

Colleagues, excellencies,

participants from all over the world,

in the name of the German delegation to the International Seabed Authority I am very happy to welcome you all to today's webinar on test mining. We are very pleased to welcome colleagues from many countries around the globe and we have participants from a wide range of stakeholders with us, such as representatives from Member States and international organisations, participants from civil society and the private sector.

Such high level of interest shows the importance and relevance of today's topic. As you may know, Germany as well as the EU and other states advocate for a very cautious approach regarding a potential future mining of resources in the deep sea: Before we potentially proceed with deep-sea mining, we need to know more. The current state of knowledge about deep ocean ecosystems and the effects of deep-sea mining on the marine environment, biodiversity and humankind is in our view insufficient.

Further and extensive research is essential in order to close existing knowledge gaps. In the meantime, it is imperative to work on a sound framework to effectively regulate potential deep-sea mining. If research should show that deep-sea mining is an option we need clear and strong regulations to govern any exploitation activities. In particular, such regulations must ensure that the marine environment and biodiversity are not seriously harmed.

Test mining, as a prerequisite of exploitation activities, in our view may play an important role in such a cautious approach. In today's webinar we want to explain the rationale behind test mining, its contents, but also present ideas on how to make test mining an integral part of the exploitation framework.

To conclude, I want to thank my colleagues from the German Environment Agency, the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources as well as the Federal Ministry for the Environment for organising today's webinar.

I now look forward to my colleagues' presentations as well as to fruitful discussions.

Thank you!