

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)**

**Nineteenth Session of the IOC Committee on International Oceanographic Data
and Information Exchange (IODE-XIX)
Trieste, Italy, 12-16 March 2007**

**Options for the organization of future Sessions of the
IODE Committee
(by Peter Pissierssens)**

**1. CURRENT ORGANIZATION OF SESSIONS OF THE IODE
COMMITTEE**

Sessions of the IODE Committee are organized every two years. Since the 17th Session (Paris, France, 2003), Sessions have been organized during the months March or April to make it possible to submit the Executive Summary of the Report to the IOC Assembly or Executive Council. The IOC Assembly or Executive Council need to adopt the Summary Report and Recommendations included therein and note the Resolutions adopted by the IODE Committee.

1.1. DURATION OF THE SESSIONS

The duration of the Sessions has remained approx. 4-5 days between the first and 9th Session (1979) but then drastically increased to about 2 weeks between 1981 and 1986, reducing to about 8 days between the 13th and 16th Session. As from the 17th Session in 2003 (due to budget reductions) the duration has been maintained at 5 working days (see Figure 1).

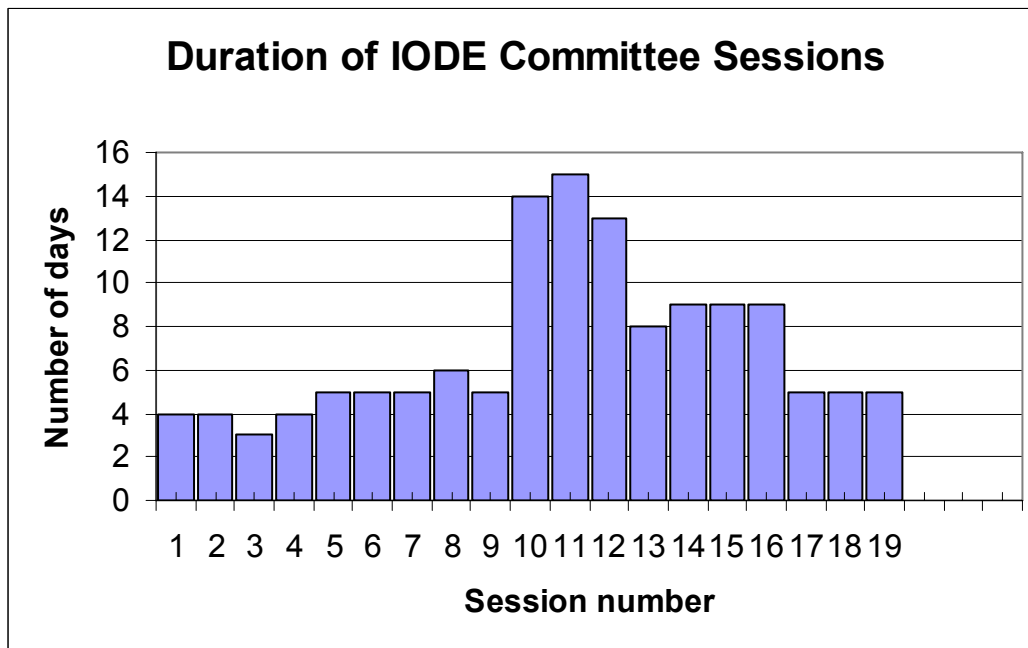


Figure 1: Duration of IODE Sessions

The reduction in duration of IODE Sessions is in line with a similar reduction in the duration of the IOC Governing Bodies.

The reduction of the duration of the Session has enabled us to reduce cost (for the local host, IOC/IODE and Member States) but has also put additional pressure on the Secretariat and Participants. As the adoption of the Summary Report has to take place on the last day it is not possible to include agenda items on that day and thus all substance has to be scheduled in 4 days. In addition the duration of a Session day is limited to 6 working hours, due to regulations for interpretation. Thus the total number of hours available to discussion agenda items is limited to 24.

Whereas the duration of the Session has been limited to 5 working days, the agenda has become heavier in recent years. This is due, on one hand, to the increased collaboration with other Organizations (e.g. GOOS, JCOMM, ...), but more importantly, it is due to the increased number of projects implemented by IODE, especially in terms of capacity building (e.g. the many ODINs that have been created). This expanding agenda is increasingly difficult to fit into the timeframe of 4 days (+1 day for the adoption of the summary report, recommendations and resolutions).

