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## **Ocean Science Centre Mindelo just before scientific operation Preparations for the scientific operation of GEOMAR research station started**

**02 June 2017/Kiel.** After two and a half years of construction, the new GEOMAR research station in Mindelo, Cape Verde, has been completed. Now the preparations for the scientific operation of the Ocean Science Center Mindelo have begun. The project is a cooperation of the GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel and the National Cape Verdean Fisheries Research Institute INDP.

In recent years, the Cape Verdean islands off the western tip of Africa have developed into an important location for international marine research. On and offshore, German institutions operate observatories for the ocean and the atmosphere. In addition, numerous ship expeditions start and end in the port of Mindelo on the island of Sao Vicente, as the tropical Atlantic plays a key role in marine biodiversity and global climate.

Five years ago, the GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel, together with the National Cape Verdean Fisheries Research Institute INDP (Instituto Nacional de Desenvolvimento das Pescas), began the planning of a research station as a meeting point and workplace for Cape Verdean and international scientific groups in Mindelo.

After two and a half years of construction, the building of the Ocean Science Center Mindelo (OSCM) has now been completed and the responsible authorities have issued the first building acceptance. "Now we are ready to start preparations for the scientific operation," says Cordula Zenk, who coordinates the cooperation with the Cape Verde Islands at GEOMAR.

The new building has a total floor space of more than 1700 square meters. The central component is a drivable hall in which heavy marine scientific equipment, such as deep sea robots and autonomous underwater vehicles, can be moved and maintained. Different workshops connect to the hall. In addition, the building will provide users with several laboratories, storage rooms for equipment and sample materials, offices and conference rooms.

"The investment volume amounts to around 2.9 million euros, of which the GEOMAR has taken over 2.6 million," says Prof. Dr. Peter Herzig, director of GEOMAR. The remaining 300,000 euros have been invested by the Republic of Cape Verde, which has also provided the site for the building.

The new centre in Mindelo will significantly simplify the logistics of the research groups working in the tropical Atlantic. "So far, after an expedition we had to transport equipment back to Kiel or other home institutions for maintenance. Then, for the next measurement campaign, we would have had to ship it back to Cape Verde. Soon we will be able to carry out maintenance in Mindelo. This will save us considerable transportation costs," explains Prof. Dr. Arne Körtzinger, marine chemist at GEOMAR. "Additionally, we will be able to carry out longer research campaigns and to react more flexibly to short-term events in the tropical Atlantic".

At the same time, the Ocean Science Center Mindelo is intended to serve as the nucleus of an intensified cooperation with researchers from Cape Verde and other West African countries. "The

training of young academics from the region is a key component of our cooperation with INDP. The OSCM will be an important platform for academic education,” says Cordula Zenk.

The scientific operation of the OSCM is expected to start in the second half of this year. The official opening is scheduled for an international conference in November, 2017.

**Links:**

[www.geomar.de](http://www.geomar.de) GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel

[www.cvoo.de](http://www.cvoo.de) The CapeVerde Ocean Observatory

**Images:**

Images are available for download at [www.geomar.de/n5205-e](http://www.geomar.de/n5205-e)

Video footage can be provided on request.

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