



GLOBAL BLUE ECONOMY

Analysis, Developments, and Challenges

Edited by

Md. Nazrul Islam
Steven M. Bartell



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Book

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Chapter

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ABSTRACT

The Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB) is one of the largest and richest polymetallic nodule-bearing areas in the world's oceans. The basin has varied morpho-structures, sediments, and rocks and other materials that are 'seeds' for the growth of nodules through hydrogenetic and diagenetic processes. The abundance of 5kg/m² of nodules on the seafloor, metal grade of 2% (copper, nickel and cobalt), and areas of low slope angles collectively make the CIOB a potential target for nodule mining. For more than four decades India has been carrying out a nodule programme that largely encompassed exploration and collection of baseline data for environmental impact assessment studies. As a contractor with the International Seabed Authority, India has certain obligations to fulfill prior to mining of the nodules.

In this chapter, we provide a gist of the different investigations conducted by India in the CIOB and this is followed by processes developed for metal beneficiation from the nodules, technological progress that is underway to mine the nodules and the economic viability of mining the nodules. There exist a number of reports that pertain to the geological and geophysical characteristics of the CIOB, but the implementation of the blue economy has never been discussed with the seriousness that it deserves. Hence, we address this important concern and the ways by which India could execute the different sectors of blue economy towards a profitable and sustainable mining of the nodules.

