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New research facilities on Baltic Sea coast

By Maciej Wolowicz

At the end of June 2006, the Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdansk (IO UG), Poland, received keys to a new landmark research building located in Gdynia, about ten minutes' walk from the boulevard along the coast of the Gulf of Gdansk, southern Baltic Sea. The total investment is estimated to be about €6million and was fully funded by the National Committee for Scientific Research.

The new building is ca.6,000m² with a glass front (seen here in the picture). There are eight levels, including a two-level underground car parking facility and a satellite image-receiving station on the roof. The spacious reception area opens into a large wooden-floored exposition hall (ca.300m²) and a lecture theatre with 200 seats, equipped with modern audio-visual units.

The ground floor houses storage rooms for field sampling equipment, preserved samples, chemicals as well as a wet laboratory and four temperature-controlled experimental rooms (0 to 30°C). Specialist geo-chemical laboratories, including atomic absorption spectrometry (AAS), chromatography (HPLC), elemental analytics (CHN), chemical digestion, sea water analytics, sedimentology and diatomology, are located on the second floor and are available for use by all departments.

The IO UG Directors Office, Department of Marine Geology and an Oceanographic Laboratory are situated on the third floor. The next floor hosts two departments: the Department of Marine Chemistry and Environmental Protection, and the Department of Marine Plankton Research, which has two laboratories, namely a plankton analysis lab and an image analysis lab.

On the fourth floor you will find the offices and laboratories of both the Department of Experimental Ecology of Marine Organisms, and the Department of Marine Ecosystem Functioning. Two of the three research teams in

the Department of Marine Ecosystem Functioning are also located here: the Laboratory of Marine Environment Bioindication and the Laboratory of Estuarine Ecology. Facilities available within these laboratories include those for the application of diatoms to water quality indication, population dynamics, ecophysiology and (cyto-)genetics of marine invertebrates and biochemistry. The Department of Physical Oceanography, consisting of Laboratory of Marine Dynamics, Laboratory of Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis and GIS Science Laboratory, is located on the fifth floor. The laboratory of Marine Plants Ecophysiology (Department of Marine Ecosystem Functioning), which holds a unique collection of Baltic algae, is situated on the top (sixth) floor. Seminary rooms are also available for use by MSc and PhD students and there is a small but charming cafeteria on the uppermost level with wonderful panoramic views of the city and the sea.

The current staff of the Institute consists of nine full professors, five associate professors, 30 assistant professors, four assistants, 24 technicians and 59 PhD students, who are involved in 11 EU projects, including MarBEF, eight international multi- and bilateral projects and 24 national projects.

We hope that this research building, together with our well-known Marine Station in Hel and our research vessel, will extend the range of Polish scientific investigations currently being undertaken within the marine domain. It is anticipated that these new facilities will not



The new Institute of Oceanography in Gdansk, Poland.

only be beneficial to our current research staff but will also facilitate the creation of new collaborative projects. These facilities will certainly ease the promotion of new international research and educational activities being carried out and help to develop large-scale strategies both within the Baltic Sea basin and at a European level. The wide-ranging facilities available within the research centre will also help to encourage the exchange of young researchers, undergraduate and PhD students. For more information, see our website: www.ocean.univ.gda.pl.

Hope to meet you soon at IO UG!

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