

Nautilus Minerals to open second seafloor mine by 2017

Cecilia Jamasmie | October 17, 2013



Canadian seafloor miner Nautilus Minerals (TSX:NUS) said Thursday it could begin mining at a second underwater site in Papua New Guinea's Bismarck Sea in as little as four years.

In an interview with Radio Australia's [Pacific Beat](#), CEO Mike Johnson said the firm is ready to move forward with its underwater copper and gold project, after [international arbitrators ruled on Nautilus favour](#) on a long-dragged dispute with the government of PNG.

Earlier this month, the [judge said the country had breached the contract](#) signed with Nautilus in March 2011 and ordered it to pay \$118 million as compensation by October 23rd.

Aside from the dispute, the Solwara 1 project, originally slated to begin production in the fourth quarter this year, has been affected by weak gold and copper prices, but Johnson said at least the problems with PNG have not risked the commercial viability of the endeavour.

"The project is largely a copper mine. Copper pricing is still very, very good; \$3.20 last Friday," Johnson told [Pacific Beat](#).

However, consensus estimates for the copper market this year are for a surplus of 172,000 tonnes and 366,000 in 2014, according to data compiled by Reuters.

Nautilus, the first yet not the only one exploring the ocean floor for polymetallic massive sulphide deposits, said it still expects Solwara to become the first project commercial deep-sea mining in the world.