

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC
COMMISSION (OF UNESCO)

JOINT WMO/IOC TECHNICAL COMMISSION FOR
OCEANOGRAPHY AND MARINE METEOROLOGY
(JCOMM)

SHIP OBSERVATIONS TEAM (SOT)

SEVENTH SESSION

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ITEM: 3.3

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REPORT FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

(Submitted by Graeme Ball (Australia), SOT Chairperson)

Summary and purpose of the document

This document contains a brief report by Mr Graeme Ball, Chairperson of the SOT, regarding his activities in support of the SOT during the past intersessional period. The document also provides a status on action items requiring attention by the Chairperson of the SOT.

ACTION PROPOSED

The Team will review the information contained in this report, and comment and make decisions or recommendations as appropriate. See part A for the details of recommended actions.

Appendix: A – List of Action Items

- A - DRAFT TEXT FOR INCLUSION IN THE FINAL REPORT

3.3.1. Mr Graeme Ball reported on the activities of the SOT Chairperson during the intersessional period, as well as some key activities of the Team. He also paid tribute to Ms Julie Fletcher (MSNZ), the former Chair of the VOS Panel, who passed away at the beginning of 2013 from a short illness. He expressed his gratitude to the work of the Secretariat and the Chairs of the SOOPIP and VOSP, in particular Ms Sarah North for stepping in as the interim VOSP Chair. He also thanked the Meteorological Service of Canada for hosting the Seventh session of the Ship Observations Team.

3.3.2. Mr Ball particularly noted the work of the Task Team on Callsign Masking and Encoding, especially Mr Scott Woodruff (NOAA) and Mr Etienne Charpentier (WMO), for preparing the **ENCODE** proposal to JCOMM-4. He also noted the work of the Task Team on Metadata for WMO Publication 47 for preparing the Pub47 proposal to JCOMM-4. Mr Ball reported that the first proposal was noted by JCOMM-4, which requested the SOT to finalise it as soon as possible through the Commission for Basic Systems (CBS). He was pleased to announce that the second proposal was subsequently approved by JCOMM.

3.3.3. Mr Ball also thanked the remaining Task Teams for their diligence in addressing the important ongoing activities during the intersessional period. He also thanked the Team for their continuing efforts, often under increasing resource pressures, to maintain their national programs in support of SOT.

3.3.4. Mr Ball noted a range of key activities he was involved in during the intersessional period, including: (1) assisting with the drafting of the SOT Implementation Strategy, (2) the appointment of the JCOMMOPS Ship Coordinator / SOT Technical Coordinator, (3) development of the VOS Ancillary Pilot Project, (4) updating WMO No. 8 in collaboration with the VOSP Chair to incorporate the observing practices contained in the FM-13 SHIP code, (5) recommending the appointment of Ms Sarah North as the interim VOSP Chair, (6) maintaining the VOS website, (7) discussion with GHRSSST and (8) a key role in the planning of SOT-7.

3.3.5. Mr Ball attended the following international meetings during the intersessional period: (1) informally representing SOT at DBCP-27, Geneva, Switzerland, September 2011, (2) formally representing SOT at the Extreme Seas Project Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland, October 2011 and (3) informally representing SOT at DBCP-28, Fremantle, Australia, September 2012.

3.3.6. The meeting agreed to establish the following groups:

- (i) An *ad-hoc* Working Group, as part of the Task Team on Instrument Standards, to develop the requirements for SST and related variables from ships in consultation with GHRSSST [membership to be agreed upon by SOT-7].
- (ii) A Working Group, as part of the Task Team on Instrument Standards, to investigate and report on new and emerging technologies [membership to be agreed upon by SOT-7].

7. The meeting decided on the following action items:

- (i) To maintain the list of international Port Meteorological Officers in **Find-a-PMO (action; SOT Chair; ongoing)**;
- (ii) To continue to maintain the VOS website (**action; SOT Chair; ongoing**)

- B - SUMMARY OF KEY INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Review and approve the SOT-6 Final Report

The SOT Chair reviewed and approved the Final Report from SOT-6 prepared by the Secretariat.

2. DBCP-SOT Drifter Donor Program

The SOT Chair worked closely with the VOSP Chair to further develop the documentation for the DBCP-SOT Donor Drifter Program. A report on the status of this initiative will be given under agenda item 7.2.7.

