

SIBER NEWS

Sustained Indian Ocean Biogeochemistry and Ecosystem Research

SIBER Meeting in Cape Town: Reaching Out to the African Research Community

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The Sustained Indian Ocean Biogeochemistry and Ecosystem Research (SIBER) program convened its 3rd Scientific Steering Committee meeting in Cape Town, South Africa on October 15-17, 2012. This meeting was held jointly with the Indian Ocean GOOS (IOGOOS) alliance, the CLIVAR/GOOS Indian Ocean Panel (IOP), and the Indian Ocean Observing System Resources Forum (IRF) (Figure 1). For background on these groups see www.iocperth.org. For more information on SIBER see the SIBER Science Plan and Implementation Strategy at <http://www.incois.gov.in/Incois/siber/siber.jsp> or <http://www.imber.info/index.php/Science/Regional-Programmes/SIBER>. The timeline for SIBER meetings and symposia that have been convened to date and that are planned for the future are shown in Figure 2.



Fig 1: Participants in the joint SIBER-IOP session on October 17, 2011 at the Protea Sea Point Hotel in Cape Town, South Africa.

The theme of the 3rd SIBER SSC meeting in Cape Town was “Reaching out to the South African Research Community”. This joint meeting, which was convened at the Protea Sea Point Hotel, was hosted by Perth Regional Program Office, which supports the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, with local support provided by the South African Weather Service and Agulhas and Somali Current Large Marine Ecosystem (ASCLME) Project.

The SIBER meeting agenda on the afternoon of October 16 focused exclusively on past and present research, capacity building and human dimensions in southwestern Indian Ocean rim nations. The talks included presentations by Mike Roberts (*Ecological research associated with the Mozambique Channel eddies*), Frank Shillington (*Operational oceanography in the southwest Indian Ocean*), Pedro Montiero (*Understanding the role of river flows in determining coastal productivity in coastal waters in the Mozambique Channel through nitrogen fixation in mangroves*), Mika Odido (*The IOC Africa: Current activities and future plans*), and Moenieba Isaacs (*Human*

dimensions: Understanding the social processes and politics of reforming fisheries policy in South Africa). They were followed by a focused discussion on developing strategies for strengthening SIBER ties to the South African research community, and also developing human dimensions components and capacity building efforts. The SIBER, IOGOOS and IOP communities emerged from these joint meetings with a strong new sense of understanding and connectivity to the South African research community.

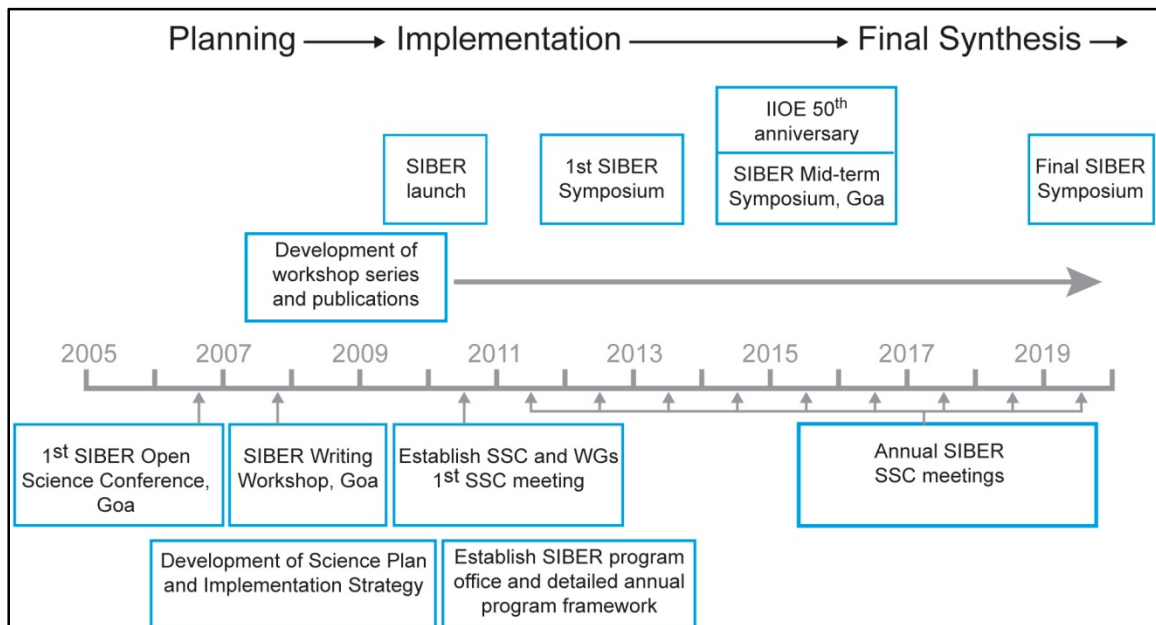


Fig 2. SIBER Program timeline from Hood et al. (2011)

This was followed by presentations and discussions focusing on planning for a 50th anniversary celebration of the International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE-2). The activities proposed include performing repeat IIOE lines and related research activities in the Indian Ocean, with the latter including a proposal for an “Eastern Indian Ocean Upwelling Initiative” by the IOP. The first workshop focusing on the development of this initiative will be convened in Yokohama Japan on April 25 and 26, 2013. Planning to convene an IIOE-2 Open Science Conference in 2015 at India’s National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) in Goa is also underway. This effort is being organized under umbrella of the Scientific Committee on Ocean Research. Forming an overarching committee to organize various IIOE-2 activities was also proposed (the IIOE-2 Reference Group). The first meeting of this group will be convened at INCOIS in Hyderabad, India

on the 14th and 15th of May, 2013. The IIOE-2 is envisioned as a 5-year expedition and effort beginning in approximately 2015 and continuing through to 2020, culminating with a second Open Science Conference. This second conference would be convened in the same spirit as the conference that was convened at the end of the IIOE, which was aimed at building research capacity in India and led to the establishment of the National Institute of Oceanography.

SIBER and its partners, IOGOOS, IOP and IRF, offer a unique opportunity to mobilize the multidisciplinary, international research effort that will be required to develop a new level of understanding of the physical, biogeochemical and ecological dynamics of the Indian Ocean. They also provide an important new model for carrying out basin-scale interdisciplinary research that can lead to the long-term collaborations needed to achieve this goal. The initiation of planning for an IIOE 50th Anniversary Celebration and Expedition is an excellent example of the potential benefits and momentum that can emerge from the synergy between SIBER, IOGOOS, IOP and IRF. But in order for this collaboration to be successful, the southwestern Indian Ocean research community needs to be fully engaged. The joint SIBER/IOP/IOGOOS/IRF meetings in South Africa represent a huge step forward in this regard.