



THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY



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The International Seabed Authority (ISA) is an autonomous international organization established under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the 1994 Agreement, which was adopted to bring the regime of the deep seabed closer in line with political and economic realities. ISA is the organization through which States Parties to UNCLOS organize and control all activities related to mineral resources in the

international seabed area (the Area). The Area effectively covers more than 50 per cent of the world's oceans' seabed. The Area and its resources are the common heritage of humankind on behalf of which ISA acts. At the core of its mandate is the need to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from deep-seabed related activities in the Area.



168
Members
(167 Member States +
the European Union)



94
Observers



THE MISSION OF ISA

ISA is the organization through which States Parties to UNCLOS organize and control activities in the Area, which is the common heritage of humankind, to promote the orderly, safe and responsible management and development of the resources

of the Area for the benefit of humankind as a whole, including through the effective protection of the marine environment and contributing to agreed international objectives and principles, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

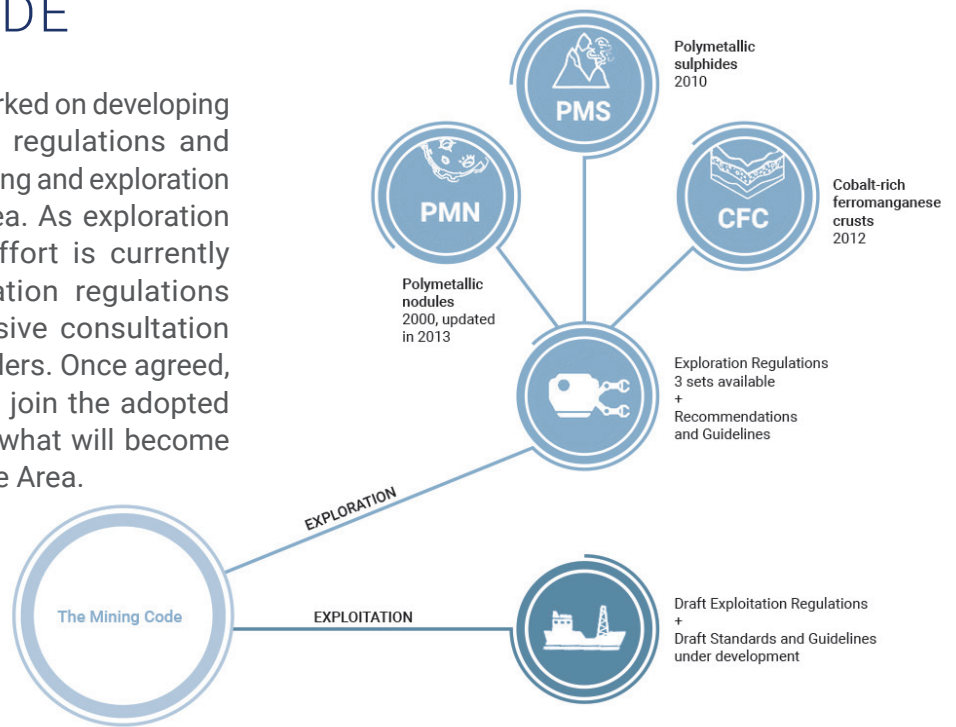
THROUGH ITS MANDATE, ISA CONTRIBUTES TO 12 OF THE 17 SDGs.





THE MINING CODE

Over the last 28 years, ISA has worked on developing a comprehensive set of rules, regulations and procedures dealing with prospecting and exploration for mineral resources in the Area. As exploration activities progress, a major effort is currently underway to develop exploitation regulations through transparent and inclusive consultation and participation of all stakeholders. Once agreed, the exploitation regulations will join the adopted exploration regulations to form what will become a complete “Mining Code” for the Area.

