

High-tech diamond mining vessel starts operations

Debmarine's newest - and biggest - diamond mining vessel, SS Nujoma, has started operations after being commissioned in Walvis Bay last week.

Financed by Standard Bank and RMB Bank, and built at a cost of N\$2.3bn, the ship is the largest-ever capital investment in underwater diamond mining. It is the fifth addition to the Debmarine fleet, but the first solely dedicated to exploration and sampling.

SS Nujoma weighs 12,000 tonnes, is 113 metres long and can accommodate 80 crew members. It was constructed in Ulsteinvik, Norway and fitted with its subsea sampling system designed by the De Beers Group in Cape Town.

Debmarine Namibia is the only company in the world to mine diamonds offshore, it produced around 1.2m carats in 2016.

Mining takes place from 120-140 metres below sea level. Through its advanced exploration capabilities, the SS Nujoma will increase resource development for the mining fleet.

The vessel's namesake and founding president of Namibia, Dr Sam Nujoma, said at the naming ceremony: "I accept this honour and reiterate my commitment to ensure that our mineral resources are used for the benefit of all our people and the safeguarding and preservation of our marine resources."

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