



Ministry of Mines Organises Outreach Programme on Auction of Offshore Mineral Blocks

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The Ministry of Mines, Government of India, organised an Outreach Programme on Auction of Offshore Mineral Blocks on 13th October 2026 at New Delhi. The programme provided a platform for prospective bidders and stakeholders to understand the two offshore mineral blocks offered for auction, the applicable policy and regulatory framework, the bidding process and the support available for exploration.

The Ministry has issued the Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) dated 1 October 2026 for the grant of operating rights for two offshore mineral blocks, **Sewell Rise-01 and West Sewell Ridge-01**, located in the Andaman Sea. Both blocks contain polymetallic nodules and crusts and are being offered for the grant of a Composite Licence. Sewell Rise-01 covers an area of 632 square kilometres, while West Sewell Ridge-01 covers 1,000 square kilometres, taking the total area offered for auction to 1,632 square kilometres.

Shri Keshav Chandra, Secretary, Ministry of Mines, highlighted the importance of strengthening India's mineral supply chains to support economic growth, technological advancement, the energy transition and manufacturing competitiveness. He highlighted the potential of the Critical Mineral Processing Park coming up on the eastern coast of India to support offshore mineral processing.

Dr. Veena Kumari Dermal, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Mines, highlighted the policy reforms undertaken to facilitate the transparent and responsible development of India's offshore mineral resources. Taking stakeholder feedback into account, the Ministry has revised block configurations, including increasing the area of polymetallic nodule and crust blocks to provide greater operational flexibility for offshore exploration. She also noted that the Terms of Reference and Guidelines for Baseline Environmental Data Collection and Environmental Management Plans for offshore mineral exploration and exploitation in India's Exclusive Economic Zone have been circulated to the concerned Central Ministries and Departments for comments and will be finalised shortly.

The Geological Survey of India (GSI) presented an overview of the offshore mineral blocks, including their geological characteristics and mineral potential. SBI Capital Markets Limited (SBICAPS), the Transaction Advisor, explained the policy framework, auction process,

tender provisions and bidding requirements. MSTC, the auction platform provider, demonstrated the step-by-step procedure for purchasing tender documents and submitting bids through the e-auction portal.

The National Mineral Exploration and Development Trust (NMEDT) presented the scheme for partial reimbursement of exploration expenses for Composite Licence holders of offshore mineral blocks. The presentation outlined the support available to facilitate exploration activities.

An open-house discussion enabled participants to interact with the Ministry and the organisations involved in the auction. Prospective bidders and other stakeholders sought clarifications and shared their views on the blocks, tender conditions, auction procedures and exploration-related support.

The auction is being conducted under the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002, as amended in 2023, and the Offshore Areas Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2024, as amended. The auction framework seeks to ensure transparency in the allocation of offshore mineral resources and facilitate systematic exploration and responsible development of India's offshore mineral potential.

Polymetallic nodules and crusts contain minerals such as nickel, cobalt, copper and manganese, which are important for various industrial applications and emerging technologies. The initiative forms part of the Government of India's efforts to advance offshore mineral exploration and strengthen the country's mineral resource base. Systematic exploration will be essential to establish the mineral potential of the blocks and assess their prospects for future development.

Auction Schedule

The sale of tender documents commenced on 1 October 2026. The pre-bid conference is scheduled for 4 November 2026, and the last date for submission of queries is 13 November 2026. Tender documents may be purchased up to 21 December 2026, while the last date for submission of bids is 28 December 2026.

The Notice Inviting Tender and related auction documents are available on the MSTC e-auction portal: <https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mlcln/index.jsp>

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