



## **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?**

**A:** Based on the evolutionary approach, the Draft balances the complex mandate assigned to ISA under UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement, considering the entirety of their intricate system of rights, obligations, duties and responsibilities.

- 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)?**

**A:** The Strategic Plan is a useful tool that allows a better organization and planning of the actions required to fulfil ISA's rights, obligations, duties and responsibilities. In particular, the guiding principles and the strategic directions are relevant components that, by taking into consideration the inputs of States Parties and other stakeholders promotes an organized, rational and secure management of the activities in the Area. The Plan contributes to other international goals, including SDGs.

- 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?**

**A:** An effective management of the global commons represents a complex and diverse task. It requires to be based on the best available science, resources and a progressive implementation and update. It also requires public participation and the involvement of States parties, contractors, Sponsor States & observers with the activities of the Authority.

The development of a robust and comprehensive legal frame, jointly with cooperation and coordination mechanisms, is key for a good and organized management of the resources in the Area for the benefit of mankind.

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

A:

- Strengthen and complement the baseline information required prior any exploitation activity takes place. These environmental baselines are key and essential for EIA process. Where there is no broad environmental baselines system, EIA will be useless and will lack of effectiveness and *raison d'être*. Therefore, this baseline system should not only rely on the information provided during the exploration stages. It requires to be constantly and progressively complemented with other data and information from different resources.

Building a comprehensive, integral and robust baseline system should be prioritized under the precautionary principle. This priority would be considered within the Strategic direction 4.5.

- More involvement of State parties and Stakeholders with the work of the Authority to give order and accountability of the activities in the Area. This should include transparency mechanisms of the activities in the Area and other activities that provides awareness of all the actions and activities that are performed under the mandate of the Authority.
- Strengthen activities to support women, especially from developing States, in deep-sea research.
- More resources should be placed to invest on Marine Scientific Research.

### Specific questions

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

A: Yes.

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

A: This draft includes the main challenges of this complex and multidisciplinary task including the protection and preservation of marine environment, the management of the Area on behalf of mankind, marine scientific research, capacity development & transfer of technology. Its implementation is based on a progressive and integral approach that considers the main elements of ISA’s mandate. Its evolutionary approach provides for a continuous update that will allow adaptation and improvement.

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

A: These linkages are subject to the progress of the development of the legal framework and the institutional mechanisms that will be implemented to comply with such directions and results.

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?**

**A:** it is Mexico's view that the establishment of a comprehensive environmental baseline should be one of the Authority's priority's for the next years. As mentioned in answer to question 4, no exploitation activity should commence without broad EIA is in place. This EIA is only effective when based in a comprehensive environmental baseline system, therefore, the current repository of contractors data should be expanded and complemented with other sources of information and data. To that effect, it is required to strength Marine Scientific Research, cooperation and joint partnership with other instruments, bodies and stakeholders to promote acquisition of additional data of the marine environment and is resources.

**Specific comments to the Draft Plan.**

p. 5 b.ii. should expressly include letters g (adoption or rules, regulations and procedures incorporating applicable standards for the protection and preservation of the marine environment) & h (Promotion and encouragement of the conduct of marine scientific research with respect to activities in the Area and the collection and dissemination of the results of such research and analysis, when available, with particular emphasis on research related to the environmental impact of activities in the Area)

p. 5. Last paragraph should read: This will be accomplished by developing and maintaining a comprehensive regulatory mechanism for commercial deep seabed mining that “**ensures**” (UNCLOS art. 145 & 146) effective protection of the marine environment and of human health and safety . . .