

Research vessels as an essential tool for ocean exploration and data acquisition

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Emerging and innovative technologies deliver important oceanographic data on a global scale but ships remain the only means to provide direct access to the marine atmosphere, the ocean surface, water column and sea floor. Research ships and the associated equipment are crucial to gather the data and knowledge needed to manage and to secure marine resources for future generations.

Based on current and future science needs this presentation will describe what defines a research vessel and it will focus on the operational and technological implications of running science at sea. Besides the vessel, the marine science community needs a national equipment pool and facility services to manage and maintain both the vessel and its sampling tools and instruments. The international and interdisciplinary character of ocean science demands a careful cruise preparation and collaboration across borders. Dedicated shore and on-board staff are indispensable to accomplish this.

The value of the RV Mtafiti as a research platform for the Kenyan inshore and offshore waters will be outlined against the societal and scientific needs and the technological capabilities.