

Second International Ship Operator Meeting

The Hague
17-18 October 1988

Summary Notes

Present

Belgium M. A Pollentier
Mathematical Modelling for the North Sea

Canada Mr S B MacPhee
Fisheries and Oceans

Finland Ms Eila Lahdes
Finnish Institute of Marine Research

France M. P Rouzaud
IFREMER

Germany Prof. D Kohnke
Deutsches Hydrographisches Institut

Japan Mr K Hamada
Japan Marine Science and Technology Centre

Netherlands Dr J Stel
Dr C van Bergen Henegouw
Netherlands Marine Research Foundation

Prof. A H A Soons
Netherlands Institute for the Study of
the Law of the Sea. Utrecht

UK Mr B J Hinde
Dr L M Skinner
Mr F P Verdon
Dr S J White
NERC

Mr J Adams
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Scotland

USA Dr D F Heinrichs
National Science Foundation

Dr K Kaulum
Office of Naval Research

Dr L Stevens
Joint Oceanographic Institutions Inc.

CEC Dr J P Boissonnas
DG XII

OCEANIC Mr J Crease
University of Delaware

Apologies were received from M. E Isphording (IFREMER), Dr N Flemming (CCMST), and Dr J D Woods (NERC).

Following a welcome from Dr Stel, the meeting began with presentations from Dr Stevens and Prof Soons on clearance Problems associated with research cruises.

Clearance Problems

Dr Stevens said that in the past year, the USA had been faced with a tripling of denials of permission for cruises, coupled with increasing difficulty in obtaining clearance. He indicated that part of the problem could be that UNLOSC (United Nations Law of the Sea Convention) was less favourable to research than previous international arrangements. The USA and some other countries (including UK) had refused to sign UNLOSC, although they were abiding by its conditions. He suggested that the meeting group was uniquely qualified to exchange information on clearance problems, and he offered to co-ordinate such an exchange, and build up a database of clearances granted or denied.

Prof Soons said that he had approached the problem of clearance difficulties from a legal standpoint. He said that UNLOSC was not in force, and custom and precedent currently formed the basis of the reaction of coastal zone states. He then outlined some of the practises that obtain currently - 6 months lead time for clearance applications, use of official/diplomatic channels, coastal zone observer(s), discretion of coastal zone state, implied consent, etc. He said that state officials and marine operators make custom and practice

Prof Soons continued by noting that the apparent increase in refusals of clearance had to be set into the context of absolute numbers of applications, so that as a percentage the refusals might be declining. He concluded by noting that the UN Commissioner for UNLOSC would be convening a meeting on UNLOSC in August or September 1989, and had asked for information on clearance problems which he (Soons) would be screening.

In the discussion which followed, M. Rouzaud highlighted two problems which had arisen in seeking clearances. The first was that a coastal zone state had indicated its wish to put two observers on board for a specific cruise, but because observers in the precise discipline of the cruise could not be provided the clearance was withdrawn. The second was an innate suspicion by coastal zone states that seismic research inevitably meant mineral exploration.

Some members suggested that scientist-to-scientist contacts sometimes helped the clearance problems, but Dr Heirichs felt that UNLOSC seemed to make this counterproductive. Dr Stel said that informal and formal contacts with the coastal zone state had become the norm in the Netherlands. Dr Heinrichs pointed out that the Dutch willingness to accommodate the demands of coastal states was a contributory factor to the problems that the USA faced in resisting demands that it thought unreasonable.

Prof Soons said that the root of the problem was that it was not easy to obtain hard factual information about clearance problems at the moment and the group should aim to build up background information over a period of years. Mr Hinde said that one reason for this meeting was to exchange experiences, and ascertain whether one country could help another over a particularly difficult problem. He was chary about developing a database of clearance problems as he felt that it might contain opinions that could be challenged. Dr Stevens said that even a consistent record of cruises that obtained or were denied clearance could be a useful indicator for the future.

Collation of Ship Details

Dr Skinner said that the paper presented to the meeting was an initial attempt to summarise ship details in a

single line, and he asked what changes people would like to see before the paper was "published". He envisaged the paper being part of a hierarchy of information about ships and cruises, with this particular publication being widely available, particularly to new scientists; other levels would be somewhat fuller details in an e-mail database, with complete details being available from the ship operator. M. Rouzaud said that CEC was carrying out a similar study of requirements. Mr Crease drew attention to the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation) database, and suggested that it might form the starting point for any work by this group.

Prof Kohnke suggested that the information provided in concise form should include a contact name, major facilities and endurance/range. He felt that it was unnecessary to specify ship power and crew numbers. It was agreed that members should write to Mr Verdon giving indications of the level of information that should be included in the booklet

Databases

Introducing this item, Mr Hinde said that the meeting in 1987 had concluded that there was likely to be a shortage of major facilities for the upcoming international programmes, and the group had recognised the need to increase informal collaboration. He added that NERC needed the information about international resources and commitments to justify its own requirements in terms of European collaboration.

