

INTRODUCTION

The year 2004 was characterized by some important changes in the directorate of Royal NIOZ and in the research strategy. The first event of major importance was the resignation of Prof. dr. Jan W. de Leeuw per 1st July. Jan will continue to perform some external tasks, e.g. representing Royal NIOZ in the 'Partnership for the Observation of Global Oceans' (POGO) as incoming chair and as chair per 30 November, and in the Executive Board of the Marine Board of the European Science Foundation through the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). For his scientific achievements in biogeochemistry and for all he did for the science development of Royal NIOZ and his managing activities, Jan received the prestigious Royal award 'Knight in the Order of the Lion of the Netherlands'.



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Royal NIOZ was not successful in finding a new director. To find a way out of this dilemma, the Board of the Royal NIOZ foundation chose to attract on a temporary basis a managing director, Ir. Jan Smit, and a part time scientific director, Prof. dr. Johan E. Meulenkamp. Both appointments are for a period of two years. Along with the appointment of both new directors and the subsequent departure of the Controller/Head of business management, Drs. ir. Rob G. Haas, some changes were made, including the installment of a Facility Management group and a Marine Research

Facilities group. In the overall management of the institute, the existing consultative structure was replaced by a Science Council, composed of the heads of the five scientific departments, and a Management Team, which includes representatives of both scientific and non-scientific staff.

By the end of the year, the Science Council completed the concept of the new science plan in which the primary research objectives of Royal NIOZ for the forthcoming years are brought together in the four multidisciplinary programmes 'Open Ocean Processes, Benthic Boundary Layer Processes, Coastal Systems and Past Ocean Processes'.

As to the scientific output in 2004, seven theses were successfully submitted at the Amsterdam, Utrecht and Groningen Universities. The five scientific departments jointly published 140 articles in peer reviewed journals and books. Six articles were published in Nature and Science, of which two had a NIOZ scientist as the principal author.

The year 2004 was very successful in terms of awards granted to NIOZ scientists. The highest possible award in science in The Netherlands, the NWO Spinoza prize, was awarded to Prof.dr.ir. Jaap Sinninghe Damsté for his outstanding work in biogeochemistry. Prof. dr. Theunis Piersma received three awards; from the Prince



Bernhard Cultural Foundation for his pioneering contribution to nature preservation in the Wadden Sea, the first triennial Wetlands International Luc Hoffmann Medal for Wetland Science and Conservation and

the annual prize of the German Ornithologist's Society for his work on the ecology of a wading bird (the knot, *Calidris canutus*).

In addition to these awards, the Marine Research Facilities group was greatly acknowledged through the award granted to RV Pelagia by the Voluntary Observing Ship Climate Project (VOSCLim) for being the most frequent reporting weather station in 2003. For master Hans Groot, who left Royal NIOZ in 2004 for early retirement, this was a nice 'finishing touch' at the end of his long career at Royal NIOZ, where he started as an able seaman in 1971.

Another expression of successful achievement of the sea going staff was the further construction of the underwater research vehicle MOVE! as part of the firm alliance between Royal NIOZ and German institutes. An expression of progress in the development of high tech equipment concerns the construction of a High Pressure Sampler prototype, allowing samples from the deep sea to be brought to the sea-surface while maintaining their original pressure.

The major building activities were finalized with the official opening of the 'Ocean-wing' for our Marine Technology department. This allowed Fen Schilling, who has been coaching all major building activities during the last five years on behalf of Royal NIOZ, to leave for his well-deserved retirement too. In the years to come, our staff will concentrate on the upgrading of the older parts of the institute.

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The institute's second research vessel, the RV Navicula, got an entirely new and larger wheelhouse and interior in the spring. The ship is now ready to serve the institute again in the Wadden Sea and the coastal area of the North Sea for the next ten years.

Royal NIOZ continued its long-term policy to establish and further develop and strengthen the

formal and well structured collaboration agreement with numerous research institutes and university faculties in The Netherlands and abroad. In the context of these collaborations, Royal NIOZ greatly acknowledges the decision of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) to honour the application of the institute to initiate the NEBROC-2 programme. Parallel to this, the German NEBROC counterpart institutions in Bremen and Bremerhaven equally were granted their application.

NIOZ staff also started to prepare the appropriate documents for a formal assessment of its research and management; the corresponding peer review will take place in May 2005. This peer review will be of particular importance for the institute and its sea going research partners in The Netherlands, since it will take place in the context of two recently submitted reports on the future of marine research in The Netherlands. The recommendations included in the report of the Committee Marine Facilities (CMF) and the report of the Committee Future Position Royal NIOZ in Sea-going Research (CNTZ) stress the importance of Royal NIOZ as the main centre of future sea going research in The Netherlands. On the other hand, both reports plead for strengthening of existing collaboration agreements with, in particular, universities and to develop formal and structural collaborations with research institutes active in the field of 'applied' research. A major step forward in this context was the signing of a formal collaboration agreement between Utrecht University and Royal NIOZ in the spring of 2004.

Johan E. Meulenkamp, scientific director
Jan Smit, managing director

