

## IODE TODAY, READY FOR TOMORROW

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**ABSTRACT:** The paper provides an overview of the progress of the IODE programme since the IODE-XVI Session held in Lisbon, Portugal in October/November 2000. It also describes the Marine Information Management (MIM) Programme within the new IOC structure framework as well as the support staff situation. The paper then proceeds with an overview of progress achieved by the main MIM activities i.e., GLODIR, OceanTeacher, OceanPortal and the ODIN projects (ODINAFRICA and the planned ODINCARSA).

The 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOC Committee on International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) was held in Lisbon, Portugal between 30 October and 9 November 2000. Attended by representatives from over fifty National Oceanographic Data Centres in as many countries, the Session defined the way forward for the IODE programme.

Although the Session was attended by Linda Pikula, President of IAMS LIC, very few Member States sent a marine information expert to the Session. With regard to Marine Information Management, the IODE Session commended the success of the Global Directory of Marine and Freshwater Professionals (GLODIR) and strongly endorsed the development of the Ocean Portal and IODE Resource Kit.

During the year 2001, the IOC Secretariat re-defined its structure which will now be composed of the Ocean Sciences, Ocean Services and Operational Oceanography Sections. A fourth Section, Regions and TEMA, will be transversal. The Ocean Services, after several years of staff reductions (resulting in only one professional staff member at the Secretariat during the year 2000), was able to welcome several new professionals during 2001: Mr Mika Odido (Kenya) as ODINAFRICA regional coordinator for the IOCINCWIO region based in Mombasa, Kenya; Dr Sekou Cisse (Guinée) as ODINAFRICA regional coordinator for the IOCEA region, based in Conakry, Guinée; Dr Murray Brown (USA) as Editor of the OceanTeacher system, based in New Orleans; Mr Greg Reed (Australia) joined the Secretariat in Paris to deal with technical aspects of data exchange; as did Mr Benjamin Sims for web-based information services.

The Marine Information Management Programme of IODE is guided by the IODE Group of Experts on Marine Information Management (GE-MIM). At the 6<sup>th</sup> Session, held in 1999, Dr Muari Tapaswi (India) was elected Chair. The



membership further includes Mrs Pauline Simpson (UK), Heather Cameron (Cameroon), Suzie Davies (Australia), and Sofia Goulala (Greece). The major activity scheduled by GEMIM-VI was the development of a Marine Information Management (MIM) module for the IODE Resource Kit. This was subsequently passed on to the IODE Steering Group for the IODE Resource Kit in which we find Murari Tapaswi, Pauline Simpson, Linda Pikula and Paul Nieuwenhuysen as MIM experts (and IAMSLIC members). Core activities of the GE-MIM are (i) GLODIR; (ii) the OceanPortal; (iii) the OceanTeacher (IODÉ Resource Kit); (iv) the development of regional networks (eg ODINAFRICA); and (v) cooperation in MEDI.

GLODIR development has continued in 2001 and has reached nearly 13,000 records. However, the addition of new records has slowed down and renewed efforts to publicize the product are necessary. A GLODIR poster is therefore planned for early 2002 and will be distributed widely to, inter alia, IAMSLIC Libraries.

The year 2001 has seen the launching of the web-based OceanTeacher composed of two sections: (i) the OceanTeacher manual; and (ii) the OceanTeacher Resource Kit. The Manual is a collection of outlines, notes, examples and miscellaneous classwork documents that should be used together with the Resource Kit. The content of the manual is based on classroom-based training events in ocean data and information management. The Resource Kit contains a range of ocean data and information management materials including software, quality control and analysis strategies and IOC publications. The OceanTeacher system is used during IODE training courses but can also be used for self study. It is available on line through the URL <http://www.oceanteacher.org> but also on CD-ROM.

The MIM section of the Manual contains the following chapters: (i) Introduction Information Centres and Libraries; (ii) The Marine Information Centre; (iii) Library Automation: working with information technology; (iv) MIM: building connections; and (vi) Data Centres vs. Information Centres.

Whereas a first version of the MIM module has been completed in September 2001, substantial work still remains in further enriching the module and IAMSLIC members are invited to participate and contribute in this project.

