



Council

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Council session, part II

Kingston, 19–23 July 2021*

Agenda item 8

**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 Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation under the contract for exploration for polymetallic sulphides between the Ministry and the International Seabed Authority

Note by the Secretariat

1. The contract for exploration for polymetallic sulphides between the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation and the International Seabed Authority was signed on 29 October 2012. The area under the contract covered 10,000 km².
2. Pursuant to regulation 27, paragraph 2 (a), 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 must have relinquished at least 50 per cent of the original area allocated to it.
3. Accordingly, the contractor was required to relinquish at least 50 per cent of its allocated area by 28 October 2020. On 7 October 2020, the contractor submitted to the Secretary-General cartographic material that included shapefiles of relinquished and remaining cells, an overview map with remaining exploration areas, and an explanatory note to the materials for the relinquishment of 50 per cent of the exploration area under the contract between the Authority and the Ministry for exploration for polymetallic sulphides.
4. During the resumed meetings of the twenty-sixth session, held remotely between March and September 2021, 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

* New dates of the in-person meetings originally scheduled for July 2020.



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://bit.ly/3qf5f0p>, consists of 100 blocks, with each block consisting of 100 cells and each cell measuring 1 km x 1 km. The number of blocks per cluster vary from 8 to 36 and they are grouped into seven clusters. A total of 5,000 cells were relinquished from among the 100 blocks within six of the seven clusters.
 6. The relinquished area has reverted to the Area.
 7. The Council is invited to take note of the present note.
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