

## Surveys with the RV Dr Fridtjof Nansen: experiences from the Western Indian Ocean Region

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The UN-flagged Norwegian research vessel Dr Fridtjof Nansen has been carrying out surveys in tropical and sub-tropical regions for the past forty years. In the period between 1977 and 1990 sixteen surveys were carried out off Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Seychelles and Tanzania in the South West Indian Ocean region. The surveys were on pelagic and demersal resources and covered all trawlable parts of the continental shelf and slope outside the inshore reef zone from depth of about 10 to 500m. Large pelagic fish in offshore waters were not covered in the surveys which also looked at the hydrography of the area. Results of the surveys carried out in Kenyan waters were presented at the 'Norad–Kenya seminar on marine fish stocks and fisheries in Kenya' which was held in Mombasa in 1984. On the basis of the estimates from the survey, participants at the seminar concluded that the resources that had been identified and assessed did not warrant the development of an industrial fishery in Kenya.

Under the auspices of the EAF–Nansen project, the RV Dr Fridtjof Nansen returned to the SWIO region in 2007 and carried out surveys in collaboration with the Agulhas and Somali Currents Large Marine Ecosystems (ASCLME) Project, and the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Project (SWIOFP). Areas surveyed included the EEZs of Comoros, Mauritius, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Seychelles as well as the Mascarene plateau and the Southern Indian Ocean seamounts. Unfortunately, due to the incidence of piracy in the northern part of the region, no surveys were carried out in the waters of Kenya and Tanzania. The results of these surveys have been reported and extensively discussed through the two projects. According to the EAF–Nansen project Data Policy, the data from all the RV Dr Fridtjof Nansen surveys may be obtained from the countries in whose waters the surveys were carried out.