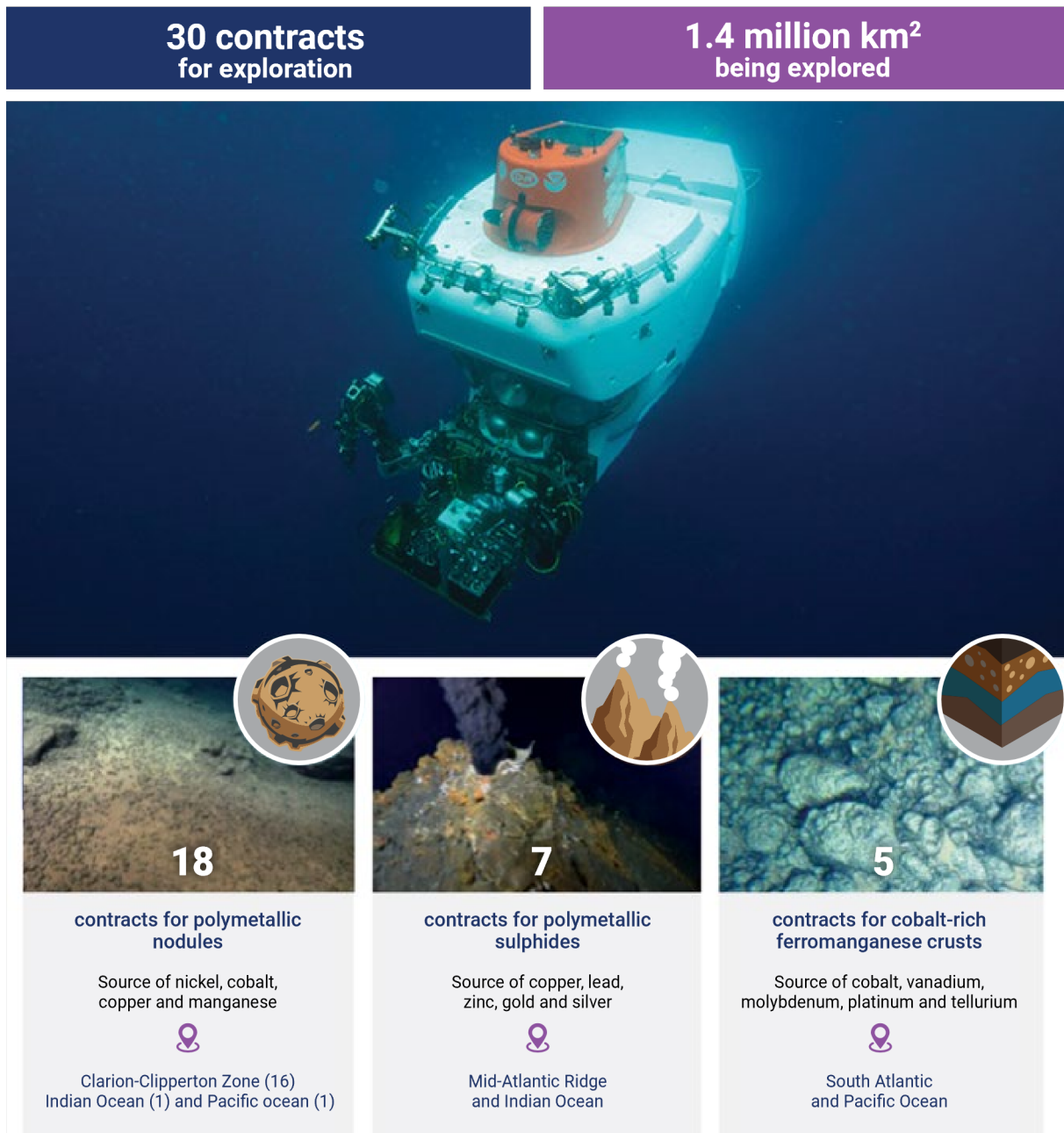
Indian Ocean Exploration Areas for Polymetallic Nodules and Polymetallic Sulphides

- Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR; Germany; Sulphides)
- China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association (COMRA; China; Sulphides)
- Government of the Republic of Korea (Sulphides)
- Government of the Republic of India (Sulphides & Nodules)
- Reserved Areas

As of June 2020, 30 contracts for exploration of the Area have entered into force. Contracts are granted for a period of 15 years.

