# SHIP REGISTRY TO GO DIGITAL
## WITH HELP FROM SMART ECONOMY GRANT

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) is pleased to announce they have awarded Maritime Cook Islands Limited (MCI) a SMART Economy Scheme grant to help digitise the Cook Islands Ship Registry (the Registry).

This SMART investment in a new digital Registry will both capitalise on the internet connectivity brought by the Manatua Cable, and support MCI to make a smart and productive commercial investment that will benefit the Cook Islands economy.

MCI performs all Flag State duties for the Cook Islands Government through an agreement with the Ministry of Transport and operates an open register for ships and yachts via a network of Deputy Registrars around the world. MCI has operated a successful global business from Rarotonga for many years, using multiple systems that have served it well but are now outdated. By moving to a fully integrated online system, MCI will be able to keep ships moving and support safe, efficient, and environmentally sustainable global trade.

MCI's Glenn Armstrong says: "We are excited about creating a state-of-the-art, online platform for the Cook Islands Ship Registry that will provide secure access to our systems and data from anywhere in the world. The new digital system will enable us to provide a world-class, speedy service while also remaining in control of the system and being able to audit for compliance. We're very grateful to have received the SMART grant to invest in updating our national ship registry systems to a world-class standard."

The new IT platform will both host and process all data about vessels in the Cook Islands Registry. Authorised people will be able to do anything that can be done at MCI head office from anywhere in the world, including generating and delivering electronic certificates for vessels and employed seafarers. MCI staff, authorised stakeholders and customers will be able to access the system any time, from a desktop computer, tablet, or smartphone.



The time and cost savings and improvement in customer service will be significant. For example, the Registry is required to issue seafarer training and certification including endorsement certificates to all officers serving on Cook Islands registered vessels over 500 Gross Tonnage. Using the new system, MCI will be able to produce electronic certificates with electronic signatures and QR Codes which can be scanned to instantly verify whether a certificate is valid. This will remove the need to use couriers, which is slow, expensive, and often leads to vessels being delayed, which is very costly for the owners.

Ship surveyors will also benefit as they will be able to complete surveys using their smartphones and upload the survey reports in real-time. They will be able to include photographs – a very useful feature that the current system doesn't have. The app will also use a GPS locator to confirm that the surveyor is on board the vessel.

In addition to the many benefits for MCI's business, their clients and stakeholders, the Ministry of Transport will also benefit as they will be able to use the system to satisfy the requirement for registering of small local craft, issuing annual warrant of fitness certificates and keeping track of the boat-masters training for skippers operating in and around the Cook Islands.