



1 December 2009

KINGSTON, JAMAICA. The workshop on the finalization of the Geological Model of the Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone (CCZ) is scheduled for 14-17 December 2009 at the Authority's headquarters in Kingston.

The workshop will showcase the Geological Model of polymetallic nodule deposits in the CCZ, and the Prospector's Guide containing a narrative description of the key factors relevant to exploration for polymetallic nodules. This signals the end of a project the Authority undertook as part of its mandate to conduct resource assessments of prospective mineral deposits in the Area.

In March, 2001, the Authority met with representatives of the seven contractors to discuss ways of improving the results of resource assessments of polymetallic nodule deposits in the CCZ.

At that meeting, and in the absence of sampling data from much of that vast geographic area, participants suggested that if the suspected relationships between high nodule grade and abundance and factors such as sediments, volcanism, topography and primary productivity could be established, they could be used as proxies for grade and abundance in poorly sampled, nodulized areas. A recommendation from that meeting was that the Authority should establish a geological model of polymetallic nodule deposits for the CCZ.

During the meetings of the ISA's ninth session the Legal and Technical Commission recognized that such a model would be useful for prospectors, contractors and the Authority, and endorsed the recommendation.

In May 2003, the Authority convened a workshop in Nadi, Fiji, to consider the data that could be taken into account to develop such a model. The workshop identified candidate proxy variables and devised a programme for the development of the model and a prospector's guide.

After taking into account the results of the Fiji workshop, a seven-member Group of Technical Experts identified the approach that would be used to generate the Model, specified the proxy data that would be tested for use in predicting nodule grade and abundance, and devised a thirty-month programme for the completion of the work. The programme commenced in the 2005-2006 biennium.

The progress of the Geological Model project was regularly monitored by the Authority, which also served as the common link between the contractors, their scientists and the Group of Technical Experts during the development stages. To ensure continuity, the Authority set up an ftp site for use by the project members – consultants and contractor scientists – to upload all data, reports and other related notes concerning the project. It also regularly evaluated the interim reports and facilitated resolution of matters that arose during the implementation of the project.

In October 2006, the Authority conducted a mid-course review of the programme at the East-West Center, Hawaii, at which the consultants and the Secretariat discussed the project's progress and a future course of action for completion and which included the reassigning of tasks amongst the team members. The drafts of the two products of the exercise were completed in February 2009 and reviewed by two renowned experts in the field.

In September 2009, a meeting of the contributors and the reviewers was held at the Authority's Headquarters to discuss the reviews and finalize the two products which after modifications will culminate in the presentation of the finalised products at the December 2009 workshop.