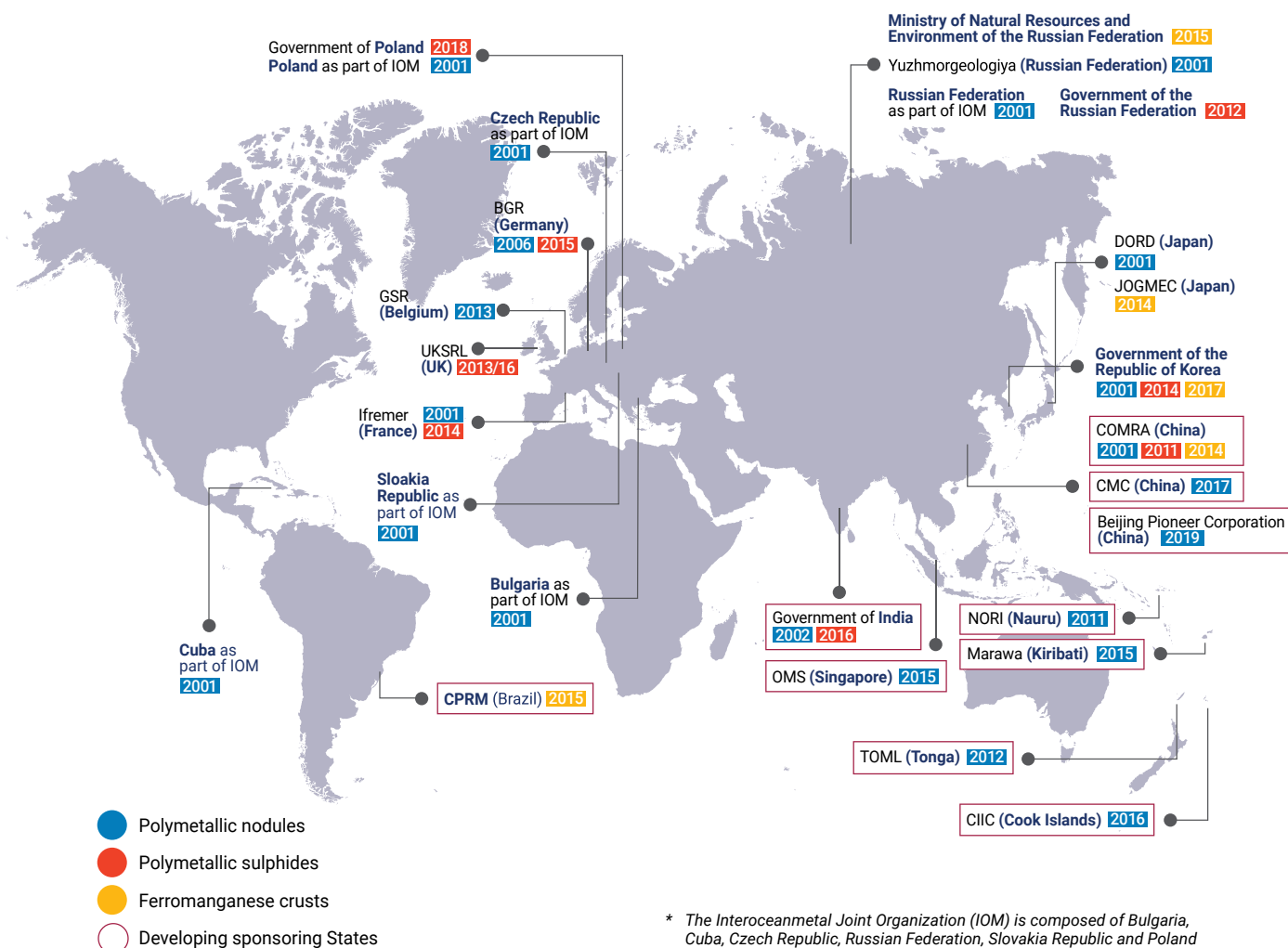
The areas being explored are in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, the Indian Ocean, the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, the South Atlantic Ocean and the Western Pacific Ocean. Exploration activities consist primarily of environmental surveys and sampling, geological studies and mineral resources assessment and have extremely low or no environmental impact.

The 30 exploration projects currently being undertaken involve 22 different sponsoring States, including 12 developing States and five SIDS (Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Singapore and Tonga). The most recent contract was issued to Beijing Pioneer Hi-Tech Development Corporation (sponsored by the Government of China) to explore for polymetallic nodules in the Western Pacific Ocean.⁶⁰



⁶⁰ ISBA/25/C/33.

Who are the contractors and sponsoring States?



Monitoring of exploration activities

Annual reporting by each contractor facilitates the monitoring of progress of the exploration work carried out against the contractor's approved plan of work. The annual report also provides ISA with data and information which may be used, for example, to evaluate, analyse and assess the environmental effects of exploration activities, and to help ISA with the formulation of relevant rules, regulations and procedures concerning safety and the protection of the marine environment. Annual reports are reviewed and evaluated by the LTC, which can provide feedback to each contractor on its performance through the Secretary-General.

The regulations also require the contractor and the Secretary-General to jointly undertake a periodic review of the implementation of the plan of work for exploration at intervals of five years.

To further improve the review process, the LTC presented during the first part of the 26th session a guidance document on the contents and format of periodic reports to ensure that all contractors report in a standardized manner and to reduce the time spent both by the contractors while preparing the reports and by the Secretariat while reviewing them.

