

Training Workshop organized by the ISA-China Joint Training and Research Center

“Advancing Marine Spatial Planning in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction for Sustainable Deep-Sea Stewardship: Best Practices and Key Insights from Regional Environmental Management Planning Process.”

23-27 April 2025

Qingdao, China

Background

1. In accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (“the Convention”) and 1994 Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the Convention, the International Seabed Authority (ISA), on behalf of the States Parties to the Convention, is mandated to administer the mineral resources in the Area and to control and organize mineral resource activities in the Area for the benefit of mankind. ISA’s mandate also includes taking necessary measures to ensure effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects which may arise from activities in the Area.¹

2. The duty of ISA to design and implement mechanisms to develop capacity for Developing States, as outlined in UNCLOS, is emphasized in the ISA’s Strategic Plan and associated High-Level Action Plan for the period 2019-2023 and extended by the Assembly until 2025.² Strategic Directions 5 and 6 focus on achieving these goals also ensuring full participation of developing States. In 2020 ISA adopted a Capacity Development Strategy that sets the core elements of capacity development programmes, projects and initiatives at ISA.³ This decision was further strengthened by the adoption of the ISA Action Plan for Marine Scientific Research in 2020, where Strategic Research Priority 6 is focused on capacity development.⁴

3. In pursuance of ISA’s mandate related to the protection of the marine environment, the Council, during its seventeenth session in 2012, on the basis of the recommendation of the Legal and Technical Commission (LTC), approved an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ).⁵ The CCZ EMP was reviewed in 2016 and 2021. One of its core measures is the establishment of 13 Areas of Particular Environmental Interest (APEIs) covering a total area of 1.97 million km² of seabed. The APEIs are designed to maintain biodiversity and ecosystem structure and function at the regional level and protect them from future mining activities.

4. Building on the experiences of the CCZ EMP and in line with the decision of the Council,⁶ and ISA’s strategic plan and its high-level action plan for the period 2019–2025⁷, ISA is developing

¹ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, art.145.

² ISBA/28/A/18, para 48

³ ISBA/27/A/5

⁴ ISBA//26/A/4

⁵ See ISBA/17/LTC/7; ISBA/17/C/19 and ISBA/18/C/22.

⁶ ISBA/24/C/8.

⁷ ISBA/24/A/10 and ISBA/25/A/15.

REMPs in other priority areas, including the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, Northwest Pacific and Indian Oceans. Such processes are expert-driven and build on a growing body of scientific knowledge and information about deep-sea environments, ecosystems, and biodiversity. Furthermore, participation from member States and other stakeholders is essential for the development and implementation of the REMPs.

5. In 2019, the first-ever Joint Training and Research Centre was established in Qingdao, China, following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between ISA and the State Oceanic Administration of China. This center provides a new platform for ISA to promote capacity development and the transfer of marine technology to developing States. Since its inception, two training workshops have been organized. The first, held virtually in 2022 focused on mineral resource assessments, deep-sea ecosystem characterization, and DeepData. The second was a two-week, in-person workshop centered on the ISA MSR Action Plan. In total, over 80 participants from developing countries have benefited from these training workshops

6. Against this background, the ISA-China Joint Training and Research Center is planning to hold a training workshop to enhance the scientific understanding and technical capacity for effective participation in future REMP processes, among experts and professionals from developing States, members of ISA.

Objectives and expected outcomes

7. The training workshop will focus on the scientific and technical needs of developing States, members of ISA related to REMPs. The objective of the 5-day workshop will be to provide comprehensive training related to:

- concepts and scientific approaches in spatial planning
- the policy context and procedures in developing and implementing REMPs in the Area
- environmental characteristics and risks from activities in the Area, and their implications for spatial planning; and
- sources of data and methodologies used in REMP processes

8. The training workshop will combine theoretical teaching with detailed REMP development and implementation case studies in the Clarion Clipperton Zone and Mid-Atlantic Ridge. Participants will hear from leading experts on how scientific knowledge helped inform the REMP process, and how to use data and other scientific information in evidence-based planning process. The learning will be enhanced by interaction discussions with the speakers and among the trainees, as well as interactive exercises to stimulate real marine spatial planning cases.

9. On the final day of the workshop, trainees will join the workshop on developing a REMP for the Indian Ocean and interact with ISA contractors and experts conducting exploration and environmental studies in the Indian Ocean. Trainees will also have opportunities to visit research facilities in Qingdao, which is an important hub for ocean research and hosts several universities and research institutes dedicated to marine scientific research and technology development.

10. Trainees are expected to engage in small group exercises in a group of 4-5 people. Each group will be asked to deliver a presentation on a selected topic and share their learning experiences towards the end of the workshop.

11. The workshop will be conducted in English.

12. Through this five-day training workshop, the trainees will be familiarised with the policy

context, the objectives and measures of REMPs, and the process for developing and implementing REMPs. They will understand how environmental and resource characteristics are considered in spatial planning and how scientific data and information can inform the planning process in different contexts. Furthermore, the trainees will have some hands-on experience in conducting data analysis. Overall, the capacity of the trainees to participate in future REMP workshops and processes will be significantly enhanced.

