



Seabed Minerals Authority  
Runanga Takere Moana  
COOK ISLANDS

Media Release

## Seabed Minerals Exploration Licensing Process Launched



L-R: Advisory Committee Chair Bishop Tutai Pere, His Excellency Sir Tom Marsters, Prime Minister Mark Brown and Seabed Minerals Commissioner Alex Herman

“Today we realise a vision”. Those were the opening words of the Prime Minister and Responsible Minister for Seabed Minerals, Mark Brown, when he officially launched the licensing process for Exploration yesterday on 22 October 2020.

Brown signed a declaration officially making areas of the Cook Islands seabed available for the application of Exploration Licences. He was joined by the previous Minister for Seabed Minerals, Queens Representative His Excellency Sir Tom Marsters, the Chair of the Seabed Minerals Advisory Committee Bishop Pere, and Seabed Minerals Commissioner Alex Herman.

Government had previously put a hold on Exploration licensing to ensure that a sound legal framework and licensing process was put in place. A suite of seabed minerals (**SBM**) legislation was passed in 2019 and 2020 to strengthen the legal framework underpinning SBM activities. An Advisory Committee representing community interests was established this established. Further, the licensing process for managing applications for Exploration was developed.



“This licensing process did not spring up overnight, it is the culmination of years of planning and preparation” Brown said. “I am confident that we have a rigorous and robust process in place to ensure that only the best, most suitable applicants are successful. The licensing process we have developed sets high expectations for any potential contractors wishing to operate in our waters, with environmental sustainability at the forefront.”

The licensing launch was well attended by members of parliament, aronga mana and religious leaders, dignitaries, civil society, government officials as well as members of the public.



Sir Marsters reflected on the history of the interest in the Cook Islands seabed minerals and the pioneers involved in exploring Cook Islands waters. He recalled the first Seabed Minerals legislation passed in Parliament in 2009 which received unanimous support from the house, and urged leaders to again come together and get behind progressing the seabed minerals sector.





Herman shared the key areas of focus for the Seabed Minerals Authority (**Authority**), in particular that of communication and engagement with the Cook Islands people. “Serving the interests of our people is a core value for the Authority and Government” said Herman.

Pere gave an uplifting and godly message to the audience. He encouraged government and the Cook Islands people to be lead by faith in the Almighty God, in the development of the SBM sector, and not be afraid of prosperity and harnessing the SBM resources sitting upon the ocean floor.

The launch was also an opportunity for the Authority to share some of its work and efforts to communicate and engage better with the Cook Islands public and stakeholders. This included videos, publications and Factsheets on SBM.

In closing, Brown said: “At a time when the world is searching for sustainable solutions to the challenges of today and tomorrow, our Moana Nui a Kiva provides us with possible solutions. So let us appreciate the significance of today, and what a defining moment it is for the Cook Islands and our people.”



Enquiries relating to this release may be directed to [dede.mingi@cookislands.gov.ck](mailto:dede.mingi@cookislands.gov.ck).

More on the licensing launch, including speeches, photos and videos can be found here: [www.sbma.gov.ck/tender-launch](http://www.sbma.gov.ck/tender-launch)



Back L-R: Dede Mingi, Eileen Macquarie, Caroline Tiria, Anna Glassie, Rima Browne  
Front L-R: Chris Brown, Alex Herman, Prime Minister Mark Brown

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