1.2 NUMBER OF WORKING DOCUMENTS

The expanding agenda has also resulted in an increase in the number of working documents (this number excludes the national reports which are collated into one document). This is shown in Figure 2.

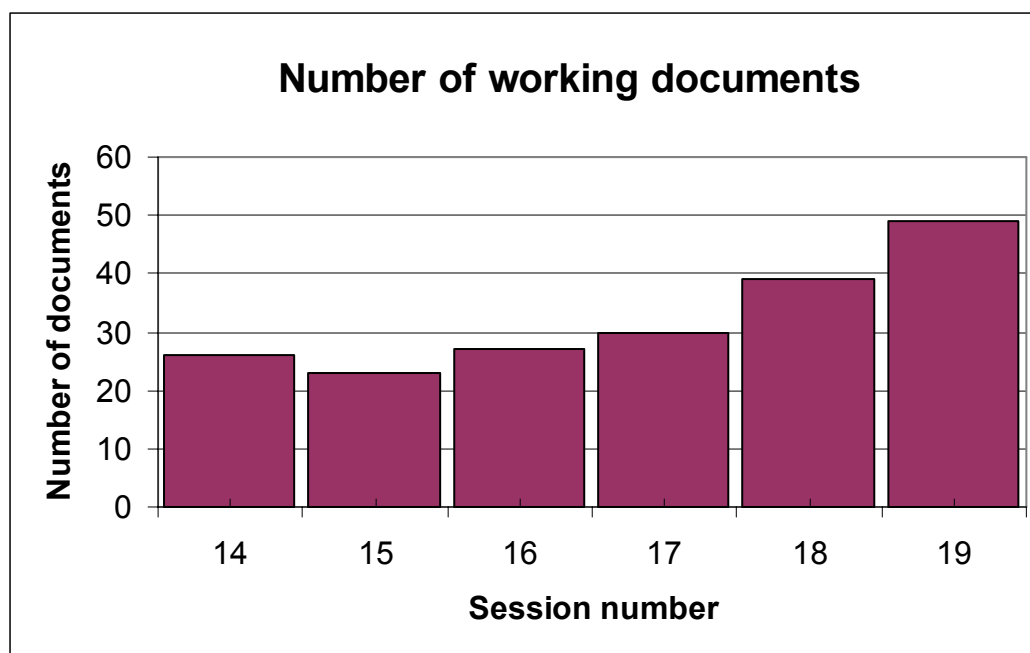


Figure 2: number of working documents per IODE Session

2. A NEW WAY TO PREPARE FOR AND IMPLEMENT SESSIONS OF THE IODE COMMITTEE

Taking into consideration the observations made in 1.1 and 1.2 we believe that the time has come to rethink the way we prepare for and implement the IODE Committee Sessions.

The following requirements are noted:

2.1 REPORTING ON ACTIVITIES

Each activity of the IODE should be able to report to and receive guidance from the IODE Committee. As such each activity should prepare a report for each Session of the Committee (every two years) and, as required, a short progress report for submission to the IODE Officers (for their meeting during the inter-sessional period).

Reports should include qualitative as well as quantitative elements (self assessment). In terms of quantitative reporting the RBM framework (Logframe), that was created for the establishment of the activity, should be used. In this regard we refer to Document 46. So for each expected result of the activity, reporting should be provided on meeting the performance indicators, reaching of the programmed benchmarks, etc. This Logframe, together with the qualitative reporting will facilitate the objective assessment of progress (or lack thereof) and guide the Committee with identifying corrective measures if necessary.

The report should also include a financial report for the past inter-sessional period and, as required, a detailed work plan and budget for the next inter-sessional period. If the work plan includes actions that differ from the original Logframe (expected results), then a revised Logframe should be provided.

The reports should therefore also include a clear set of requested actions. These can include a request for the continuation of the activities, a request for additional resources, etc.

Finally the report may include (a) draft resolution(s) or recommendation(s) (we recall that a Resolution is a decision without financial implications to the IOC; a recommendation is a draft decision that has financial implications for IOC and thus requires formal approval by an IOC Governing Body i.e. Assembly or Executive Council).

