

**Report of the
7th Meeting of the UN Atlas of the Oceans Technical Committee
3-4 June, 2003; UN Headquarters, New York**

The seventh meeting of the UN Atlas Technical Committee (Committee) was held 3-4 June 2003. The meeting was chaired by Serge Garcia. The Committee is composed of technical staff from the seven UN agencies that have entered into formal agreements to co-operate in the development of the Atlas of the Oceans. Representatives of FAO, IMO, IOC, and UNEP attended. IAEA, SCBD and WMO were unable to attend. Partner NOAA was represented by Steve Brown and John Everett. The List of Participants, a list of Agencies and collaborators, and the meeting Agenda are included below as Attachments.

- **Agency, Project Manager and Administrative Reports**

Each of the UN agency partners that were in attendance presented their report of progress and issues since the last meeting. The Project Manager and administrative reports were also presented along with that of NOAA. IAEA and WMO, although not present, forwarded their reports after the meeting. These are included in Attachment 4.

- **Wrapping up the Development Phase: what we did, reports**

Mr. Everett reviewed the documents prepared for the end of the development phase of the Atlas. Primarily these consisted of the final report, a budget for the ongoing activities, a proposal that agencies can use for seeking funding from donors with which they might be associated, and a revised presentation for use by members of the Technical Committee. These are discussed in more detail in the report of the Project Manager and under Project Administration, in Attachment 4.

- **Pending issues: Publisher and National Geographic**

Mr. Everett provided an overview of the discussions with the National Geographic Society, describing some of the difficulties in gaining access to their magazine articles for which they generally do not own the pictures. He reported that the remaining issues would be discussed at the Society later in the week. Our primary cooperation with the Society consists of an active link to their map machine from the maps section of the Atlas.

He also provided an overview of the difficulties the publisher had following the events of September 11, 2001 wherein the sources of funding for venture capital of the nature and vision for the UN Atlas derivative products was greatly diminished. He also reported that a presentation by the publisher would be made shortly, discussing their status.

- **Institutionalization in the UN, including day-to-day support: reports from each agency**

FAO appeared to be the most advanced agency in terms of integrating the Atlas into its routine operations. Mr. Garcia reported that nearly all of the FAO fisheries materials have been uploaded into the Atlas and that the Atlas is now the source for information about fisheries activities, including the development of the Fisheries Atlas that is put out at the same time as the Committee on Fisheries holds its biennial meeting. Other agencies are also working in this

direction, but less ambitiously, usually working to automatically link the Atlas to other parts of the agency's information system so that materials are maintained automatically in a current state.

- **UN Atlas of the Oceans side event**

Concurrent with the Atlas technical committee meeting, the UN Informal Consultation on Law of the Sea was being held in the same building. Delegates attending the consultation were invited to a "side event" to hear about the Atlas and the progress in the year since its launch. Mr. Everett made the presentation and Mr. Garcia hosted the question and answer session. Although the session was lightly attended, taking place during the only scheduled lunch break for the delegates, the presentation was well received and there was a lively discussion. Several delegates suggested that the presentation be made before the whole Consultation but they were unable to cause it to happen because of the fullness of that agenda.

- **Report by publisher on status and prospects.**

Mr. Hal Denstman, accompanied by Jim Witker and Bob Melnick, discussed the problems that had beset the company and caused their inability to perform the publication activities that we all had envisioned. Commercial products are intended to be prepared for sale to the public at large, policymakers, and to the educational market. They talked in general terms about the possibility of receiving sufficient funding to allow their activities to move forward and to perhaps also provide significant resources to the Atlas itself, to insure its longevity and its improvement. They believed that the outcome of this opportunity would be determined shortly.

- **Ideas for Cooperation with South Street Seaport Museum, New York**

Mr. Peter Neill, President of the South Street Seaport Museum, presented ideas on how his museum could work with the UN Atlas through the creation of The World Ocean Observatory at its premises in lower Manhattan, New York, to present to the public through exhibits, educational programs, and a web-based information exchange themes and information outlining the implication of the ocean for the future of human survival. The Observatory is designed in response to a primary recommendation by the Independent World Commission of the Future of the Ocean, in its 1998 report, THE OCEAN, OUR FUTURE. Mr. Neill presented documents which outlined the project in detail. He suggested a partnership with the UN Atlas that would entail such contributions as provision of content, assisting with the linking to maritime museums and science centers around the world, and assistance in fund raising. He noted that the Museum has the largest fleet of historic vessels privately maintained in the world, was a major attraction in New York, and was eager to extend its mission to a global audience. Mr. Neill is former President of the Council of American Maritime Museums and the International Congress of Maritime Museum; he suggested that his commitment to the Atlas could expand this important audience.

