

Fifth International Ship Operators Meeting

9 October 1991, Paris, France

Summary notes

Country	Representative	Organisation
Belgium	Mr A Pollentier	MUMMS, Brussels
France	Mr J Binot	IFREMER, Paris
	Mr D Girard (Chairman)	IFREMER, Paris
	Mr Y Keranflec'h	GENAVIR, Toulon
	Mr L Laubier	FREMER, Paris
	Mr P Rouzaud	IFREMER, Toulon
Japan	Mr T Chiba	Nippon Marine
	Mr M Kato	JAMSTEC
	Mr H Nakato	AMSTEC
Netherlands	Mr C van Bergen Henegouw	SOZ
Russia	Dr I Sborshchikov	P Shirshov Institute
USA	Ms E Dieter	NSF
	Dr D F Heinrichs	NSF
UK	Dr C W Fay	NERC
	Dr J Ramster	MAFF
	Mr F P Verdon (Secretary)	NERC
FAO	Mr E Jan de Boer	Fisheries Division
OCEANIC	Ms K Bouton	U Delaware, Lewes

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Australia (Dr A MacEwan), Canada (Mr S B MacPhee), Finland (Ms E Lahdes), Germany (Prof D Kohnke) USA (Dr K Kaulum), UK (Dr S White) and EC (M. J Boissonnas).

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Mr Laubier, on behalf of Mr Papon, President of IFREMER (Institut Français de Recherche pour l'Exploitation de la Mer) extended a welcome to IFREMER, and said that he had looked at the agenda with interest. He said that he particularly liked the concept of "barter" which had been an ongoing item in ISOM, since it presumed bilateral exchanges without money. He pointed out that IFREMER had already operated this way with Japan and UK, and was now discussing a bilateral arrangement with Australia; this would be based upon approximate daily costs of facilities used by either party, and require a balance of utilisation over a three year period. He added that he fully accepted that different nations budgeted their facilities differently, but he saw the France/Australia discussions as a potential model for the future.

Mr Girard then welcomed Dr Sborshchikov to ISOM, and expressed particular pleasure that a Russian representative had finally been able to attend. Dr Sborshchikov said he was pleased to attend, and saw co-operation with other countries as a means of alleviating his country's present problems with respect to "hard" currency: he said that Russia had eight big ships, but could only operate three. He added that his Institute would like to work in the Atlantic, and might be able to offer the capabilities of an icebreaker in return for expedition time on another ship.

Thanking Dr Sborshchikov for his remarks, Mr Girard asked the remainder of those attending to introduce themselves for their and Dr Sborshchikov's benefit. This was done.

2. MINUTES OF FOURTH MEETING

These were accepted as a true record of the meeting held in Hamburg on 9 October 1990.

3. COMMON INPUT FORM FOR DATABASES

Introducing this item, Mr Henegouw said that he had chaired a meeting of representatives of EEC, FAO and OCEANIC at which there had been agreement that the EC input form could be adapted to serve all three databases. Dr Boissonnas had been expected to attend ISOM91, but he sent his apologies because of pressure of the Commission's work. Mr de Boer said that the EC proposed digitising the data to disk, which would then be distributed.

The meeting accepted that the proposal offered a way forward, and asked Mr Henegouw to press EC DGXII to provide evidence of progress.

4. OCEANIC _ US PLANS

Ms Bouton said that she had information about OCEANIC, including lists of what ships and cruises were currently on the system. She emphasised that OCEANIC was keen to assist members of ISOM with information, and was very willing to use the common input form. She said that OCEANIC had recently passed the 500 queries per month milestone, and had information from 17 nations on its database.

In response to a question, Ms Bouton said that future funding looked secure, and OCEANIC were being encouraged to add a graphics capability to their other outputs. Dr Heinrichs noted that, although ISOM had made a commitment to meet some OCEANIC costs over two years, NSF was providing the support as it was cumbersome to collect from the other contributors: he said that NSF might look for a contribution in kind at some stage.

