13. A Plan for a Spanish Contribution to the GDP in the Western Mediterranean Sea, SOCIB, a New Open Infrastructure in the Balearic Islands

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Abstract: The Coastal Ocean Observing and Forecasting System located in the Balearic (SOCIB), foresee to deploy, every year, between 5-10 drifters in the western Mediterranean Sea. The deployments of the SOCIB's Argo and surface drifter facility will be part of the Spanish contribution to the Global Drifter Program. The deployments will begin at the end of 2011 and are orientated to fulfill specific scientific objectives in the framework of research projects. During the first three years, the deployments will be focused to monitor the North/South exchange of Mediterranean and Atlantic waters through the Balearic channels and will contribute to the overall objective of understanding the environmental factors that determine the spawning areas of the Atlantic Bluefin tuna stock in the Western Mediterranean Sea.

SOCIB is a new observing system that implements up-to-date monitoring technologies to deliver new insight into coastal ocean variability. It will trigger new theoretical and technological developments, increasing our understanding of open ocean, coastal and near shore processes; contributing to a more science based and sustainable management of the oceans and coastal areas. SOCIB is a facility of facilities, covering from the coast to the open sea, that includes, among others a nearshore beach monitoring facility, HF radar, gliders and AUV's, moorings, satellite, drifters, Argo profilers and modeling. SOCIB will provide streams of oceanographic data and modeling services to support operational oceanography in a European and international framework, therefore also contributing to the needs of marine and coastal research in a global change context. SOCIB takes profit of the strategic position of the Balearic Island at the Atlantic/Mediterranean transition area, one of the 'hot spots' of biodiversity in the world's oceans.