- **Long-term fund raising: Agency efforts (reports from each agency)**

The agencies had not been able to make significant progress in raising long-term funding for the Atlas. Strategies for raising the necessary funds were presented by the project manager. The strategies, in general terms, focus on the current operational mode of keeping the investment intact with modest improvements through the use of in kind services by the agencies, with the need for funding of the Project Manager an urgent question. The next level of funding would bring the long-term budget into play at the \$225,000 level, and the third would pursued several improvements in the Atlas that require more substantial funding.

The Project Manager noted that the present array of options for the likelihood of receiving funding from outside the UN system was, in ranked order:

- NOAA
 - The publisher
 - South Street Seaport Museum
 - Foundations
- **Interim solutions:**

The agency partners reviewed their individual situations with respect to the ability to continue serving the Atlas needs. All agreed that they were in a position to maintain their current level of involvement, including maintaining the quality of materials and continuing to input new materials on a time-available basis. If there were to be additional funding available, most agencies could use it profitably to expand their content in both scope and depth. Given that the funding of the Project Manager by FAO internal funds is about to run out, an immediate need exists to find additional revenues.

- **The UN Atlas as a formal WSSD partnership**

Following a presentation by DESA on the WSSD Partnership Programme (detailed information is available at <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/partnerships/partnerships.htm>) including the evolving criteria for selection among proposals for inclusion in the WSSD list, the Committee discussed whether it was possible and convenient to get the UN Atlas of the Oceans included in the list. It was made clear that the program was meant to include new programs that have been set up as a result of the WSSD and that programmes such as the Atlas, set as a follow-up to UNCED, would not automatically qualify. It was also not clear that there would be significant benefits sufficient to compensate for the additional coordination, reporting and other burden that would be associated with being listed. As criteria were still being reviewed in DESA, it was agreed that action was deferred until final information was received from DESA and additional discussions have been held.

- **Working with volunteer editors (experiences/prognosis by each agency)**

The agency partners reviewed their present cooperation with volunteer editors from outside the agencies. In general, it has been difficult to work an outside individual into the mainstream process. Nevertheless, it has been accomplished in some cases. The difficulties generally rise in that some of the agencies devote resources to the Atlas periodically rather than continuously at a low level and that the interest of the volunteers often do not mesh with the interests of the agencies. It was generally agreed that this is an area that needs greater attention on the part of the agencies.

- **How to fix weak parts of the Atlas**

Mr. Everett identified four weak parts in the Atlas and estimated that it would take about \$50,000 in consultant fees to complete them. Most of these areas lie outside the realm of UN agencies and a suitable organizations outside of the UN system have not stepped forward nor otherwise been identified.

- **Software technical issues and improvements**

Throughout the meeting, various suggestions were made on possible changes to the software supporting the Atlas. These are compiled below for discussion with the information technology team.

- Establish a bulletin board in the Atlas for questions and answers. For example, post your questions here, someone will answer. It was not clear who the “someone” would be.
- Out reach: E-mail a message periodically accumulating changes that have been made
- What can we learn about the users? Country, internet domain?
- The Atlas homepage should say why people should join the Atlas.
- We need to fix the geography section, perhaps by deleting the country listings and moving the See more page into the main page.
- Can we get the software to automatically search for empty topics, or those with a minimal number of knowledge objects?
- Can we automatically send an e-mail to editors telling them that they have a material in their Inbox awaiting their decision?
- Can we have a button to facilitate communication among co-editors of a particular section? Clicking on the button would send the message to the 2, 3, or 4 co-editors as a group.
- We should investigate developing a more explicit mission statement for the Atlas.
- **Coordination on shared areas – avoiding overwriting the work of others**

The discussion was held on the need to be very careful when editing materials that are in an area of the Atlas with multiple editors on the topic. This is particularly true if there is any uncertainty as to who may have entered the material and is maintaining it. The committee determined that one way to facilitate coordination would be to have an E-mail button available to the Co-Editors so that they could automatically send materials to all the persons collaborating in that topic, for review, comment or approval.

