



Kia Orana!

Welcome to the Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority's (**SBMA**) quarterly online newsletter, sharing relevant Seabed Minerals (**SBM**) updates and information.

Who are we?

The Cook Islands Seabed Minerals 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.

In this issue:

- **Kia Orana from SBMA**
- **Policy & Regulatory Oversight**
 - Tranche 1 Standards and Guidelines - Public consultation Reminder
 - Inspectors onboard Anuanua Moana
- **Knowledge Management**
 - First level seabed habitat management zones established
 - New mineral resource estimate complete
 - Seafloor mapping around Ngaputoru
 - Cook Islands participate in World Oceans Assessment
- **Partnerships & Co-operations**
 - SBMA participates at Tereora College's STEM Careers Day
 - World Oceans Day 2023
 - Careers Expo 2023
 - Cook Islands present at PECC Conference in New Caledonia
 - Cook Islands participate in Training and Capacity Development workshop in Tonga
- **Corporate Support**
 - Join our Team!
- **Other news**
 - Anuanua Moana Vessel providing inter island services for the Pa Enea

Kia Orana from SBMA

We have had another productive quarter.

Exploration Licence Holder Moana Minerals continued their exploration expeditions, with the National Environment Service (**NES**) and SBMA collaborating on monitoring their activities to ensure they were in compliance with our laws.

Regarding NES, congratulations are in order for the passage of their Environment (Seabed Minerals Activities) Regulations 2023. This essential work also paved the way for SBMA and NES to release a tranche of the Standards and Guidelines for public consultation.

We have also been active on the technical front, completing a new estimation of mineral resources and developing Level 1 seabed habitat management zones (HMZ) as part of our contribution to the Marae Moana marine spatial plan.

Engaging with Cook Islands youths regarding their prospective futures has also been a feature of this quarter. SBMA participated in both the Careers Expo 2023 and STEM Week, an annual event that promotes education and employment in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

The seabed minerals industry offers new and interesting career opportunities for our young people, and it is important that we raised awareness on these opportunities and how they can pursue them.

Kia Manuia



Policy and Regulatory Oversight

Tranche 1 Standards and Guidelines Public Consultation Reminder

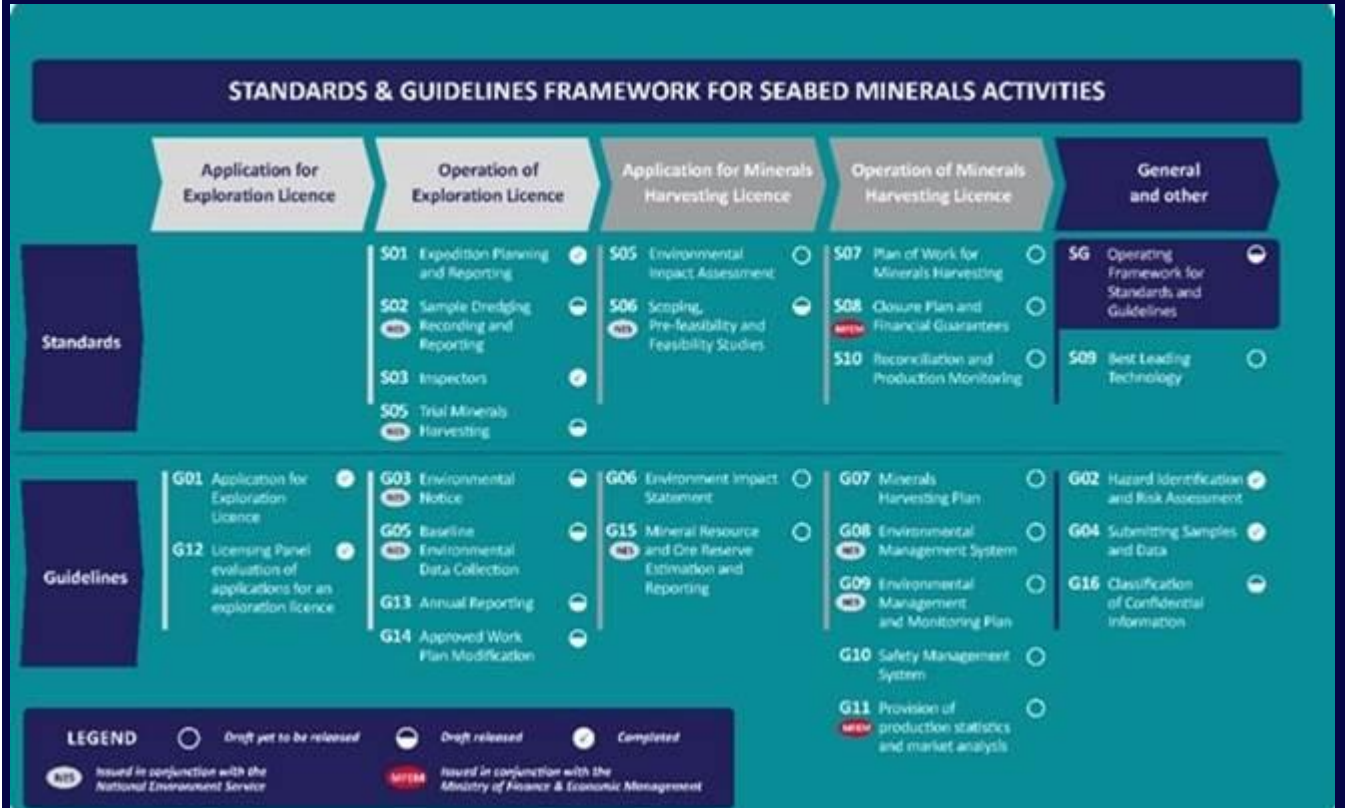
On 15 June 2023, SBMA and NES released Tranche 1 of the Standards and Guidelines (**S&Gs**) for public consultation. The period for providing comments on the S&Gs closes on 14 July.

