

1. Weekly Report SO271 (INDEX 2019)



04.11.2019

Cruise SO271 (INDEX2019) is the sixth cruise to the German exploration license area for polymetallic sulfides in the Indian Ocean after signature of the contract with the International Seabed Authority in 2015. It addresses about a third of the overall 10.000 km² of the license area and equally shares exploration activities identifying new sulfide sites, and environmental base line studies continuing biological, oceanographic, and sedimentary surveys.

The scientific crew is represented by BGR and marine groups from different German research institutions and universities including the University of Hamburg, HafenCity University, CAU Kiel, FAU Erlangen, as well as the University of Padova, Laurentian University, GEOMAR and INES/DZMB Senckenberg am Meer, CSSF, and two experts from Kiel and Seattle. A scientific blog on the BGR homepage and at planet erde will inform about our diverse activities during the cruise.

After the arrival of all 39 scientific cruise members in Port Louis, Mauritius, earlier last week and subsequent arrangement talks with the shipping agency and ship's master Lutz Mallon, we entered TFS SONNE last Thursday. The laboratories, offices and cabins were occupied and equipped with our scientific tools for measurements and analyses. In total twelve containers were loaded including, for the first time on the new SONNE, the Canadian ROV ROPOS, and our equipment was installed on the vessel. SONNE departed Port Louis last Friday at 17:15 local time and we started the transit (684 nm) to our working and claim area along the southernmost Central and the northern Southeast Indian Ridge.

SONNE is very well equipped for our scientific program and we were warmly welcomed. Following a short period of getting used to ship movements, all participants are well and look forward with high interest to our variable activities in the license area. This morning, the program started with a first CTD water cast, followed by plankton studies with a multinet and sediment sampling (MUC), before we explore the western flanks of license cluster #01 along the southern Central Indian Ridge with a towed sensor sled.

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With best regards,

Dr. Ulrich Schwarz-Schampera, Chief Scientist
Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural
Resources



ROPOS maneuver test on TFS SONNE in the harbor of Port Louis, Mauritius