

Introduction of IOC/WESTPAC - from Japanese perspective

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Followed by the high level objectives of Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, IOC Sub-commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC) promotes international cooperation and coordinates programs in three areas; marine research and application, ocean observation service, and capacity building in the western Pacific and its adjacent seas.

At present WESTPAC consists of 22 member states mainly from East Asia, Southeast Asia, and south Pacific. In the area of marine research and application, twelve projects are endorsed by member states, and four projects are supported by the Japanese government (Harmful Algae Bloom, Toxic Marine Organism, Ocean Remote Sensing, and Biodiversity in coral reefs). WESTPAC also endorsed the working group activities to foster scientific and societal discussions on the regional marine science. The working group (WG) on Asian dust was the first WG in WESTPAC, led by Japanese experts, and compiled the collection of scientific papers to foster the inter-disciplinary study in WESTPAC. There are two regional Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) projects in the area of ocean observation service. North-East Asian Regional GOOS (NEAR-GOOS) is conducted by Japan Meteorological Agency and Japan Oceanographic Data Center in cooperation with China, Korea, and Russia, to share in-situ ocean data from each country. The other one is the South East Asian Regional GOOS (SEA-GOOS), led by Thai and conducting several pilot studies from observation to forecasting experiments. Capacity development (CD) is one of key activities in WESTPAC to foster and develop capability of marine science in the region. In the case of Japan in conjunction with the marine research projects, CD has been conducted through the workshops of laboratory experiments and field surveys. In parallel to these activities, a new type of CD activities was proposed in 2008, aimed to establish the Regional Training and Research Center (RTRC) with specific research subject respectively and to develop networks among centers in sustainable manner. The first RTRC was established in China, and the efforts have been continuously made in Japan. In recent years, based on these activities, inter- and trans-disciplinary contributions are welcomed to WESTPAC. Detailed information will be introduced in the presentation.

Keywords: IOC, WESTPAC, Asia, marine science, ocean observation, capacity development