- **Coordination on complex areas**

The project manager discussed the current situation where there are complementary materials in a very few topics that have been added in each of the three main areas of the Atlas: about, uses, and issues. An example is coral reefs. Whenever someone establishes a new topic, they should first do a search of the Atlas to see if the material is already covered, and whether it already meets their needs such that it could be displayed through a simple linking operation. If not, materials that are added need to be complementary to the other materials and certainly should never be in contradiction. Some duplication at this stage in the development of the Atlas is fine, as is a better policy to permit quite free input of materials rather than worrying about some duplication that might occur. The issue should be inserted in the guidelines to editors.

- **Recognition**

The committee noted that it wished to recognize the excellent work of Julian Ross of IMO and Jennifer Perce of IOC. Their enthusiasm and dedication to develop a very high quality herheart felt appreciation of the excellent job done by the FAO developers of the CDS software. The CDS is a pleasure to work with, and allows for virtually any type of information to be correctly displayed.

- **Decisions**

Publisher. Meeting by itself, the committee determined that it should allow one more month for the publisher to reach a positive outcome in its efforts to mobilize resources for the Atlas development. After this, additional arrangements will be sought and every effort will be made to obtain funding support for the Atlas from foundations and other sources that might be appropriate. Nevertheless, discussions and joint fund-raising efforts with the publisher could continue.

South Street Seaport Museum. Meeting by itself, the committee determined that the museum should be invited to become an Atlas partner on the same footing as other partners such as WRI or CoML as its aim was to help improve the website itself, a recognized public good. The Committee considered that the task was so large that there was room for more partners with additional skills and potential contributions. It noted in this respect that the Museum was in a particularly strong position to assist in developing the topic on the history of Oceanography as well as to develop more and better quality educational material. The Committee noted with interest that the Museum could, in addition, assist in raising funds to improve the Atlas website. It agreed to pursue the discussion to identify the best ways to do so. The Project Manager was instructed to forward a copy of an existing cooperative agreement to the Museum so that it could be used as a prototype to develop a cooperative agreement, with a specific work plan for adding content and for assisting in the raising of funds.

UN-DOALOS. Following the presentation by UNDOALOS, the Committee determined that this office was working at a high level of competence and should become a partner in the Atlas. The Project Manager was instructed to send a draft agreement to them for their consideration. The committee noted also the excellent work that Mr. Robert Sandev had done on the Governance Topic and the Office’s recognition that Governance is broader than the Law of the Sea and further that the Office was working to prepare a broader outline for the topic. It urged DOALOS to update and establish collaborations on this central issue as soon as possible.

Additional budget needs. The Committee developed a list of funding requirements that are in addition to the agreed \$225,000 annual basic budget needed to maintain and improve the Atlas, and the \$50,000 (one-time) for development of prototype Atlas products for soliciting publishing investors.

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| 1. Fill in top-level topics that are weak or empty. (one-time) | \$50,000 |
| 2. Edit/update text from the HDNO Atlas. (one-time) | \$30,000 |
| 3. Translate the Atlas into Spanish and French. (one-time, mostly) | \$200,000 |
| 4. Edit the entire Atlas. (one-time) | \$50,000 |

5. Hire a part-time editor. (continuing)	\$50,000
6. Develop and staff a strong outreach Program (continuing)	\$75,000
Total one-time costs (prototype plus 1, 2, 3, & 4)	\$380,000
Total continuing (basic plus 5 & 6)	\$350,000

In order to better determine the actual costs of translation of the main parts of the Atlas into French and Spanish, it was agreed to request of the CDS staff to determine if they could assist in automatically counting the number of words in the topic introductory pages and in the associated See More pages. Using this information, each agency would request an estimate from the translators with whom they work.

Next meeting. It was decided to aim to have the next meeting of the Technical Committee in association with the Ocean Conference to be held in Paris on 11 - 13 November, with the Atlas meeting to be held on 12-14 November.

