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INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION  
COMMISSION OCÉANOGRAPHIQUE INTERGOUVERNEMENTALE  
COMISIÓN OCEANOGRÁFICA INTERGUBERNAMENTAL  
МЕЖПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВЕННАЯ ОКЕАНОГРАФИЧЕСКАЯ КОМИССИЯ  
اللجنة الدولية الحكومية لعلوم المحيطات  
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Subject: SIMORC recommendation

To whom it may concern

The **Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC)** adopted a policy on oceanographic data exchange to promote and to facilitate a wide availability and access to oceanographic and marine data and information to enhance marine research, exploitation and development worldwide. To deal with oceanographic data and information management, the IOC, in 1961, established the **International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange Programme (IOC/IODE)**. This programme now has the following terms of reference:

- (i) to facilitate and promote the exchange of all marine data and information including metadata, products and information in real-time, near real-time and delayed mode;
- (ii) to ensure the long-term archival, management and services of all marine data and information;
- (iii) to promote the use of international standards, and develop or help in the development of standards and methods for the global exchange of marine data and information, using the most appropriate information management and information technology;
- (iv) to assist Member States to acquire the necessary capacity to manage marine data and information and become partners in the IODE network; and
- (v) to support international scientific and operational marine programmes of IOC and WMO and their sponsor organizations with advice and data management services.

Therefore the IOC/IODE is proud to be a partner in the development and implementation of the SIMORC service (System of Industry Metocean data for the Offshore and Research Communities), which aims at facilitating overview, access and long-term storage of metocean data sets that have been, and continue to be, collected by the oil & gas industry at various sites on the globe, to serve a wide range of users, including contributing parties, the scientific community and other possible users.

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The SIMORC project is financially supported by the European Commission and implemented by experienced ocean data management specialists, together with the International Association of Oil & Gas Producers (OGP). At present, six major oil & gas companies (Shell, Total, BP, Chevron, Statoil and Hydro) will contribute data sets; it is expected that other companies will follow.

The data sets that will be made available through the SIMORC service are likely to be valuable for the scientific community and can be used to (i) develop, fine-tune, and verify numerical models (waves, storm surges, ecosystem, etc.); (ii) to analyse metocean trends including long term trends (particularly using relatively long-term series in under-sampled regions); and (iii) to study algal blooms, temporal and spatial variability of ocean currents, etc. Use of these data is likely to enhance understanding of both local and regional ocean [& marine] systems.

The products and services generated from the SIMORC data will be beneficial both for the data originators (the oil & gas companies) for their local assessments, as well as for the scientific users, through incorporation of new data sets in their analyses and research projects.

This will not only benefit local and national research, but will result also in considerable added-value for operational oceanography by applying and implementing the models in operational forecasting systems and services. Moreover it will contribute to strengthening the scientific capacities to understand global change, conserve ecosystems, and protect biodiversity. In addition, the SIMORC service will also be beneficial for coastal zone management, policy making, fisheries, aquaculture, and for other purposes. This is of special interest to developing countries that usually do not have sufficient resources to monitor their coastal waters themselves.

IOC/IODE is responsible for dissemination of information on and promotion of the SIMORC service. It is in an excellent position to do so. Information dissemination and networking are two of the main activities of the IODE. The IODE network includes more than 65 countries. This network allows rapid and efficient dissemination of information to interested scientists and organisations around the globe.

IODE has considerable experience in organising training events for scientists and data managers with special attention given to developing countries. Ocean Data and Information Networks (ODIN) projects have been successfully implemented in Africa (ODINAFRICA), South America and the Caribbean region (ODINCARSA), and the Indian Ocean region (ODINCINDIO). Additional networks are under development for the Black Sea region and European countries in economic transition. The ODIN projects involve more than 50 countries. They provide training as well as expert follow-up support by email and web, and operational support to the participants. The ODIN networks will be involved in SIMORC by developing a dedicated SIMORC training curriculum that will focus on use and functionalities of the SIMORC service for ocean and marine research and management in developing countries.

This will be further strengthened by incorporating the SIMORC training curriculum into the IODE OceanTeacher system (a collection of training tools for Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange and Management). These tools are used during IODE Training Courses and can also be used for self-training and continuous professional development. A special component will be added to OceanTeacher that will help with the training of scientists from developing countries on the SIMORC data usage, processing and presentation.

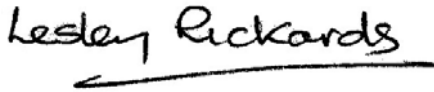
The possibilities of IODE were significantly improved with the newly-established IOC Project Office for IODE located in Ostend, Belgium. Among its tasks, the Project Office (<http://www.iode.org/projectoffice/>) has several that are relevant to the SIMORC promotion and dissemination. In particular the Project Office is a:

- TRAINING CENTRE: a global training centre for ocean data and information management with a special attention to the developing countries;
- CONFERENCE CENTRE: a forum where ocean data and information experts and students from different countries can meet and work together;

- DATA AND INFORMATION PORTAL CENTRE: developing, hosting and maintaining IODE ocean data and information systems and related public awareness tools.

During its first year of operation the Project Office organised 13 training events during which 139 students from 64 countries (mostly developing countries) were trained. Starting from August 2005, all participants were provided with brief information on the SIMORC facility. From this initial experience, it is already clear that the SIMORC project and the data it may provide are generating considerable interest within the scientific community including in developing countries.

Taking into account IOC's data policy, the objectives of SIMORC and its potential benefits, and activities underway and planned, as set out above, the IOC/IODE strongly recommends (co-) owners of oil industry metocean data sets (governmental and private) to participate in the SIMORC project and service. Moreover, IOC/IODE strongly encourages (co-)owners to agree to contribute their (co-owned) data sets to become part of the SIMORC resource.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Rickards". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Dr Lesley Rickards  
Chair IODE