Standards and Guidelines assist regulators, including SBMA and NES, to monitor Licence Holder performance and to ensure that they comply with the terms and conditions of their Licence, environmental approvals, and relevant Cook Islands laws.

Standards set out requirements that must be met and are legally binding on a Licence Holder. Guidelines are issued to assist Licence Holders with meeting their regulatory requirements.

Tranche 1 S&Gs are primarily aimed at exploration activities and will replace the interim S&Gs currently in place. Tranche 2 S&Gs are currently being developed and will cover trial minerals harvesting activities and the studies required.

More information about the S&Gs and how to participate in the consultation process can be found [here](#).



Inspectors aboard Anuanua Moana



A major step forward for SBMA and NES's collaboration on monitoring, compliance and enforcement took place on board Anuanua Moana for Moana Minerals' recent exploration voyages. For the first time,

both SBMA and NES placed inspectors on board a vessel with Knowledge Management Director Dr. John Parianos and NES officials Hugh Henry and Junior Tapoki serving as licensed SBMA Inspectors.

Henry accompanied Parianos on the first leg of the expedition, while Tapoki provided his expertise on the second leg. The collaboration highlighted the commitment of both NES and SBMA to the sustainable management of seabed resources while providing for mutual education and improvements. Read more [here](#).

Knowledge Management

First level seabed habitat management zones established

Level 1 seabed Habitat Management Zones allow for the effective management of our Cook Islands seabed. As part of the Marae Moana Spatial plan it also enables informed development decisions to be made.

