

General comments on “Environment” of the Draft Regulations

The Draft Regulations should balance resource development and marine environmental protection, and establish scientifically sound, fair and equitable environmental regulations, standards and guidelines.

Regarding the environmental thresholds, the formulation should fully listen to the opinions of various stakeholders. Contractors carrying out deep-sea exploration and survey activities are the direct participants in deep-sea activities and can contribute to the formulation of environmental thresholds.

Regarding the template for the environmental impact statement, it is recommended that the provisions of the Exploitation Regulations be harmonized with the Exploration Regulations and the "Recommendations for guidance to contractors on the content, format and structure of annual reports" and other documents already issued by the Authority related to environmental impact statement. To regulate various types of data and information in the environmental impact statement while meeting the requirements for confidentiality of exploration data and information of contractors.

Regarding the scoping report, as it is an important part of the environmental impact statement, it is recommended that after clarifying the process and time frame related to scoping report, it should be integrated with the relevant provisions of the environmental impact statement. The content of the scoping report should be incorporated into the environmental impact statement template. Or, its specific detailed provisions should be placed in the corresponding standards and guidelines and ensure the harmonization of relevant expressions and provisions.

Regarding stakeholder consultation, it is recommended to strengthen the study of this issue, support the development of relevant standard procedures by the Authority, and clarify the details of stakeholder consultation targets, implementation process and time limits, so as to provide clear guidance for the stakeholder consultation.