Reports on activities should be submitted to the IODE Secretariat not less than 3 months prior to a Session. The IODE Secretariat will then check the report (compliance with mentioned structure), assign a number and post the document on the Session web site.

Member States should then download the document from the web site and analyze the document. Member States are encouraged to share comments on reports with the view of reaching a consensus on the requested actions. It may be appropriate to set up email discussion fora for certain documents that require extensive discussions. This service will be provided by the IODE Secretariat. A volunteer should be identified who will Chair the email discussion forum and prepare a report on the discussions, with clear recommendations for action by the Committee. Such reports should be submitted to the IODE Secretariat, not less than 2 months prior to the Session. The IODE Secretariat will then post this discussion document as an addendum to the original report.

2.2. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS FOR NEW ACTIVITIES

Each proposal for a new activity should have a work plan and budget attached that uses Results-based-management (RBM) methodology, so expected results and associated performance indicators, means of verification, benchmarks are clearly identified.

A proposal should originate either from a Group of Experts, a Steering Group of an existing Project or from a group of Member States. It should be avoided for an individual or one member state to submit a proposal for an activity.

Proposals should fit within the medium-term strategy of IODE (as defined) and contribute to the expected results defined in that strategy.

Only proposals with a realistic expectation of funding from extra-budgetary sources or that have a substantial in-kind support should be submitted.

Finally the proposal may include (a) draft resolution(s) or recommendation(s) (we recall that a Resolution is a decision without financial implications to the IOC; a recommendation is a draft decision that has financial implications for IOC and thus requires formal approval by an IOC Governing Body ie Assembly or Executive Council).

Each proposal should be submitted to the IODE Secretariat not less than 3 months prior to the Session.

The IODE Secretariat will then check the proposal (compliance with mentioned structure), assign a number and post the document on the Session web site. Member States should then download the document from the web site and analyze the document. Member States are encouraged to share comments on proposals with the view of reaching a consensus on the requested actions. It may be appropriate to set up email discussion fora for certain proposals that require extensive discussions. This service will be provided by the IODE Secretariat.

A volunteer should be identified who will Chair the email discussion forum and prepare a report on the discussions, with clear recommendations for action by the Committee. Such reports should be submitted to the IODE Secretariat, not less than 2 months prior to the Session. The IODE Secretariat will then post this discussion document as an addendum to the original proposal document.

2.3. NATIONAL REPORTS

For each Session of the Committee Member States are requested to prepare National Reports. These reports traditionally included highlights of the past inter-sessional period. Since IODE-XIX the reporting structure has been changed and is available as Document IOC/IODE-XIX/Inf2.

National Reports should be submitted to the IODE Secretariat not less than 2 months prior to the Session.

The IODE Secretariat will collate the reports and also analyze the responses of questions 5 to 14. This analysis will be included in the collated report.

2.3 ACTION PAPER

In order to facilitate the work of the Committee during a Session, a so-called Action Paper has been prepared at past Sessions (except IODE-XVIII). This document should now include the following elements for each agenda item:

- **Introductory paragraphs** that summarize the intervention of the introducer of the agenda item. It is noted that introductions of agenda items should not be longer than 5 minutes of plenary time.
- **Paragraphs proposed as actions** by the Committee

- It is noted that **discussions in Plenary** will be summarized by the Secretariat during the Session and added to the introductory paragraphs **if necessary** and/or if they differ from the proposed action paragraphs
- **Logframe**: for each activity a logframe (expected results, performance indicators, means of verification, programmed benchmark) for the next inter-sessional period will be added.
- **Financial implications**: for each agenda item the financial (resource) implications of the proposed actions will be included in the action paper. These will be used during the Session to compose the proposed work plan and budget

2.4. CONDUCT OF THE SESSION

The Session is traditionally chaired by the IODE Chair. At IODE-XIX it will be proposed to henceforth elect two Co-Chairs. The two co-chairs will agree on the agenda items that each will chair during the Session.

The Co-Chair will open an agenda item by inviting the person who will introduce the item. The introducer will refer to the relevant working document and give a brief (not more than 5 minutes) introduction to the Document, referring especially to the actions required from the Committee. The introducer will also refer to the discussion document (see 2.1 and 2.2).

Following the introduction, the Co-Chair will invite Member States to comment, especially regarding the recommendations or resolutions formulated in the original document or in the discussion document.