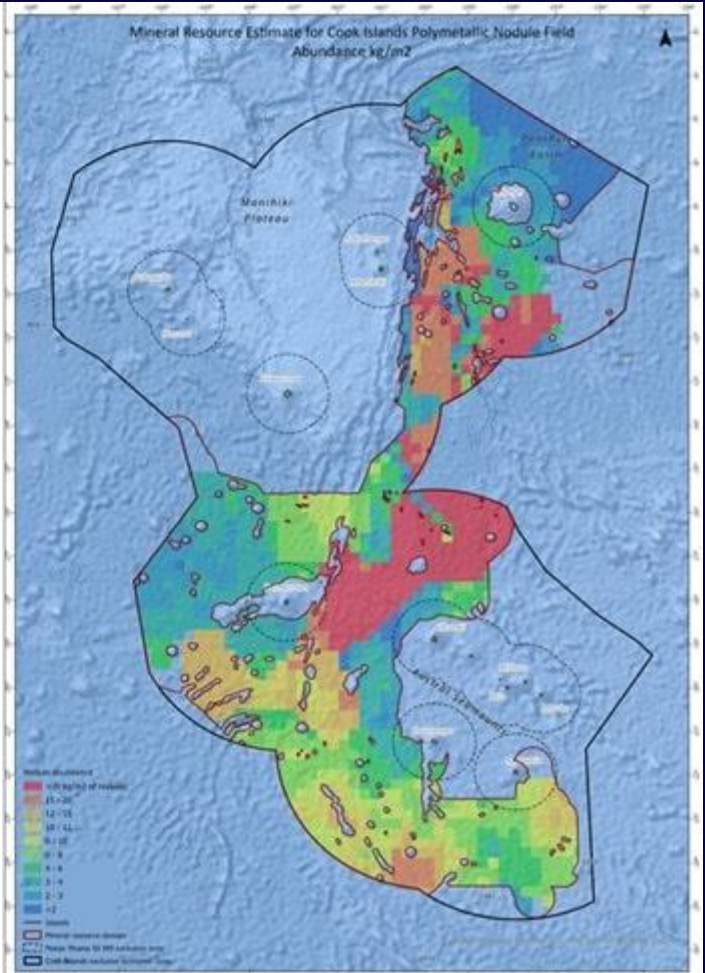
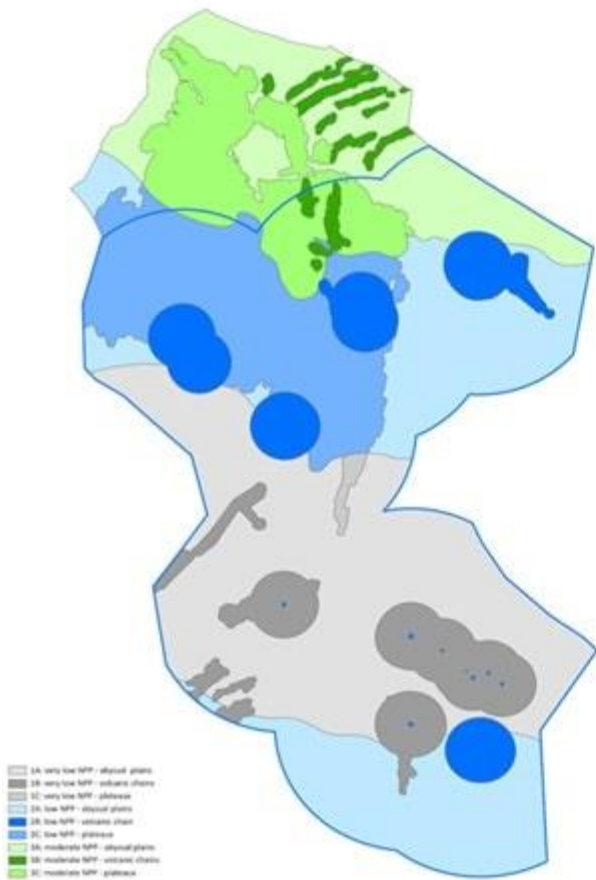
Find out more on the HMZs [here](#).

New mineral resource estimate completed

Check out the new mineral resource estimate (MRE) for the Cook Islands polymetallic nodule field. We have an estimate of nearly 7 billion tonnes of nodules in our waters.

Find out more about the MRE [here](#).

