

THE NETHERLANDS MARINE RESEARCH FACILITIES (MRF)

Contributor: Marieke J. Rietveld

MRF advises the Earth and Life Sciences (ALW) of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) on the technical, logistic and financial aspects of the National Programme for sea research. When sea-going research projects have been approved and granted by ALW, MRF assists the chief scientists in their planning, preparation and execution of the cruises. MRF also advises ALW on long-term investments, in consultation with the financial department and marine technical services of NIOZ and the advisory committees on CTD systems, auto-analyser systems, moored instrumentation systems, bottom sampling and seismic systems and biological sampling systems. Scientists and technicians from all Dutch groups involved in sea-going research participate in these advisory committees for pooled equipment.

The Long Term Planning on MRF investments was updated for the years 2006 – 2010 and submitted to NWO/ALW. This update takes place every year.

In 2006 the National Programme consisted of the following cruises:

BIOSYS (BIODiversity and EcoSYStem Functioning of Deep Water Coral Reefs in the Mediterranean and N.E. Atlantic; chief scientist Dr. C. Maier, NIOZ). A 14 day cruise was performed in the North Atlantic Ocean West of Hebrides and Mingulay area on board RV Pelagia. During the cruise aspects of the ecology and biology of cold water coral reefs were studied.



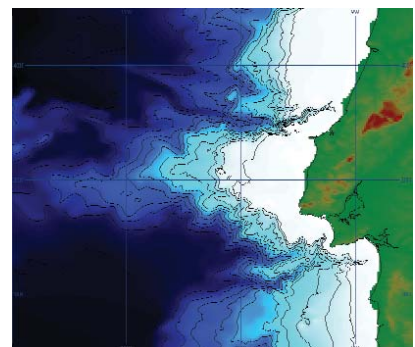
PASS-2 2006, Palaeoceanographic, Palaeoclimatic, Palaeo-environmental and diagenetic Aspects of

Sapropel formation in the Eastern Mediterranean with emphasis on the most recent S1 (PASS-2). Project manager and cruise leader Dr. G.J. de Lange, Institute of Earth Sciences, Utrecht University. The project is the sea-going contribution to the EU-programme Sapropels and Paleoceanography (SAP). The overall aim is a better understanding of the (paleo)-functioning of the Eastern Mediterranean and to determine the role in the global environment by studying the characteristic biogeochemical processes. The Project is a co-operation with Italian research groups.

A 12 day cruise was performed on board the Italian RV Universitatis.

HERMES-CANYONS (Hotspot Ecosystem Research on the Margins of European Seas – Canyons off Portugal; project manager Prof.dr. T.C.E. van Weering,

chief scientist Dr. H. de Stigter, NIOZ), a 21 day cruise was performed in the Atlantic Ocean off Portugal in the Nazaré and Setubal Canyons on board RV Pelagia.



ARCHIMEDES (Activity, Rates, Carbon use and High-pressure Microbial Ecology of the DEap Sea; project manager Prof.dr. G. Herndl, NIOZ). A 28 day cruise was performed in the Atlantic Ocean on a transect from the Canary Islands south over the equator till 5° South on board RV Pelagia. A defect on the deep-sea winch limited the scientific outcome of the cruise as



and redeployment of the 4 LOCO moorings in combination with a British, a French and a German group on RRS Discovery in the Irminger Sea.

The MRF advice to NWO/ALW for the National Programme of 2007: For the ongoing project HERMES-CANYONS (Hotspot Ecosystem Research on the Margins of European Seas – Canyons off Portugal); project manager Prof.dr. T.C.E. van Weering, chief scientist Dr. H. de Stigter, NIOZ, a 21 day cruise was advised in the Atlantic off Portugal and West of Ireland (Porcupine Bank) on board RV Pelagia.

