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Ceremonial Groundbreaking on the Cape Verde Islands

GEOMAR Kiel launches construction of a science center for marine and atmospheric research

November 19, 2014 - Mindelo/Kiel. After nearly two years of planning and coordination work, the time has come: The construction of a science center for marine and atmospheric research off West Africa, the "Ocean Science Centre Mindelo" (OSCM), can start. The building was planned in partnership between the GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel and the Cape Verdean Institute for Fisheries Development (INDP), located in Mindelo, the capital of the Cape Verdean Island of São Vicente. The total cost of the center is 2.5 million euros.

GEOMAR can already look back on a 10-year long partnership with the Republic of Cape Verde. A first workshop funded by the Volkswagen Foundation, was held in 2004, and carried the title "Towards a West African Science Logistics Centre in Cape Verde". The vision of creating a research station for marine and atmospheric research in the tropical northeast Atlantic Ocean on the Cape Verde Islands goes back to the marine chemist Prof. Dr. Douglas Wallace. He recognized the uniqueness of the Republic of Cape Verde in both geographical and logistical terms. This globally significant region with regard to many scientific questions he was hoping to efficiently explore in collaboration with scientists from around the world. It took a whole decade to turn this vision into reality. According to GEOMAR Director Prof. Dr Peter Herzig, the project has also benefitted from the transfer of the Kiel marine research institution to the Helmholtz Association: "Our main funding agency, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), has decisively strengthened and supported us in this measure. This research infrastructure will allow us to further enhance the extremely successful research we have conducted in this region for several years," Herzig continued.

Determination and commitment of the two partner institutes GEOMAR and INDP are now rewarded. On 18th of November, the scientific director of the cooperation, Prof. Dr. Arne Körtzinger, and project coordinator Cordula Zenk, together with the Prime Minister and other government representatives of Cape Verde, participated in the groundbreaking ceremony for the building. The Republic of Cape Verde is proud of the project that perfectly fits into the strategic science planning of the country: "The Cape Verde Islands, as an island state and geostrategic crossroads between Europe, Africa, South and North America, have committed themselves to their natural resources, sun, wind and water, and to benefit from their sustainable use. Many projects aim at the expansion of the maritime sector. The "Ocean Science Centre Mindelo" integrates perfectly with these goals," said Arne Körtzinger. For the next year, the celebration of the topping-out ceremony and the 10th anniversary of the cooperation is planned, embedded in a scientific summer school with many international partners.

A characteristic feature of the future building is a central drive-through hall, inspired by the "Lithothek" at GEOMAR. Attached are workshops, laboratories and storage rooms. Another wing of the building will provide offices, conference rooms and lounges. Many departments of GEOMAR were involved in the planning. Coordinator Cordula Zenk truly appreciates this: "We are more than grateful for the support that we received from many colleagues at GEOMAR during the joint planning with the Cape Verdean-German architectural office of Pedro Gregório Lopes. Bit by bit it all

added up and only with the help of colleagues we have managed to develop a unique and consistent approach for Cape Verde. "

Completion is scheduled for summer 2016, when the center will be handed over to the international atmospheric and marine research community. "There is now an exciting construction phase lying ahead of us. We wish the builders and architects involved every success and good luck," concludes GEOMAR Management Director Michael Wagner.

Links:

www.geomar.de GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel

<http://cvo0.geomar.de/index.php?id=89> Homepage of Cape Verde Time Series Station

<http://www.oceanblogs.org/capeverde/> Blog on current Cape Verde activities

Images:

Images are available for download from www.geomar.de/n2178

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