Level 1 Seabed Habitat Management Zones

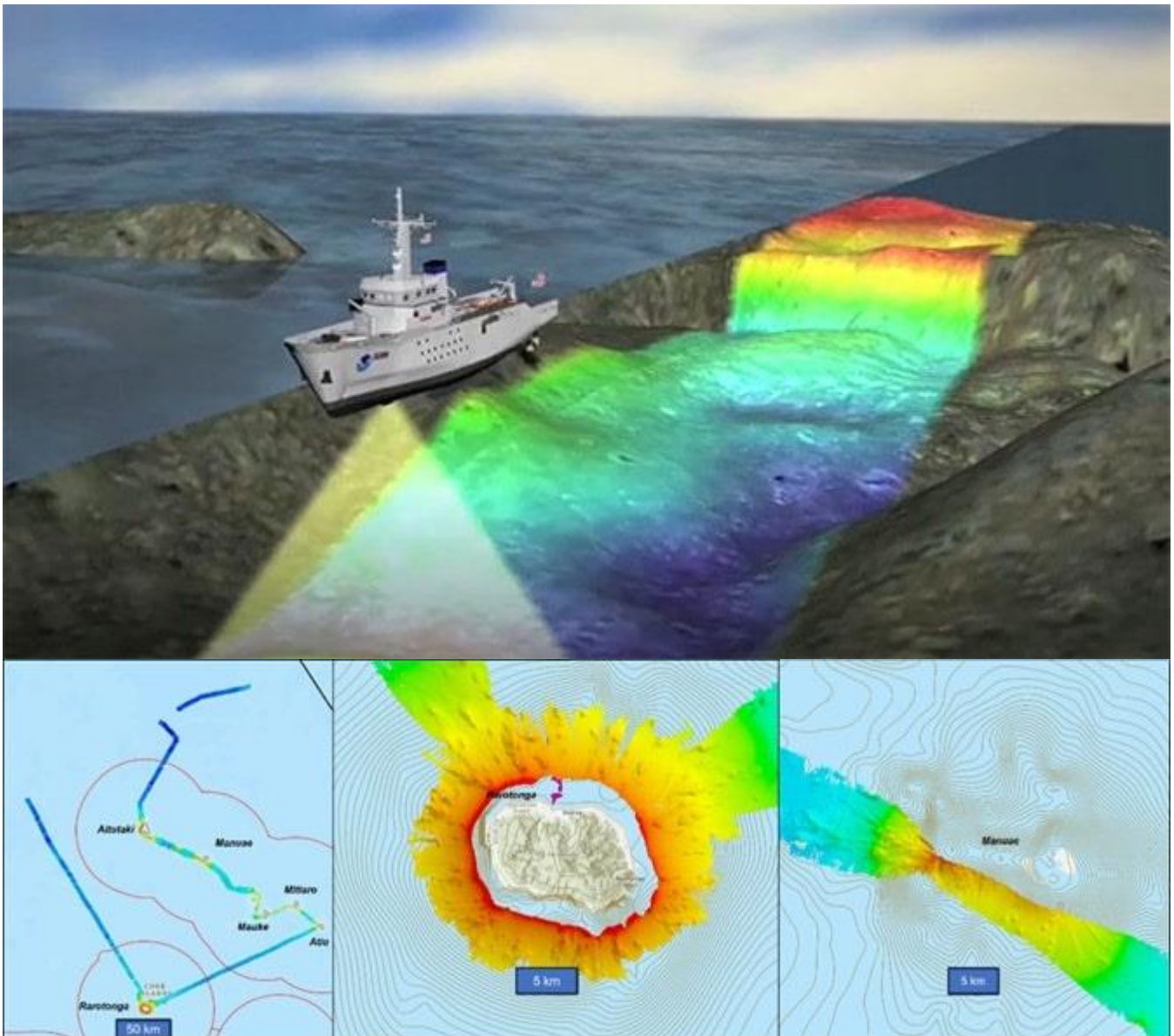


Seafloor mapping around Ngaputoru

To encourage and promote environmental research in Cook Islands waters SBMA recently secured a 12 month umbrella research permit for small environmental programmes from the National Research Council (**NRC**).

The umbrella permit comes with a series of conditions, primarily that:

- Work is restricted to environmental research
- Programmes cannot be longer than 30 days. Requests for longer term programs still go to NRC
- All data goes into the public domain
- Cook Islands will retain ownership of samples and first right to recover them when research is complete
- SBMA will submit an annual report to the NRC at the end of the 12 months



So far in 2023 SBMA have issued two letters of permission for seabed surveying. This included mapping of areas around Nga-pu-toru as well as transit paths to and from seabed minerals exploration licence areas.

The Cook Islands is 99.99% ocean and less than 25% of our ocean has been surveyed using multibeam technology. This technology offers higher resolution of data which is critical for effective management and use of our marine space.

Cook Islands participate in World Oceans Assessment



Senior Knowledge Management Officer, Rima Browne was in Jamaica for the first part of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (WOA).

The WOA reviews the environmental, economic and social aspects of the state of the world's oceans, both current and foreseeable.

Browne was invited along with other experts to contribute to the WOA. Her involvement was a great opportunity to ensure the perspectives and experiences of the South Pacific were raised as part of the review for the next WOA cycle.