5. SHIP EXCHANGE/BARTER ARRANGEMENTS

Dr Fay said that UK (NERC) had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with IFREMER, and both were now committed to exchanges of ship-time and major facilities. He said that the US (NSF)/UK (NERC) bartering arrangements continued to function well, and RVS had committed an early cruise on the "new" Discovery to American use.

Mr Girard said that IFREMER currently exchanged about 5/6 scientists each year, but in any one cruise there was almost always a foreign scientist. Mr Rouzaud added that co-operation extended to major equipment also, and cited the use of a French SAR on board a Canadian vessel.

Mr Nakato said that Japanese scientists had shared cruises with IFREMER, USA and China.

Mr Henegouw and M. Pollentier both said that bartering was not very practical, since both operated only one ship each.

Mr Ramster noted that for many years the ICES member states had carried on ship bartering and data-pooling arrangements very successfully. Mr de Boer confirmed this and hoped the ICES model could be applied to other Regional Fisheries "umbrella" groups.

Dr Fay asked whether current informal barter arrangements should become slightly more formal by the

introduction of a "standard" form, covering such matters as insurance of the ship and major equipment. After some discussion, it was felt that attempting to formalise the current arrangements could be counterproductive, but Dr Fay's question did open up a debate on the matter of equipment lost at sea. The general position appeared to be that all operators represented at the meeting were theoretically "insured" by their parent governmental body, but that in practice this was unlikely to produce funds for instant replacement of a lost capital asset.

This led on to a discussion about the practicality of recovering equipment lost at sea, and it was felt that ISOM had a role to play in this. It was suggested that each representative should note what equipment was lost, and where, and then if another ship was passing over the area it could make an effort to recover the equipment, particularly if a submersible were available. Mr Pollentier reported that he already had an arrangement with the Royal Belgian Navy that they conducted "exercises" in a particular area if he had lost equipment there, and he thought this privilege might be extended to others within the operational area of the Navy.

Mr Girard offered to prepare a draft form for reporting equipment losses, and Ms Bouton said that OCEANIC would like to help be, possibly, setting up a "catastrophe" notice board on which such losses could be displayed. These suggestions were welcomed, and Mr Henegouw was asked to keep the matter active.

6. UPDATE ON NEW/REFIT SHIP STATUS

Mr Verdon (UK) showed some pictures of the current state-of-play in the conversion of RRS Discovery. He reported that halfway through the projected conversion period, most of the steel structure was complete, and he expected the fitting out to begin shortly. He said that the predicted completion date had slipped slightly, and others said this was not unusual. Dr Fay reported that NERC's new icebreaker, RRS James Clark Ross, had been delivered to NERC and was at that precise time alongside the dock in RVS Barry being prepared for her first scientific cruise. He showed some pictures of the ship. Mr Ramster reported that MAFF/UK hoped to begin planning a new 60 metre Fisheries Research Vessel in 1992 and that a private management scheme for the two SOAFD (UK) research vessels had just come into effect.

Mr Nakato (Japan) showed a video of the Shinkai 6500, which was now operational. He said that it had carried out some 60 dives during her maiden voyage of 1990 fiscal year. The submersible, supported by its mother ship, the Yokosuka, could be launched and recovered in seas as high as sea state 4. It could spend 3-4 hours on the bottom, but this was because operating policy dictated that it only dive between sunup and sunset.

M. Rouzaud (France) presented a brochure about the Atalante, which had been handed over to IFREMER about a year ago. He said that all those who had used the vessel were very pleased with it, but that her capabilities had not yet been fully stretched.

Mr Henegouw (NL) reported that NIOZ had recently taken delivery of a new 60m ship for operations in the North Sea. The vessel had been named the Pelagia.

