



# **CIC Limited’s Local Engagement, Training, and Business Development Plan (LDP) for Cook Islands 2020/2021 Seabed Minerals Tender**

**8 November 2021**

***“Responsible Exploration of Seabed Resources of the Cook Islands”***

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# 1. Local Engagement, Training and Business Development Plan

## 1.1 Employment, Training and Capacity Building of the Cook Islands' Community

CIC's Local Engagement, Training, and Business Development Plan (LDP) will lead to a variety of employment, training, and capacity-building opportunities for Cook Islanders. This will assist in developing the Cook Islands' seabed mineral exploration sector by establishing new technical, administrative, and support services that will be able to cater to future maritime and research operations. If exploration and research activities determine that nodule harvesting will not create serious harm to the environment, creation of these services will be important in the development of one of the world's first deep-sea mineral harvesting programmes and create opportunities for future generations of Cook Islanders to pursue new technical career paths related to ocean exploration and scientific studies.

There will also be considerable direct benefits to the Cook Islands' local business economy. While it is recognised that a significant part of the economic activity conducted from the larger ship during exploration will focus on port stops in Pago Pago (American Samoa) or other ports with the required facilities, CIC will give priority to staffing the research team with Cook Islanders who either have appropriate previous experience or would qualify as trainees. CIC will also utilise local port and support facilities whenever possible.

It is expected that early-stage exploration and evaluation through to full-scale harvesting (if approved) will require progressively greater levels of ship-to-shore support, utilisation of local expertise and modern communications techniques and technologies, while being sensitive to local and community concerns. Examples of potential local support in the exploration phase include provisioning of the ship's operations with fuel, food and supplies from local businesses, emergency and standby support vessels and calling on islands in the event of an emergency. Local chartering services could also benefit, as will port facilities and operators.

When the smaller research vessel arrives for its intended multi-year mission, it will initially be staffed primarily from outside the Cook Islands by experienced DP/research vessel crew, but it will need to be supported by facilities, suppliers and other resources from the Cook Islands. As the project progresses and Cook Islanders' trainees have gone through training programmes and are able to assume more responsibilities for running this vessel, it is anticipated that the crew will eventually be made up primarily of qualified local Cook Islanders' seamen and officers whom CIC will assist in obtaining appropriate licencing and certification for running the vessel.

It is also expected that many of the planned environmental monitoring and support programmes will ideally include local hiring of Cook Islanders who have exceptional local knowledge relating to the waters and sea life around the Cook Islands. There will likely be a need for the development of onshore testing and laboratory facilities for biological, geological, and other sampling analysis and a programme established to train locals for a variety of technical positions which will be needed for onshore logistics and/or testing facilities.

The combination of these requirements will create both professional and non-professional job opportunities.

These expected direct benefits will be widely distributed throughout the Cook Islands, with the intent to create new direct employment and business opportunities for a wide range of activities. This will be matched with extensive community outreach efforts, both on the more populous islands (Rarotonga and Aitutaki), as well as on the Pa Enea (outer islands), where a combination of meetings, technical workshops, town halls, web-based communications, ship visits and seminars can ensure that everyone has the necessary information and understanding of the project to make their own informed opinions.

Over time, if harvesting is licenced and Cook Islanders desire to be involved in more of the nodule harvesting support activities, there will be opportunities for local sourcing of many different types of resources. Nevertheless, it is recognised that it will be important to avoid placing too much pressure on the country's current facilities, taking into account the opinions of the public and government as to how activities could cause detrimental effects to the Cook Islands' cultural or natural resources.

Even in the early evaluation days where on-shore activities will be relatively modest, CIC intends to create on-shore and at-sea development, apprenticeship and educational opportunities to build local competencies so Cook Islanders can learn the skills for the future roles in the seabed minerals sector.

As deep-ocean harvesting technology gains prominence and global interest, it will raise awareness of the implications of future seabed mineral harvesting technology as well as the potential for a new critical metals supply needed for developing electric vehicles and batteries for renewable energy sources. This may also create new career opportunities for Cook Islanders both at home and abroad.

It is expected that the final feasibility studies for the decision to proceed to harvest will review these direct and indirect benefits in more detail. Final feasibility studies will include projections for new employment in addition to mapping of second and third order economic benefits. There will be close engagement with the Cook Islands' Government and local stakeholders so that final planning incorporates and meets local expectations.

CIC recognises the importance of the Cook Islands' National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) 2016-2020 and intends to assist the Cook Islands in achieving as many of their goals outlined in this plan as possible by developing the seabed mineral sector.

