



DOSI intervention #11

LTC report - Delivered by Patricia Esquete on 28/03/2024

Thank you. Mr President

DOSI welcomes the LTC chair's report ISBA/29/C/7.

Regarding Part B on development of environmental thresholds, DOSI welcomes the update that the intersessional expert groups have convened, that two intersessional expert sessions have been held since the last Council meeting, and that there will be an in-person meeting of the three groups together. DOSI would like to request publication of the updated Terms of Reference for the IEGs in regards to an expected timeline of work. We encourage sufficient time to be allowed for careful and thorough work on these thresholds. More importantly, we would like to remind the council and stress that, without clear environmental goals and objectives, and in absence of sufficient data, it will not be possible for the experts to fulfill their task effectively, as setting thresholds for allowable harm requires these definitions as baselines.

Further, DOSI wants to stress the importance of holding a transparent and inclusive process, especially since each expert group only has 10 members that may not have the full diversity of expertise that is needed, as DOSI has commented on previously. This should include publication of all information on which the draft document is based, and the draft document itself, to the ISA website, holding stakeholder engagements during the development process to share progress and seek input, and holding stakeholder consultations on the draft document, before final approval is suggested. This will ensure proficiency of the final product.

Regarding Part C, DOSI welcomes the update on the development of a standardized procedure for the development, establishment and review of regional environmental management plans (or REMPs). We emphasise that the standardized procedure for the development, approval and review of REMPs and the REMP template should be agreed and applied **prior** to developing a REMP for any area, to ensure consistency between REMPs of different areas. Without an adopted document which provides guidance on REMP development, and that sets guiding principles and overarching goals, scientific experts working with the LTC to develop REMPs in various regions cannot fulfill their tasks effectively. It is essential for experts to know what the policy parameters of the REMPs should be for them to contribute meaningful inputs towards them.

Finally, DOSI welcomes the Data Management Strategic Workplan linked in the LTC chair's report, and the associated revised reporting templates for contractors to use for providing data in their annual reports. Regarding the strategic workplan, we applaud the progress made, and would like to make suggestions for further improving the way forward: We suggest integrating the data with global observing efforts, and the adoption of best practices, interoperability, and accessibility. The implementation of data standards such as Darwin Core and unique data identifiers throughout the system, (in both the template for the contractors and the DeepData database) will ensure findability and interoperability. In addition, and importantly, we suggest implementing a data quality control system to ensure reliability and accuracy of the data provided by contractors and made available through the platform.

