

We want to thank the Chair for this report and the commission for their hard work. With respect to Part B, the Deep-Ocean Stewardship would like to comment on paragraph 6(M). Although DOSI is pleased to hear of an increasing level of mid-water sampling, especially in cobalt-rich crust environments, there remains an urgent need to collect baseline data on mid-water ecosystems in almost all exploration areas. As we heard yesterday in the DOSI side event, the midwater environment is highly connected to the seafloor, for example through the migration of organisms, and the exchange of nutrients. It should be noted that the spatial scale of mid-water biological studies is often much broader than the more focussed seafloor or benthic studies. For example, a detailed pelagic biology study in a region such as the Clarion-Clipperton Zone would ideally cut across many exploration areas in its scope and support decisions on REMPs. Additionally, pelagic and benthic baseline data could be obtained via collaboration with scientific networks such as the Deep Ocean Observing Strategy which is considering a demonstration project in the area. DOSI notes that for the results of all such studies to be useful for the protection of marine environment during deep sea mining (whether conducted by contractors or scientific endeavours), they require an adequately extensive sampling effort and open access of environmental and biological data.

Many thanks,  
Diva Amon  
(On behalf of DOSI)