“It was exciting to be part of the process and to contribute towards the next WOA,” said Browne, “Networking with academics and scientists from around the world was also beneficial.”

Partnerships and Cooperation

SBMA participates at Tereora College's STEM Careers Day



STEM careers are in great demand, and this event gives students the chance to learn about some of the related careers right here in the Cook Islands. Tereora College welcomed SBMA along with 4 other STEM related agencies to inspire and connect with their students.

Our SBMA booth showcased different types of marine minerals including polymetallic nodules collected from Cook Islands waters. Also on display was a hologram of marine animals which was a hit with the students. Staff of SBMA were also on hand to answer questions about potential careers in the Cook Islands SBM sector.

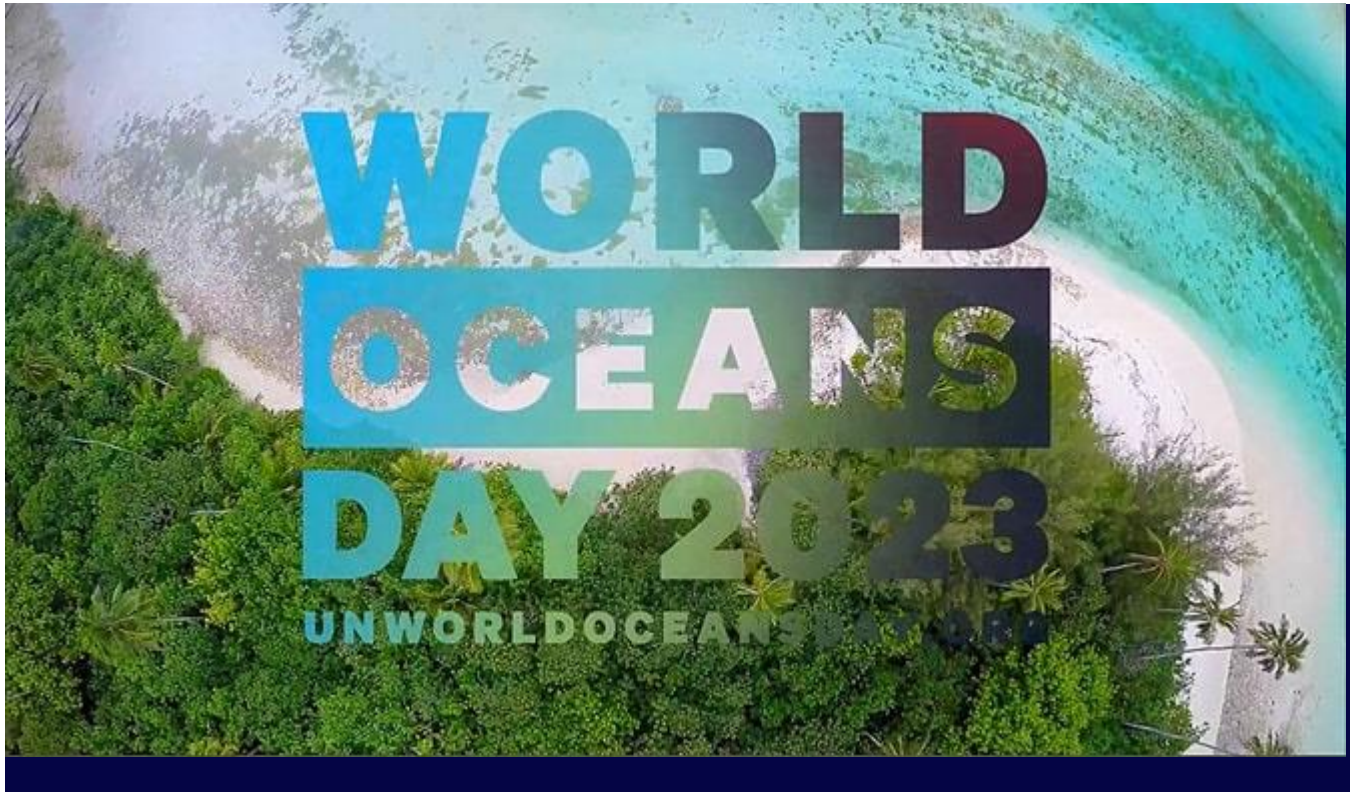
"We're excited to be part of STEM Day and to share the possibilities in the SBM sector," said Knowledge Management Officer Tanga Morris "We hope that this event will inspire the next generation to pursue STEM careers in the Cook Islands to help build a more prosperous and sustainable future for our country."

