Polymetallic nodule regulations 2000

- Exploration **ONLY** (essentially directed search for and evaluation of commercially-exploitable deposits)
- Who is entitled to contracts
- How to get a contract
- Terms and conditions of contract
  - 15 years
  - 150,000 km², reducing to 75,000 km²
Contractors

- Mainly States or State entities: COMRA (China), DORD (Japan), IFREMER (France), Korea, Yuzhmoregeologia (Russia), Interoceanmetal Joint Organization, BGR (Germany)
- In Clarion-Clipperton Zone
- India (Indian Ocean basin)
Environmental requirements

- Basic premise: little environmental impact from exploration (list of “no impact” activities from U.S. Hard Minerals Act remains valid)

- Contractor requirements in exploration phase aimed at:
  - Collection of baseline data
  - Monitoring of environmental impact of exploration; and
  - Reporting on above to ISA
  - Supported by ISA guidelines on monitoring and evaluation of environmental impacts
Test mining

- Environmental regulation becomes more stringent at phase of “test mining”
- Contractors’ obligation to set aside “impact reference zones” and “preservation reference zones”
- Query: What is “test mining” – somewhat depends on technology development
Questions and issues

- What are criteria for IRZs and PRZs? Size and characteristics
- Required of each contractor or shared zones?
- Political constraints:
  - Contractors will not want to set aside best mining areas
  - Will wish to delay implementation
  - Will not want to spend money on monitoring and assessment
Considerations

- Make use of opportunities for data collection during exploration phase
- Build on existing regulatory regime
- Consider incentives to contractors to cooperate with scientific community, e.g.
  - Potential for shared IRZs and PRZs
  - Access to data and evaluation