3. SOT Implementation Strategy

The SOT Chair, in conjunction with the Secretariat, developed a draft SOT Implementation Strategy. This was subsequently circulated to the SOOPIP and VOSP Chairs for comment and will be presented under agenda item 10.

4. SOT/VOS Status Report to OCG

The VOSP Chair, in consultation with and on behalf of a holidaying SOT Chair, provided the OPA Coordinator with a status report on SOT and VOS activities, including likely work plans through to 2017.

5. Filling the vacant VOSP Chair position

The SOT Chair recommended to the WMO Secretariat and the OPA Coordinator that Ms Sarah North (Met Office, UK) be appointed as the interim VOSP Chair following the passing of Ms Julie Fletcher (MSNZ). Ms North agreed to accept the position until SOT-7. The appointment of Ms North was subsequently confirmed.

The SOT Chair has initiated discussion with a suitable candidate to fill the vacancy on a long-term basis. The SOT Chair might be in a position to advise the Team on the outcome of these discussions under agenda item 13.2.

6. Appointment of the JCOMMOPS Ship Coordinator (SOT Technical Coordinator)

The SOT Chair assisted the selection panel in choosing the successful applicant for the position of JCOMMOPS Ship Coordinator (SOT Technical Coordinator).

Once the position was confirmed and accepted, the SOT Chair welcomed Mr Martin Kramp as the new SOT Technical Coordinator on behalf of the Team.

7. JCOMMOPS Teleconference

Whilst unavailable to participate in the JCOMMOPS Teleconference in February 2013, the SOT Chair briefed Ms Sarah North (appointed to represent the SOT at the teleconference) on the key SOT tasks to be performed by the newly appointed SOT Technical Coordinator.

8. PAME (Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment)

PAME I-2012 adopted a record of decision where the United States government agreed to submit a report to PAME II-2012 to educate member governments on the International Voluntary Observing Ships (VOS) Scheme, how it supports Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA) Recommendation III(A) and other PAME strategic goals.

In response to the PAME-I decision, Mr Edward Young (NOAA) contacted the SOT Chair for guidance about the VOS Scheme, particularly with regards to extending the VOS capabilities in the South Pacific.

9. SOT Annual Report

The SOT Chair, in consultation with the SOOPIP and VOSP Chairs, developed the document templates for the 2011 and 2012 SOT National Reports on behalf of WMO.

10. Find-a-PMO

The SOT Chair maintained the contact details of the Port Meteorological Officers in the Google Earth application **Find-a-PMO**¹ from the submitted 2010 and 2011 SOT National Reports and other communication received during 2010 and 2011.

The contact details in **Find-a-PMO** will be reviewed on the basis of the submitted 2012 SOT National Reports at the earliest opportunity following SOT-7.

11. Extreme Seas Project

The SOT Chair and VOSP Chair participated in the Extreme Seas Project Meeting in Geneva, October 2011. This was an industry meeting aimed at improving wave observations, maritime safety and ship design.

The SOT Chair provided an overview of the SOT sampling programs. The ensuing discussion was fundamental in proposing the VOS Ancillary Pilot Project.

12. VOS Ancillary Pilot Project

The SOT Chair worked closely with the VOSP Chair to develop and implement the VOS Ancillary Pilot Project. A report on the status of the VOS Ancillary Pilot Project will be given under agenda item 7.3.1.

13. JCOMM Document Review

The SOT Chair worked closely with the VOSP Chair to begin updating WMO No. 8 Part II Chapter 4 Marine Observations (WMO Guide to Meteorological Instruments and Methods of Observation) to include the observing practices contained in the FM-13 SHIP code (WMO No. 306 Manual on Codes).

This activity lapsed late in 2012 due to the ill-health of the (then) VOSP Chair. This task was subsequently taken over in early 2013 by Dr Elizabeth Kent (National Oceanography Centre, UK) as the lead, on behalf of the Task Team on Instrument standards.

¹ http://www.bom.gov.au/jcomm/vos/find_pmo.html

14. VOS Website

The SOT Chair, on behalf of the Task Team on VOS Recruitment and Programme Promotion, maintained the VOS website. Details of the changes are documented on the website and will be further discussed under agenda item 12.2.

Requests have recently been received for additional changes to be made to the content of the website, particularly regarding VOSCLim. These suggested changes will be completed at the earliest opportunity following SOT-7.

15. Logo Design

The SOT Chair revised the VOSCLim logo and created a new Port Meteorological Officer logo. Both logos are based on the existing VOS logo and are prominently displayed on the VOS website.