• **Action Items from Seventh Meeting of Technical Committee**

Item	Responsibility	Due Date
Find permanent funding for the Atlas	Everett/Garcia/All	continuing
Pursue development of weak areas	Everett/Garcia	continuing
Obtain copy of FAO Forestry/NGS agreement	Garcia	15 July 2003
Each agency should bring the Atlas before their governing body and should tell about their participation	All Agencies	31 Dec. 2003
Editors should add the Atlas website to their E-mail business cards	All editors	1 August 2003
Print additional brochures as money is available	Garcia	Pending
Auto count words in topic screen and see mores	Carocci, Hoad	1 August 2003
Modify Logo to include words for use on website links	Carocci	1 August 2003

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| Attachment 1 | Agenda |
| Attachment 2. | List of Participants |
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| Attachment 4 | Agency, Project Manager and Administrative Reports |

Attachment 1 Agenda

**7th Meeting of the UN Atlas of the Oceans Technical Committee
3-4 June, 2003; UN Headquarters, New York**

AGENDA

2 June, 19:00 Gather for dinner in lobby of Crowne Plaza at the UN, 304 E 42nd St.

3 June, 09:30, Conference Room 5

- * Begin Agenda, Introductions
- * Wrapping up the Development Phase: what we did, reports (Everett)
- * Pending issues: Publisher and National Geographic (Everett)
- * Institutionalization in the UN, including day-to-day support: reports from each agency
- 13:15 to 14:45 UN Atlas of the Oceans side event (Everett & Garcia)
- * Report by publisher on status and prospects.
- * Long-term fund raising:
 - Agency efforts (reports from each agency)
- * Interim solutions:
 - Minimum budget needs (Everett)
 - Funding availability from each agency (reports from each agency)

18:00 Adjourn

4 June, 09:30, Conference Room 5

- * The UN Atlas as a formal WSSD partnership: (Garcia)
 - * Working with volunteer editors (experiences/prognosis by each agency)
 - * How to fix weak parts of the Atlas (Everett)
 - 11:00 Ideas for Cooperation with South Street Seaport Museum, New York (Peter Neill)
 - 13:00 - 14:45 Vacate Conference Room 5 - LUNCH
 - 15:00 Reconvene in Conference Room 5
 - * Software technical issues and improvements
 - * Coordination on shared areas – avoiding overwriting the work of others
 - * Coordination on complex areas – Corals as an example.
- 18:00 Adjourn

Attachment 2 List of Participants

**7th Meeting of the UN Atlas of the Oceans Technical Committee
3-4 June, 2003; UN Headquarters, New York**

List of Participants

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Everett, John john.everett@fao.org
Garcia, Serge serge.garcia@fao.org

IMO: International Maritime Organization

Harvey, Marianne m-harvey@imo.org

IOC-UNESCO: Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission

Pissierssens, Peter p.pissierssens@unesco.org
Perce, Jennifer J.Perce@unesco.org

UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme

Korporal, Kenneth k.korporal@unep.nl

UN-DESA: Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Rogers, Anne rogersa@un.org

UN-DOALOS: Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea

Sandev, Robert sandev@un.org

Census of Marine Life

Zhang, Phoebe phoebe@IMCS.rutgers.edu

South Street Seaport Museum

Neill, Peter PNeill@compuserve.com

MediaCom Communications Group (Cinegram Media, Inc.)

Denstman, Hal hdenstman@comcast.net
Witker, Jim and Bob Melnick

NOAA: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Brown, Steve: Stephen.K.Brown@noaa.gov

Attachment 3 Full Names of UN Atlas Agencies

UN – Associated Agencies

FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IAEA International Atomic Energy Agency
IMO International Maritime Organization
IOC Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)
SCBD Secretariat of the Commission on Biological Diversity
IUCN Int. Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
UNCHS United Nations Centre for Human Settlements: Habitat
UNDESA United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UN-DOALOS Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNEP United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNF United Nations Foundation
UNIDO United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WCMC World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WWF/IUCN/UNEP)
WHO World Health Organization
WMO World Meteorological Organization
WTO World Tourism Organization

Other Collaborators

HDNO Head Department of Navigation and Oceanography (Russia)
NOAA National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (US)
World Bank
CoML Census of Marine Life
NGS National Geographic Society
WRI World Resources Institute

Attachment 4 Agency, Project Manager and Administrative Reports

FAO. Mr. Serge Garcia reported on FAO contributions:

1. **Technical improvements to the CDS** (*released mid-June*)