For each agenda item there should be actions taken by the Committee. These can be included in the body of the summary report or they can be Resolutions or Recommendations.

2.5 SESSIONAL WORKING GROUPS

Traditionally a number of sessional working groups, composed of participants of the Session, are established during the Session. Preferably all sessional working groups are established under Agenda Item 2.4. As a minimum it is recommended to establish a sessional working group on Programme and Budget, and a sessional working group on capacity building. It is advisable not to establish too many sessional working groups, bearing in mind that most national delegations to the Session have only one member. The sessional working groups will meet after the plenary sessions. For practical reasons the number of sessional working groups that can meet on-site at the same time is two. Sessional working groups can meet as from the first day (possible time slots are lunch-time and evening). Sessional working groups should meet prior to the opening of the relevant agenda item during the plenary. Exceptionally an agenda item can be re-opened or re-scheduled to allow a sessional working group to meet and report back to the Plenary.

2.6 ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

The adoption of the report is composed of adoption of the Resolutions and Recommendations, and adoption of the Summary Report of the Session. Traditionally a full day (the 5th day) is reserved for the adoption of the report. In practice the adoption usually takes ½ day.

Bearing in mind the revisions described in 2.1 to 2.4 it may be considered to only adopt the Resolutions and Recommendations and leave the finalization of the Report to the IODE Secretariat, provided that the number of changes to the paragraphs proposed as actions (see 2.3) is not substantial. This may make it possible to reduce the duration of the Session by ½ day (ie a total of 4 days).

3. RECOMMENDATION FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF A JOINT IODE/IGOOS SESSION IN 2009 AS A MECHANISM TO IMPROVE GOOS-IODE COOPERATION

The twentieth Session of the IODE Committee will be held in 2009. An invitation has been extended by the People's Republic of China to hold the Session in China. This offer will be discussed by IODE-XIX under Agenda Item 11.

The People's Republic of China has also invited GOOS to hold its I-GOOS (Intergovernmental Committee for GOOS) in China.

The revised terms of reference of IODE (revised at IODE-XVIII, 2005) now state "(v) to support international scientific and operational marine programmes of IOC and WMO and their sponsor organisations with advice and data management services." This clearly indicates that IODE should play a more cross-cutting/horizontal role as a data and information management service provider for all IOC programmes. The restructuring of the IOC whereby the IODE programme has been "housed" together with GOOS under the "Ocean Observations and Services" section should facilitate collaborative activities between GOOS and IODE. Bearing in mind that IODE deals with "delayed mode" data as well as (an increasingly) with "operational" data, a closer collaboration with GOOS should be mutually beneficial: for the GOOS community the collaboration with the IODE network of data centres will provide the ocean observation community with access to the know-how of the global network and resources of NODCs (as well as WDCs) and also make use of the IODE's regional as well as global capacity building expertise. IODE will benefit from this collaboration by gaining a new and extensive user community as well as from increased visibility (and hopefully appreciation).

One way to establish this closer collaboration could be through the organization of partially joint Sessions of the IODE Committee and **I-GOOS (Intergovernmental Committee for GOOS)**. "*The Intergovernmental Committee for GOOS (I-GOOS), functioning under the IOC of UNESCO with co-sponsorship from WMO and UNEP, has the overall responsibility for formulation of policy, principles and strategy, and for planning and coordination of GOOS.*" 23 IOC Member States have identified a GOOS national representative to I-GOOS. The I-GOOS Board consists of a chair and four vice chairs elected every two years by participating member states at I-GOOS plenary meetings. The chair of the GOOS scientific Steering committee is an appointed ex-officio member and the GPO director serves as secretary

GOOS also has a "**GOOS Scientific Steering Committee**" (GSSC) that "*advises the Intergovernmental-GOOS governing board on scientific and technical matters including strategy, implementation and pilot projects. The committee meets annually and is comprised of members appointed by the GOOS sponsoring organizations, representatives of these sponsors, representatives of partner organizations and invited scientific experts. In 2005 the GSSC was expanded in order to include oversight of Coastal GOOS implementation.*" The GSSC has 12 members.

