

Report of the sixteenth meeting of the Ocean Facilities Exchange Group (OFEG), held on the 20th and 21st April 2006 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Attending: Jacques Binot, Jean-Xavier Castrec, Juanjo Danobeitia, Colin Day, Linda Goad, Thomas Mueller (only on second day), Per Nieuwejaar, Marieke Rietveld, Ingolf Roettingen, Marck Smit (only on second day), Barbara Tanner, Mike Webb

1 Welcome and approval of minutes

The Group welcomed representatives from Norway (Per Nieuwejaar, Ingolf Roettingen) to the 16th meeting of OFEG. It was noted that Norway already has a bilateral barter exchange agreement in place with the UK and that Norway could if it wished become a member of OFEG by formally accepting the Group's Tripartite Agreement.

The Group approved the minutes of the 15th meeting of OFEG with one minor amendment ("Juanjo Danobeitia's name to be added to list of attendees"). The Group accepted the proposed meeting agenda but noted that Thomas Mueller would not arrive until the second day of the meeting and so some of the agenda items completed on the first day would need to be revisited once Thomas joined the meeting.

2 Feedback on barter cruises in 2005/06 and any clearance issues

Feedback was provided on recent barter cruises. The only major issue that was raised was over gaining diplomatic clearance for the Poseidon to work off Egypt in May 2006 for Ifremer.

3 Up-date on the 2006/07 cruise programmes and new barter opportunities

Reports were provided on members' cruise programmes in 2006 and 2007, and a number of major barter opportunities were identified. These included: 3 cruises off Sumatra for the UK, a 4-week cruise of Chile for Germany and a 30-day cruise off Réunion for France. It was noted that enquires on proposed barter exchanges should only be through the national barter contacts within OFEG and any enquires from another nation's science community should be re-directed back to their national barter contacts. [Action: All]

4 Up-date of the OFEG activity document and barter balances

4.1 The Group agreed amendments to the barter points balances (in the OFEG barter bank document) and the activity data (in the OFEG activity document).

5 Revision of the OFEG ship deployment information

5.1 The Group agreed to postpone the revision of the OFEG ship deployment information for 2008/09 until the next meeting.

6 Report on fleet and major equipment changes

6.1 The Group was up-dated on progress with the build of the *James Cook* and on the plans for the replacement of *Discovery*. The Group was also given background information on the Norwegian research fleet, its national instrumentation activities, and a proposed new vessel.

7 Website developments

- 7.1 The Group was given a brief presentation on the new NERC Marine Planning website and how it is being used to manage the UK's cruise planning process.
- 7.2 The UK proposed to the Group that OFEG should consider having a 'Deep Platforms Facility' to better co-ordinate its deep platform facilities and to improve OFEG's international profile. Following this proposal, the Group discussed the potential benefits of having such a facility and it was agreed that an OFEG Deep Platforms Facility should be launched on the web as soon as possible. Members considered that there was merit in having a common format for the presentation of information on OFEG deep platforms. It was agreed that, following an offer from NIOZ, the OFEG Deep Platforms facility would be hosted on the NIOZ website and that members would provide NIOZ with information on their deep platforms within one-month for inclusion on the new website. [**Action: All**]

8 Marine equipment

- 8.1 Following a query from Ifremer on what gravimeters were available within OFEG, the UK confirmed that it has two gravimeters that may be of interest to Ifremer and that it would provide Ifremer with the specification of these instruments. [**Action: NERC**]

9 Any other business

- 9.1 It was agreed that the next meeting should be held in Spain (in either Madrid or Barcelona).
- 9.2 The Group briefly discussed what it could do to publicise its 10th anniversary. The Group considered that an OFEG anniversary leaflet would be worthwhile and that this should both review past activity (e.g. the number of barter cruises, the number of interventions) and have a forward look (e.g. launch of the Deep Platforms Facility, improved exchange, co-ordination and co-ownership of new marine equipment and instrumentation). It was agreed that OFEG members should work together to develop a leaflet. [**Action: All**]

Action Sheet arising from OFEG meeting on the 20th and 21st April 2006

- Action 1.2: Approved OFEG minutes to go on the OFEG website [**Action: Webb**]
- Action 3.1: Members to re-directed barter enquires from members of the science community back to the appropriate national OFEG contact(s) [**Action: All**]
- Action 7.2: To launch an 'OFEG Deep Platforms Facility' as soon as possible [**Action: All**]
- Action 8.1: The UK to provide Ifremer with the specification information on its gravimeters. [**Action: NERC**]
- Action 9.2: Members to work towards developing an OFEG anniversary leaflet [**Action: All**]
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