1.1 **Information management**

- A new tab in the explorer for members to manage their topic subscriptions
- Topic permissions are displayed in a more intuitive matrix format (still not perfect).
- Date added is now tracked for all KOs and topics.
- Short form URLs have been introduced for topics and KOs. Will look like <http://www.oceansatlas.org/id/37598>. These are useful for sending references via mail and for embedding in static pages.
- StatisticsGenerator is improved.
- Password generator should no longer generate passwords with equals signs.
- Suggestors of KOs are now informed when the KO is approved by an editor.
- KOPools allow indexing of content maintained in other web systems (A FIGIS KO pool is planned -- see note below regarding collaboration with FIGIS).
- More parameters added to cap the numbers of requests.
- The topic links page has been integrated with the KO information view.
- KO sorting on added and changed date.

1.2 **Improvement of software/system performance**

- Better page caching (particularly important on the CD ROMs and when there are lots of browsing users).
- Bug in topic editorship removal fixed (CEs only).
- Bug in "join now" that lost contact data has been fixed.
- New advanced search form including CSV export and allowing sorting possibilities
- There is a minor performance improvement to the search results page.
- There are several new CDS instances including Fresh water life and Rural Finance.
- Lots of new JSP tags for constructing the homepage.
- New versions of Tomcat, Lucene and the Java Virtual Machine.
- Internal performance change to XSL transformations - most noticeable on CD-ROM start-up.
- Addition of load statistics to HTML pages (invisible to most users).
- New MAIL_FORMAT parameter to force all emails to be sent as plain text. Previously all mails were sent as HTML.

1.3 **System standards**

- Migration to UTF-8 encoding for the HTML pages and the internal storage. This avoids problems with accented characters but can require some manual fixing after the migration. Necessary for proper display of characters in eventual language versions.
- Modification of underlying storage of information to bring it into line with AGMES and Dublin Core.
- Modification of URL status value encoding to adhere to W3C standards. Most old URLs should still work for a good few releases.
- For security reasons, there will be an upgrade to Windows 2000

2. Elaboration of maps

- Eighty-four maps were received from HDNO, as agreed. These were uploaded, tested and work fine. More work is planned to generate real GIS formats.

3. Links with FIGIS, the Fisheries Global Information System

- Developers have been building KO pools (Knowledge Object pools) in order to technologically bridge the CDS and FIGIS. KO pools are one-way linkages between two systems. KO metadata is captured from one system, pooled as a collection of metadata and attached (like a satellite) to the "consumer" system. This enables the consumer system to retrieve, link to and display relevant information on its system. The relevance is determined by the keyword parameters used to filter metadata captured. In practical terms, this means that, through the standardized use of keywords, topics will be enhanced by the addition of knowledge object metadata from other systems accessed through the KO pool. There is no limit to the number of KO pools a consumer system can have. For example, the UN Atlas could have a KO pool from onefish, another one from the FAO document repository, etc.
- Regarding FIGIS, which will host the master version of the information displayed in Fisheries and Aquaculture, technicians are developing a method by which changes made to the master copy will be automatically updated in the CDS.

4. CD-ROM factory

The CD-ROM factory was tested twice with satisfactory results. Certain editorial parameters (filters) will have to be established in order to enhance the output of the factory.

5. Miscellaneous

- FAO has supported the Project Manager post on its own resources (through June 2003);
- GIS maps are being developed for both species distributions and maps coming from the Russian Atlas
- An interface is being developed to "automatically" update the CDS when information is posted on the FAO FIGIS. The procedure should be usable, with minor modification, to automatically load references to information added on ordinary websites onto the CDS.

IAEA. Mr. Pavel Povinec provided the following report.

Work continued on and should be ready soon for the following subtopics:

1. Stationary in situ monitoring of radionuclides in the Irish Sea, with possible direct data viewing using satellite data transmission;
2. Mapping of radioactivity of sediments – contamination maps for the Irish Sea will be presented
3. Worldwide marine radioactivity studies carried out in the open ocean will contribute to the present understanding of distribution of radionuclides.

IOC. Ms. Jennifer Perce and Mr. Peter Pissierssens presented the following report.

