

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND RODRIGUES
DEPARTMENT FOR CONTINENTAL SHELF, MARITIME ZONES ADMINISTRATION AND EXPLORATION

IORA TRAINING WORKSHOP ON
“OCEAN OBSERVATORY DATABASE”

Concept Note

INTRODUCTION

The Ocean is considered as the next frontier for development. Shipping, aquaculture, fisheries, recreational activities, renewable energy and seabed exploration for hydrocarbon and minerals are among the sectors which could contribute to the development of the Ocean Economy. However it is recognized that the need to balance the conservation and the protection of the marine environment with a sustained economic development of the marine resources is to be carried out with a careful marine spatial planning. Achieving this balance requires understanding the long-term capacity of ocean ecosystems, identifying tools that communities, industry and government can use to adjust resource use, and providing access to this information. Oceanographic, geological, geochemical and geophysical data are essential for understanding marine processes and resources. These form the basis over which resource managers, environmental experts and potential investors make science-based decisions.

The Department for Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration in collaboration with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Oceans & Atmosphere, Australia, is working on the project “Developing an Enhanced Ocean Observatory in support of Ocean Exploration and Development” to design the framework for a database (supported by marine spatial planning) to collect, store, organize and provide access to spatio-temporal data relevant to ocean exploration and development.

By integrating various sources of information and providing access to relevant knowledge, the database will serve both as a guide to identify gaps in existing information and data and as a baseline for environmental impact assessment. The database will also ensure that data meeting the needs of industry and government authorities can be easily accessed and analyzed. By providing relevant information, the integrated database will also help to sustainably manage the area for informed policy decisions.

TRAINING WORKSHOP FOCUS

This training workshop will bring together representatives of IORA Member States with policy/regulatory responsibilities and scientific/technical expertise relevant to Data Management and Exploration. The specific objectives of the workshop are as follows:

- (i) build knowledge of Marine Spatial Planning approaches and how data can drive development of management options and the monitoring and assessment of management decisions
- (ii) raise awareness on ocean exploration and development among the IORA Member States with a focus on data discovery, gap analysis and data management; and
- (iii) develop the exploration and exploitation of marine resources in a sustainable and methodological manner by providing a centralized information system for marine spatial planning.