



Legal and Technical Commission

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Agenda item 9

Consideration of applications for extension of contracts in accordance with the procedures and criteria for the extension of an approved plan of work for exploration pursuant to section 1, paragraph 9, of the annex to the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982

Applications for the extension of approved plans of work for exploration pursuant to section 1, paragraph 9, of the annex to the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982

Note by the secretariat

Addendum

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides an update to the Legal and Technical Commission on the applications for extension of approved plans of work for exploration received from contractors by the secretariat and should be read in conjunction with [ISBA/31/LTC/3/Rev.1](#). The report also contains a proposed process for consideration by the Commission.

II. Status of applications

2. In addition to the applications contained in [ISBA/31/LTC/3/Rev.1](#), the Commission is invited to note that as at 29 May 2026, an additional application for extension of approved plans of work for exploration for polymetallic sulphides has been received from China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association (COMRA). The applicant has requested an extension of five years and



has paid in full the required fee of \$67,000 for processing the application for extension.¹

3. In accordance with paragraph 7 (b) of the annex to decision [ISBA/21/C/19](#), the Secretary-General notified the sponsoring State of the receipt of the application and of the requirement set out in paragraph 3 of said annex. Paragraph 3 provides that, unless otherwise indicated by the sponsoring State or States at the time of making the application for an extension, sponsorship is deemed to continue throughout the extension period and the sponsoring State or States shall continue to assume responsibility in accordance with article 139 and article 153 (4) of the Convention and article 4 (4) of annex III to the Convention. In this connection, by note verbale dated 15 May 2026, China confirmed that the certificate of sponsorship for the China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association would remain in force for the extension period.

III. Process for consideration

4. The process for the consideration of applications for extensions by the Commission is set out in paragraphs 8 to 13 of the annex to decision [ISBA/21/C/19](#). Under those provisions, the Commission is required to consider applications expeditiously and in the order in which they are received.

5. To facilitate consideration of the applications by the Commission, the secretariat is preparing a preliminary evaluation of the data and information provided by the applicant. The evaluation will be made available to the Commission before the start of its meetings. In this connection, information and data, as well as the proposed programme of activities for the requested period of extension, are also being evaluated against the applicable recommendations issued by the Commission.² The format of the preliminary evaluation follows appendix I to decision [ISBA/21/C/19](#). The preliminary evaluation will also identify missing or incomplete data and information, if any.

6. It should be noted that the Commission may request an applicant to submit such additional data and information as may be necessary regarding the implementation of the plan of work and compliance with the standard clauses of the contract, in accordance with paragraph 9 of the annex to decision [ISBA/21/C/19](#).

7. To facilitate the submission of complete and detailed applications for extension of exploration contracts, the Commission prepared a guidance note for contractors on the preparation of an application for extension of exploration contracts. The guidance document was circulated by the secretariat to all contractors on 8 October 2025.

IV. Report and recommendations of the Legal and Technical Commission

8. Pursuant to paragraph 9 of section 1 of the annex to the agreement and paragraph 12 of the annex to decision [ISBA/21/C/19](#), the Commission will recommend approval of the application for extension of the contract for exploration if it considers that the

¹ The application documents were received on 15 May 2026. The payment of the application fee in the amount of \$67,000 was made by COMRA on 13 May 2026 and received by the secretariat on 19 May 2026.

² Recommendations for the guidance of contractors on the content, format and structure of annual reports ([ISBA/21/LTC/15/Rev.1](#)); recommendations for the guidance of contractors for the reporting of actual and direct exploration expenditure ([ISBA/21/LTC/11](#)); recommendations for the guidance of contractors and sponsoring States relating to training programmes under plans of work for exploration ([ISBA/19/LTC/14/Rev.1](#)); and recommendations for the guidance of contractors for the assessment of the possible environmental impacts arising from exploration for marine minerals in the Area ([ISBA/25/LTC/6/Rev.3](#)).

contractor has made efforts in good faith to comply with the requirements of the contract but, for reasons beyond its control, has been unable to complete the preparatory work necessary for proceeding to the exploitation stage or if the prevailing economic circumstances do not justify proceeding to that stage.

9. The Commission is required to submit its report and recommendations on the outstanding applications in [ISBA/31/LTC/3/Rev.1](#) as well as the present application Council at the first possible opportunity, taking into account the schedule of meetings of the Authority.

10. Following its previous practice regarding the consideration of complex legal and technical matters, the Commission may wish to consider dividing itself into working groups that would report to the Commission. The groups could be tasked with a preliminary review of thematic aspects, such as legal, financial, training, technological, environmental or geological aspects.
