

REVOLUTIONS IN THE IMIS WORLD

Haspeslagh Jan, Klaas Deneudt, Roeland T'Jampens and Edward Vanden Berghe

Vlaams Instituut voor de Zee
Vismijn, Pakhuizen 45-52, B-8400 Oostende, Belgium
E-mail: jan.haspeslagh@vliz.be

The Integrated Marine Information System (IMIS) of the Flanders Marine Institute acts more and more as the benchmarking information resource for its users. Since the conversion to IMIS2, a lot of extra features were added. Apart from the further development of the already existing modules (persons, institutes, literature, events, projects), some modules have been completely redesigned (data sets) and a few new modules are in full development (maps, infrastructure).

The redesigned data set module offers a uniform detailed description of data sets. The present metadata format is, on the one hand, based on an inquiry identifying the existing needs within the scientific user community and the attributes they consider essential for describing their data sets. On the other hand the used metadata format results from applying internationally accepted metadata standards (ISO-19115, EDMED). The description of the data set informs the user with details on the copy of the data set and with details on the data set entity and its content. Details on the content contain information on the measured parameters, the geographical and temporal cover, relevant taxonomic terms, links to the people and institutes responsible and links to the related projects and publications.

New modules in preparation will allow for detailed description of cartographic material (map bibliographic object as an extension of the library module), and scientific research equipment (infrastructure module). Further enhancements to the IMIS-database comprise web-based input facilities (in progress), and several output tools allowing to export predefined sets of records to other applications, e.g. an export to the XML-standard for Felnet (a distributed catalogue) and an export to the ISO-2709 format, used by ASFA.

In the new IMIS, records can be assigned to one or several predefined 'contexts'; information on any of the knowledge items (persons, institutes...) can be made selectively visible based on the context in which IMIS is consulted; examples are the ScheldeMonitor, TROPHOS and ENDIS. On the ScheldeMonitor web site, only the information relevant to the ScheldeMonitor project is shown, though IMIS contains obviously many more records. Working with different contexts has several major advantages over separate databases for each application; the most important of these is that records relevant to more than one context only have to be created once, and can be assigned to several contexts.

Finally, the IMIS database is already in use today as the information platform for the WES-library (Westvlaams Economisch Studiebureau), and two other similar projects are in progress (IMIS as integrated information management tool for the Flanders Hydraulics Laboratory Antwerp; IMIS as the platform for the on line Directory of European Aquatic Information Centres, managed by Euraslic).