



Council

Distr.: General
27 June 2025

Original: English

Thirtieth session

Council session, part II

Kingston, 7–18 July 2025

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 two thirds of the area allocated to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation under the contract for exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts signed between the Ministry and the International Seabed Authority

Note by the secretariat

1. The contract for exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts between the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation (the contractor) and the International Seabed Authority was signed on 10 March 2015. The area under the contract initially covered 3,000 km².
2. Pursuant to the schedule for fulfilling relinquishment obligations, as set out in regulation 27 (1) of the regulations on prospecting and exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts in the Area ([ISBA/18/A/11](#), annex), by the end of the eighth year from the date of the contract, the contractor must have relinquished at least one third of the original area allocated to it; and by the end of the tenth year from the date of the contract, the contractor must have relinquished at least two thirds of the original area allocated to it.
3. Accordingly, on 9 March 2023, the contractor submitted to the Secretary-General of the Authority cartographic material that included shapefiles of relinquished and remaining cells and an overview map of the remaining exploration areas. The Council, acting on the recommendations of the Legal and Technical Commission, noted that the contractor had fulfilled the first part of the schedule of relinquishment obligations pursuant to regulation 27 (1).¹ The relinquished area reverted to the Area.

¹ [ISBA/28/C/19](#).



4. During the second part of its thirtieth session, 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 total original area, the maps of which are available at https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/MNRE-CFC_Relinquishment-Maps-Per-Cluster.pdf, consists of 143 blocks, with each block consisting of 16 cells and each cell measuring approximately 1.12 km x 1.12 km. The number of relinquished cells per cluster varies from 27 to 208. A total of 800 cells, comprising an area of 1,000 km², were relinquished within nine clusters. The remaining area under exploration covers 1,000 km².

6. The relinquished area has reverted to the Area.

7. The Council is invited to take note of the present note.
