



Seabed Minerals Authority
Runanga Takere Moana
COOK ISLANDS

NEWSLETTER

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Kia Orana!

Welcome to the Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority's quarterly online newsletter for September 2022, sharing relevant Seabed Minerals (**SBM**) updates and information. In this issue we focus on recent capacity development initiatives.

Who are we?

The Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority (**Authority**) is the key regulator of seabed minerals activities under Cook Islands jurisdiction. The Authority administers the Seabed Minerals Act 2019 (**Act**) on behalf of the Cook Islands Government.

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Welcome from our Senior Technical Officer

Kia Orana and Welcome!

Given the focus of this newsletter on capacity development, I am pleased to share on my experience in my role as a Senior Technical Officer at the Authority. The past year has been a time of great learning and development, and I've had the opportunity to contribute to several recent scientific advancements.

To begin with, I assisted in the interpretation and drawing of the Cook Islands' first-ever full resolution seabed geomorphology map. It is satisfying to fully comprehend and communicate to others the complexity and diversity of our seabed. Additionally, I was able to submit this map to a global peer-reviewed journal, and will find out soon if it will be approved and published.



The management of the seabed habitat within our Marae Moana is another project I am involved in. Making decisions about key drivers and proposing management zones is really exciting. The responses from a variety of internal and external stakeholders, including some environmental experts, have been very positive and encouraging.

I have also played a key role in updating the Cook Islands' nodules' mineral resource estimation. In terms of information quality and interpretation, we have been able to make some significant new contributions, so we anticipate that this will be the most accurate resource estimate to date. I will be giving a presentation on this work at an international SBM conference in October.

Last, but certainly not least, I had my first experience as an Authority Inspector on board the *Seasurveyor* monitoring the recent exploration expedition carried out by CIC. This expedition leg was the first to venture in the southern Cook Islands region for more than 30 years.

The next 12 months looks to be just as busy as the last.

The gathering and compiling of all the new exploration data that will result from the planned exploration work will be a crucial task, and I look forward to playing my part in ensuring that the data is secure and managed properly.

Rima Browne
Senior Technical Officer

Recent Capacity Development Initiatives

Sea Survival training



Participants diving headfirst into their ocean survival drills



Colin Mailer from Westport Deep Sea Fishing School overseeing the drills

As part of the Authority's monitoring and compliance programme, inspectors are required to undertake sea survival training. This involves two courses on personal safety and social responsibilities, and also on personal survival skills, which focuses on surviving at sea in the event of abandoning ship. The practical component of the training includes learning how to put on a life jacket and survival suit; how to safely jump into the water; boarding a life raft, and tending to unconscious team members.

Usually sea survival training takes place overseas through training institutes that are approved by the International Maritime Organisation and through the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping (STCW Convention). The Westport Deepsea Fishing School based in New Zealand agreed to send an instructor to Rarotonga to conduct training for the Authority earlier this month.

This enabled the Authority to invite other government agencies as well as companies involved in the SBM industry to participate in the training. Overall 21 people from the Authority, National Environment Service, Ministry of Marine Resources, Ministry of Transport, Police Maritime Department, and CIC were certified.

Safety onboard marine vessels is extremely critical in the ocean sector. Given the success of this first Rarotonga-based training and the interest of other organisations and individuals to also become certified, the Authority will be organising another course in the future.



Participants conducted moderately challenging maritime survival training in Avatiu Harbour

G-REG Programme

Staff from the Authority, National Environment Service, and the Ministry of Transport recently completed a Government Regulatory Practice Initiative (G-REG) Level 3 Core Knowledge course. The Core Knowledge course helped participants understand regulatory concepts and models, as well as topics like managing information, records, and evidence.

The G-REG Programme is a government initiative in New Zealand that aims to improve regulatory practise, regulatory leadership, regulatory culture, and workforce capability.

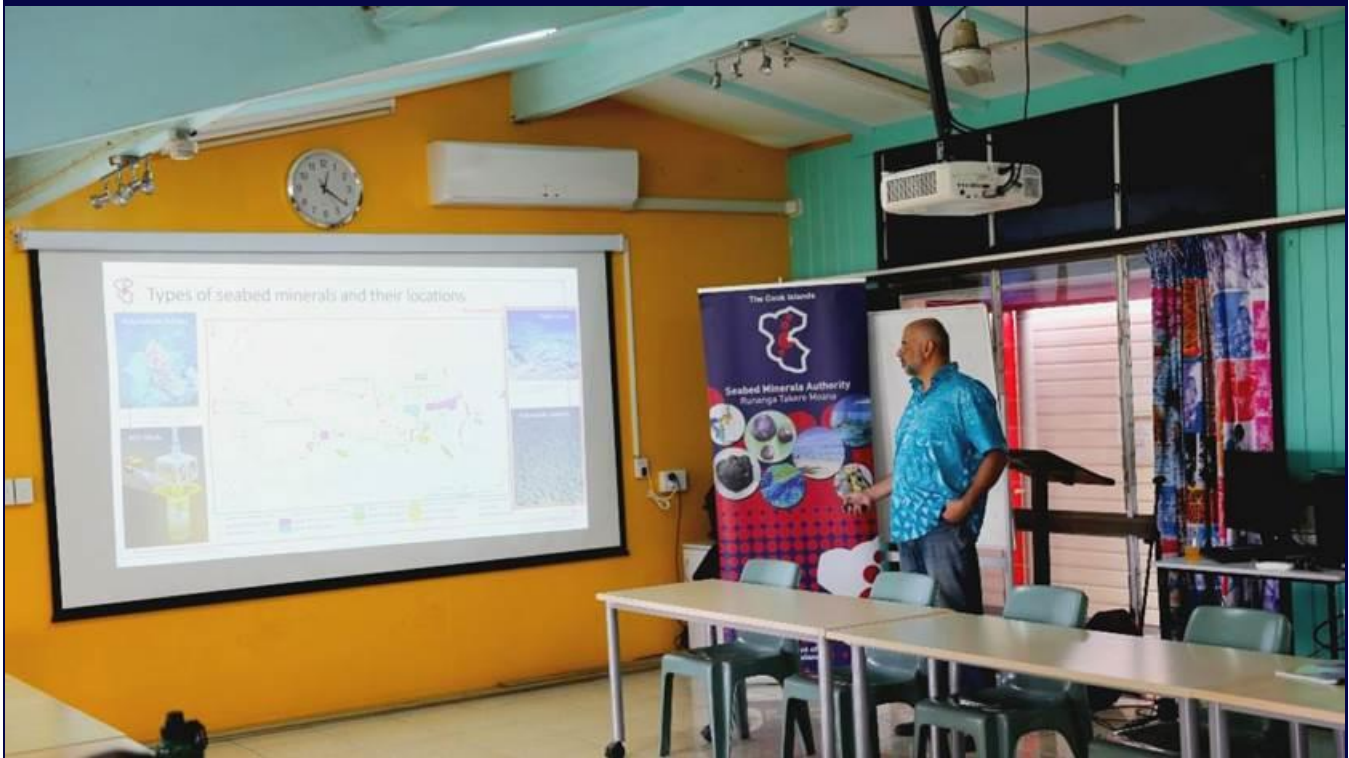
Although the G-REG programme is designed for New Zealand, the concepts involved can be applied by other regulatory agencies, such as the Cook Islands.

The feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive. Here is feedback from some participants:

- **Rima Browne, Authority** – *“Great introductory course which has great real life examples. You learn about the role of being a regulator and how the Authority as a regulator fits into the bigger picture.”*
- **Te-ara Henderson, Authority** – *“The course is great for entry level knowledge on the role of regulatory agencies. It gave us an idea of what the regulatory environment and standard of work is like in New Zealand. Although a little different to the Cook Islands it is very relatable.”*
- **Jessie Nicholson, National Environment Service** – *“It explained the roles that regulators should be playing and how to go about it. As someone who had recently started working in the compliance and advisory division, this provided great insights on how I should perform to ensure good work ethic.”*
- **Roselyn Strickland, National Environment Service** – *“The course was extremely useful to my line of work as part of a regulatory organisation because the contexts and examples made references throughout the entire course were relatable to what we do.”*
- **Teariki Tearetoa, National Environment Service** – *“Very detailed and specific information relevant to our compliance work here in the Cook Islands.”*

Given the success of the Core Knowledge course, the Authority has enrolled staff in advanced G-REG courses.

Technical SBM seminars



Technical Director John Parianos leading a 2 day technical SBM seminar at USP, Rarotonga.

The Authority has developed a series of technical SBM seminars which covers topics such as SBM geology, ecology, engineering, project management, and even historical analysis. The seminars are intended to ensure that participants broaden their understanding of SBM, which is a complex and multifaceted field.

The seminars are primarily being delivered to government officials involved in the SBM sector to ensure that they have a baseline knowledge of SBM issues, and can engage more effectively in their respective roles. In the future, the Authority will look towards delivering seminars for the public.



Government officials absorbing basic knowledge of SBM issues at USP, Rarotonga

ISA Internship in Jamaica

Technical Officer Tanga Morris has recently departed to undertake a two month internship with the International Seabed Authority (ISA) in Kingston, Jamaica.

The ISA is the international organisation responsible for regulating and managing SBM resources beyond national jurisdiction for the benefit of mankind as a whole.

The ISA internship programme serves two purposes: **(a)** it provides a framework through which government officials from various academic backgrounds can gain exposure and experience with the work functions of the ISA; and **(b)** it allows the ISA to benefit from the assistance of



government officials specialised in various skills within the scope of the internship activities.

Tanga will be based in the Office of Environmental Management and Mineral Resources. Her internship will focus on biological data within the wider field of environmental and ocean science management.

Her work will involve compiling, synthesising and mapping biological datasets.

Seabed minerals is still a new area for Tanga, and she hopes that the ISA internship will allow her to learn and absorb as much as she can: "It will be a long time away from home in a foreign country, but it is a challenge I am willing to accept. The nerves are starting to kick in, but I'm more excited to meet new people and learn everything I can."

We wish her the best of luck during her two months away from home.

Intern profile: Inano Harmon



Inano has been a full-time intern with the Authority since the beginning of 2022. Inano decided to take a gap year after finishing her NCEA Level 3 to gain work experience before continuing her studies at university.

Inano has a strong interest in marine science and is excited with the Cook Islands' development of its SBM sector, which is why she applied for an internship at the Authority.

Inano works in the Technical Division. She assists and supports others by reviewing data, working on maps and graphs, and conducting online research. Inano is also working on her own project on the

Antarctic Bottom Water Current and investigating how it affects the formation of nodules in the Cook Islands.

Inano has also participated in a number of SBM courses, seminars, and workshops. She recently completed the sea survival training course, sharing "I enjoyed the course and especially the practical portion. It was pretty cool to see the flares being demonstrated live."

Learning all of the new technical terms was one of the challenges she faced. Understanding these technical terms helped her to broaden her understanding of marine science. Inano enjoys interacting with scientists and other Authority staff.

Overall, Inano has enjoyed his time working with the Authority. "It's a warm, welcoming environment, and teamwork is one of the main focuses," she says.

Inano intends to study abroad in New Zealand next year. Her first goal is to obtain a Bachelor of Science in Marine Science in order to become a marine biologist.

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