



Legal and Technical Commission

Distr.: General
24 January 2022

Original: English

Twenty-seventh session

Legal and Technical Commission session, part I

Kingston, 14–18 March 2022

Item 10 of the provisional agenda*

Consideration of applications for approval of plans of work for exploration

Application for approval of a plan of work for exploration for polymetallic nodules by Circular Metals Tuvalu Ltd.

Executive summary**

1. On 21 December 2021, the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority received an application for approval of a plan of work for exploration for polymetallic nodules in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone in the Pacific Ocean submitted by Circular Metals Tuvalu Ltd. pursuant to the regulations on prospecting and exploration for polymetallic nodules in the Area.
2. According to the application, Circular Metals Tuvalu is a privately owned enterprise, and the application is sponsored by the Government of Tuvalu. Its place of registration and principal place of business is Funafuti, and it is subject to the jurisdiction of Tuvalu.
3. Circular Metals Tuvalu is a 100 per cent owned subsidiary of Circular Metals Corp., a Canadian registered company that is focused on extending the life cycle of key metals required for batteries to power the transition to electric vehicles and off-grid storage of renewables. It is planning to set up lithium-ion battery recycling plants, initially in Europe and then in Asia, and recirculate the recovered metals into the battery production process. Circular Metals Tuvalu seeks, in parallel, to support the off-grid storage of renewable energy and the decarbonization of transport by sourcing the key metals for this transition from the application area.
4. The total area covered by the Circular Metals Tuvalu application is 74,460 km², comprising parts of reserved areas in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone contributed by JSC Yuzhmoregeologiya, the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources of Germany, UK Seabed Resources Ltd (contract signed with the Authority in 2016), Deep Ocean Resources Development Co. Ltd. (DORD) and Interoceanmetal Joint Organization. The area is subdivided into eight blocks. Six blocks are located in the central area of the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, while the other two blocks are in the eastern part of the Clarion-Clipperton Zone.

* ISBA/27/LTC/L.1.

** Submitted by the applicant.



5. The respective sizes of the blocks, which are designated A to H, are as follows: 17,760 km² (block A), 8,334 km² (block B), 1,959 km² (block C), 7,286 km² (block D), 9,284 km² (block E), 14,780k km² (block F), 10,880 km² (block G) and 4,177 km² (block H).
6. In accordance with regulation 19 of the regulations, Circular Metals Tuvalu has paid the application fee of \$500,000 to the International Seabed Authority.¹
7. Circular Metals Tuvalu has submitted a programme of activities for the five-year period. It will conduct exploration activities which will include the collection of mineral data and the development of oceanographic and environmental studies.
8. The overall objectives of Circular Metals Tuvalu are to progress the exploration potential to inferred, indicated and measured resources, and ultimately to proven and probable reserves; conduct environment baseline studies within an ecosystem-based management framework across multiple blocks for regional-scale assessment; conduct environmental baseline studies in concert with resource exploration to enable the harmonization of ecosystem approaches and environmental optimization early in the project cycle; and determine the most efficient and environmentally acceptable method for collecting the nodules from the sea floor.

¹ The Authority received the payment on 9 December 2021.