



Consultation on the draft Strategic Plan for the International Seabed Authority for the five-year period 2024-2028.

General questions

1. Does the Draft Strategic Plan for the period 2024-2028 clearly encapsulate the mandate and responsibilities set out for the Authority by the Convention and the 1994 Agreement?

Japan considers that the Draft Strategic Plan for the period 2024-2028 encapsulates the mandates and responsibilities which the International Seabed Authority (ISA) is given in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of UNCLOS of 10 December 1982 (1994 Agreement) appropriately.

2. How do you think the Strategic Plan and associated High-Level Action Plan have contributed to fulfil the mission of ISA (as per the mission statement)?

Japan considers that the adoption of the Strategic Plan and associated plan which stimulated the ISA's activities as well as enhanced its visibility has successfully identified the priorities under ISA's broad mandate and clarified a step-by-step approach with a goal to be achieved over five years.

3. To what extent do you think the work of ISA provides a useful model for sustainable management of the global commons as Steward of the Area and its resources?

Japan understands that ISA as Steward of the Area and its resources has so far been successful in promoting the orderly, safe and responsible management of the resources of the Area for the benefit of mankind as a whole, by developing regulatory mechanism including exploration regulations and promoting marine scientific research as well as capacity development, through working closely with all member states and stakeholders. Japan believes that ISA's activities have the potential to be a good precedent for the realization of the concept of global commons and lead to advancing a legal order in the ocean.

4. What should be the priorities of the Authority for the next five years?

Japan is of the view that the highest priority for the period 2024-2028 should be given to the development and adoption of the rules, regulations and procedures relating to exploitation in accordance with the Convention and the 1994 Agreement.

Specific questions

5. Does the “*Mission Statement*” (unchanged from the first strategic plan) continue to accurately reflect the mandate of the Authority?

Yes.

6. How do you consider that the context and challenges identified remain relevant? Should there be any new elements identified?

In general, the context and challenges identified in the first strategic plan remain relevant today and Japan considers that the Part III of the draft strategic plan 2024-2028 has appropriately added new developments since 2019.

On “Organizational development”, Japan recognizes the importance of allocating sufficient resources to the Authority, especially during the transition period from exploration to exploitation, allowing it to fulfil its role as regulator of activities in the Area, as appropriate. On the other hand, since the timing of the commencement of commercial exploitation of deep seabed minerals is unpredictable at this stage and all organs and subsidiary bodies should be established cost-effectively in order to minimize costs to States parties in accordance with 1994 Agreement, continuous efforts should be made to scrutinize the needs and reduce costs for establishing and functioning the organs and subsidiary bodies.

On matters relating to the Enterprise, Japan is of the view that the Enterprise should be established at an appropriate stage in accordance with UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement and welcomes recent adoption of the Council decision on the establishment of the position of an interim director general of the Enterprise. Meanwhile, it is anticipated that it will take some time for the Enterprise to commence mining operations, taking into account the fact that exploitation of mineral resources in the Area has not yet commenced by contractors, Japan wonders whether operationalization of the Enterprise will take place in the next five years. Therefore, Japan would like to take further consideration on how the matters relating to the Enterprise should be addressed in the Strategic Plan, taking into account the opinions of other member states and stakeholders.

On “Equitable sharing of benefits”, Japan is of the view that the adoption of rules, regulations and procedures for the distribution of payments made through the Authority under article 82 (4) of the Convention in respect of the exploitation of non-living resources on the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles, is not necessarily a matter of high priority for the next five years, if no member states expect any exploitation of the non-living resources of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles. Recognizing that this issue is provided by UNCLOS, Japan would like to hear opinions by other member states.

7. Are the “*Results and Priority Outputs*” appropriate and is there a clear link between the “*Strategic Directions*” and the “*Results and Priority Outputs*”?

Yes.

8. Are there any specific observations or comments that Member States and other stakeholders wish to make in connection with any other aspect of the Draft Strategic Plan for 2024-2028?

Throughout the draft strategic plan, Japan wishes to add more perspective on the interests of contractors. As an important actor, contractors contribute to the implementation of the Convention and the 1994 Agreement through exploration and exploitation activities. Japan would like to discuss this aspect with other member states and stakeholders in the coming meetings.