

A Note on some Inventory Forms for International
Oceanographic Data Exchange

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With the rapid development of oceanographic investigations in the 1950s and 1960s it became virtually impossible to publish all data stemming from these investigations. Contributing to this situation was the introduction of new types of instruments producing data in amounts hitherto unheard of.

In order to make the data available to the user community it is of the utmost importance that information be spread with short delay as to which data have been collected and how and where they are available. This can be done by preparing and publishing inventories.

In ICES inventory lists were introduced by the Hydrography Committee for reporting on cruises and data stations from the year 1967. The collection of completed forms, together with track charts, was made available to the ICES Statutory Meetings in 1968 and 1969, replacing the earlier Administrative Report of the Committee. From 1969 onwards the edited inventory lists, accompanied by track charts have been issued in the series "ICES Oceanographic Data Lists and Inventories".

ROSCOP

The IOC Working Group on International Oceanographic Data Exchange (IODE) at its 5th Session (1970) recognized the urgent need for a single inventory of oceanographic activities in a simple multi-disciplinary format and recommended the so-called ROSCOP form (ROSCOP: Report of Observations/Samples Collected by Oceanographic Programs) for adoption by IOC as an inventory form to facilitate the initial exchange of marine data.

ICES, also concerned about the proliferation of forms and wishing to avoid duplication of reporting work, shortly after decided (C.Res.1970/4:9) that the ROSCOP format should be used for the preparation of the annual Reports mentioned above. It was added that submissions in the ROSCOP format should be accompanied by track charts.

In some respects the ROSCOP form, compared to the original ICES form, represented a considerable development, in as much as it permitted inclusion of much more detailed information on biological, geophysical and geological observations.

This is true to an even higher degree of the revised ROSCOP form, the so-called ROSCOP 2, introduced in 1974. This new version of the form also contains a number of fields for reporting pollution observations. Another new feature of ROSCOP 2 is a number of fields intended for reporting types of studies undertaken.

The repositories for completed ROSCOP forms are the two World Data Centres A and B (Oceanography). Edited versions of all completed forms received at ICES Service Hydrographique are supplied to the WDCs in advance of publishing the forms in the Reports. It is understood that U.S. NODC/WDC-A is currently in the process of developing the necessary programs and formats for automation of the ROSCOPs received. This will obviously facilitate retrieval of information from the completed forms. It will also make it possible to provide a periodic summary from the ROSCOPs.

ROMBI

ROSCOP is a "first-level" inter-disciplinary inventory form, to be completed by the Chief Scientist immediately after the end of a cruise. In many disciplines there will be a need for a more detailed, "second-level" inventory. The ROMBI form (ROMBI: Results Of Marine Biological Investigations) is intended to provide the basis for the establishment of such more detailed inventories of data holdings in biological oceanography and certain aspects of marine pollution. The ROMBI form was set up by a SCOR/ACMRR Working Group (cf. Document C.M.1972/C:36) and was recommended for international use by the 8th Assembly of IOC (1973). It is supplemental to, and compatible with, the ROSCOP form but allows for the entry of more detail concerning marine biological data and for reporting of relevant scientific documentation in greater depth. The ROMBI form will therefore, have to be completed somewhat later than the ROSCOP form, by the laboratory holding the data.

It should be pointed out that specific centres have not yet been identified which will receive and process ROMBI forms generally, provide information services and exchange ROMBIs internationally. The World Data Centres, which take care of the ROSCOP forms on an international scale, have clearly indicated that they do not want to become involved with ROMBI responsibilities for the time being.

All one may hope for in the immediate future with regard to the ROMBI scheme would then seem to be that the format be tested nationally and that the completed forms be exchanged bilaterally or multilaterally among interested institutions. Experience gained in this way may lead to a revised form for international use. At that stage it will be necessary to establish a focal point for ROMBI information.

Overflow '73 Inventory Form

The cruises carried out as part of the ICES Expedition Overflow '73 have been reported on in the usual way by means of the ROSCOP form. In addition to that, however, it was desirable to report in some more detail. For that purpose a sort of second-level inventory form was introduced. It is connected with the ROSCOP form by using the same parameter keywords as the first ROSCOP.

The Overflow inventory form served its purpose well, and the ICES/JONSIS Working Group has decided to use essentially the same form for setting up a second-level inventory of the data from JONSDAP 76.

Inventory Forms for Marine Geological and Geophysical Data

An International Geological/Geophysical Cruise Inventory (IG/GCI) form has been established jointly by IOC and the Commission for Marine Geology of the International Union of Geological Sciences. It should facilitate cruise planning, identify data repositories and stimulate scientist-to-scientist communication and exchange of data. Completed forms of this type should be sent to the World Data Centre system where computer plots of the locations will be prepared, as well as machine print-outs of the information. The plots will be included in a Catalogue of IG/GCI Sample and Traverse Location Plots.

In this connection it may be mentioned that IOC has developed an International Marine Geological Data format for exchange of such data. It is understood that the form is not so much intended for recording and transmission of large volumes of quantitative data, but rather is designed to inform marine geologists of the nature of materials available in collections. A corresponding International Marine Geophysical Data format is in preparation.

Note. Copies of the various types of inventory forms mentioned above will be available on request at C.M.1975 in Montreal.