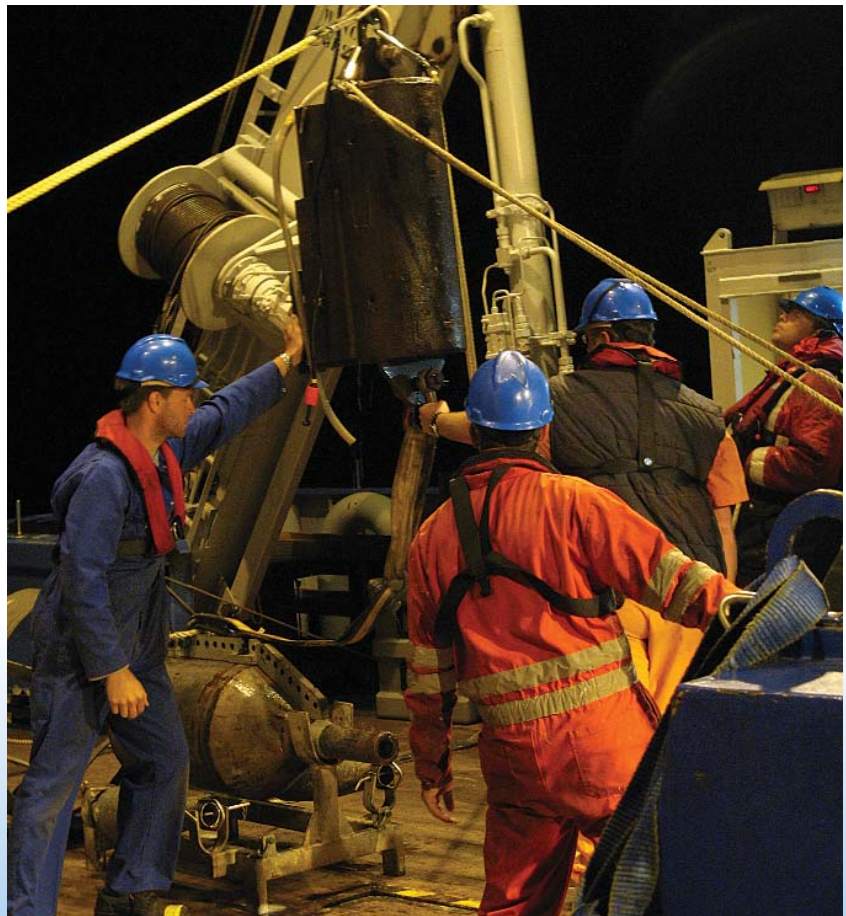
deep sea sampling was curtailed to a maximum of 3000 m.

North Atlantic; project manager Dr. H. van Aken, NIOZ): A 19 day combined barter cruise for the recovery

For the investment subsidy NWO-Large two cruises were performed for the LOCO project (Long-Term Ocean Climate Observations).

LOCO/Mozambique (Long-Term Ocean Climate Observations – Mozambique Strait; project manager Dr. Ir. H. Ridderinkhof, NIOZ). A 18 day barter cruise on board the UK research vessel RRS Discovery was performed in March/April 2006 in the Mozambique Strait.

LOCO/IW (Long-Term Ocean Climate Observations – Internal Waves; project managers Dr. H. van Haren and Dr. L. Maas, NIOZ): a 25 day cruise was performed in the Atlantic Ocean Canary Basin on board RV Pelagia. LOCO/North Atlantic (Long-Term Ocean Climate Observations –



For the remaining ship time of BIOSYS (BIODiversity and EcoSYStem Functioning of Deep Water Coral Reefs in the Mediterranean and N.E.Atlantic); chief scientist Dr. C. Maier, NIOZ, a 7 day cruise was advised in the Skagerrak off the Swedish coast on board RV Pelagia.

