



WORKSHOP FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE AREA OF THE NORTHWEST PACIFIC

26 October - 6 November 2020

Virtual Workshop

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Terms of Reference

The International Seabed Authority (ISA), in collaboration with the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea and the Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology (KIOST), will convene a workshop for the Regional Environmental Management Plan (REMP) for the Area of the Northwest Pacific from 26 October to 6 November 2020 (weekdays only), via an online meeting platform.

Background

The objective of REMPs is to provide the relevant organs of ISA, as well as contractors and their sponsoring States, with a proactive management tool to support informed decision making that balances resource development with conservation (ISBA/24/C/3). In line with the mandate of ISA to ensure effective protection for the marine environment from harmful effects which may arise from activities undertaken in the Area, the Council took note of a preliminary strategy for the development of REMPs for the Area (ISBA/24/C/3) for key provinces where exploration activities under contracts were being carried out, identifying the Northwest Pacific as one of the priority areas. As highlighted in this preliminary strategy, the development and implementation of REMPs in the Area require a collaborative and transparent approach, including the compilation and analysis of available data from multiple sources, as well as a consultation with recognized experts from the international scientific community, contractors and relevant international organizations. Likewise, it is essential that such processes facilitate full participation by developing States. The Council also emphasized that the Secretariat should aim to expand the breadth and depth of its strategic partnerships with relevant organizations and researchers, including exploring opportunities for new strategic partnerships.

In this context, the Secretariat has pursued a cooperative effort with the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea and KIOST in facilitating the development of a draft REMF for the Area of the Northwest Pacific Ocean. The proposed workshop also builds on the results of the workshop convened in Qingdao, China, in May 2018, which addressed the design of REMPs for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts in the Northwest Pacific Ocean. Since then, a new contract for exploration of polymetallic nodules was

approved for this region, providing additional environmental and resource settings for consideration under the REMP.

Workshop Objectives

The workshop aims to: (i) review, analyze and synthesize scientific data and information on biogeography; physical, geological and environmental settings; biodiversity, ecosystem features and habitats of the Northwest Pacific seamounts and nodule areas, (ii) review current exploration activities within contract areas and distribution of resources (cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts and polymetallic nodules) in the Northwest Pacific region, (iii) describe potential areas that could be impacted by future exploitation of mineral resources in the Area and would require enhanced management measures and precautions, and (iv) discuss a framework to address cumulative impacts from future exploitation activities in order to achieve effective protection of the marine environment.

Expected outputs

A workshop report will be prepared by the designated co-chairs and the Secretariat. The results of this workshop will provide scientific inputs to the following REMP workshop in this region, which will focus on potential policy and management measures to be considered in the REMP. The results of these two workshops will then be made available, together with the results of previous Qingdao workshop, as information to the Legal and Technical Commission (LTC) in its future meeting.