



Template for the review of the draft standards and guidelines associated with the draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area

I. Background

1. The draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area ([ISBA/25/C/WP.1](#)) require that certain issues are addressed in accordance with, or taking into account, standards and guidelines to be developed by the organs of the Authority. The standards will be adopted by the Council and will be legally binding on Contractors and the Authority, whereas the guidelines will be issued by the Legal and Technical Commission or the Secretary-General and will be recommendatory in nature.
2. Stakeholder consultation is an integral part of the process decided upon by the Commission for the development of the standards and guidelines ([ISBA/25/C/19/Add.1](#)).
3. The Legal and Technical Commission will consider the comments received through stakeholder consultation during its current session.
4. The drafts include a cover page containing background and contextual information on the approach taken by the Legal and Technical Commission in developing each standard and guidelines. Please note that stakeholder comments are not sought on this cover note.
5. Issues of format and consistency across the standards and guidelines will be reviewed by the secretariat and the Legal and Technical Commission once the content of the various standards and guidelines is finalized following stakeholder consultation.

II. Submitting Comments

6. To ensure that your comments are given due consideration, please send them by e-mail to ola@isa.org.im, at your earliest convenience but **no later than the date announced on the ISA website for the relevant draft standards and guidelines**.
7. When submitting comments, please adhere to the following guidance as much as possible:
 - a. Please provide all comments in writing and in an MS Word .doc or .docx format using the table provided below.
 - b. The table format allows for an unlimited number of comments to be added. To add more comments, you may add more rows.

- c. Please provide full contact information for the individual/Government/organization submitting the comments.
 - d. Please avoid commenting on issues related to format, grammar, spelling or punctuation, unless it affects the overall meaning of the text, as the document will be formatted and edited when the final draft is prepared by the Legal and Technical Commission.
 - e. To facilitate the revision process please be as specific as possible in your comments. In areas where you feel additional or alternative text or information is required, please suggest what this text may look like or what information should be included.
 - f. Text may be copied from the draft into the table if stakeholders wish to use "track changes" in editing text (this is encouraged to ensure accuracy and avoid numbering errors).
 - g. If you refer to additional sources of information, please include these with your comments when possible or provide a complete reference or hyperlink.
 - h. All review comments will be posted on the ISA website, unless otherwise requested by the submitting entity.
8. Should you have any questions regarding the review process, please contact ola@isa.org.jm.

III. Template for Comments

- 9. Please use the review template below when providing comments.
- 10. Line and page numbers have been provided in the drafts. Please use these as a reference as illustrated in the table below.

TEMPLATE FOR COMMENTS

<i>Document reviewed</i>	
Title of the draft being reviewed:	Draft Guidelines for the establishment of baseline environmental data
<i>Contact information</i>	
Surname:	Langman
Given Name:	Robert
Government (if applicable):	
Organization (if applicable):	MarineSpace Ltd
Country:	United Kingdom

E-mail:	Rob.Langman@marinespace.co.uk	
General Comments		
Socioeconomic environment needs to be considered within the baseline for informing the EIA, but no guidelines for its inclusion are provided in the Draft Guidelines.		
In situ sediment characteristics are not mentioned in the Draft Guidelines, but have a profound effect on the nature and extent of plumes generated. It is suggested that details regarding the assessment of potential plumes is included in this Draft Guidelines, and thus the nature of the sediment and its tendency to form extensive plumes can be detailed within the baseline that will inform the EIA.		
A list of abbreviations/glossary would be helpful at the start of the Draft Guidelines t as, in some instances, a term or abbreviation is not explained on its first introduction, or is described later on in the document (e.g. ACDP, CTD and UAV).		
Clearer signposting is needed in the document to both best practices and guidelines, and sources (e.g., in para. 117).		
A summary table of variables; sampling technique(s); indicative replication; indicative temporal/spatial variation would be useful within the document.		
Specific Comments		
Page	Line	Comment
7	164	We disagree that it can be assumed that will not be seasonal variability for benthic infauna (e.g., during periods of recruitment) and so agree it would be important to validate this.
7	167	This reads that collection of baseline data should cover, as a minimum, a 3 year period. This is an important guideline so should this be stated higher in up in the section? Also, in contrast, Paragraph no. 57 (line393) suggests surveys “every season for at least 3 years”. This implies a constant collection of baseline data over 3 years, rather than just collecting data for a 3 year period. Clarification is needed as to what timescales baseline data collection is required.
7	174	If repeat sampling over X years, then a statement should be included to ensure that any results included are not an artifact of sampling itself. For example, as sampling of the seabed causes disturbance, if sampling the next season/year be aware that any changes are not indicative of sampling effects by of any natural temporal changes.
7	181	Clarification required. This paragraph states that 3-4 replicate samples are required to be taken within the surface to 200 m depth - is that 3-4 samples to be taken between the surface and 200 m, or 3-4 at each of the sub-layers within that sampling zone?
8	230	If a sampling programme is adjusted to focus on where areas of mining are expected to take place, does this extend the duration of the baseline sampling programme itself? i.e. re starts the clock to get adequate baseline data to cover temporal variation (3 years)? Clarification is required.
9	266	It would be useful to understand the types of “state-of-the-art models” discussed here, either as examples or specific guidance. The models are likely to be developed and enhanced by the Applicant and/or external consultants and therefore some latitude in allowing these models to feed