The following are some of the ways CIC sees its assistance in the expansion of the Cook Islands' seabed minerals sector potentially contributing toward various goals presented in the Cook Islands' NSDP:

**Table 1.1: CIC Contributions toward the Cook Islands NSDP 2016-2020**

Strategic Goal	How CIC can contribute
1. Improve welfare, reduce inequality and economic hardship.	If exploration successfully leads to the discovery of an economically and environmentally viable deposit and is brought to production, the Cook Islands will be able to diversify its economic portfolio, which has the potential to significantly raise the Cook Islands' economic resilience and bring about a new source of revenue.
2. Expand economic opportunities, improve economic resilience and productive employment to ensure decent work for all.	Throughout both exploration and harvesting phases, CIC will make a variety of new technical work opportunities and training available to Cook Islanders. The skills garnered from these technical positions will be applicable to a variety of jobs within and outside of the seabed minerals sector.
3. Promote sustainable practises and effectively manage solid and hazardous waste.	CIC is committed to environmentally and socially responsible practises and will ensure it will follow all applicable waste standards and regulations. This includes, but is not limited to, international standards and regulations such as The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).
4. Sustainable management of water and sanitation.	Neither exploration nor harvesting would impact freshwater supplies or sanitation for the Cook Islands. After exploration, should the project proceed to harvesting, revenues from harvesting could be directed to develop and/or augment infrastructure relating to water supply and sanitation.
5. Build resilient infrastructure.	Neither exploration nor harvesting would impact current infrastructure in the Cook Islands. After exploration, should the project proceed to harvesting, revenues from harvesting could be directed to develop and/or reinforce infrastructure to be more resilient.
6. Improve access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, clean energy and transport.	CIC, together with the Cook Islands, can help deliver to the world the metals it needs to realise a clean energy future if nodule harvesting is found to create no serious harm to the environment. The battery metals found in the Cook Islands' polymetallic nodules are critical for the development and growth of the battery industry and could contribute to the development of renewable energy sources in the Cook Islands such as wind and solar.

<p>7. Improve Health and Promote Healthy Lifestyles</p>	<p>CIC intends to engage with the Ministry of Health, INTAFF (Internal Affairs) and CISNOC (Cook Islands National Olympic Committee) with an interest towards achieving the NSDP goal of Improving health and promoting healthy lifestyles.</p>
<p>8. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities.</p>	<p>Scholarships and bursaries from revenue will be generated by a successful seabed mineral harvesting programme. Apprenticeships and capacity building related to both technical and non-technical work during exploration and harvesting phases that will carry over into many other career opportunities.</p>
<p>9. Accelerate gender equality, empower all women and girls, and advance the rights of youth, the elderly and disabled.</p>	<p>CIC encourages equal opportunity in both education and employment. The company recognises that equality exists between all genders, not only in the workforce of the Cook Islands but also at all community levels. CIC's programme will endeavor to provide opportunities that empower females, educate youth and include the elderly and disabled.</p>
<p>10. Achieve food security.</p>	<p>Increased revenue from a successful harvesting programme can be distributed to achieve this goal.</p>
<p>11. Promote sustainable land-use, management of terrestrial ecosystems and protect biodiversity.</p>	<p>Exploration will expand the Cook Islands' database of deep-sea biodiversity and assist in establishing the necessary precautions to preserve it. Additionally, CIC intends to support the development of land-use and terrestrial ecosystem management programmes.</p>
<p>12. Sustainable management of oceans, lagoons, and marine resources.</p>	<p>Development of a better understanding of the Cook Islands' marine environment is essential in establishing the necessary set-asides to preserve the ocean, its biodiversity and resources for future generations of Cook Islanders to come. The oceanographic and environmental data acquired throughout exploration and harvesting is property of the Cook Islands and can be used to establish sustainable management programmes to ensure that the newly established Marae Moana marine park is properly maintained and monitored.</p>

