



Urban Sea Systems and the Role They May Play When Deep Ocean Mining Occurs

The IF, WHEN, & WHERE – (A CPC/STAR workshop)

While the timeline and extent of potential Deep-Sea Mineral (DSM) exploitation remain uncertain, increasing global interest—particularly driven by the demand for rare earth minerals and metals essential for technological advancement—has brought Deep Ocean Mining (DOM) to the forefront. For Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS), understanding the possible if, when, and where of such activities is crucial in preparing for both the potential impacts and opportunities. This workshop, therefore, aims to introduce the concept of Urban Sea Systems in SIDS and explore possible scenarios related to DOM, with a view toward identifying pathways for adaptation, mitigation, and equitable benefit-sharing, should such activities proceed in the future. Further, the value addition that new science would bring to the existing body of knowledge and inform perceived uncertainty is invaluable.

The workshop will consist of four phases with multiple themes: 1) Review, 2) Input, 3) Industry Perspective, and 4) Digestion and Planning. Tentative themes to be presented in Phase 1 (Review) consists of: A) Review of DSM potential within the Pacific SIDS region, B) Present and evolving DOM technologies, and C) Lessons learned regarding environmental considerations. Under Phase 2 (Input), the tentative themes are: D) Legal constraints and social justice associated with SIDS, and E) SIDS governance. Phase 3 (Industry Perspective) is: F) Industry consideration and plans for DOM, and G) Economic and regulatory assessments. Phase 4 will consist of: H) Identification of SIDS Urban Sea Systems and the potential role these systems can play when DOM occurs, and I) Interactive planning for SIDS involvement where SIDS's interests, concerns, and knowledge are translated into regional assessments from source to market and how SIDS can capitalize on this activity within the region.

The timing of this workshop is critical as the potential for a maritime “gold rush” to obtain cobalt, nickel, gold, silver, rare earths and other strategic minerals and metals from the Pacific seabed is in the staging phase. The Circum-Pacific Council for Energy and Mineral Resources (CPC), an international NGO, non-political, non-profit, scientific charitable organization, is perfectly positioned to undertake this workshop jointly with STAR and the Fijian Government. CPC has established a long and creditable history in the SIDS region for bringing together government, academic, and industry expertise to present and debate topics of immediate concern in conferences, workshops, and symposia through the auspices of CCOP/SOPAC and SOPAC STARs. This workshop is scheduled to take place November 24-25 in Suva, Fiji and is in the formative stage. It will be an inclusive workshop, and all interested parties are cordially invited to participate. Those interested can contact the following CPC Officers:

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