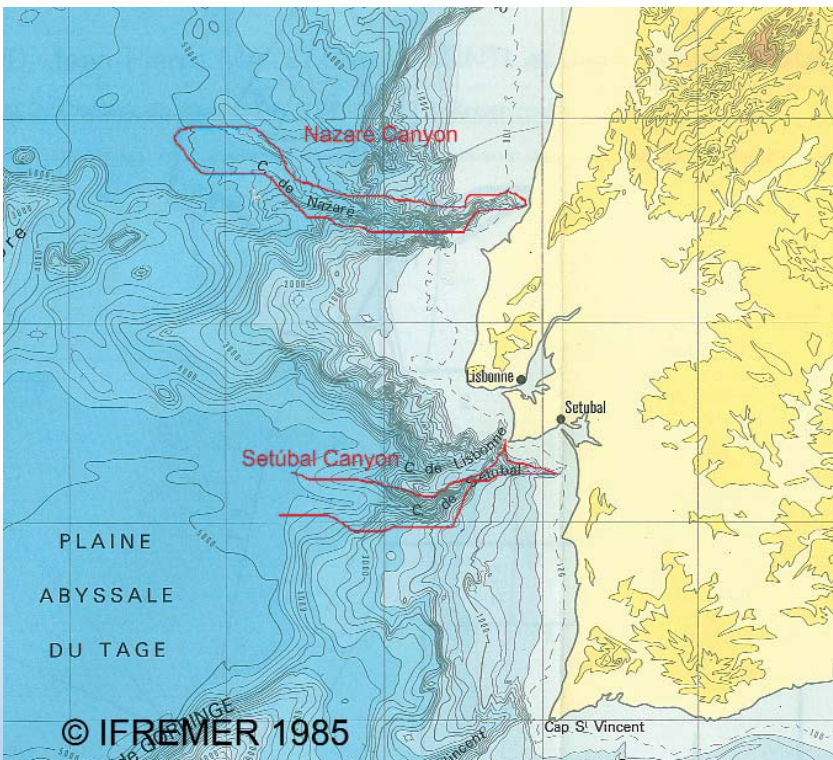
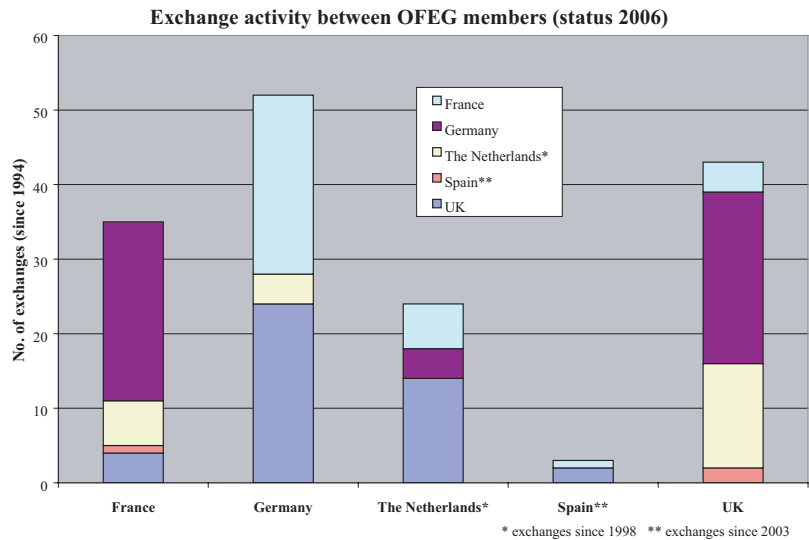
For the NWO big-investment grant for the LOCO project (Long-Term Ocean Climate Observations) three ongoing cruises were advised. One cruise for LOCO/North Atlantic (project manager Dr. H. van Aken, NIOZ) for 28 days in combination with the CAMP and VAMOC programme and the German CIS moorings on board the RV Pelagia in the Irminger Sea in the North Atlantic, and for LOCO/IW (Internal Waves), project manager Dr.ir. H. van Haren, a 26 day cruise in the

North Atlantic, south of the Canary Islands and east of Brasil on RV Pelagia.

Ocean Facilities Exchange Group(OFEG)
The OFEG was established to use research vessels from different

European institutes more efficiently by exchanging shiptime and large equipment.

Participants of OFEG are: NERC and NOCS (UK), IFREMER (Fr), BMBF (De) and NIOZ (NL). UTM-CMIMA of the Spanish research council CSIC, and IMR of Norway



became a full member as off November 2006. The OFEG fleet now consists of 25 research ships.

In 2006 a number of cruises were performed in the OFEG framework. A 24 day cruise for the RANAMOX project of the Queen Mary University of London (Chief Scientist Dr. M. Trimmer/Dr. J. Nicholls) on board RV Pelagia in the Celtic Seas; A 18 day cruise for the NIOZ LOCO/Mozambique cruise on the UK RRS Discovery in the Indian Ocean. A 19 day cruise for the NIOZ LOCO/Irminger Sea cruise on the UK RRS Discovery in the Irminger Sea.

This year the Ocean Facilities Exchange Group (OFEG), met twice, in April in Amsterdam (Netherlands), and in November in Madrid (Spain).

As the stepping down Chair, M.J. Rietveld attended the 20th meeting of the International research Ship Operators Meeting (ISOM), hosted by the Marine Insitute in Galway,

Ireland 25 – 26 October 2006, as well as the ISOM workshop regarding Underwater Sound and Marine Life on the 24th. M.J. Rietveld was one of the editors of the ESF Marine Board Ocean Fleets Working Group (OFWG) report on the European Research Fleets. M.J. Rietveld was an invited guest at the UNOLS/RVOC meeting at the University of Washington in

Seattle. For the Marine Infrastructure Forum (MIF) of the EU/ESF MarinERA programme M.J. Rietveld participated in the meeting in St. Feliu (Spain). In June the European Research Vessel Operators (ERVO) convened at the Marine Research Institute in Reykjavik (Iceland).