<p>13. Strengthen resilience to combat the impacts of climate change and natural disasters.</p>	<p>Benefits from the development of the seabed mineral sector will contribute to the nation’s funding options to find the ideal practises for facilitating its climate change activities and achieving its development aspirations. CIC recognises and will aim to assist in the realisation of the following Cook Islands goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving 100% renewable energy generation in all islands by 2025</li> <li>• Achieving 100% energy efficiency across the country by 2025</li> <li>• Confirm a zero emissions target for the Cook Islands by 2040</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, if the Cook Islands goes forward with a nodule harvesting program, the nation can contribute to a de-carbonised society by supplying the critical metals needed for clean energy solutions.</p>
<p>14. Ensure a sustainable population, engaged in development for Cook Islanders by Cook Islanders.</p>	<p>Throughout both exploration and harvesting phases, if harvesting is determined to be viable, a variety of new technical work opportunities and training will be made available to Cook Islanders. The skills garnered from these technical positions will be applicable to a variety of jobs within and outside of the seabed minerals sector. For example, reapplying the skills gained from mineral/sediment assaying can be used for terrestrial soil and hydrologic analyses.</p>
<p>15. Promote a peaceful and just society and practise good governance with transparency and accountability.</p>	<p>CIC aligns with this goal and intends to work with the Cook Islands’ Government through every stage of development to ensure transparency and accountability of an environmentally responsible and economically viable seabed mineral resource management programme, taking into account a deep concern and respect for Cook Islands’ culture.</p>
<p>16. Preserve our heritage and history, protect our traditional knowledge, and develop our language, creative and cultural endeavours.</p>	<p>CIC has set up and funded The Cook Islands Traditional Arts Trust (Te Rito O Taku Peu Tupuna) and has already begun contributing to the preservation of Cook Islands’ heritage, history, art and language through multiple programs and initiatives.</p>

## 1.2 Public Engagement, Collaboration and Information

CIC welcomes advice and ideas with respect to public outreach and looks forward to establishing a formalised engagement plan in consultation with the Cook Islands' Government to ensure effective public engagement and education that is culturally appropriate.

CIC intends to utilise local expertise and communication techniques to effectively engage the public of the Cook Islands. With the help of trusted local experts and public input, CIC plans to provide Cook Islanders with the data and information needed to develop an informed view of impacts, consequences and merits of seabed exploration activities and harvesting. A proactive approach will be implemented that ensures consultation with all levels of the community regarding concerns related to seabed mineral exploration and harvesting. This would include, but is not limited to, meetings with traditional leaders, environmental organisations, Pa Enea leaders/communities, schools, churches, parliament, the various Ministries and all political parties.

Additionally, CIC intends to foster cooperation between academic experts from the University of South Florida College of Marine Science (USA), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (USA), The University of the South Pacific (Rarotonga), Eckerd College (USA), The University of Hawai'i (Manoa), Kochi University (Japan), The International Marine Minerals Society (IMMS), The United States Geological Survey (USGS), The Natural History Museum of London (UK), and The National Oceanography Centre at the University of Southampton (UK) as well as other institutions. Students and faculty will have an opportunity to co-author scientific articles and participate in scientific investigations related to the project.

The team is committed to engaging with Cook Islands' citizens and stakeholders for scientific collaboration, education, grant acquisition and employment opportunities pertaining to marine science and engineering.

Dr. Martens of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a co-leader of CIC's physical oceanographic data collection and current modelling plan, has experience with similar interagency and international team building. A specific programme he participated in organising focused on scientific investigation of Brazil's Amazon region through a long-term effort funded as part of NASA's Large-scale-Biosphere-Atmosphere Ecosystem Program (National Aeronautics and Space Administration). The programme resulted in training, employment and education through the doctoral level for many citizens and scientists including members of the regional community wherein the study was undertaken. Dr. Martens, as a member of the CIC team, can assist in implementing a similar successful programme within the Cook Islands.

CIC foresees the following steps in developing its engagement plans and conducting meaningful engagement:

- Stakeholder Identification and Collaboration. These stakeholders include, but are not limited to:
  - Parliament
  - Government Ministries and Crown Agencies
  - The Koutu Nui House of Ariki
  - Religious Advisory Council (RAC)
  - Local Non-governmental organisations – Te Ipukarea Society (TIS) and Korero O Te 'Orau

- General Public – Village meetings in each of the three Rarotonga Vakas: Takitumu, Te Au Tonga and Puaikura as well as throughout the Pa Enuā
- Schools

