





Trade Winds

Framework for management of seabed minerals

Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority

The Cook Islands is a country of 15 islands that benefits from an extensive marine and ocean jurisdiction with a large exclusive economic zone of almost two million square kilometres. This zone contains valuable marine resources such as black pearls, fisheries, and seabed mining. The surrounding ocean offers new economic prospects through activities associated with the exploration and exploitation of seabed mineral deposits of manganese nodules.

In 2009, the Cook Islands became the first nation to pass legislation – the Seabed Minerals Act – dedicated to the sensible development of its national seabed minerals resources. The key objective is to establish a legal framework for the efficient management of the seabed minerals of the Cook Islands. This Act commenced on March 1, 2013, and currently a world class, sustainable regulatory framework of regulations is being developed for future seabed minerals exploration activities in the Cook Islands.

This framework will include the normal expectations placed on the mining industry, such as making an application for an exploration license, which must include a project proposal with a bona fide and effective work plan and allow for independent environmental and financial due diligence assessments. This process will be administered by the Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority through a transparent and accountable licensing system.

The Seabed Minerals Authority (SMA) was established by the Cook Islands Government in June 2012. The overarching vision of the SMA is to develop and mature the seabed minerals sector of the Cook Islands in order to maximize the benefit of its national seabed minerals resources for the Cook Islands people as well as investment and development partners, while also taking into account social and environmental considerations.

For more information:

www.seabedmineralsauthority.gov.ck