Ms. Dieter (USA) presented a brochure about the new AGOR23, named the Thomas W Thompson, which had been handed over to the University of Washington in July 1991. The design of the vessel showed considerable similarities to that of the "new" RRS Discovery, prompting comments that maybe there should be a "standard" oceanographic vessel! Ms Dieter also reported that the conversion of RV Knorr had been completed, and the ship was returning to Wood's Hole. Work was now proceeding well on the second conversion, RV Melville, and this ship was expected to return to Scripps Institute of Oceanography in February 1992. She was pleased to say that both vessels were expected to play a full part in the US WOCE programme in 1992. Finally, Ms Dieter said that a new icebreaker, the Nathaniel B Palmer was under

construction in Louisiana, and was due to be handed over to NSF's Division of Polar Programmes in March 1992 on a 10 year lease. Dr Heinrichs said that, in the longer term, the Office of Naval Research had agreed to build Agor 24, which would replace the RV Thomas Washington at Scripps in about 1995, and Agor 25, which would replace the Atlantis II at Wood's Hole in about 1997. At that time, RV Knorr would be adapted to serve as support ship for the submersible Alvin. An outline specification had also been issued for an Arctic ship, with the University of Alaska taking the lead in the design process.

7. GLOBAL CHANGE

Dr Heinrichs distributed an NSF booklet about opportunities for research into Global Change. He said that NSF appreciated the "glossy" nature of the booklet, but that it did provide a list of contacts in various disciplines and had been welcomed for that information. He noted that NSF expected to be given the bulk of its bid for funds in 1992 for research into global change. Dr Heinrichs then identified the majority of the cruise commitments associated with Global Change, and other representatives gave brief comments on their plans.

8. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

- (i) Submersible activities

Dr Heinrichs said that the current priority assignment for submersibles in USA was NSF/ONR/NOAA science - other science - commercial users. After 1992, a proposal was being considered to drop the national priority, and suggest that international science should have some priority. He said that NSF could not provide support for international programmes, but would consider barter for programmes that might otherwise have to be paid for. He hoped that other nations with submersibles - i.e. IFREMÉR, JAMSTEC, USSR - would be equally responsive, and that ISOM would help in this process.

- (ii) Practical problems

Dr Heinrichs noted that IFREMÉR had recently had to withdraw from a cruise that was an integral part of a two-year, two ship exercise. NSF had managed to recover some of the "lost" cruise time, but he sought the endorsement of ISOM to the principle that two-ship programmes ought not to be changed without international agreement. This view was agreed.

- (iii) Conference

Mr Girard advised the meeting that IFREMÉR and NERC were jointly organising a symposium in late 1993 on trends and needs in marine research equipment. He suggested that the symposium could be associated with OCEANS93 in either Brest or Nice, and he would be contacting members of ISOM about representation.

- (iv) Clearance forms

Mr Ramster said that he had received a new UN form for notification of clearance to work in EEZ waters, and he said that he would send a copy for circulation with the minutes of the meeting. Mr Henegouw said that he saw little difference from the old form, but M. Rouzaud said that he had asked for more information about the new form.

- (v) Future of ISOM

Dr Fay asked whether ISOM should continue to meet on a regular basis, and whether additional

representation should be invited. Mr Girard said that it was useful to ask these questions, and they should be a standing item on future agenda. He added that when doubt was expressed about continuance of the meetings, they should stop.

- (vi) Attendance in Tokyo

Dr Fay asked how many people would be likely to attend the meeting in Tokyo; he said that NERC would probably have a single representative. Mr Girard said that IFREMER would also probably have a single representative. Dr Heinrichs said that NSF would probably be represented by Ms Dieter and Mrs Rom, who had recently rejoined Ocean Sciences Division. Mr de Boer said that he would try to combine ISOM with other travelling that he had to do. Dr Sborshchikov and Mr Henegouw both indicated that they would have at most a single representative.

9. REPLACEMENT OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Mr Girard thanked Mr Verdon for his work over the past five years, and presented him with a small token on behalf of the meeting. There was then general acclaim for Mr Henegouw as replacement.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Mr Nakato suggested Monday 26 October 1992 as the date of the next meeting, immediately following Techno-Ocean '92 in Yokohama. This was agreed. Mr Nakato also extended an invitation to ISOM Members to visit JAMSTEC on Tuesday 27 October 1992, and this was noted.

Mr Girard suggested that ISOM93 could be held in France again, in association with OCEANS93 and the equipment symposium.

1st draft by Frank Verdon, 15 October 1991

revised version Cok van Bergen Henegouw, 15 May 1992