*This list will be updated on a regular basis.*

- Develop a list of expertise and services required for the project.
  - Advertising locally and looking in country for initial hires.
- Review of relevant local expertise and techniques, including marine scientists, fisheries experts, laboratory analysis capability, etc., in consultation with the Cook Islands' Government.
  - CIC to work in collaboration with the Cook Islands' Government to create a local database of qualified Cook Islanders in various skilled fields to draw from when required.
- Review of local businesses and the capability of the local community to offer supplies for the exploration vessel.
  - CIC to meet with local suppliers to discuss how they can meet the needs of the exploration vessels – giving local businesses first opportunity.
- Review of local communication techniques and technologies – e.g. newspaper, radio, TV, workshop and conferencing facilities.
- Establish an in-country CIC presence to ensure a local go-to person and response team for local interaction with the project.
- Conduct awareness campaigns, including visits to outer islands as advised by the Cook Islands' Government.
  - Awareness campaigns will be conducted in both English and Maori.
  - Ideally, these would be joint campaigns between CIC, the national government, and any relevant experts to collaboratively inform the public about the activities being undertaken, the regulatory regime related to these activities, the impact of the activities, and to answer any questions the community may have about the planned activities.
  - Campaign schedule to be decided in consultation with the Cook Islands' Government.
- Collaboration with the Ministry of Education to include seabed minerals and ocean exploration as part of its current curriculum.
- Open, inclusive, transparent workshops to discuss exploration plans and results in both Rarotonga and the outer islands.
- Development of information materials for dissemination (co-developed with Cook Islands' Government and translated into Cook Islands' Maori).
- Berths made available on CIC exploration ships to trained Cook Islands' Government representatives as well as local interested parties and researchers.
- Operation of a full-time, smaller research vessel is envisioned to be based in Rarotonga beginning in year one of the Exploration Programme. This will create opportunities for qualified Cook Islanders to regularly participate in exploration activities, support the local economy, and provide an enhanced research platform for other interested sea users and institutions.

### 1.3 Development and Investment in Local Business, Arts and Projects

Over the past 20 months, CIC has been engaged in various projects in the Cook Islands including:

- Sourcing, transporting and donating medical equipment for COVID-19 preparation in cooperation with *Te Marae Ora*, the Ministry of Health.
- Creating a dialogue with the Arts Department of the Ministry of Education to encourage the Arts curriculum within the schools. Working on this initiative with the Advisor for the Ministry of Education and coordinating these activities with The Cook Islands Traditional Arts Trust.
- Supporting Autism Cook Islands and contributing to its fundraising efforts for the Kara Run 2020.
- Securing sponsorship funds with the local BSP bank to construct bathroom facilities and to open a teaching cafe to support the Tavioni Arts program & Vananga.
- Support for classes in traditional arts skills and assisting author Michael Tavioni to distribute his educational motif book to several schools in Rarotonga and Aitutaki.
- Participating in World Clean-Up Day on the beaches and roadways.
- Providing a mental wellness workshop for the community.
- Contributing support and funds to the Cook Islands' 2020 Olympic kayak team.

#### **Cook Islands Traditional Arts Trust (CITC)**

In the traditional terrestrial mineral extraction industry, Foundations are often created for the purpose of community development funds over the life of the mine; however, investment in local traditional, cultural and educational programmes is not done directly or initiated by companies until after a mining licence is acquired, extraction has started, and cash flow is being generated from the processed metals.

To demonstrate CIC's commitment to contribute to various local non-profit cultural and educational projects, The Cook Islands Traditional Arts Trust has been established and has already developed plans and has begun making contributions in a variety of local traditional, cultural and educational programmes.

#### **Objectives**

The Trust is established as a charitable organisation for the purpose of providing financial assistance to such individuals, entities or projects as are approved by the Trustees for educational initiatives which advance and develop the cultural and traditional arts of the Cook Islands and will benefit the public of the Cook Islands.

#### **PROJECT 1: THE TAVIONI ARTS SCHOOL/TAURA VANANGA TRUST**

Construction work has already begun on the existing facility to help provide an operational footprint that will allow the Arts Centre to offer more courses, workshops and events in traditional arts and life skills. The physical working space requires these zones to be better structured and organised to ensure that the teaching areas are fit for purpose, safe and hygienic.

These new improvements are already providing a more structured teaching campus for the traditional teachings of Master Carver Mike Tavioni and other Cultural Arts programmes – with many classes and events being regularly planned and conducted for students of all ages.

## Conclusion

CIC is pleased to have submitted an application for exclusive mineral exploration rights in the 2020 Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Tender. As proven by the relationships already developed with stakeholders and the mitigation measures incorporated into the Exploration Programme, CIC will endeavour to make every effort to fulfil its responsibilities as an appointed steward of mineral resources if it is licenced to explore in an environmentally sensitive manner.

CIC looks forward to working with Cook Islanders to better understand their marine minerals and deep-ocean environment in a manner that will allow all stakeholders to evaluate whether it makes sense to move toward commercial harvesting of subsea nodules. If the country decides to move forward, continued research and development of these marine resources have the capacity to boost both the nation's economy and the scientific understanding of the ocean environment.