Third annual meeting of contractors

11-13 October 2019 - Changsha, China



Contractors meet in Changsha, China on the occasion of the third contractors meeting convened by the Secretary-General.

Since 2017, the Secretary-General has held annual meetings with contractors to discuss issues of common interest and share best practice in deep-sea exploration. The 2017 meeting was held in Jamaica and the 2018 meeting in Warsaw, Poland.

The 2019 meeting in Changsha, China, addressed several important topics such as promoting increased transparency of contracts, the status of development of the regulatory framework for the exploitation of mineral resources, the environmental compensation fund and the submission of digital data including bathymetric data.

In a special session of the meeting, the International Cable Protection Committee was invited to make a presentation and discuss what it considered matters of mutual interest with the contractors, as well as matters of future collaboration.

The meeting also discussed the types of deep-sea data the contractors can contribute to ISA DeepData database in order to ensure effective environmental protection and enhance transparency, along with issues related to annual reports and periodic reviews.

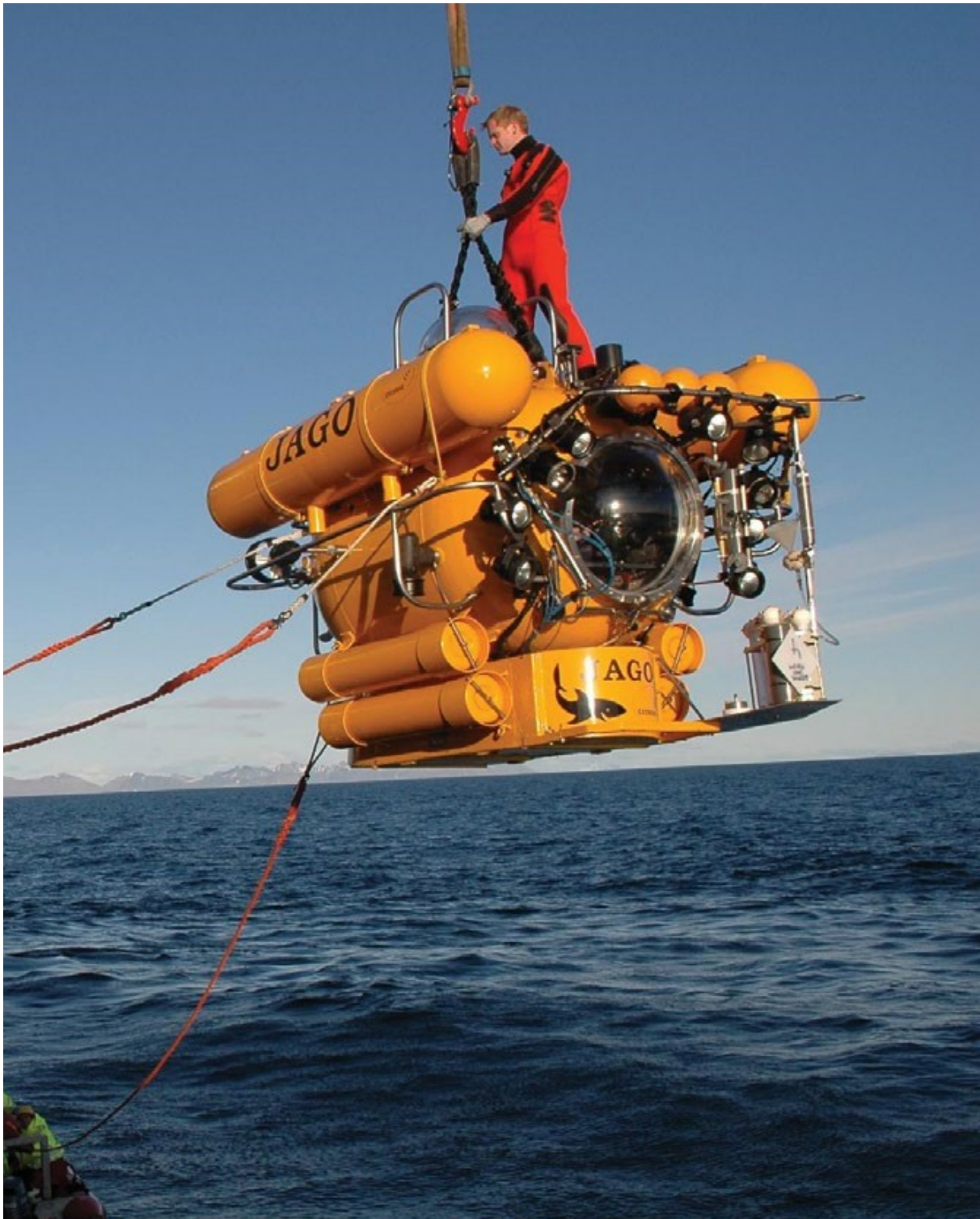


Photo: GEOMAR