Looking at the terms of reference of the two GOOS bodies we could say that the IODE committee combines the two: **the IODE Committee deals with scientific and technical matters including strategy, implementation and pilot projects, but it also has the overall responsibility for formulation of policy, principles and strategy and for planning and coordination of [IODE].**

There is also a difference in membership. Whereas the IODE Committee is composed of professionals specialized in data or information management (75 IODE National Coordinator for oceanographic data management and 33 IODE national coordinators for marine information management), I-GOOS is composed of a wider spectrum of expertise (heads of research institutions, policy managers (in various sectors of government), researchers,...)

representing the wide range of GOOS stakeholders, but as mentioned above the group is smaller (I-GOOS has 23 members). The IODE Committee currently has a Chair and Vice-Chair¹. IODE also has IODE Officers, composed of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, and Chairs of the Groups of Experts (including JOCOMM/IODE ETDMP)

Ideally the IODE Committee should be able to interact with the GSSC for technical/scientific matters and with the I-GOOS for policy and strategy matters.

In the past, coordination was attempted through participation of the IODE Chair in the GSSC and I-GOOS. However in practice the impact of this arrangement was limited and GOOS requirements have not really been taken on board. Inversely IODE has not featured very high on the GSSC and I-GOOS agenda.

Establishing mutual paths of input or feedback between IODE on one side, and GSSC/I-GOOS on the other has not been easy. We can mention IODE-XIX and GSSC-X as an example: IODE-XIX takes place between 12 and 16 March 2007 in Trieste, Italy whereas GSSC-X takes place between 13 and 16 March in Korea. This makes interaction between the bodies impossible. I-GOOS VIII provides an opportunity as it will take place between 13 and 16 June 2007 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. However this Session is organized very close to the IOC Assembly which will make submission of recommendations from I-GOOS (that might be outcomes by IODE-XIX reviewed by I-GOOS) to the Assembly rather difficult.

It should also be noted that a joint IODE/I-GOOS meeting will not result in cost savings: a quick scan of the membership of the IODE Committee and I-GOOS reveals only one common member. For the GSSC and the IODE Committee there are no common members at all. The interest of joint meetings will therefore be of substance benefit rather than financial.

Efficient and effective cooperation between the IODE Committee, GSSC and I-GOOS will therefore need a different approach, a different model.

If we consider an end-to-end model that includes observation, data management, product/service provision to end users then we can consider that GOOS covers two of these “systems” - observations and “product/service provision to end users”. IODE will play a role in the data management system. IODE centres should therefore respond to the needs of the observing system as well as to those of the actors that develop products and services (in some cases the IODE data centres may in fact be these actors). It is likely that the GSSC will be the partner who can identify the needs of the two aforementioned GOOS systems. These needs should then be submitted to IODE which will then, together with relevant GOOS experts, develop strategies and work plans that will enable the development of relevant data management systems (and, to some extent, product/service provision to end users systems). These could then be submitted to I-GOOS for inclusion in, and approval of the relevant policy and strategic decisions.

To this we also need to add JCOMM which is considered as the implementing mechanism of GOOS. IODE already has close working relations with JCOMM through the JCOMM/IODE Expert Team on Data Management Practices (ETDMP) and is also a member of the JCOMM Management Committee. Accordingly there should also be linkages between these JCOMM bodies and the GSSC as well as the proposed GSSC/IODE technical working group. If it is preferred not to establish a new body then the ETDMP could possibly play the role of the GSSC/IODE technical working group, provided the TORs are adapted.

This model is shown in Figure 3.

¹ Subject to approval by IODE-XIX, the IODE Committee will henceforth be chaired by two Co-chairs

