



Legal and Technical Commission

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Status of contracts for exploration

Report of the Secretary-General

1. As at 29 April 2013, the International Seabed Authority has concluded 12 contracts for exploration for polymetallic nodules and two contracts for exploration for polymetallic sulphides, including eight contracts which were signed between 2001 and 2010. The present report provides information on the status of contracts for exploration following the approval of nine plans of work by the Council, on the recommendation of the Legal and Technical Commission during the seventeenth and eighteenth sessions of the Authority. At the seventeenth session, the Council approved applications by Nauru Ocean Resources Inc. (NORI), Tonga Offshore Mining Limited (TOML), China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association (COMRA) and the Government of the Russian Federation. At the eighteenth session, the Council approved applications by the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer (IFREMER), UK Seabed Resources Ltd. (UKSRL), Marawa Research and Exploration Ltd. and G-TEC Sea Mineral Resources NV (GSR).
2. Following approval by the Council, each plan of work is to be prepared in the form of a contract incorporating the standard clauses set out in the applicable regulations. Each contract is signed by the Secretary-General on behalf of the Authority and by the designated representative of the contractor.
3. A contract with COMRA was signed in Beijing on 18 November 2011. Contracts with NORI and TOML were signed in Kingston on 22 July 2011 and 11 January 2012, respectively. Contracts with the Government of the Russian Federation and GSR were signed on 29 October 2012 in Moscow and on 14 January 2013 in New York City, respectively. A contract with UKSLR was signed on 4 February 2013 in London and on 8 February 2013 in Kingston. Members of the Authority were notified of the signature of the above-mentioned contracts by means of press releases posted on the Authority's website. At the time of reporting, contracts with other applicants were under preparation.
4. With the exception of COMRA, all applicants elected to pay a fixed fee at the time of submitting their application. As permitted under the regulations then in



force, COMRA elected to pay a fixed fee of \$50,000 at the time of the submission of its application and an annual fee based on the number of blocks retained thereafter. Under that formula, the first annual fee of \$50,000 became due on 18 November 2012 and was duly paid.

5. Each contractor is required to propose a programme for the training of nationals of developing States. The training programme, as agreed with the Authority, is incorporated into the contract as schedule 3. In this regard, training programmes have been agreed with NORI, TOML, COMRA, the Government of the Russian Federation, GSR and UKSRL and have been incorporated into the relevant contracts. The training programme has also been agreed with the Government of the Republic of Korea and will form part of the contract to be signed.

6. Progress made on the implementation of training programmes as well as suggestions for the recommendations of the Commission on the design and implementation of such programmes are the subject of a separate report. At its February meeting, the Commission agreed to consider this matter further at its next meeting, in July.

7. Each contractor is required to submit an annual report on its programme of activities by 31 March. NORI submitted its first annual report in 2012. In the case of COMRA, the contract was signed in November 2011, and it was agreed that since COMRA did not intend to commence its programme of activities until 2012, the first annual report would be submitted in 2013 and would cover the period from signature through the end of 2012. This has been duly submitted. For the same reason, an identical agreement was made with the Government of the Russian Federation following the signature of its contract for exploration.

8. Prior to the commencement of its programme of activities under the contract, each contractor is required to submit to the Secretary-General a contingency plan to respond effectively to incidents arising from its activities in the exploration area.

9. The Commission is invited to take note of the present report.

Annex

Status of contracts for exploration for polymetallic nodules and for polymetallic sulphides

A. Contracts for exploration for polymetallic nodules

<i>Contractor</i>	<i>Date of entry into force of contract</i>	<i>Sponsoring State</i>	<i>General location of the exploration area under contract</i>	<i>Date of expiry of contract</i>
Interoceanmetal Joint Organization	29 March 2001	Bulgaria, Cuba, Czech Republic, Poland, Russian Federation and Slovakia	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	28 March 2016
Yuzhmorgeologiya	29 March 2001	Russian Federation	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	28 March 2016
Government of the Republic of Korea	27 April 2001		Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	26 April 2016
China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association	22 May 2001	China	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	21 May 2016
Deep Ocean Resources Development Co. Ltd.	20 June 2001	Japan	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	19 June 2016
Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer	20 June 2001	France	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	19 June 2016
Government of India	25 March 2002		Indian Ocean	24 March 2017
Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources of Germany	19 July 2006	Germany	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	18 July 2021
Nauru Ocean Resources Inc.	22 July 2011	Nauru	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	21 July 2026
Tonga Offshore Mining Limited	11 January 2012	Tonga	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	10 January 2027
Marawa Research and Exploration Ltd.	To be signed	Kiribati	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	
UK Seabed Resources Ltd.	8 February 2013	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	7 February 2028
G-TEC Sea Mineral Resources NV	14 January 2013	Belgium	Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone	13 January 2028

B. Contracts for exploration for polymetallic sulphides

<i>Contractor</i>	<i>Date of entry into force of contract</i>	<i>Sponsoring State</i>	<i>General location of the exploration area under contract</i>	<i>Date of expiry of contract</i>
China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association	18 November 2011	China	Southwest Indian Ridge	17 November 2026
Government of the Russian Federation	29 October 2012		Mid-Atlantic Ridge	28 October 2027
Government of the Republic of Korea	To be signed			
Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer	To be signed	France	Mid-Atlantic Ridge	