		into updated EMMPs and subsequent EISs may be required.
12	377	Further clarification is required as to how the “same station” is defined in this context for sampling of each parameter/variable– e.g. should this be a simultaneous physical sample, or a sample in the same location in water column (e.g., plankton sampling) or directly at sediment surface for benthic fauna? Or both?
12	391	As per comment on Paragraph no. 17 (Line 167), this is now every season for 3 years – need to define the season (which may require additional data collection) and also collect a significant level of data constantly for 3 years if the seasons are changing regularly.
20	733	Can these “accepted methods” be listed in the document to prevent ambiguity? A list of methods and/or Standard Operating Procedures etc. would be useful to avoid inconsistency.
22	787	We feel this paragraph needs clearer signposting, where appropriate, for other paragraphs and sections of the document where ‘Best Practices’ are referred to and detailed.
22	803	Clarification required – is it a minimum of a single replicate in each of the 3 zones (IRZ; PRZ and mining area) required? Please confirm if these stations should be the ones regularly monitored as part of the baseline program described in paragraph 57?
36	1411	We suggest that the in-situ physical properties of the sediments are also collected and recorded (cohesion etc). These data will be used to generate more relevant and specific modelling results for the EIS.
38	1471	It would be useful to produce, or signpost to, a standardised terminology of abyssal undersea features to ensure consistency and that all consultees will understand the nature of the features described.
38	1499	To what extent beyond the mining site(s) should the sampling be conducted? The extent could be determined from predictive modelling or a pre-determined buffer zone in our experience, but deliver very different sampling arrays. If the modelling is to be required first, this may hold up the application development and these extents may not be easily defined at the baseline stage.
39	1526	The paragraphs under General Methodology read more like an opening set of paragraphs and should include more detail such as replication of sample sites.
39	1532	It would be useful to define ‘distant’ as a range, at least in Km’s.
39	1536	General Note Under ‘C. Sampling Resolution – 1. Pelagic sampling’ (para 223 -224), no indication of replicates provided or temporal resolution.
42	1650	For Macrofauna it is standard to use 500 µm (e.g., animals usually retained on a mesh size of 500 µm). Please state if it is standard for deep sea fauna to use a finer mesh of s250-300. µm.
43	1704	Given the variability of fauna, can the length of transect required to encounter >500 individuals be easily predicted? How often should stills be taken along a transect, as in Paragraph 238 it is stated that along the transects, image assessment should use stills and not moving images from

		videos. Thus, it is important to understand the frequency of still images to be taken along a transect, as this may influence the number of individuals encountered.
44	1755	What size sieved should be used for each depth fraction, also these will likely include 'megafauna' (>0.1cm) so please explain how these should be processed.
45	1765	It cannot be avoided to fix crustaceans in formaldehyde solution if they are present in sediment fractions >3cm, as the whole fraction will be fixed first in formalin, and then specimens extracted and put in ethanol.
55	2203	The section is very light compared to the others but is likely to be a focus for many consultees. We suggest it should be expanded significantly to address the likely concerns raised by consultees.
55	2216	We feel this section similarly requires expanding as again it is likely to be a focus for some consultees.
<i>Additional rows can be added to this table by selecting "Table" followed by "insert" and "rows below"</i>		

Comments should be sent by e-mail to ola@isa.org.im