For more click [here](#).

World Oceans Day 2023

"The tides are changing" was this year's theme for World Oceans Day. It encouraged us to do our part to make a positive difference for our oceans. It reminded us that even small changes can have a big impact.

Let's do our part for our oceans!



Careers Expo 2023

On 21 June, SBMA took part in the Careers Expo 2023 and connected with the next generation of leaders to showcase careers in the seabed minerals sector. Interactive displays and quizzes sparked students' curiosity about future employment and internship opportunities.

Our goal was to provide young people with the knowledge and skills necessary to discover and learn about our Marae Moana. SBMA is proud to have participated in Careers Day once again because of the positive impact it has on young people and their ability to build a foundation for a successful future.

For more click [here](#).



Cook Islands present at PECC Conference in New Caledonia

Commissioner Alex Herman and Knowledge Management Director John Parianos were invited speakers at a seabed minerals focused workshop hosted by Pacific Economic Cooperation Council in Noumea.

A wide range of views were presented from Pacific and European stakeholders, and we were able to share on the Cook Islands precautionary approach to developing the SBM sector, through three presentations on social, environmental and mineral resources.



SBMA also took advantage of the visit to: meet and compare experiences with our sister organisation in New Caledonia DIMENC; present on our spatial management plan for the seabed with experts from the Pacific Community; and to visit one of the large metallurgical processing plants located in the country.

Cook Islands participate in Regional Training and Capacity Development workshop in Tonga



Alex Herman and NES Director Halatoa Fua participated in the fifth and final workshop of the Abyssal Initiative for Blue Growth Project which took place from 20-23 June 2023 in the Kingdom of Tonga. The workshop theme was on “Equitable sharing of benefits from activities in the Area.”

Prime Minister Mark Brown provided opening remarks virtually, stating that “the resources of the Area belong to all of humanity. Thus, it is paramount that we establish and implement a robust regime to ensure the equitable and non-discriminatory sharing of benefits derived from seabed activities – for the benefit of current and future generations.”

Prime Minister Brown emphasised that “UNCLOS requires particular consideration to be given to the interests and needs of developing States and of peoples who have not attained full independence or other self-governing status – so that no nation or community is left behind. Given this, it is critical that Pacific SIDS ensure our voices are heard.”

Some of the topics covered in the workshop included the various approaches to equitable sharing criteria and the alternative forms of equitable distribution such as the Seabed Sustainability Fund.

The workshop was also an opportunity to further discuss and update the critical capacity development needs of Pacific SIDS sponsoring activities in the Area.

Click for more on the [Abyssal Initiative Project](#), Introductory Remarks [speech](#) and [video](#), High-Level Panel [speech](#) and [video](#).

Corporate Support

Join our Team!!!



We are looking for capable and passionate people to help support the responsible and sustainable development of our Cook Islands SBM sector.

We have opportunities for the following positions:

- **Partnerships Director**
- **Intern**
- **Technical Advisor**

Visit our [Vacancies](#) to learn more and browse job descriptions.

Other news

Anuanua Moana Vessel providing inter island services for the Pa Enuā

The Anuanua Moana is a research vessel owned by Kiva Marine Minerals. While its main purpose is to carry out scientific expeditions it is also available on charter for shipping and passenger services within the Cook Islands. In recent times the vessel has been utilised to respond to urgent calls for delivery of goods to the Pa Enuā.

The vessel can cater for a wide range of cargo including perishable goods, medical supplies, building materials, educational resources, etc. The ship's design and storage arrangements ensure the safe transportation of sensitive cargo.



For more information on this service please contact Hans Smit (President & Chief Executive Officer of Moana Minerals) on phone: +682 87 955 or email: hsmit@omlus.com

Queries on this Newsletter may be directed to Dede Mingi: dede.mingi@cookislands.gov.ck

SEABED MINERALS AUTHORITY - Runanga Takere Moana | 29193 | sbma.gov.ck



[Unsubscribe {recipient's email}](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by sbma@cookislands.gov.ck