Purpose

The mandate of the IOC is to promote international cooperation and national capacity to pursue and develop the marine sciences (both pure and applied) amongst its member states. The UN Atlas is a reference tool whose function is to orient its users to the multi-dimensional nature of the oceans and its related issues – with a view towards their sustainable development - and to allow the user to pursue an Atlas topic to whatever level of specificity, complexity or technicality he wants. Bearing these things in mind, I feel that the purpose of the IOC's entries into the Atlas is to facilitate understanding and communication between the marine science and technology perspective and the governance and policy-making perspective.

Strategy

The strategy by which I have pursued this purpose (Feb – May, 2003), for the IOC, is:

- Review the existing UN Atlas content
- Assign priority ranking to the 31 (24) topics and sub-topics the IOC is responsible for
- Methodically work down the ranked list, researching and extracting information relevant to each topic
- Write / edit introductory texts for each of the topics, careful to include information that is accurate, practical and relevant to scientists, managers and policy makers
- Gather relevant links, documents, and other related knowledge objects, and make them accessible through the Atlas
- Gather images and graphics to illustrate the point of the texts

Results

The application of this straightforward strategy has resulted in updated and useful Atlas entries for all of the IOC topics, as well as an increased understanding of the practical aspects of multi-partner project implementation.

Contributions

The following people facilitated the IOC's contributions to the UN Atlas by donating their time and advice:

IOC

Peter Pissierssens - Coordinator
Colin Summerhayes (GOOS)
Thorkild Aarup (GLOSS)
Ole Vestergaard (all Coral Reef topics)
Alexi Suryumov (TTR and TEMA)
Bernardo Aliaga (TEMA)
Umit Unluata (Marine Assessments,
SOEMEP)
Benjamin Sims (IODE topics)
Irene Gazagne (web support)

Non-IOC

A Suryachandra Rao
Institute for Global Climate Change
Research
Yokohama City, Kanagawa, Japan
(Major Oscillations)

Emily Corcoran
UNEP-WCMC
Marine Research Officer
(Marine Assessments)

Lorraine Parkin
Centre for Marine Studies
University of Queensland
(Images–Affiliated Ecosystems/Coral Reef)

Future Role For IOC And UN Atlas

IOC's continuing role in the Atlas depends on the future of the Atlas itself, as well as the future of the IOC web presence, and public relations/ information dissemination strategies (the new IOC website will include an issue-oriented section that will make extensive use of the UN Atlas). As the Atlas exists at this time, it requires relatively little maintenance; all of the introductory texts have been written or re-written, and there have been many relevant knowledge objects added. I would recommend periodic reviews of the topics and updating/editing of knowledge objects. I conservatively estimate that this would require approx 90 hours/ 6 months, from a qualified person/persons. However, any elaboration on the Atlas, or integration of the Atlas with other aspects of the IOC's programmes, both of which are worthy of consideration, would require substantially more time and effort.

Suggestions

The UN Atlas is intended to be a serious tool, and perhaps the products of the Atlas are also, however, great inconsistencies amongst the topic entries detract from its credibility. Furthermore, shifting editorial rights combined with irregular/poor inter-agency communication also hampers the relevance of the Atlas. Moreover, the infrastructure exists for feedback and suggestions to the Atlas, however this is under-utilized and could represent the most efficient way of keeping the Atlas updated (i.e., if the Journal of Marine Technology sent a memo to the relevant topic editors when a new article appeared).

Other Notes

- Flagging topics can help identify who is entering content
- More flexible editorial rights combined with increased communication between editors could increase the value of the Atlas as a resource
- There are several empty topics and subtopics (ID numbers 3522, 513, 2386, 2383,2386,2389,465.....)
- Most notably, in the 'About' sections, there are very weak introductory texts, and I feel that not only should the topics often be further developed, but they should be further developed in a fashion where it is stated why certain knowledge is being published (i.e., 'coral bleaching is when the coral polyp expels its symbiot' , versus, 'coral bleaching occurs when the coral polyp expels its symbiot and is a result of dramatic changes in sea temp – this is relevant considering global warming and bleaching is a kind of environmental indicator...')

IMO. Mrs. Marianne Harvey presented the IMO report.