13. As the development of REMPs builds on the best available scientific knowledge, as well as widely accepted scientific approaches and methodologies, it is also expected that the trainees can also apply the learnings from this workshop in other contexts, such as marine spatial planning in national waters or areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Eligibility

14. Trainees will be selected from the nominations received from member States of ISA, academic and research institutions and other entities. Nominees should be nationals from developing States, member of ISA, and proficient in the English language.

15. To maximize the benefits of this five-day training workshop, trainees are expected to:

- Have an education background in one of the following disciplines: marine biology and ecology, oceanography and marine geology. An advanced university degree is preferred. Applicants with a bachelor degree and a minimum of two years of relevant experience will also be considered.
- Technical knowledge and/or practical experiences about area-based management in coastal and marine environments and/or marine spatial planning in a national, regional or international context; and
- Ability to understand environmental data and conduct basic data analysis to inform management or policy discussions.
- A sponsoring organization whose mandate or scope includes a focus on marine spatial planning, whether from a research or policy perspective.

16. Qualified women from developing States are particularly encouraged to apply.

17. A total of 20 trainees will be selected. All selected trainees will receive financial support to cover return flights and daily subsistence allowance.

Draft Programme of work

Day 1

Time (Qingdao, China)	Workshop activities
8:30 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 10:00 <i>Master of Ceremony:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda item 1. Opening of the workshop Opening speech <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Co-Chairs of the training workshop ○ Key-note presentation
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee break, Group photo
10:30 – 12:00 <i>Moderator:</i>	<p>Agenda item 2. Introduction to the workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction: ISA mandate and policy context for REMPs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. Jose Dallo, Director, Office of Environmental Management and Mineral Resources, ISA • Introduction to REMPs in the Area: objectives, measures and procedures for REMP development and implementation • Introduction to course structure and assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Co- Chairs of the training workshop <p><i>Plenary, Q&A for each presentation</i></p>
12:00 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00 – 15:00 <i>Moderator:</i>	<p>Agenda item 3. Concept, tools and methodologies for spatial planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concepts and scientific approaches to spatial planning <p><i>Plenary, Q&A for each presentation</i></p>
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee break
15:30 – 17:00 <i>Moderator:</i>	<p>(Agenda item 3. continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration: data analysis to support spatial planning in the REMP process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Geo-spatial data ○ Other data • Introduction to group exercises: <i>comparison between ISA approaches and spatial planning in national or other contexts: what drivers spatial planning decisions</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduced by Co- Chairs and LTC members

Day 2

Time (Qingdao, China)	Workshop activities
9:00 – 10:30	<p><i>(Agenda item 3. continued)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case study: Clarion-Clipperton Zone Environmental Management Plan<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ecosystems and biodiversity in the CCZ○ Resources and exploration activities in the CCZ○ Potential environmental impacts from mineral activities <p><i>Discussion</i></p>
10:30 – 11:00	<p><i>Coffee break</i></p>
11:00 – 12:00	<p><i>(Agenda item 3. continued)</i></p> <p><i>Discussion</i></p>
12:00 – 13:30	<p><i>Lunch break</i></p>
13.30 – 15:00	<p><i>(Agenda item 3. continued)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case study: Clarion-Clipperton Zone Environmental Management Plan<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Scientific criteria and design of APEI networks○ Habitat modelling in the CCZ○ Dealing with uncertainties <p><i>Discussion</i></p>
15:00 – 15:30	<p><i>Coffee break</i></p>
15.30 – 17:00	<p><i>(Agenda item 3. continued)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Further reading materials and group discussion</i>

Day 3

Time (Qingdao, China)	Workshop activities
9:00 – 10:30	<p><i>(Agenda item 3. continued)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study: Mid-Atlantic Ridge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ecosystems and biodiversity in the MAR ○ Resources and exploration activities in the MAR ○ Potential environmental impacts from mineral activities
10:30 – 12:00	<p><i>(Agenda item 3. Continued)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discussion</i>
12:00 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13.30 – 15:00	<p><i>(Agenda item 3. Continued)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study: Mid-Atlantic Ridge (MAR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scientific criteria and design of sites of particular environmental interest ○ Cumulative impacts and non-spatial management
15:00 – 15:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
15:30 – 17:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Agenda item 4. Area-based management in areas beyond national jurisdiction</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Representatives from ISA and other UN organizations • <i>Discussion</i>

Day 4

Time (Qingdao, China)	Workshop activities
9:00 – 11:30	<p><i>Agenda item 5. Group discussion</i></p> <p><i>Group presentation: comparison between ISA approaches and spatial planning in national or other contexts: what drivers spatial planning decisions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each group will give a presentation for a maximum 20 minutes ○ Each group will receive feedback by Co- Chairs and LTC members
11:30 – 12:30	<i>Lunch break</i>

12.30 – 17:00	<i>Agenda item 6. Visit to the China Deep Sea Research Center or another research facility in Qingdao</i>
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Day 5

Time (Qingdao, China)	Workshop activities
9:00 – 16:00	<i>Agenda item 7. Trainees will join the workshop on the development of the REMP for the area of the Indian Ocean to gain experience in an expert workshop</i>
16.00 – 17:00	<p><i>Agenda item 8. Closing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing speech <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Representative from the ISA • Closing remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Representatives from sponsors and host organizations • Closing by co-Chairs of the training workshop