

framework of UNCLOS shall be

nodule province in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone. This plan, which explicitly adopts the precautionary approach and ecosystem-based management, included the designation of Areas of Particular Environmental Interest (APEIs). They represent the largest network of ABMTs established in ABNJ and are a significant contribution to the objectives as set out in Part III of the FRDT. Other REMPs and related ABMTs in other key regions are under development for other priority areas identified by the Council in the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, Northwest Pacific, Indian Ocean, and South Atlantic Ocean.

ISA's experience with REMPs demonstrates that to establish ABMTs and manage them effectively, there is a need for highly specialized knowledge of the marine environment as well as of the potential impacts that may arise from activities and technologies at local, regional, and global scales. Competent international organizations are certainly best placed to acquire and apply that knowledge. A question then arises as to whether the coordination mechanism envisaged for ABMTs under Article 19 of the FRDT does complement existing collective efforts to establish and manage ABMTs in the Area or it instead duplicates and undermines such efforts.

Environmental impact assessments

It is important to recognize that pursuant to Part XI UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement, ISA has developed a comprehensive regime for EIA for activities in the Area. In the exploration phase, there are substantive [regulations](#) and [recommendations](#) in place related to the assessment of possible environmental impacts, which define the sort of activities that require EIAs, the form and content of such EIAs when required, as well as guidance on baseline studies, monitoring, and reporting, including on the impact on marine biodiversity on the seabed as well as in the water column above it. ISA is also in the process of developing [draft regulations to govern the exploitation of mineral resources in the Area](#), which includes detailed provisions relating to EIA.

ISA has over 25 years of experience in this domain, and it is hence submitted that the current provisions of Part IV of the FRDT are at risk to undermine its existing practices. In particular, consultation of relevant legal instruments or framework or relevant global, regional subregional, or sectoral body foreseen under article 23 (4) FRDT is paramount to avoid duplication and undermining of the EIA procedures.

Capacity-building and transfer of marine technology

[During the past sessions of the IGC](#), ISA highlighted that Parts XI and XIV UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement set out specific requirements to deal with CB&TT. ISA is required to take measures to acquire scientific knowledge and monitor the development of marine technology relevant to the activities in the Area and to ensure capacity-building in conformity with articles 144 and 274 UNCLOS. In this respect, one wonders whether the objectives set out in Part V FRDT, and in particular the content of article 43, partially overlap with those set out for ISA in articles 144 and 274 UNCLOS, section 5 of the 1994 Agreement and