16. WOC Initiatives

Whilst unable to attend the WOC (World Ocean Council) Smart Ocean/Smart Industries Workshop in December 2011, the SOT Chair briefed Ms Sarah North (appointed to represent the SOT at the workshop) on the relationship between SOT and WOC, and how the WOC could promote the SOT and its sampling programs.

17. Consultation with GHRSSST

The SOT Chair liaised with Mrs Helen Beggs (GHRSSST) with regards to an action item arising from SOT-6. The status of the relevant action item is given in Appendix A

18. All-Ships Log

The SOT Chair provided advice to an Australian group keen to implement a marine debris reporting system. The SOT Chair indicated that when the reporting system was mature, it might be feasible to ask KNMI to implement a "Marine Debris" button in TurboWin to log marine debris reports in the same way that VOS phenomena reports are logged.

There has been no further contact with the group, or action on this topic during the past 18 months.

19. SOT-7 Planning

The SOT Chair played a key role in the planning of SOT-7. This included an active role in preparing the draft program and approving the final program, assisting the Meteorological Service of Canada with a list of meeting requirements and appointing the session Chairs for the Science and Technical Workshop and the National Reports.

20. SOT-8 Pre-planning

The SOT Chair has initiated discussion with a prospective host for SOT-8 in 2015. The SOT Chair might be in a position to advise the Team on the outcome of these discussions under agenda item 15.

21. Meetings Attended

- a. DBCP-27, Geneva, Switzerland, September 2011 (informal SOT representation)
- b. Extreme Seas Project Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland, October 2011 (formal)
- c. DBCP-28, Fremantle Australia, September 2012 (informal)

22. Task Team Participation

- a. Chair of Task Team on Metadata for WMO No. 41 (Pub41)
- b. Chair of Task Team on Callsign Masking and Encoding
- c. Member of Task Team on VOS Recruitment and Programme Promotion
- d. Member of Task Team on Instrument Standards
- e. Member of Task Team on Satellite Communications

Appendices: A – List of Action Items

APPENDIX A

LIST OF ACTION ITEMS

No	Ref	Action item	By	Lead	Deadline	Status	% Done
4	2.2(6-3) 10.1	The Team agreed that the roles of JCOMM and OceanScope with regard to the WOC had to be clarified relatively quickly	SOT Chair	G. Ball	June 2011	Done. Completed in preparation for WOC sponsored meeting attended by Sarah North for SOT.	100
26	5.1.2.3	The Team agreed to review the SOT overarching implementation plan that was adopted at SOT-3, and to include in it an SOT strategy for addressing the full range of observational data requirements (drawn essentially from the RRR, and including those of WMO, OOPC, GCOS, operational oceanography and other applications) and gaps in terms of ship observations, and requested the Chair, in liaison with the VOSP and SOOPIP Chairs, and the Secretariat to update the document for review at SOT-7	SOT Chair	G. Ball	SOT-7	Done. Drafted by SOT Chair in consultation with VOSP & SOOPIP Chairs, and the Secretariat	100
34	5.2.2.8	the SOT Chair to contact the US VOS Program Manager in relation to the SAMOS Project and encourage a close cooperation between the US PMOs and SAMOS ships	G. Ball	G. Ball	SOT-7	Done. Contact made with Chair SAMOS and US VOS Program Manager.	100
35	5.2.5.2	The Team noted the positive energy of the OceanScope Working Group, but stressed that it was important to build a future program also based on existing infrastructure and institutions, including the work of the Team. It was desirable to present a unified voice of all actors in ocean observations from commercial ships to the shipping industry. The Team decided to comment along these lines when the OceanScope report was made public for comment	VOSP, SOOPIP, and SOT chairs	G. Ball	by OceanScop e comment deadline presumed mid-2011	No action. No record of the Oceanscope report being provided.	0