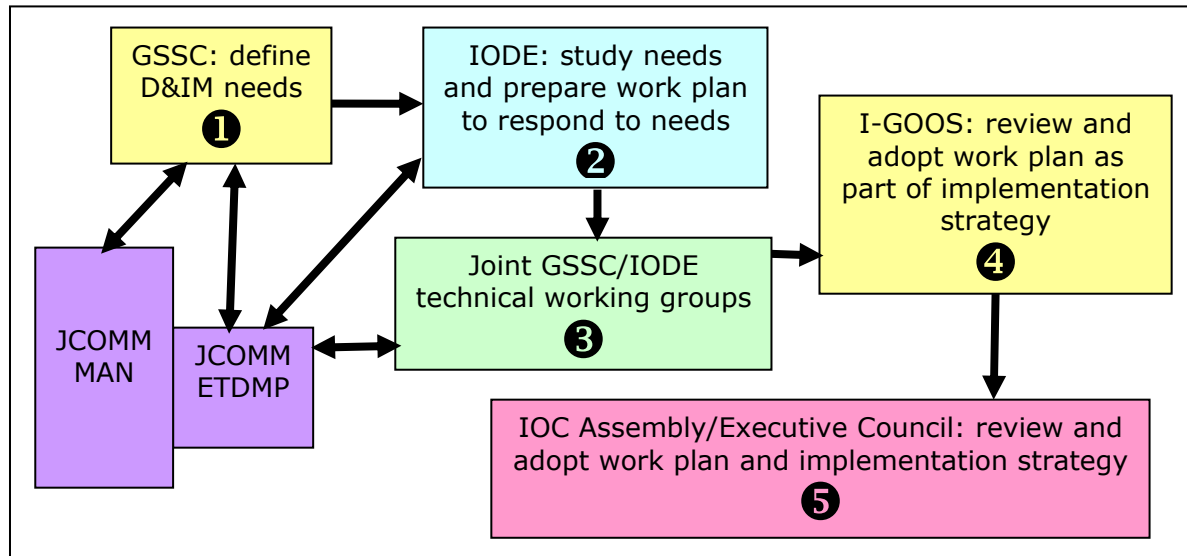


Figure 3: GOOS/IODE coordinated cooperation model

In order for the above model to function a suitable scheduling of GSSC, IODE and I-GOOS Session will be required.

We recommend that the model is tested as from 2008 with a GSSC Session in 2008 (any time), IODE Session and I-GOOS Session in 2009 (possibly around March/April) and IOC Assembly in 2009.

In order to enable joint discussions of the outcome of the work of the Joint GSSC/IODE technical working groups we recommend that the 2009 Sessions of IODE and I-GOOS are organized with a two joint events: one during the first day which will feature presentations on the issues that should be addressed by IODE (these presentations could be made by members of the joint GSSC/IODE technical working groups and/or members of the GSSC). The second joint event would take place the final day and would feature presentation and adoption of the work plan proposed by the IODE Committee, based upon the requirements defined by the joint GSSC/IODE technical working groups possibly adjusted by the joint event of the first day. This is outlined in Figure 4. It is noted that the joint events on the Day 1 and Day 5 may only require ½ working day.

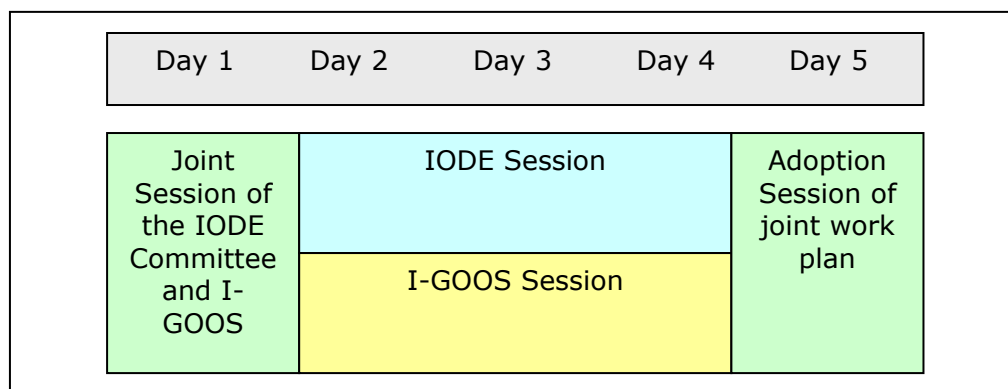


Figure 4: Organization of joint Sessions of IODE and I-GOOS

We note that compressing the IODE Session into 3 days may not be realistic and we may need to plan for 4 days, as a minimum. This will require further discussion with I-GOOS and the IODE Committee.

4. ACTION REQUESTED FROM THE COMMITTEE

The Committee is requested to:

- 1. endorse the proposed new way to prepare for, and implement Sessions of the IODE Committee**
- 2. endorse the proposed model for the organization of a joint IODE/I-GOOS Session in 2009 as a mechanism to improve GOOS-IODE cooperation**