



Council

Distr.: General
15 March 2023

Original: English

Twenty-eighth session

Council session, part I

Kingston, 16–31 March 2023

Item 14 of the provisional agenda*

**Report of the Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission on
the work of the Commission at its twenty-eighth session**

Report on the relinquishment of 50 per cent of the area allocated to the Government of the Republic of Korea under the contract for exploration for polymetallic sulphides between the Government and the International Seabed Authority

Note by the Secretariat

1. The contract for exploration for polymetallic sulphides between the Government of the Republic of Korea (the contractor) and the International Seabed Authority was signed on 24 June 2014. The area under the contract covers 10,000 km².
2. Pursuant to the schedule for fulfilling relinquishment obligations, as set out in regulation 27 (2) of the regulations on prospecting and exploration for polymetallic sulphides in the Area ([ISBA/16/A/12/Rev.1](#), annex), by the end of the eighth year from the date of the contract, the contractor must have relinquished at least 50 per cent of the original area allocated to it, and, by the end of the tenth year from the date of the contract, the contractor must have relinquished at least 75 per cent of the original area allocated to it.
3. Accordingly, the contractor was required to relinquish at least 50 per cent of its allocated area by 23 June 2022. By letter dated 17 June 2022, the contractor submitted to the Secretary-General of the Authority cartographic material that included shapefiles of relinquished and remaining cells and an overview map with the remaining exploration areas.
4. During the first part of its twenty-eighth session, held from 7 to 15 March 2023, on the basis of the technical review carried out by the secretariat, the Legal and Technical Commission noted that the contractor had complied with its relinquishment obligations pursuant to the applicable regulations and the recommendations for the guidance of contractors on the relinquishment of areas under exploration contracts for polymetallic sulphides or cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts ([ISBA/25/LTC/8](#)).



5. The total original area, the maps of which are available at <https://bit.ly/3JdSLjM>, consists of 100 blocks, with each block consisting of 100 cells and each cell measuring 1 km x 1 km. The number of blocks per cluster varies from 5 to 34. A total of 5,000 cells, comprising an area of 5,000 km², were relinquished from 100 blocks within eight clusters. After this relinquishment, the remaining area under exploration covers 5,000 km².
6. The relinquished area has reverted to the Area.
7. The Council is invited to take note of the present note.
