

Press Release

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Start for the "Jeddah Transect Project"

– Contract for a new German-Saudi-arabian Marine Research Programme signed –

May, 26, 2010. Jeddah / Kiel. On 26 May 2010, representatives from the IFM-GEOMAR in Kiel and from King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi-Arabia, met in Jeddah to sign a contract that marks the beginning of a close cooperation. The contract regulates the "Jeddah Transect Project" for the implementation of joint marine research in the Red Sea.

From the point of view of a marine scientist, the Red Sea is a unique region. A marginal sea of up to 360 km in breadth and 2240 km in width, it is a newly emerging ocean in which we find the same conditions as must have prevailed in the Atlantic Ocean when it was opening up many million years ago. The 200-m-deep trench is also an outstanding biotope because of the coral reefs, rich in species, which are lining it.

Within the Jeddah Transect Project, multidisciplinary marine research will be performed off the coast of the Saudi-Arabian port of Jeddah. A total duration of nine years is intended, consisting of three phases of three years each. The first phase, which involves four projects, is to start in the summer of 2010. Joint biological, geological and geophysical studies will be performed in a working area that reaches from the coast to the 2-km-deep Red Sea trench axis. A large range of subjects will be covered, such as coastal protection, the ecology of fish/ coral communities, venting of gas and fluids on submarine slopes and examinations of the deep basins in the central Red Sea, which contain vast resources in the form of solutions rich in minerals.

The project is funded by King Abdulaziz University. € 6.4 million have been made available for the first phase. Apart from scientific know-how, IFM-GEOMAR is contributing technical and logistic support. Furthermore, Kiel scientists will stay in Jeddah to offer educational programmes for Saudi students and postgraduates.

For the administration of the project in Saudi-Arabia, IFM-GEOMAR is collaborating with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ).

Links:

www.kau.edu.sa/home_english.aspx - King Abdulaziz University

www.ifm-geomar.de - Leibniz Institute of Marine Sciences (IFM-GEOMAR)

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