No	Ref	Action item	By	Lead	Deadline	Status	% Done
61	6.6.8(2)	The new BUFR descriptors, templates, and BUFR table entries constituting the proposal shall then be submitted to the CBS Inter Programme Expert Team on Data Representation and Codes (IPET-DRC) for its meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, September 2010 in the view to have the proposal endorsed by the CBS-XV in 2012 for inclusion of appropriate elements in the WMO Manual on Codes	SOT Chair	G. Ball	Sept 2011	Note done	0
103	9.1.1.14	The Team noted that Australia is also using tighter criteria for its VOS, and requested G. Ball to provide these criteria to the RTMC	G. Ball	G. Ball	asap	Done.	100
108	9.1.3.6	the SOT and VOSP Chairs to play an active role in TT-DMVOS discussions and provide SOT input as appropriate regarding the modernization of the MCSS	G. Ball & J. Fletcher	G. Ball	asap	Done (participation in TT-MCSS)	100
144	9.4.5 (3)	That the SOT in collaboration with the ETMC provides views on the emerging new HQC standard, and also continues to suggest how data and products will most effectively be served to a broad spectrum of users, e.g., through possibly complementary roles of the GCCs, RMs, and ICOADS	SOT, TT-DMVOS, TT-MOCS	G. Ball	ongoing	Considered by ETMC-4. Ongoing.	80
145	10.1.2 (1)	Develop simple information to bring to industry at a high level on what is being done by which companies, what the potential is, where the scientific need is	SOT, VOSP, and SOOPIP chairs in collaboration with IOCCP, OceanScope, and World Ocean Council	G. Ball	by fall 2011	Partly done. Continuing to work with WOC	30

No	Ref	Action item	By	Lead	Deadline	Status	% Done
146	10.2.2(2)	Try to positively use the energy of all the initiatives to approach the shipping industry, the IMO and ICS in a coordinated way	SOT, VOSP, and SOOPIP chairs in collaboration with IOCCP, OceanScope, and World Ocean Council	G. Ball	SOT-7	Partly done. Continuing to work with WOC. Some contact with ICS.	30
158		Chair to investigate establishment of an SOT TT or working group on emerging technology developments and to report at SOT-7	Chair	G. Ball	SOT-7	Recommend that a Working Group, under TT-IS, be established to review/report on new and emerging technologies.	100
163	11.2.6 (1).	Ad hoc committee (G. Ball, J. Fletcher, G. Goni, C. Clark, M. Belbeoch, S. North, Secretariat) to review the proposal for the establishment of a Cruise Technical Coordinator position within JCOMMOPS, propose ToR, and provide feedback to the OCG, and consider funding part of it as of 2012, and generic yearly budget.	Ad hoc committee	G. Ball	end 2011	Completed. Ship Coordinator recruited	100
164	2.2(3-3) 11.2.6 (2).	The SOT Chair to encourage SOT participating countries to augment their contributions to JCOMMOPS for eventually achieving appropriate support to the ship-based observation programmes	SOT chair	G. Ball	on-going	No action. Most NMS are facing increasing fiscal pressures and would be unlikely to increase their voluntary contributions.	0
165	3.4.9(1) 11.2.6 (3).	The SOT Chair to consult with the VOSP Chair, the SOOPIP Chair, and the ASAP Task Team Chair, and provide a list of reasonable priorities to the SOT TC & JCOMMOPS for the next intersessional period, with regard to SOT support.	SOT chair	G. Ball	end 2011	Done. Provided to JCOMMOPS	100
166	11.2.9	Graeme Ball to contact the GDC in the view to possibly install a drifter onboard the Lady Amber and use it as a simple AWS	G. Ball	G. Ball	ASAP	GDC had No spare buoys in Fremantle. PMO Fremantle was also unavailable at the time of the ship's visit to Fremantle.	100

No	Ref	Action item	By	Lead	Deadline	Status	% Done
167	12.1.3	the VOSP, SOOPIP, and ASAP TT Chairpersons to comment and provide feedback to the SOT Chairperson regarding changes to the format of the National Report	VOSP, SOOPIP ASAP TT chairs	G. Ball	Sept 2011	No changes requested	100
36	5.2.6.3	Ian Barton and the SOT Chair to identify people for the proposed ad hoc working group and decide on the opportunity to establish a SOT/GHRSSST pilot project	I. Barton & G. Ball	I. Barton	SOT-7	<p>Liaised with H. Beggs (new GHRSSST contact in lieu of I. Barton).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was agreed that a working group (WG) be established to better define the requirements for SST and associated variables in conjunction with GHRSSST. • It was agreed that a Pilot Project was not appropriate because the high cost of specialised SST equipment would be out of range of most operational programs. The SOT could assist GHRSSST to install specialised SST instruments on ships by requesting PMOs to identify and liaise with potential vessels to carry the equipment. <p>It is recommended that SOT participation in the ad-hoc WG be through TT-IS. GHRSSST has nominated Viva Banzon, Helen Beggs and Werenfrid Wimmer to participate in the WG.</p>	100