

Towards IPOS Deep-Sea Pilot Project: Reflections and Next Steps

Towards IPOS is honoured to have been part of this important international scientific consultation on deep-sea mining (DSM), initiated in response to a request from French President Emmanuel Macron. This joint venture, carried out in partnership with Bruno David, was an opportunity to explore best practices for delivering rigorous science to inform policy, providing a working pilot study while IPOS was shaping its services and processes.

An Inclusive and Independent Process

From the outset, our priority was to ensure an open, inclusive, and scientifically rigorous process. The consultation engaged over 40 experts across 28 countries from diverse disciplines, including science, law, economics, and Indigenous knowledge systems. While the initial question carried political connotations, the committee had full autonomy to shape its discussions. Their approach was to neutrally assess whether deep-sea mining is a sustainable option for increasing critical mineral supply. Through their deliberations, they independently reached a consensus on the need for a precautionary approach, which led to a call for a moratorium. Additionally, the Towards IPOS team helped refine the narrative, tone, and language to ensure the content resonated with non-scientific target audiences while maintaining the scientific integrity of the document.

Key Deliverables

The Scientific Proclamation – A robust scientific statement communicating the latest available knowledge on DSM that includes an evidence-based suggestion for policy makers. This document is available in English, French, and Spanish and was signed by all members of the scientific committee.

The Expert Q&A Document – A comprehensive resource answering key questions about DSM, reflecting insights from leading experts and knowledge holders across diverse fields, including science, law, economics, the private sector, art, and Indigenous knowledge.

IPOS's Role and Future Direction

IPOS's role was to facilitate and support an independent expert-driven process, which was an invaluable learning process. The conclusions of the proclamation reflect the consensus of the working group based on scientific analysis and expertise. As a platform dedicated to sustainability, IPOS does not engage in advocacy but remains committed to sharing evidence-based findings transparently.

Moving forward, we will conduct a detailed evaluation of this pilot to refine our methodologies, building on best practices we have developed through extensive benchmarking and engagement, to ensure alignment with our long-term objectives. This includes clarifying how future IPOS services will build on these experiences while maintaining impartiality and credibility.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the French government for their trust and support in this process and thank everyone involved in the creation of these reports. As IPOS continues to evolve, we look forward to engaging with the broader community and strengthening our role as a trusted platform for global ocean sustainability.