

Deep Sea Mining - The Need for Transparency

FACT SHEET 2

NAUTILUS AND SOLWARA 1

Canadian mining company Nautilus Minerals Inc. (Nautilus) has its eyes set on PNG as a testing ground for the world's first attempt to mine metals from the sea floor. It plans to extract gold and copper from the bottom of the Bismarck Sea. The Solwara 1 mine site is about 50 km from Rabaul in East New Britain and only 30 km from the coast of New Ireland Province.

Nautilus is temporarily suspending the construction of equipment in PNG to stop the company "bleeding" money while the company and the PNG Government resolve their dispute over the terms of agreement. Wary investors are pulling out. The company's share price has plummeted and is expected to drop even further.

But don't be fooled into thinking this is the end of sea bed mining in PNG. Nautilus is patiently waiting. The company has invested many millions of dollars in Solwara 1 and it still believes that mining the sea floor will provide a massive and easy profit.



DEEP SEA MINING AND ITS IMPACTS

The focus of deep sea mining (DSM) is the deposits laid down over thousands of years around underwater hot springs, or hydrothermal vents. Very little is understood about the possible impacts of Solwara 1. The only thing that is certain is that impacts will be associated with each step of the deep sea mining process.

Solwara 1 would directly destroy thousands of amazing hydrothermal vent formations and their unique ecosystems. The destruction of vents alone would provide sufficient reason to not approve DSM projects. But there are many other risks such as the potential toxicity of metals that will be released into the ocean.

So this begs an important question: why isn't Nautilus trialing this new technology in its home country,

Canada, or in another developed country that has strong environmental safeguards and an emergency response capacity? PNG has none of these things.

THE SOLWARA 1 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was the key document considered by the PNG National Government in granting the environmental permits and operating licence to Nautilus. The EIS for the Solwara

1 Project was submitted to the PNG Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) in 2008. In 2009 DEC issued the final environmental permit for the development of the Solwara 1 project, followed by the granting of a 20 year mining lease in January 2011.

The purpose of an EIS is to provide a clear and rigorous assessment of potential hazards and impacts. The Solwara 1 EIS should have provided the groundwork

for comprehensive risk analysis and the development of risk management strategies.

In early November, the DSM campaign released a review of the sections of the EIS that describe the currents and the vertical water movements (upwelling) at the Solwara 1 site. We focused on these oceanographic properties as they are vital for determining the level of risk that coastal communities and marine ecosystems will be exposed to.

The review found that the oceanographic aspects of the EIS suffer from a lack of rigor. There are many errors and omissions in the modelling, presentation and analysis of data. Instead of providing a solid basis for informed decision-making the EIS attempts to blind its readers with 'junk science'. It downplays the risks facing local communities and the marine environment. At only 30km away New Ireland is especially at risk, with the possibility of upwelling and currents carrying mine-derived metals towards its coastline.

THE PEOPLE OF PNG HAVE BEEN KEPT IN THE DARK!

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THE NEED FOR TRANSPARENCY - THE PEOPLE OF PNG HAVE BEEN KEPT IN THE DARK!

Solwara 1 is a unique project of worldwide significance. However, the basis on which the 20 year operating license was issued by the Government of PNG is not clear.

At a minimum DEC and Nautilus must now place in the public arena:

- the full oceanographic data set for the EIS, i.e. all the data gathered and all the analysis conducted by the EIS consultants but not presented in the EIS
- The 2009 independent review of the oceanographic aspects of the EIS conducted for DEC by Cardno Lawson Treloar Pty Ltd
- Any other independent reviews of the EIS commissioned by DEC
- the conditions of the Solwara 1 permits issued to Nautilus by DEC
- The draft environmental management plan for Solwara 1
- Studies and modeling that show what metals will be released, what chemical forms they will be present in, the extent to which they will find their way into the food chain, how contaminated the seafood eaten by local communities will be and what effects these metals will have on fisheries of local, national and regional importance.

It is incumbent on the PNG Government to provide resources for civil society selected scientists to evaluate these documents.

RESOURCES

The following reports can be downloaded at: <http://deepseaminingoutofourdepth.org/report>

Deep Sea Mining campaign report - *Physical Oceanographic Assessment of the Nautilus Environmental Impact Statement for the Solwara 1 Project – An Independent Review*

Deep Sea Mining campaign report - *Out of Our Depth: Mining the Ocean Floor in Papua New Guinea*

Professor Richard Steiner's - *Independent Review of the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Nautilus Minerals Solwara 1 Seabed Mining Project, Papua New Guinea*

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DEEP SEA MINING CAMPAIGN

(affiliate of Friends of the Earth Australia)

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