IODE’s Training Programme: An Overview

During the intersessional period, the training component of IODE was marked by continuous development and regional expansion. As it was recommended during IODE-XV, the regional approach laid the foundation for IODE-TEMA activities. Centres of excellence for providing regular training were identified in some regions (Japan, Russia). More than 15 short-training courses (usually up to two weeks) were arranged in Japan, Denmark, Thailand, Iran, Russia (Gelendzhik, Obninsk), India, Argentina, Kenya, South Africa, France, Greece, Brazil. During these courses, more than 100 participants received training in oceanographic data management. The programmes of the courses covered different aspects of data and information management and were also used for making local experts acquainted with the IOC regional activities and IODE data and information exchange policy. This helps to increase awareness of the system, its benefits and provides an opportunity to improve national and regional data and information management capabilities.

In addition to the above training courses, scientific workshops on different issues of ocean data and information management were held, allowing experts from developed and developing countries to share information and to present project results. Thus, scientific workshops served as a valuable source of education to scientists and planners. Most of these activities were held in support of ongoing programmes and with close co-operation with the countries of the regions.

During the intersessional period modern ways of providing training were developed. The ODINEA CD-ROM, developed during the Regional Training Course on Ocean Data Management, Mobasa, Kenya, 1-11 December 1997, enables students of the training courses to re-visit the topics covered during the course and to utilize the software tools on local datasets.

Details on the ODINEA CD-ROM, are presented in the core document “A toolkit of Data and Information Management Modules for ICAM and Coastal Oceanography Programmes”. The document describes steps involving data and information management in the marine science research process, from the scientific programme design to the data products and reports. The system utilizes an html interface which provides great flexibility for adding content or for opening external files in a variety of formats (necessary plug-ins are provided), or for running external applications, in DOS or WINDOWS environment.

Throughout the document, students can open additional information sources (GO! Button) install software (INSTALL button), run applications (RUN button) without leaving the WWW browser client. The ODINEA CD-ROM contains over 500 MB of information and data. The current version includes ArcExplorer, ATLAST, CDS/ISIS, Collage, OceanPC (OPC1, OPC2, ODB1), QuickBASIC 4.5, ROSWin and Surfer as scientific applications, as well as plug-ins for viewing PDF files (Acrobat Reader 3.0), MS Excel 97 spreadsheets, and MS Word 97 documents. It also contains Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0 as the HTML browser client.

In accordance with the IODE-XV recommendations, an effort was made to conduct an evaluation of the IODE-TEMA activities in order to identify the effectiveness of training and support efforts, short comings and success stories. A questionnaire, approved by the IODE officers was circulated to IODE National co-ordinators and Directors of NODCs, RNODCs and WDCs. They were requested to provide information on the observations made and the experience gained in respect of the IODE-TEMA activities, in particular in
cases when their Centres/Institutes organised or participated in courses related to IODE. They were also invited to provide suggestions, which could, in their opinion improve effectiveness of training within IODE-TEMA. Only five countries responded to the above request. China, Argentina and Turkey submitted the above mentioned questionnaire, properly completed by scientists of their Centre/Institute who attended a training course. India and Egypt provided suggestions, which in their opinion may improve the effectiveness of IODE training courses. Taking into account that during the last few years hundreds of scientists, coming from a large number of countries received training, the responds received do not allow the extraction of any reasonable conclusions.

As it was recommended during IODE-XV, an effort was made to explore the possibilities for the various data centres to offer long-term training (from a few months to 2-3 years). A letter, approved by the IODE officers, was circulated to all IODE National co-ordinators and Directors of NODCs, RNODCs and WDCs. They were invited to provide information on the type of training they would be prepared to offer to IOC, in the framework of the IOC/IODE-TEMA programme and the needs for long-term training. Two counties, USA and Greece responded to the request and a scientist from the recently established DNA in Georgia was supported to have long-term (two months) on-the-job training in the Hellenic National Oceanographic Data Centre. Unfortunately, the lack of funds did not permit IODE to meet other requests for long-term training.

In response to the request from regions or Member States, an IODE mission to make feasibility study was arranged. The result of this mission was the development of a DNA, Georgia and the establishment of effective regional cooperation through data and information exchange networks. Unfortunately, the luck of funds did not permit IODE to meet other requests for missions from Member States. Results of the above mentioned mission and reports of the training courses have been published and widely distributed.

Themes that must be added?:
- New challenges identified by UNCED, UNCLOS and GOOS.
- Recommendations to make TEMA most effective.
- Constraints in the implementation of TEMA activities (e.g., inadequate funding)
- Voluntary Co-operation Programme. I had prepared a circular letter for the IOC Executive Secretary. Was it sent? Was it any respond to it?

2. IOC-INCO-ROPME Training Course on Oceanographic Data and Information Management Tehran, Iran 19-20 October 1997

3. IOC-WESTPAC Training Workshop on Operational Data and Information Systems in the Gulf of Thailand Bangkok, Thailand 18-21 November 1997

4. Training Course on Management of Marine Data and Information for the IOCINCWIO Region Mombasa, Kenya 1-11 December 1997

5. IOC/IODE-NIO Training Course on Oceanographic Data and Information Management Goa, India 17-27 October 1998

6. IOC-Side-Flanders-SFRI Workshop on Ocean Data Management in the IOCINCWIO Region Capetown, South Africa 20 November – 11 December 1998

7. IOC/IODE Training Course for trainers from countries of Eastern Europe and Republics of former USSR on Oceanographic Data Management Obninsk, Russia 6-17 July 1998

8. IODE Training on Oceanographic Data and Information Management for the Spanish-Speaking Countries of Central and South America Rio Grande, RS, Brazil 20-29 September 1999

9. Workshop – Training Course on marine data and meta-data quality control for Central and Western Mediterranean Sea Brest, France 22 November to 3 December 1999

10. Workshop - Training Course on marine data and meta-data quality control for Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean region Athens, Greece 29 November to 10 December 1999