



Council

Distr.: General
12 July 2024

Original: English

Twenty-ninth session

Council session, part II

Kingston, 15–26 July 2024

Agenda item 7

**Status of contracts for exploration and related matters,
including information on the periodic review of the
implementation of approved plans of work for exploration**

Report on the relinquishment of 50 per cent of the area allocated to the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources under the contract for exploration for polymetallic sulphides signed with the International Seabed Authority

Note by the secretariat

1. The contract for exploration for polymetallic sulphides between the Federal Institute for Geoscience and Natural Resources (BGR) and the International Seabed Authority was signed on 6 May 2015. The area under the contract covers 10,000 km².
2. Pursuant to the schedule for fulfilling relinquishment obligations 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 shall have relinquished at least 50 per cent of the original area allocated to it, and by the end of the tenth year, at least 75 per cent of the original area.
3. Pursuant to regulation 27 (2), the contractor was required to relinquish at least 50 per cent of its allocated area by 6 May 2023 (i.e. the end of the eighth year). On 15 December 2020 and 18 March 2022, however, BGR requested to defer its scheduled relinquishments owing to the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on its operational activities (see [ISBA/27/LTC/4](#)), whereupon the Council decided to defer the schedule of the first and second relinquishments by one year, to 6 May 2024 and 6 May 2026, respectively (see [ISBA/27/C/19](#)). By a letter dated 16 April 2024, the contractor submitted to the Secretary-General information on the relinquishment of 50 per cent of the area allocated under the contract, with cartographic material that included shapefiles of relinquished and remaining cells and an overview map with the remaining exploration areas.



4. During the second part of the twenty-ninth session, held from 1 to 12 July 2024, 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 relinquished area, the maps of which are available at www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/0000-BGRSPMS1-1stRelinq-Entire-scaled.jpg, consists of 1 km x 1 km cells within 100 blocks, varying from 0 to 800 cells in each cluster. A total of 5,000 cells were relinquished from 100 blocks within 12 clusters.
6. The relinquished area has reverted to the Area.
7. The Council is invited to take note of the present note.
