GEMIM: ASK NOT WHAT GEMIM CAN DO FOR YOU, ASK WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR GEMIM

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I want to thank Eirikur for including this panel session. You may not immediately think it relevant to the theme of this conference "Tools of our trade", but by the end of this presentation, I hope you will consider GEMIM to be your tool to influence marine information strategy. I should like to suggest that from now on, a GEMIM session be included during each IAMSLIC conference session.

GEMIM is yet another acronym in an already acronym crowded world. It stands for Group of Experts on Marine Information Management, and is a subcommittee of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commissions's Committee on International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE). That is all the provenance I shall be explaining today because at IAMSLIC 91, Allen Varley and I presented an outline history of IOC/IODE/GEMIM, which was published in the proceedings.
(Simpson, 1992)

I became Chair of GEMIM in 1991, and I have to admit that before that time I felt it was a very remote grouping that rarely influenced my work and which offered me no opportunity to give feedback, and perhaps unfairly, was not particularly productive. It had met twice before - the last time six years ago. Its achievements during that long intercessional period include: the successful implementation of RECOSCIX (thanks to Peter Pissierssens); the development of the ASFA database and CD ROM; the IOC Manual and Guides No. 23 (Varley, 1991); and the Strategy for the Development of the International Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Information System (ASFIS) in 1990.

The third GEMIM session was held in April 1992 at IOSDL Wormley, and because of the long time span between meeting the agenda was very full, with a great deal to cover and discuss. Indeed, the comment was made that some new technology had almost come and nearly gone in the intervening period.

The group was reconstituted with some previous members still remaining but the new composition better reflecting the marine information of its title - and I like to think that I had a hand in that.

The report by GEMIM III is just being distributed and you should all read it - do you all in fact get a copy?

Top Row:

Murari, Tapaswi, NIO India
David Moulder, EURASLIC
Ed Akyuz, MARA Turkey
Margharita Almada de Acensio, CICH Mexico
Vyacheslav Smirnov, WDC Oceanogr, CIS
Youri Oliounine, IOC
Allen Varley, PML UK

Bottom Row:

Ciunieas Boyle, Canada
Peter Pissierssens, IOC
Jean Collins, FAO Rome
Carol Watts, NOAA USA
Pauline Simpson, IOSDL UK (Chair)
Robert Gelfeld, NODC USA

I am not giving a blow by blow account of the meeting, but just covering some highlights in the hope that it will stimulate some discussion from you. Following this short presentation will be a panel session to give you an opportunity to air your views and say what you think the strategy of GEMIM should be - and more importantly, how you think this forum can progress that strategy. Joining me will be Peter Pissierssens from IOC and Tom Moritz, President of IAMSLIC. I shall be asking them how they see their respective organizations responding to GEMIM. There are also others in the audience with experience of GEMIM and I hope they will also participate.

To dispel quickly an oft held belief, IOC is not a funding agency *per se*. It cannot take GEMIM recommendations and by the wave of the wallet, make it happen. Limited funding is available derived from contributions from Member States, but the initiative to make the strategy in marine information work comes from ourselves-the marine information professionals. What can we do ?

One of the most important documents coming out of GEMIM meetings is the Action Plan. I am going to use the GEMIM III Action Plan to outline some of the

discussions and hopefully stimulate you thoughts for actions also.

Some of the Action Lines are self evident so I shall not be expanding them greatly. Please ask questions as we go along.

Never before have we had this bridge between GEMIM and IAMSLIC--let's use it!!

