

DOSI Intervention regarding Item 10: Draft Regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area: Fourth meeting of the Informal Working Group on the Protection and Preservation of the Marine Environment

**Annex IV Section 8 - Assessment of impacts and Environmental Effects on the biological environment and proposed Mitigation
#27 Delivered 22 March 2023 by Sonigitu Ekpe**

Thank you, Madame Facilitator. In Paragraph (a)ter, the Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative, DOSI recommends the addition of verification of any modeling or other analyses besides the description of assumptions and limitations of the models. With regards to paragraph (d), we recommend that threshold values not be deleted. While threshold values for the various impacts of deep-sea mining are currently not established, we recognise that there are various efforts that aim to start constraining normative thresholds, including the intersessional work highlighted in the LTC report.

As with our feedback on Section 7, the Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative recommends that listed examples in para 8.2 are not comprehensive, with loss of connectivity and of vulnerable species or toxicity not included. We suggest a reference to the relevant Standards and Guidelines for more complete lists is more appropriate with these stated examples, which should only be for illustrative purposes.

DOSI further recommends explicit mention that this work needs to span the size range from megafauna to microbial communities, both across the water column and on the seafloor, similarly to the fauna that is required to be investigated according to section 5. As such, we suggest removing the text in 8.2 ter for the water column “as appropriate”. Similarly to the seafloor, obtaining a comprehensive and holistic understanding across the water column for fauna spanning from megafauna to microbial communities should be required. It is not clear why these two different areas would be treated differently. Further, the term “as appropriate” does not suggest a clear and transparent way for inclusion or exclusion of faunal groups. We note that toxicity is not included in the list of potential receptors, which is, however, an impact that needs to be considered alongside mining plumes. At a minimum, the Contractor needs to justify why certain groups should not be included in these impact studies and analyses.

With regards to paragraph 8.7, DOSI recommends here that synergistic effects are explicitly mentioned alongside cumulative effects, as we suggested for Section 7.

Lastly, DOSI recommends the addition of two paragraphs to this section. First, we recommend that there is a paragraph that outlines the requirements to consider the effects of accidental events and natural hazards, as per section 7 and 9. Second, we recommend there is a paragraph that outlines the assessment of uncertainty added to this section.

Many thanks, Madame Facilitator.