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(of UNESCO)

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**EC Project: System of Industry Metocean data for
the Offshore and Research Communities (SIMORC)**

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1. Introduction

Metocean in situ data are an important category of oceanographic and marine data, comprising observed parameters like sea level, waves, currents, sea temperature, conductivity, air temperature, air pressure, and wind. A very substantial volume of metocean in situ data is collected by or under contract to major oil & gas companies. This is done all over the world and over many years a large volume of data sets has been acquired, often at substantial cost. These data are currently managed by the metocean departments of the oil & gas companies and stored in various formats. They are exchanged on a limited scale between the oil & gas companies. Despite various industry co-operative joint projects, there is not yet a common awareness of available data sets and no systematic indexing and archival of these data sets within the industry. Furthermore there is only limited reporting about, and access to these data sets & results of field studies for other parties, in particular the scientific community. Opening up these data sets will provide favourable conditions for creating highly valuable extra knowledge of both local and regional ocean & marine systems.

To stimulate and support a wider application of these industry metocean datasets a System of Industry Metocean data for the Offshore and Research Communities (SIMORC) is being established. This consists of an index metadatabase and a database of actual data sets, that together are accessible through the Internet. The index metadatabase is public domain, while access to data is regulated by a dedicated SIMORC Data Protocol. This protocol contains rules for access and use of data sets by scientific users, by oil & gas companies, and by third parties. In the project all metocean data sets in the database undergo quality control and conversion to unified formats (Provided by BODC), resulting in consistent and high quality, harmonized data sets.

SIMORC is a unique and challenging development, undertaken by: MARIS (NL), BODC (UK) and IOC-IODE (UNESCO), and the International Association of Oil & Gas Producers (OGP), involving participation of major oil & gas companies, that are bringing in their considerable data sets. The SIMORC project is co-funded by the European Commission for the 2 year project period starting 1st June 2005 (now is being extended for 6 more months).

Now the following companies have signed the agreement and are active contributors to SIMORC: Shell, Total, BP, Chevron, Statoil, Hydro.

The main objectives of the SIMORC project are as follows:

- to create a central index and database of metocean data sets, collected by the oil & gas industry at various sites on the globe in the past and continuing at present;
- to facilitate harmonisation in quality and formats, storing and retrieving of these industry metocean datasets for use by industry partners and scientific users;
- to define and to establish arrangements for use, updating and long term operation of the SIMORC facility beyond the project period;
- to promote and to disseminate the SIMORC facility in both the oil & gas industry and scientific communities to achieve an increasing number of contributing parties and users.

After consulting with the SIMORC Advisory Board and considering a number of international data policies and licenses a draft was prepared for a SIMORC User License Agreement for scientific and educational purposes by research and academic institutes. The original draft has been legally checked and re-phrased under coordination by OGP with the support of a number of company lawyers. This has been circulated to all SIMORC OGP partners and has resulted in the adoption of the final version, which can be downloaded from SIMORC web site. The access to SIMORC data by research and academic institutes is free of charge.

The User Licence Agreement focuses on scientific and educational purposes. For other use and other parties it will be a bilateral negotiation between the owner, as listed in SIMORC metadata, and the third party.

After a period of testing and finetuning the SIMORC service has officially been launched, in October 2006. The SIMORC service provides an index metadatabase and a database of actual Metocean data sets. The public index metadatabase features a geographic and alphanumeric user interface to locate interesting data sets easily. The data sets are stored in a secure way and access to data is regulated. At present the SIMORC service offers only a limited number of data sets from Shell, BP and Total, but this number will increase steadily as part of the ongoing QC process and the ongoing submission of data sets.

A dedicated web site with full Project information and access to the metadata is available at: <http://www.simorc.org>. At the moment (January 2007) SIMORC data base contains 140 data sets and this number is quickly growing.

Scientific and academic organisations are invited to register to the SIMORC service and conclude a User Licence Agreement for their staff members for regular use and access to data sets. This Agreement is concluded between the organisation, represented by a central contact person, and the SIMORC service. After acceptance of the registration request the central contact person will be asked to nominate staff members for which a personal id – password will be activated. This registration will give access to the growing number of metocean data sets from major oil & gas companies worldwide, that are being included in the SIMORC database.

2. IODE role in SIMORC

IODE is the lead contractor (together with MARIS and OGP) for the project Work Package 5 (Promotion, Dissemination and Exploitation).

Any initiative that aims to promote accessibility and availability of data and information must be end-user driven and therefore partners are pro-active in seeking out views of the end-users community and in creating awareness among potential users of the benefits of the new facility for their applications. Therefore promotion and dissemination are an essential part of the

project development and for all partners. Partner IODE plays a special role in this activity, especially targeting a global community of ocean researchers through its IODE global network and targeting users in developing countries, by including SIMORC in its regional training and education courses.

The objective is to promote and to disseminate the SIMORC facility in both oil & gas industry and scientific communities to achieve an increasing number of users AND contributing parties.

Information dissemination and networking is one of the main activities of the IODE and this IODE experience can be used effectively within the SIMORC project. Dissemination of information on the SIMORC facility will include dissemination of full and detailed information on the facility itself and information on data collected in the SIMORC database via IODE web sites (including main IODE web site and OceanPortal web site), during the IODE meetings, and directly to the IODE action addresses. The IODE network, that includes at the moment more than 60 countries, permits to disseminate quickly and efficiently all necessary information around the globe to all interesting scientists and organizations.

The IODE ODIN networks will be involved in SIMORC by developing a dedicated SIMORC training curriculum, that will be focusing on use and functionalities of the SIMORC facility for ocean and marine research and management in developing countries.

3. Requested Actions from the Committee

The Committee is requested to:

- Comment on the SIMORC project development and results
- Widely distribute and advertise information on the SIMORC facility among research and academic institutions in the member countries.

[end]