



Media Information

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IFM-GEOMAR, Kiel receives state-of-the-art remotely operated vehicle (ROV). Austermann: “Optimal opportunities for exploration and exploitation of the oceans.”

Kiel, Germany—June 29, 2006. In 2007, the Leibniz Institute of Marine Sciences (IFM-GEOMAR) in Kiel, Germany will receive the world’s most advanced remotely operated vehicle (ROV) system for marine research. The ROV system, built by the U.S. company Schilling Robotics, costs €4.7 million (approximately \$6 million USD). In the presence of members of the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of Science, Dietrich Austermann, Professor Peter Herzig (director of IFM-GEOMAR), and Norman Robertson (Schilling Robotics’ representative) signed the contract today. “I am pleased that approximately €1.5 million of the total budget will be contributed by German manufacturers,” said Austermann.



Signing the contract for purchase of the ROV system are, left to right, Norman Robertson (of Schilling Robotics), Dietrich Austermann (Ministry of Science of the state of Schleswig-Holstein), and Prof. Peter Herzig (director of IFM-GEOMAR).

Schilling Robotics, based in Davis, California, Houston, Texas, and Aberdeen, Scotland, is a leading producer of remotely controlled underwater vehicles, and was the only applicant in this internationally advertised solicitation that met IFM-GEOMAR’s technical requirements. The total investment of €4.7 million will be provided by the Schleswig-Holstein-Fonds of the state of Schleswig-Holstein.

Austermann pointed out that the ROV system offers a number of commercial opportunities beyond investigation of environmental and climate change, saying, “The robot will enable us to investigate and explore the marine geophysical environment.” The ROV will also allow the Leibniz Institute to consolidate and expand its reputation as an internationally recognized, high-profile institute in the marine sciences. Austermann stated, “This will lead to new jobs for highly qualified researchers in the field of deep-sea technology and marine science.”

Professor Peter Herzig stated that the electric ROV system can be used in water up to 6,000 meters deep, allowing the vehicle to reach 90% of the ocean floor. The unmanned deep-sea robot, named *Kiel 6000*, will be equipped with two electro-hydraulic manipulators with advanced cameras and floodlights, as well as state-of-the-art navigation technology. The ROV system, which can be used in coastal areas as well as in the deep sea, will be equipped with a 6,500-meter fiber optic cable on a separate winch system.

Herzig stated that the first deep-sea tests of *Kiel 6000* will take place in summer 2007 in the Pacific, aboard the research vessel *SONNE*. “These tests will be followed by the first expeditions in the central Atlantic led by IFM-GEOMAR scientists using the research vessel *MARIA S. MERIAN*,” said IFM-GEOMAR’s director.

The basic investment for the robot is approximately €3.2 million. An additional €1.5 million will be spent on the system's technical equipment, some of which will be delivered by companies in Schleswig-Holstein.

Tyler Schilling, CEO of Schilling Robotics, is pleased that IFM-GEOMAR has chosen the Schilling Robotics electric ROV system for its research program. "Because the institute is involved in many different types of scientific studies," said Schilling, "we believe that it will benefit from the ROV system's ability to perform a wide range of tasks."

Technical information about the ROV system is available from Schilling Robotics at sales@schilling.com.

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Responsible for the content: Harald Haase | Ministry for Science, Economy and Transportation | Düsternbrooker Weg 94, D-24105 Kiel | Germany | Phone +49-431 988-4420 | Fax +49-431 988-4705 | E-Mail: pressestelle@wimi.landsh.de | Dr. Andreas Villwock, IFM-GEOMAR, Wischhofstraße 1 – 3, 24118 Kiel, avillwock@ifm-geomar.de; Media Information for the state government is available under <http://www.landesregierung.schleswig-holstein.de>