



**IODE Associate Information Units :
A New Opportunity for Marine Information Managers to Participate at the Global Level**

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Abstract

How can the marine information management community participate more actively within the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) Network? Although there are National Coordinators for Marine Information Management, there has been no other mechanism for IODE to communicate directly with other marine information professionals, and it has been a challenge for IODE to reach the broader marine information community. This changed in 2017 at the 24th session of the IOC Committee on IODE when the Committee approved the establishment of Associate Information Units (AIUs). Interested regional or national projects, programmes, institutions or organizations with information activities can apply to become an AIU, and if approved, benefit from the ability to influence the IODE Committee decisions on global marine data and information initiatives. A representative from the Joint IODE-IAMSLIC Group of Experts in Marine Information Management in a Transitional Capacity (GEMIM-in-T), which was tasked with designing and managing the application process, presented this new opportunity to conference attendees. She outlined the benefits, reviewed the Terms of Reference, described the application process, and shared progress-to-date. For anyone wishing to apply, the AIU application form is available at: <http://www.iode.org/aiu>

Keywords: International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange, Associate Information Units, Marine Science Libraries, Marine Information Management, Libraries

Introduction

The International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) programme of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC) was established in 1961. Its purpose is “to enhance marine research, exploitation and development, by facilitating the exchange of oceanographic data and information between participating Member States, and by meeting the needs of users for data and information products.” The network structure of IODE includes 66 National Oceanographic Data Centres, 81 National Coordinators for Oceanographic Data Management, and 42 National Coordinators for Marine Information Management (IODE, 2018a). Recognizing the importance of the wider oceanographic data and information community as key stakeholders in the IODE Network, and to broaden participation beyond the national centres and coordinators, IODE established Associate Data Units and Associate Information Units, both of which can be projects, programmes, institutions or organizations. Associate Data Units (ADUs) were approved by the IOC Committee in 2013 (IODE, 2013), and Associate Information Units (AIUs) were approved in 2017 (IODE, 2017). As of December 2018, there were 29 ADUs (IODE, 2018b) and two AIUs (IODE, 2018c).

The Joint IAMSILIC/IODE Group of Experts on Marine Information Management in a transitional capacity (GE-MIM-in-T), which was established in 2017 (IODE, 2018d), was tasked with promoting the new AIU initiative to marine science libraries, designing and managing the application process, and evaluating applications. This paper focuses on the Associate Information Units, including the benefits, terms of reference, application process, and progress-to-date.

Associate Information Units (AIUs)

An Associate Information Unit or AIU is an organization, institution, project or programme with a marine science information activity. Joining IODE as AIUs offers libraries and information managers the opportunity to collaborate and create projects using their expertise of metadata, document repositories, data management practices, and the organization of knowledge. By establishing AIUs, IODE aims to promote greater communication with the global marine information community, and to offer it a greater voice in strategic planning for data and information products and services.

Key benefits include:

- Being part of an international marine data and information vision
- Influencing the future digital direction of marine information
- Participating in innovative projects, meetings, training courses, workshops
- Sharing and gaining experience in new technology applications
- Being part of a professional network of global marine information managers

Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference describe the profile of an AIU.

1. Be national projects, programmes, institutions or organizations, or regional or international projects, programmes, institutions or organizations (including academia) that carry out marine information management functions, and/or provide marine information services/products.
2. Be staffed by at least one marine information professional (by qualification or experience).
3. Actively participate in the further development of online information services and products.
4. Promote Open Access to information. In this context “Open Access” is defined as “unrestricted access and unrestricted reuse” to/of information.
5. Display a collaborative and networking ethos through:
 - a. Membership/partnership of professional information networks to enrich their own as well as the entire IODE community;
 - b. Sharing expertise and experience with other AIUs, and IODE National Coordinators for Marine Information Management;
 - c. Sharing information on new digital initiatives implemented within the AIU, with the IODE community;
 - d. Encourage organization staff to submit to OceanExpert
6. Receive information on, and contribute to, IODE standards and best practices related to marine information management,
7. Be welcomed to participate in training activities, organized within the framework of the IODE OceanTeacher Global Academy programme,
8. Be welcomed to participate in IODE workshops and projects,
9. Agree to display the IODE/AIU decal logo on your webpage and on marine information products developed in collaboration with IODE,
10. Agree to make available information management documentation (standards, practices, guides...) used by the AIU for the wider marine science library and information community.

Application process

Interested libraries are encouraged to carefully review the Terms of Reference and Criteria before applying. Note that there are four essential criteria: having a web presence, having a collections holdings database, being staffed by a marine information management professional, and actively participating in a professional network.

The steps in the application process are:

1. Complete the application form at: <http://www.iode.org/aiu> and submit to Peter Pissierssens, IODE Programme Coordinator, p.pissierssens@unesco.org
2. GEMIM-in-T reviews the application using the Terms of Reference and Criteria (until

February 2019).

3. GEMIM-in-T submits a recommendation to the IODE Management Group for approval. After February 2019 the IODE Management Group, which will include marine information representatives, will review applications.
4. Applicants are contacted in writing by Peter Pissierssens.
5. If an application is approved, then information about the new AIU will be posted on the IODE site and a Certificate of Accreditation issued.
6. Accreditation is reviewed every 5 years.

Questions should be directed to Peter Pissierssens at p.pissierssens@unesco.org

Progress to date

In 2018 the GEMIM-in-T designed an application process and began promoting the new AIU initiative to the marine information community. Invitations were sent to 30 eligible marine libraries, and presentations were given at the ASFA Advisory Board meeting in June 2018 and the IAMSLIC Annual Conference in October 2018. In the fall of 2018, GEMIM-in-T evaluated applications from two libraries which were then approved by the IODE Management Group. The MBLWHOI Library at the Marine Biological Laboratory Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, and the INSTM Library at the Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer in Salammbou, Tunisia were the first two libraries to join as accredited IODE Associate Information Units. Future plans to encourage applications include continued promotion to marine libraries through blog posts and email campaigns with the support of IAMSLIC. As more AIUs join IODE, the community of marine information managers within the Network will be strengthened.

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