Progress

We were able to include all the topics based on the cooperative agreement. Since we have uploaded many of those topics, there have been significant new amendments to IMO instruments; it has therefore been necessary to review the following :

USES: Transportation and Telecommunication: Maritime Transportation: International Maritime Organization

USES: Transportation and Telecommunication: Maritime Transportation: Passenger Ships: Tankers and Passenger Ships: Passenger ships

ISSUES: Emergencies: Emergencies: Transportation and Telecommunication : Shipping emergencies: the GMDSS

ISSUES: Emergencies: Emergencies: Transportation and Telecommunication : Shipping emergencies: search and rescue

In addition we have introduced five new topics:

ISSUES: Safety at Sea: Maritime Security : Maritime security

ISSUES: safety at Sea: Transport of Dangerous Goods

ISSUES: Pollution and Degradation: Liability and Compensation for Chemical Pollution

ISSUES: Safety at Sea: SOLAS Convention

ISSUES: Pollution and Degradation : MARPOL Convention

USES: transportation and Telecommunications: Maritime Transport: Navigation

Overlap of Topics

Because of the increase in the number of editors, there is also a possibility of topics overlap. A case in point is the search and rescue topic.

Although the structure is sound in practice we should check the links to harmonise the contributions of various editors and authors.

Coordination

Maybe there is a case to be made whereby the information sent to the Atlas is checked by the project manager prior to public release.

Hyperlink Topics

Following the recommendation of the project manager, those pages which had links to websites have been revised as they would not operate in the CD-ROM. Further work needs to be done in order to do so in the other pages edited by IMO.

Institutionalization of the Atlas

There is now greater awareness of the Atlas particularly in the External Relations Division of IMO. A substantial amount of material originates from the IMO website.

Unlike the initial phase of the project, we are now able to upload and update information without the services of consultants.

The editors of the Atlas are also editors of the IMO website and should therefore ensure synchronicity of information. In the absence of a web editor, we will try to incorporate this whenever possible.

Support from IMO

Support includes 3 staff time and some funds which were used to hire consultants during the initial phase of the project including travel costs to attend Atlas meetings.

FAO funds : the IMO Atlas subproject received a total of \$30,000 from FAO. Part of the funds were expended to cover a consultant as well as travel costs to attend the Paris and New York meetings.

Although IMO cannot contribute any money, we are committed to continuing to populate the Atlas in the years to come.

Project Manager: Mr John Everett reported on his project management activities:

1. Co-ordination. Mr. Everett maintained the Structure and Assignments Matrix that documents the content and responsibilities of the UN Agencies and the collaborators. A revised matrix was recently sent to the Technical Committee and posted to the Atlas Information Site (<http://www.oceansatlas.org>). Since the last meeting, one updated set of instructions was provided to the Committee and also was posted to the site. Mr. Everett also developed the meeting agenda. Other details follow in the discussions on the completeness of the input.
2. Collaborations. Mr. Everett reported that discussions with National Geographic (NG) on sharing of materials remain positive. Discussions and meetings are continuing to refine

how their materials will be used, but the equivalent of a Letter of Intent, including an agreement to mutually link web-sites has been achieved through reciprocal e-mail messages. A draft formal collaboration agreement was provided to NG, to advance discussions on how NG materials will be used.

3. Mr. Everett also reported that discussions with the Census of Marine life resulted in a formal agreement agreeing to link the UN Atlas to CoML and its Biogeographic Information System, which will be an excellent source of information about oceanic biological information.
4. Presentations. The Atlas presentation was updated and modified for events since the launch. A copy is on the Atlas Information Page.

NOAA. . Mr John Everett reported on his his role as NOAA Coordinator and Point of Contact:

1. NOAA has continued to retain Mr. Everett to continue co-ordinating NOAA activities on the Atlas and to serve as the NOAA Point of Contact. NOAA remains committed to collaboration on the Atlas. NOAA staff throughout the Agency are inputting and reviewing materials for the Atlas. NOAA offices have provided a great many sites for use as Knowledge Objects on the Atlas web site. These have been entered in the appropriate places by Mr. Everett and summer students. Mark Chandler of the Project Manager's former NOAA staff has continued developing the Energy USE topic. He has successfully interested experts from around the globe in providing materials making this one of the richest parts of the Atlas.
2. Dr. Suzanne Bolton, also of the Project Manager's former NOAA staff, developed the materials for the Climate Change Impacts ISSUE. These are being coordinated with the WMO-lead. Dr. Frances Michaelis working through the NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southwest Fisheries Science Center has made significant contributions to the Ecosystems topic, in the ABOUT section of the Atlas, working with Dr. Ned Cyr, at NMFS headquarters.
3. NOAA has assembled a network of staff across the Agency to provide materials, assist, and review the content of the Atlas.