A first version of the OceanPortal was launched in August 2000, in preparation for IODE-XVI. It was a static set of web pages containing links to ocean data and information URLs categorized according to subject. Whereas this site was quite successful (approx. 10,000 visits/month) it was felt that a database-based solution was called for. The new OceanPortal was thus launched in July 2001 using the URL <http://www.oceanportal.org> and pre-populated with 2,000 URLs of web sites providing online data and information sources. The system allows users to submit URLs (together with description and category keyword). New



submissions are reviewed and cleared by the Editor (Murray Brown). After 2 months an additional 1000 URLs were submitted.

Going back to the definition of a Portal: "A Web site or service that offers a broad array of resources and services, such as e-mail, forums, search engines, and on-line shopping malls." It was realized that additional services would be required to make the OceanPortal a really valuable service. A project proposal was submitted within the framework of intersectoral programmes within UNESCO. The project 'The development of Regional OceanPortals' was approved by the selection committee with a budget of US\$ 400,000 over a period of two years. The project aims at developing three Portals: one for Africa, one for the Caribbean and South America and one for the Western Pacific. The proposal will be submitted to the UNESCO General Conference in October 2001 for approval as part of the workplan for the biennium 2002-2003.

The project will have 2 major objectives: (i) Portal that can provide information, packaged differently for different audiences. These audiences will include decision makers, research & academia, private sector, schools, and general public; (ii) Portal that provides different types of information: URLs (current OceanPortal), Documents (e-Library), Expert information (GLODIR), Events (IODE calendar) and news items. As the portals aim at audiences in developing countries it was realized that a web-only approach would not be successful and thus a printed product is planned as well (newsletter).

UNESCO is currently investigating different portal solutions. It is expected that a choice will be made before the end of 2001. The concepts used by oneFish are used as a guiding example.

At the regional level 2001 has been the start for the Ocean Data and Information Network for Africa (ODINAFRICA). This project, in which 20 African countries participate, and co-financed (US\$ 4 M) by the cooperating countries, the Government of Flanders, and the IOC has the following objectives: (i) assist countries in developing and operating ocean data and information centres; (ii) establish networking between the cooperating countries; and (iii) assist the cooperating countries in developing ocean data and information products and services serving a wide range of audiences including scientists, private sector, decision makers and general public. In its first year of operation the project has identified national coordinators, has organized a first training course (in a series of 3) in ocean data management, has provided nearly 60 PCs for the data and information centres and developed the ODINAFRICA web site, providing information for the project participants, as well as providing a news service on ocean research and management in Africa. The site is developed and maintained by a team composed of Mika Odido, Sekou Cisse, Clive Angwenyi, Sam Ngete, Kizzie Osore, Eunice Onyango, and Estehr Fondo. All, except Sekou Cisse (who provided the translations into French), work at the ODINAFRICA Information



Services Centre based at the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, Mombasa, Kenya.

A first Marine Information Management Training Course will be held in Cape Town, South Africa between 29 October and 9 November 2001.

A major priority within the GE-MIM programme has been the development or identification of an Integrated Library Management System (ILMS) for use mainly in developing countries. Whereas many developing countries have been using UNESCO's Micro CDS/ISIS software to develop library catalogue databases, the software has never been developed further into an ILMS and was therefore not considered as an option. The IODE ResourceKit MIM members compared a number of small to medium size ILMS packages and selected INMAGIC. The software is now being distributed to all ODNAFRICA cooperating countries and an intensive training will be part of the Cape Town training course. The cooperating countries will be requested to develop (or convert their existing CDS/ISIS catalogues) their catalogues with the new software and send regular updates to IOC Paris, where the 20 country catalogues will be merged and served over the WWW.

Following the success of the ODINEA and ODINAFRICA projects, IOC Member States in the Caribbean and South American regions have requested the development of a similar network. A planning workshop for this possible future project will be held in Guayaquil, Ecuador between 24 and 26 October. Possibly a first MIM training course could be organized jointly with the IAMSLIC 2002 conference in Mazatlan, Mexico.