

**SUMMARY REPORT**  
**EXPLORATORY MEETING ON A**  
**PARTNERSHIP FOR OBSERVATION OF THE GLOBAL OCEANS**

March 8-10, 1999

Paris, France

**Introduction and Background:**

Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and the Southampton Oceanography Centre, with support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, organized a meeting to explore a new global partnership among oceanographic research institutions. The purpose of the meeting was to consider areas in which ocean institutions can work together more closely. Among these areas is the development of plans for long-term cooperation in defining and implementing a strategy for global ocean observations. The meeting was held March 8-10, 1999 in Paris at UNESCO, the parent organization of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, one of the sponsoring organizations of the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS). The list of attendees is attached. [Attachment 1: attendees] At the meeting participants agreed to create a new forum, called the Partnership for Observation of the Global Oceans (POGO). A provisional Charter and Mission were prepared.

**POGO CHARTER**

The participants agree to proceed with the establishment of a partnership of institutions (and consortia thereof) which have demonstrated capability to undertake basin-scale oceanographic observations and research together with such associated members and affiliated entities as may subsequently be agreed. Representation will be at the level capable of committing their institutions:

The Partnership shall:

- Initiate key actions to enable effective coordination , integration, and implementation of international ocean observing strategies;
- Establish collective agreements among institutions to promote timely developments in ocean science;
- Promote coordinated views of ocean institutions concerning ocean science to governments, international bodies, and others;
- Facilitate linkages between oceanographic research and operational institutions in relation to their goals, plans, and programs;
- Exchange policy and technical information;
- Coordinate their education and outreach programs;

- Encourage responsiveness to user communities;
- Promote capacity building;
- Promote sharing of facilities and infrastructure;
- Encourage interdisciplinary use of observing infrastructure;
- Support the partnership Secretariat.

## **POGO MISSION**

A Partnership for Observation of the Global Oceans (POGO), composed of major institutions involved in research and observation in global ocean science, will work with the ocean, earth, and atmospheric science communities to promote global oceanography, including especially the development of an integrated global observing strategy. POGO will play a leading role in implementation of an international and integrated global ocean observing system.

The meeting brought together a small group of leaders of oceanographic research organizations with the managerial and scientific leaders of international organizations and programs for an intensive discussion of key issues where research institutions might benefit from a closer working relationship. The number of attendees was limited for the initial exploratory meeting, with the goal of having enough participation from a small group of representative organizations so that there was enough scientific breadth and organizational depth on which to build a possible broader partnership if a consensus could be reached. Participants were expected to interact with other marine research institutions in their regions before and after the meeting so that they could represent a broader segment of the community.

The meeting was conducted on an informal basis with a lot of dialog and interaction. The initial presentations gave a common framework for deliberations by providing a status report and outlook from ICSU, CEOS, GOOS, and CLIVAR. The Chairman of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), the Director of the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) all attended the opening session and expressed the strong support from their organizations for the creation of the proposed partnership. Dr. Ausubel of the Sloan Foundation also strongly encouraged the creation of POGO in the context of the proposed Census of Marine Life.

Participants discussed the unique role that a new forum could play, taking into account the existence of groups such as SCOR, GOOS, and WCRP. In addition, the experience of CEOS and the work on an IGOS Partnership were presented. The success of CEOS in providing a forum for Earth observation from space can be a model for POGO in some regards. If successful, POGO should serve as a coherent voice for the in situ ocean data-providing community in the context of the IGOS partnership, complementing the role of CEOS on behalf of the space agencies, and the global observing systemsponsors representing major user communities.

**Initial Focus:**

The group discussions were wide-ranging; however it was agreed that as an initial focus, POGO should concentrate on global-scale oceanography, particularly issues associated with implementation of observing systems. There was agreement that the scope of POGO should be broader than physical oceanography; indeed one of the contributions POGO can make is to stimulate more interdisciplinary use of observing infrastructure and increased interactions among the various disciplines in oceanography in implementing an integrated global observing strategy. Other important areas in which a new forum can be useful include increasing dialog among directors of institutions who do not regularly have a chance to interact informally, and working together to increase efficiency and effectiveness in public understanding and education.

The community has evolved to the point that integrated implementation can be addressed. The recent agreement between WMO and IOC to create a Joint Technical Commission on Marine Meteorology (JCOMM) was cited as evidence of the recognition by both institutions of their common interest and the need and desirability to become more closely integrated and more efficient in marine observations.

**Organizational Structure:**

Participants emphasized the need to maintain open communication and interaction with the broader ocean and Earth science communities, both at governmental and institutional levels, and including both operational and research programs. The group developed preliminary criteria for membership within the partnership, while recognizing the desire to establish collaborative relationships with non-member national, international or nongovernmental organizations concerned with ocean science, when it is mutually beneficial. Membership will be open to institutions (and consortia thereof) which have demonstrated capability to undertake basin-scale oceanographic observations and research or are capable and willing to make substantial contributions in other forms to the POGO objectives. Members will be expected to provide financial support for the maintenance of a small POGO secretariat. Initial funding (3-5 years) for start-up will be sought from private foundations and other funding sources.

**Observing Systems:**

The meeting recognized the importance of the development of the global ocean observing system via pilot projects and other strategic initiatives. For the POGO participants, the following observing system initiatives were to be considered of particular importance:

- \* GODAE
- \* Argo
- \* Time-series observatories

- \* Communications and telemetry
- \* Repeated hydrographic and biogeochemical sections

As a specific initiative, the meeting recognized the importance of rapidly developing a project for ocean time series/observatories. The meeting requested OOPC to develop a plan for consideration at the next meeting of the participants. This plan should consider the effective sharing of information, technology and experience among participants in the project.

#### **Data and Information Management:**

In the area of data and information management, the group reviewed areas of possible POGO involvement. Discussion ranged from data access policies to the adequacy and cost of telecommunications requirements for data relay from remote observing platforms. The participants discussed areas where the proposed group could be useful in addressing data and information issues. It was agreed that, as a first step, each organization would identify a point of contact with expertise in data and information issues related to ARGO and time series observatories. These experts would assess, for their organizations and related communities, the adequacy of protocols, bandwidth, data retrieval from repositories, and understanding of costs, as well as any other issues they identify, to recommend future activities for the group.

#### **Public Understanding and Education:**

There was strong and enthusiastic support for initiating cooperation in the area of public understanding and education. All institutions are engaged in these activities, and the goals and methods for communication have a great deal of commonality. Participants saw many opportunities for improved effectiveness through better coordination and increased cooperation. CSIRO offered to take the lead, and participants agreed to identify their media relations point of contact, so that a communications subgroup could be formed. Support was offered to convene an initial meeting of this subgroup in the near future. Collaborative activity in community outreach was also discussed and participants agreed to interact with the broader community as the POGO concept becomes formalized and proceeds.

#### **Next Steps:**

The group agreed to convene its first formal meeting during the second half of 1999, at which time participants would agree on the Charter, Mission, and Terms of Reference, along with an initial plan of action.

#### **Conclusions:**

There was a shared view that a forum of ocean research institutions would be a useful addition to the current institutional framework supporting global oceanography, particularly with respect to implementation of an integrated global observing strategy. The preliminary structure and initial agenda for such a partnership was developed at the exploratory meeting.

Work will begin immediately in preparation for the inauguration of the partnership before the end of 1999. Participants received strong support from leaders of existing programs and international organizations and are confident that this effort will make important and effective contributions in the future.