UNEP. Mr. Ken Korporal reported on UNEP contributions:

1. UNEP wishes to acknowledge and thank Serge Garcia and FAO for their continued role in coordinating the UN agencies involved with the UN Atlas of the Oceans and for their appreciated support to fund the Project Manager, John Everett, to manage the day-to-day activities of the UN Atlas. UNEP remains hopeful that new sources of funding will become available to enable all core UN agencies to continue to contribute in a highly substantive manner. We remain vigilant to identify possible sources of funding and open to participate in the fund raising process.
2. UNEP continues to update and maintain the responsible areas of the Atlas as best as possible without dedicated resources. Additional topic editors were engaged and documents and reports were approved for upload or linking as knowledge objects. The UNEP Team also continues to undertake editorial responsibilities, including responding to queries and discussing suggested contributions from UN Atlas members or new topic editors.

3. The challenge remains to institutionalize the updating process and to instil buy-in from the various globally dispersed programme areas that could provide relevant material. In this regard, discussions are planned for July 2003 to potentially change the focal point responsibility to a programme area with closer linkages to major activities such as the GEO reporting process, global marine assessment, and UNEP.Net initiatives like the Water Portal. The discussions will also critically look at the resource issues to determine how UNEP can continue to maintain the site in the event that no new funding is forthcoming.
4. In order to further address data gaps, improve existing content and to facilitate the addition of new content, UNEP will require either a re-allocation of existing internal funds, which would be difficult, or access to funds derived by the private sector publisher of the UN Atlas or to funds provided by a donor(s) to the Atlas.
5. There is interest in the possibility of producing spin-off products, such as a GEO oceans assessment, an oceans atlas, and/or region specific CD-ROM products for students including teaching guides. UNEP would be pleased to work with all the partners, including the private publisher, to further develop plans for such products. Activity in this area will be discussed in the next phase of internal UNEP discussions. UNEP may be able to work with donors to obtain funding for region specific products, such as teaching oriented CD-ROM products in certain key regions.

WMO. Mr. Peter Dexter provided a report prepared by Consultant David Meldrum.

1. Work completed to date:

A consultant (David Meldrum) was engaged for a further 3-day period in February 2003 to progress WMO input to the atlas. His tasks included:

- selection of suitable text and graphics for the remaining WMO topics, sub-topics and linked resources
- seeking permission for the use of material where appropriate
- liaising with other agencies with whom topics or sub-topics are shared
- writing opening page paragraphs as required
- uploading of complete topic pages, imagery and links to the atlas website
- preparation of an audit trail for atlas source material
- local archival of source files and preparation of guidance notes to facilitate future maintenance of the WMO parts of the atlas

Access to the Atlas server had noticeably improved over the last year, and new upload tools greatly facilitated the reliable insertion of material into the Atlas.

All WMO topics are now virtually complete, although some of the 'See More' links still point to sites external to the atlas.

2. Future work plan

The consultant is continuing to work from his home institution insofar as time permits to bring the WMO sections to completion; in particular the replacement of off-atlas links by uploaded material.

Remaining tasks include:

- preparation of stand-alone 'See More' pages in place of off-atlas website links
- final editing of material on shared pages (e.g. with IOC, IMO, NOAA)

Clear guidance is needed from the chief editors as to how to progress the copyright/permission issues in a clear, effective and consistent manner.

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Project Administration. Mr. Serge Garcia and Mr. John Everett provided a report on Project administration:

1. Long-term (5 years) agreements have been signed between FAO and six UN Agencies (IOC, IMO, IAEA, SCBD, WMO, and UNEP).
2. Project management and reporting to the UN Foundation. The Final report to the UN Foundation, was prepared by Mr. Everett, with the assistance of Committee inputs, and reviewed by the Committee. It was received and accepted by the Foundation.
3. Using the materials prepared for the budget section of the final report, a projected budget for a continuing level of operations was prepared indicating that \$225,000 per year would allow sufficient funds to maintain and improve the Atlas. This is, in turn, served as the underpinning for a funding proposal suitable to be used by the member agencies to seek donor funding.

end of report