

Report of the eighteenth meeting of the Ocean Facilities Exchange Group (OFEG), held in Bergen, Norway on the 3rd and 4th May 2007

Attending: Jacques Binot, Jean-Xavier Castrec, Juanjo Danobeitia, Colin Day, Thomas Mueller, Per Nieuwejaar, Marieke Rietveld, Marck Smit, Barbara Tanner, Mike Webb

1 Approval of minutes and matters arising

The Group noted the actions from the last meeting.

OFEG-TECH: The Group welcomed the developing plans for the first OFEG-TECH meeting in Autumn 2007 and considered that this is a very important initiative for OFEG. Representatives of OFEG partners were attended an OFEG-TECH planning meeting in Bergen on the 3rd May and OFEG was provided with a brief oral report on the outcomes of this meeting by Colin Day on the 4th May.

It was noted that the UK is planning to host an International Moorings Workshop at some point in 2008 to enable mooring teams to share information on best practice with a view to improving the effectiveness of ocean mooring arrays. It was noted that all OFEG members would be invited to send representatives to this workshop and that this could potentially be an OFEG-TECH workshop.

In light of the various new OFEG initiatives, such as OFEG-TECH and the OFEG Deep Platforms Facility, members considered that OFEG needed to improve its communications strategy. Following discussions it was agreed that there was a need to develop a dedicated OFEG website, OFEG.ORG. This was considered to be a very positive first step to raising the profile of OFEG and ensuring that the wider marine community is better informed about OFEG's coordination and partnership activities. This website would also include all of the information on the various OFEG documents, such as the OFEG booklet and barter activity documents. It was agreed that NERC would lead the development of a new website with support from members for various elements of the website as required. In particular NERC would work with NIOZ to develop the OFEG equipment pool part of the website

[Action: Mike Webb/Colin Day]

It was noted that the Spain and UK had started discussions on a partnership agreement that would provide for the deployment of a transnational team to support the new Spanish geophysics facility. This new facility will only be used by Spain for ca.60-days a year and so a partnership agreement would provide for greater utilization of the facility and, potentially, for co-funding to support the facilities associated infrastructure costs. It was noted that a future OFEG-TECH Workshop on geophysics support should be a priority with a view to improving geophysics collaboration across OFEG in areas such as training and the sharing of spares. An up-date report on the proposed Spanish-UK partnership agreement would be provided at the next OFEG meeting.

[Action: Mike Webb/Juanjo Danobeitia]

2 Feedback on barter cruises in 2006/07 and any clearance issues

Feedback was provided on recent barter cruises and a number of minor diplomatic clearance issues were discussed.

3 Up-date on the 2007/08 cruise programmes and new barter opportunities

Reports were provided on the 2007 and 2008 cruise programmes, and a number of major barter opportunities were identified for inclusion in the OFEG 'BIDS for 2007/08' list. All members agreed to follow up actions associated with these bids with a view to establishing whether proposed barter cruises could be confirmed in the near future. **[Action: All]**

4 Up-date of OFEG documents

4.1 The Group agreed amendments to the OFEG activity data (in the OFEG activity document) and the deployment information (in the OFEG ship deployment document). Amendments to the barter points balances (in the OFEG barter bank document) were also agreed and it was decided that members' overall barter points balances should be clearly identified.

4.2 The Group noted that the OFEG booklet would now need to become part of the new OFEG website and that the new web pages would need to include all of the Spanish and Norwegian marine facilities. **[Action: Mike Webb]**

5 Fleet and major marine facilities changes and proposed procurements

5.1 The Group noted the various ESFRI Roadmap marine infrastructures that were now being put forward as FP7 bids for preparatory phase funding. The Group also noted that: plans are progressing for the build of a new Norwegian ice ship; no plan is yet in place for the replacement of Poseidon; the UK has 4 new seismic compressor containers and four new general purpose laboratory containers.

5.2 The Group discussed the recommendations in the OFWG report and it was agreed that OFEG should try to ensure that capital investments in ships and heavy equipment are better coordinated. In light of this it was decided that members should start to share capital investment plans and that 'long term capital investment plans' should be a future agenda item. **[Action: All]**

5.3 The Group decided that it should formally respond to the OFWG report and, in particular, it was felt that there is a need to recognize that a portfolio of ships is required within OFEG to allow for the cost-effective delivery of science programmes. It was agreed that an OFEG position statement and an OFEG Roadmap for ship replacement should be developed by the UK and Germany, respectively. **[Action: Mike Webb/Thomas Mueller]**

6 Any other business

9.1 It was agreed that the next meeting should be held in Paris on the 8th November and the following meeting should be held in Kiel in Spring 2008.