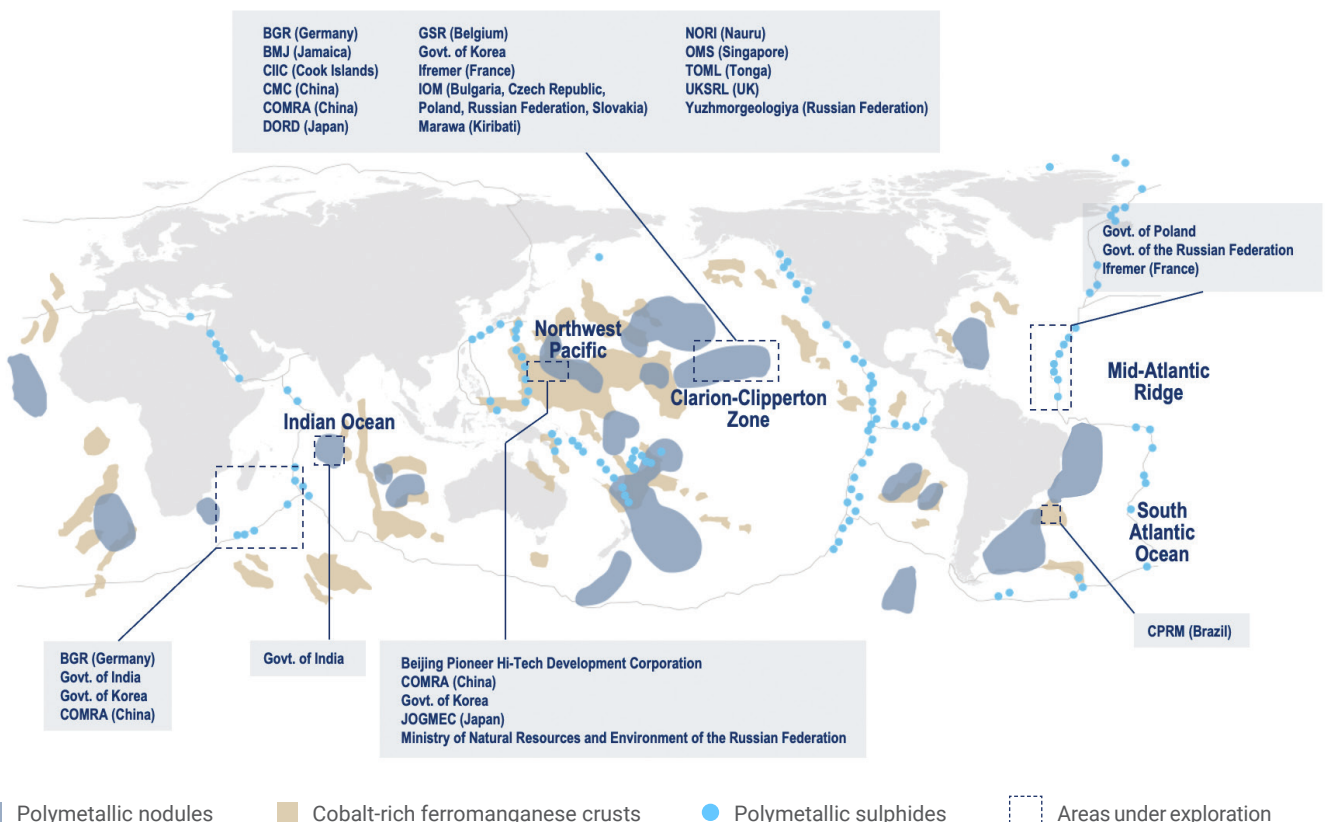


EXPLORATION OF THE AREA

To date, 31 contracts to explore patches of the Area have been granted to contractors sponsored by 21 different States, including ten developing States, six of which are small island developing States.

Contracts are for 15 years and confer exclusive rights to explore for polymetallic nodules, polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts.

The research on living and non-living resources as part of exploration activities in the Area is the main source of data and contemporary knowledge of the deep sea.





MARINE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF OCEAN SCIENCE

ISA has the specific and exclusive responsibility to promote and encourage marine scientific research in the Area. Particular focus is placed on improving understanding of the potential environmental impacts of activities in the Area. In 2020, ISA Members unanimously endorsed the ISA Action Plan for Marine Scientific Research in support of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (ISBA/26/A/17). The Plan identifies six strategic research priorities and specific outputs that will help accelerate marine scientific research in the Area.



Photo: TMC

STRATEGIC RESEARCH PRIORITIES



1
Advancing scientific knowledge and understanding of deep-sea ecosystems, including biodiversity and ecosystems functions, in the Area



2
Standardizing and innovating methodologies for deep-sea biodiversity assessment, including taxonomic identification and description, in the Area



3
Facilitating technology development for activities in the Area, including ocean observation and monitoring



4
Enhancing scientific knowledge & understanding of potential impacts of activities in the Area



5
Promoting dissemination, exchange and sharing of scientific data and deep-sea research outputs and increasing deep-sea literacy



6
Strengthening the deep-sea scientific capacity of ISA Members, particularly developing States



COLLECTING & DISSEMINATING HIGH-QUALITY DEEP-SEA DATA

ISA systematically collects, standardizes and centralizes all data and information related to mineral resources, the deep seabed environment and associated water column in its online database **DeepData**. All environmental data is publicly available. Since 2021, the ISA Secretariat has served as a node of the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS), enhancing global access to the biodiversity data contained in DeepData. ISA also collaborates with the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) to ensure the quality of deep-sea taxonomic information and data through periodic scientific reviews between DeepData and WoRMS' thematic subregister, the World Register of Deep-Sea Species (WoRDSS).



Photo: BGR



EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF DEVELOPING STATES

ISA endeavors to ensure the effective participation of developing States in its work and activities carried out in the Area, particularly through world-leading trainings in deep-sea related fields. The flagship capacity development programmes of ISA include the Contractors' Training Programme, the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research and the Internship Programme. Additional activities have been undertaken through the implementation of Voluntary Commitments to support the implementation of SDG 14 (Life below water) registered at the 2017 United Nations Ocean Conference. These include the Women in Deep-Sea Research project (#OceanAction15467), the Abyssal Initiative for Blue Growth (#OceanAction16538) and the African Deep-Seabed Resources project (#OceanAction16374). More recent initiatives include establishing the ISA-China Joint Training and Research Centre and the ISA Junior Professional Officer programme.

500

people have benefited from these schemes so far

44%

per cent of them are women



Photo: ISA



2021 United Nations Decade
2030 of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development



International Seabed Authority
14 - 20 Port Royal Street, Kingston, Jamaica
isa.org.jm

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Photo: BGR