

Canada acquires ISE Explorer AUVs to map Arctic seabed

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On Tuesday September 22nd, 2009 International Submarine Engineering Ltd. handed over two Explorer Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs) to Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) at a ceremony held onboard ISE's research vessel in Indian Arm, BC. The event was attended by Mr. John Weston, Member of Parliament for West Vancouver and the Sunshine Coast on behalf of the Honourable Lisa Raitt, Minister of Natural Resources.

"The capabilities are absolutely phenomenal and Canada is the first country in the world to use this type of technology for Arctic research," Mr. Weston said at the ceremony. "The AUVs are Canadian manufactured and modified specifically for these Arctic missions resulting in a unique, world-leading capability. Not only are we protecting our Arctic sovereignty but we are creating high-skilled jobs for Canadians at the same time. Now this is a real win-win situation for everybody."

The vehicles will be deployed to the high Arctic next year to map the seabed in support of Canada's land claim under Article 76 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Canada has ratified the UNCLOS treaty and has until 2013 to submit a claim to support its rights under international law to natural resources in the Arctic Ocean beyond the 200 nautical mile limit.

The Explorer AUVs are designed to operate autonomously underneath the Arctic ice shelf at depths of up to 5000 meters. The vehicles utilize onboard sonar systems to collect data about the seafloor and can travel 450 kilometers during a single mission. The NRCan Explorers were made in Port Coquitlam and are at the leading edge of this type of technology.

The event was hosted by Mr. James Ferguson, Vice President of ISE's AUV group. Also participating were Dr. Jacob Verhoef, the Science Director of the UNCLOS Program for NRCan, and Mr. David Hopkin, Director of the AUV development program and head of the Maritime Asset Protection Section, Defence Research Development Canada (Atlantic).

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