

FOREWORD

It is my pleasure to present the twenty-second Annual Report of the Data Buoy Co-operation Panel, describing the Panel's activities during 2008.

As you will note, the format is somewhat different from earlier years. We have used the possibilities afforded by the CD-ROM format to incorporate a wealth of new information, including the Annual Report of the Ship Observations Team and other reference material such as workshop presentations, Edition Eight of the DBCP Implementation Strategy (DBCP TD. No. 15), the current status of pilot projects and so on.

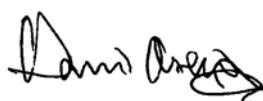
A number of new initiatives have been created, to serve both the Panel's immediate needs and those of the wider community. Key amongst those are:

- Workshops, to engage with the users of buoy data and establish their current priorities and future needs, and where appropriate to establish pilot projects: in 2008 we co-hosted a workshop with the JCOMM Expert Team on Wind Waves and Storm Surges to establish priorities for reporting directional wave spectral data from data buoys;
- Training programmes, to engage new countries in the work of the Panel, both by increasing awareness and competence in the use of buoy data, and by fostering collaborative activities and deployment opportunities in critical and data-sparse areas: the first of these, directed at key personnel from the African region, was held at Ostend in June 2007, and plans were laid during 2008 for a further in-region workshop in East Africa in 2009;
- Pilot projects, to rigorously evaluate new technologies that might ultimately enhance both the research and operational capabilities of data buoys: the first example, the DBCP Iridium Pilot Project, continues to evaluate the global performance of the Iridium satellite system in drifting buoys, while three new Pilot Projects have been created to evaluate the new Argos 2-way satellite system and the recovery of two-dimensional wave spectral data from both moored and drifting buoys;
- Provision of interim technical support to new observing systems as part of a move to a more inclusive JCOMMOPS organization: the first system to benefit from this outreach will be the OceanSITES network of ocean reference platforms, but we hope that others may follow.

At its recent sessions in La Jolla (October 2006), Jeju (October 2007) and Cape Town (October 2008), the Panel acted very positively to set aside funds to support these new activities.

As regards organizational matters, the search to identify a possible new home for JCOMMOPS, the technical support function within JCOMM that is presently staffed by the DBCP/SOOP-IP and Argo technical co-ordinators, has come to a conclusion. Many institutions responded to the call for Letters of Intent, and a rigorous initial sift narrowed the field down to three possible candidates: NOAA in the USA, INCOIS in India, and CLS/IFREMER in France. A final selection process involving the JCOMMOPS stakeholder community is currently under way, and it is hoped that the outcome will place JCOMMOPS and its staff on a much more secure footing for the years ahead.

Overall, I feel confident that the Panel is both well placed and enthusiastic to continue its pivotal role in ensuring the smooth flow of observations and other data from the oceans to a wide user community, and in addressing new observational and organizational challenges.



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