



Council

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Report of the Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission on the work of the Commission at its twenty-seventh session

Decision of the Council of the International Seabed Authority on the deferral of the schedule of relinquishment upon request by the Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer

The Council of the International Seabed Authority,

Recalling that, on 18 November 2014, the Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer entered into a 15-year contract for exploration for polymetallic sulphides with the Authority,

Recalling also regulation 27, paragraph 2, of the regulations on prospecting and exploration for polymetallic sulphides in the Area,¹ which refers to the schedule of relinquishments of the area allocated to contractors,

Noting that, according to such schedule, the Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer is required to relinquish at least 50 per cent of the original contract area allocated to it by 18 November 2022, being the end of the eighth year from the date of the contract, and at least 75 per cent of the original contract area allocated to it by 18 November 2024, being the end of the tenth year from the date of the contract,

Noting also that the Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer requested to defer the schedule of relinquishment, owing to the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on its operational activities,

Recalling that, pursuant to regulation 27, paragraph 6, of the regulations, the Council may, at the request of the contractor, and on the recommendation of the Commission, in exceptional circumstances, defer the schedule of relinquishment and that such exceptional circumstances shall be determined by the Council and shall include, inter alia, consideration of prevailing economic circumstances or other unforeseen exceptional circumstances arising in connection with the operational activities of the contractor,

¹ [ISBA/16/A/12/Rev.1](#), annex.



Considering that the Legal and Technical Commission has found that the reasons presented by the contractor qualify as “unforeseen exceptional circumstances arising in connection with the operational activities of the contractor”,² and has recommended to defer by one year the schedule of the first relinquishment to 18 November 2023 and the second relinquishment to 18 November 2025,

Acting upon the recommendation of the Commission,

1. *Determines* that the reasons presented by the Institut français de recherche pour l’exploitation de la mer qualify as “unforeseen exceptional circumstances arising in connection with the operational activities of the contractor”;
2. *Defers* the schedule of the first and second relinquishments as recommended by the Commission;³
3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to communicate the present decision to the Institut français de recherche pour l’exploitation de la mer.

*285th meeting
26 July 2022*

² See [ISBA/27/C/16/Add.1](#).

³ *Ibid.*