

Oceanteacher global classroom pilot project

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With the establishment of the IOC Project Office for IODE in April 2005 in Oostende (Belgium), IODE was able, for the first time, to organise a sustained training programme for both data and information management. Since then, the programme has been able to organise an average of 8 courses/year over the past 5 years and welcomed over 1000 students from 120 countries. However, due to the limited budget, only 1-2 students per country can be invited to attend each course, which does not ensure the desired long-term impact. Travel time to Ostend is usually long, especially from Asia and Latin America, for both trainers and trainees, which combined with the jet lag and the limited one week duration of the courses, does not provide an optimal learning experience for the students.

In order to address some of these issues, the IOC Project Office for IODE will develop the OceanTeacher Global Classroom Pilot Project during 2013. Its main objectives will be to: (i) establish pilot regional and specialised training centres in India, Russia and Kenya; (ii) extensively test and fine-tune video streaming technology in the pilot regional and specialised training centres; and (iii) organise 2 courses in 2013 that will make use of the distributed and video streaming approach to lecturing. The expected results of this pilot project are to: (i) Expand the learning experience from OceanTeacher's current 20 students/course to hundred(s); (ii) Combine focus on local/national priorities with a global view; (iii) Achieve true lecturer flexibility: make the best lecturers available anywhere in the world without the need for expensive, tiresome and time-consuming travel; (iv) Link classrooms in geographically dispersed locations: Oostende, Obninsk, Hyderabad and Mombasa; and (v) To obtain an improved long-term impact of our training efforts.

The project will undertake the following activities: (i) organisation of training courses in the selected locations (Oostende, Hyderabad, Mombasa) with simultaneous video streaming to other locations; (ii) evaluation of user-friendliness, technical quality and reliability, student appreciation of the method and employed technologies. The evaluation results will be used to determine the feasibility of a global network of training centres (OceanTeacher Global Classroom) using video conferencing/video streaming, planned for 2014-2018.