Mr Verdon reported that he had nothing to add to the paper before the meeting on the development of one or more "Information bases".

Mr Crease gave a presentation on the current capabilities of the SONIC database, which has been developed and maintained by the University of Delaware, with some support from NSF/WOCE. SONIC (as accessed by the marine community) was primarily concerned with cruise programmes, and Mr Crease suggested that to make the most effective use of the database these programmes needed to be for as long in advance as possible; he cited Germany who provided an outline programme for METEOR and POLARSTERN for the next 5 years. The question as to whether or not another database of unmet cruise requirements should be set up was discussed, but there was agreement that such a database was inappropriate.

Dr Boissonnas said that he was encouraged by the prospects for collaboration between the present meeting and the DGXII group, and he went on to explain EEC interest/involvement in matters marine. He said that the EEC "Framework" programme had a projected budget of 5.9 Billion ECU, of which the Exploitation of Marine Science element was 80 Million ECU, spread over 5 years. Within that figure, the Marine Applied Science and technology (MAST) programme had 4 activities, of which one- supporting initiative - was looking at better co-ordination of research vessels. IFREMER had been selected to lead the study, and it was expected that a first draft report would be available by January 1989.

There was general agreement that a database or databases should be set up, and some support for the possibility of developing the ship programmes aspect of SONIC for this purpose. Mr Crease pointed out that if SONIC were developed it would be possible to "download" it to a European system, if desired. M. Rouzaud said that the problem he faced, as leader of the CEC study, was that he was apparently faced with the choice of SONIC or starting afresh. M. Rouzaud said that before France could support SONIC, he would have to see a fairly firm proposal from the University of Delaware, a comment that was echoed by Mr Hinde for the UK. Mr Crease was asked to prepare a brief prospectus for the development of SONIC along the lines discussed by the meeting.

In the discussion about details to be included in the database, and the use to be made of it, the following points were made:

- it is highly desirable to have at least one place where up-to-date information on international ship programmes is available; access to the data should be open to all scientists;
- any exchange of time or facilities would have to be arranged bilaterally between the scientist(s) and the ship operator or manager;
- the database should include details of major facilities, and where these are included, any exchange would be "weighted" to take them into account;
- it would be useful to have a nominated "contact" for each ship.

Ship Requirements through to 2000

Mr Hinde apologised for Dr Woods absence, since it was his suggestion to include this item on the agenda. He said that NERC had a need for forward planning of ships, and the paper set out some initial ideas based upon the agreed strategy for Marine Sciences in NERC, and the needs of Community Programmes and of individual scientists and laboratories.

Dr Stel drew attention to a study by the Danes of worldwide research ships; this seemed to show that most research vessels were between 20 and 30 years old. The study concluded that a major investment in research ships would be needed in the next decade. Europe was considering building a seismic research ship for use by a number of countries.

Dr Heinrich said that the USA had problems trying to forecast cruises. A related issue was that there was a need to co-ordinate the US national plans for the several international programmes currently being planned. NSF had recently published its 5-year longterm plan, and this showed "financial underpinning" which would double the NSF budget by 1993.

Prof Kohnke said that Germany had tentative plans for science programmes up to 1994/95, but these included only the Polarstern and Meteor - the other vessels' programmes were planned upon a shorter timescale. He felt that it was possible to make projections for 10-15 years ahead, but without precision, since the demand for shiptime still exceeded the available resources.

Dr Stel questioned the relationship between this meeting and the CEC group, which was aiming to cover much the same ground. Prof Kohnke said that this meeting had covered much more ground than the CEC group, and the aim should now be to find a mechanism to bring the two into line. Dr Skinner opined that the two groups were, in fact, complementary, since the CEC group was aiming to provide seatime for countries that do not have ships, whereas this one involved ship operators. He said that CEC should be encouraged to provide funding to allow the operators represented at this meeting to provide some of the berths the CEC was seeking.

Summary of Actions

Mr Hinde summed up the agreed actions as he had recorded them. These are:

Ship Details

UK to modify ship details "booklet" to include ships' range and endurance, lab spaces, major equipment capabilities, and contact point;

all countries to be encouraged to produce full details of their ships, and a point of contact for programmes.

Clearance Problems

Dr Stevens to produce a proposal for a database of clearance experiences;

In normal circumstances, ship operator to arrange international clearance(s) and follow-up actions.

Databases

OCEANIC (University of Delaware) to produce a prospectus on development and support of SONIC;

All countries to be invited to;

- i. subscribe \$5,000 per year for 2 Years;
- ii. participate in the development;
- iii. name a contact or contacts to be included in the database.

M. Rouzaud to convey the views of this meeting to group.

Date and Place of Next Meeting.

Dr Heinrichs offered to host Washington DC. The date should participants could be invited to at that time of year.

Mr Hinde thanked Dr Stel for the hospitality.

Mr MacPhee proposed a vote of thanks to Dr Skinner, who would be retiring from NERC at end-October.