IOC/GEMIM ACTION PLAN OF THE GROUP FOR 1992-1993

ACTION	Responsibility	Date Due
1. Report on diagnostic procedures and definition of minimum requirements for providing information services on national and/or regional level.	IAMSLIC/EURASLIC (T. Moritz) (D. Moulder)	12/92
2. Identify standard bibliographic data structure and documentation.	IOC Secretariat	12/92
3. Identify standard directory record structure.	IOC/EURASLIC/ IAMSLIC	12/92
4. Send circular letter to the IOC Member States with the request to deposit funds in the IOC trust Fund and/or regional centres, earmarked for information centres and libraries in developing countries to use for funding bibliographic searches and document delivery systems from Marine Information Centres of Excellence.	IOC/Secretariat	9/92
5. Organize training activities:		
- co-organize RECOSCIX-WIO Training course on Marine Information Management.	IOC/Belgium/...	8/92
- co-organize China Marine Information Management course on Marine Information Management.	IOC/China	
- organize Marine Information Management Training Courses in other regions.	IOC/other donors	upon request

6. Study of document delivery services for developing countries: - Investigate and report on document delivery via international telecommunications networks.	IOC/IAMSLIC/ EURASLIC/IAMSLIC (T.Moritz)	12/92 8/92
7. Recommend procedures to facilitate transfer of useful surplus publications to developing countries.	IAMSLIC-CIC/IOC	10/92
8. Investigate ways and means to implement electronic communications in developing countries.	NOAA (B.Gelfeld)	6/92
9. For NOAA to open an OMNET Bulletin Board in order to enable Group of Experts on Information Management members to communicate during the Intercessional period.	NOAA/GE-MIM (B. Gelfeld)	5/92
10. Develop CD-ROM of UNESCO-IOC documents.	IOC Secretariat	93-
11. Provide brief report on interoperability between library catalogs and data directories.	NOAA (B. Gelfeld, C. Watts)	1/93
12. Carry out pilot project to rescue historical Marine Information at the WDC-A Oceanography to assess resources requirements.	NOAA (B. Gelfeld, C. Watts)	3/93
13. Assess the number, currency and quality of the manual records which constitute the World List of Serials currently held by FAO.	FAO	6/92
14. Contact WMO with regard to their inclusion of full MEDI information in INFOCLIMA and report to the Group and the IODE Committee.	IOC Secretariat	9/92

15. Recruit a consultant to prepare a paper assessing the current situation of ASFIS and ASFA with regard to policies, management structure and operation, and presenting alternatives in view of possible changes.	IOC Secretariat	10/92
16. Recruit expertise to carry out a feasibility study of a "International Global Centre on Marine Information's Marine Information within global science programs.	IOC Secretariat	10/92

Following our discussion of Action Lines 1-16, I want to bring up one more point, which was not in the action plan but with hindsight should have been.

One of the first and continuing concerns of GEMIM III was the visibility of the marine information professional. The Chair IODE presented a paper at the meeting in which he described global marine programmes, and the new Global Ocean Observing Programme (GOOP) that was just at the implementation stage. He confirmed that an information specialist was not included in the planning team, yet acknowledged the pivotal role we had to play in the information flow from global programmes. This is a problem that has to be tackled from the top down and bottom up. How can we start to raise the visibility of the information component within these programmes:

- we can raise the awareness of MIM much more within the IODE agenda.

- we must report to our national delegates to IOC and IODE on MIM initiatives within our countries.

- we need joint proposals where there is integration of the work of the product specialist with the information specialist.

- we need to be in at the planning stage of any information system for global ocean programmes; and we need to progress this with some aggression. It is interesting to see the IGBP Data and Information System configuration, which at present does not appear to have a "window" for the published interpretations and synthesis of the data.

- you can do your part by raising your profile within your own organizations.

- IOC can do its part by raising the visibility of information alongside every other discipline with in the ocean sciences.

- we need to formulate a diagnostic model for the implementation of the

information component within any new ocean science programme. This should certainly be an agenda item for the GEMIM IV.

Of course we cannot change perceptions overnight, but it must be part of GEMIM's strategic plan, and we all have our part to play. The quality of our professional future depends on the effort we put in now.

REFERENCES

Simpson, P. & Varley, A. 1991. Marine information management: the IOC connection. In: *The aquatic environment: description, management, conservation. Procs. 17th Annual Conference.* Galveston: International Association of Aquatic and Marine Sciences Libraries and Information Centers, 243pp.

Varley, A. 1991. *Marine information centre development: an introductory manual.* IOC Manuals and Guides, No. 23, 32pp..