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Establishment of "Marine Information Clearing House" in Japan

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The Japan Oceanographic Data Center (JODC) started to operate "Marine Information Clearing House" manages and provides metadata of marine data and information in March 2010.

In Japan, the Basic Act on Ocean Policy was put into force in July 2007 aiming comprehensive and systematic promotion of ocean policies to realize the sound development of economic society and the more stable life of Japanese people as well as to contribute to the coexistence of human beings. In order to promote measures with regard to the oceans intensively and comprehensively, Headquarters for Ocean Policy was established in the Cabinet. Director-General of the Headquarters is served by the Prime Minister. The Headquarters formulated the Basic Plan on Ocean Policy on 18 March 2008.

In the Basic Plan on Ocean Policy, it has been requested to establish a system to comprehensively manage and provide the data and information now scattered in respective agencies, so as to provide them for private companies and research institutions in a user-friendly manner and enhance effectiveness of marine surveys by respective agencies, with a view to contributing to the development of marine industries and the improvement of scientific knowledge.

It has also been requested that, in the process, efforts made so far by agencies such as JODC, which has carried out international services under the framework of International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) promoted by Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, should be utilized at a maximum to make the system effective and efficient, while seeking cooperation from universities, local governments and private companies as well. It should be ensured that collected and managed information is accumulated comprehensively over a long period of time.

Under the framework of the Basic Plan on Ocean Policy, a task team was organized and decided to develop "Marine Information Clearing House" in JODC. The system manages and provides metadata of marine data and information scattered in each agency. The metadata of the system contains attribute information of the marine data or information, such as title, summary, contact, time scale, special scale and etc, so that users could easily find necessary data or information through the system.

A format of the metadata was developed based on Japan Metadata Profile (JMP) 2.0 which was formulated by Geographic Survey Institute in Japan in compliance with ISO 19115 metadata standard. The task team decided to cover a variety of categories for the information managed in the system, such as ocean physics, ocean chemistry, marine environment, marine biology/ecosystem, marine meteorology, topography, geophysics, geology, energy, mineral resources, geographic boundaries, marine spatial information, disaster prevention information etc. The system covers not only scientific data but also social information that for the user, such as marine research cruises and facility information, publications and the legislations concerned. User friendly interface and functions have been considered in the system providing synonyms dictionaries, pill-down menu or retrieval function on map etc.