

To: Scientific Community
From: Manik Talwani, IODP-MI President & CEO
Re: IODP FY2008
Date: May 2007

IODP is entering a new phase that provides exciting opportunities.

Over the next year IODP enters an exciting new phase. For the first time, all three implementing organizations will be conducting IODP operations. This new phase of operations provides an unprecedented opportunity for scientific ocean drilling.

Starting in September 2007, *Chikyu* will begin IODP operations with a series of expeditions in the Nankai Trough. Over the past year, the *Chikyu* riser has been successfully deployed in different water depth and coring and laboratory equipment readied for these IODP operations. Following significant enhancements to its drilling equipment and laboratory and living spaces, the *JOIDES Resolution* will resume IODP drilling operations in January 2008. Scheduled operations will begin with NanTroSEIZE riserless operations followed by expeditions in the Equatorial Pacific and the Bering Sea. ESO, meanwhile, will continue its Mission Specific Operations this summer with an expedition to the New Jersey margin.

The Science Advisory structure (SAS) continues its important job of receiving, nurturing, and ranking drilling proposals. Proposals representing a number of disciplines are continuing to come in at a healthy rate. Mission proposals were received for the first time and are in the process of being reviewed. The Science Advisory Structure Executive Committee was reorganized (as SASEC) and is providing valuable advice on workshops, Topical Symposia and Distinguished Lectures Programs which will all be implemented by IODP-MI. SASEC will also review the science accomplished by IODP, among its other activities.

The Central Management office run by IODP-MI, meanwhile, also continues its task of working with SAS and the Implementing Organizations to manage a wide variety of program functions, including the support of the Science Advisory Structure, coordinating data management and supporting the Site Survey data bank, managing IODP publications, developing the annual Science Program Plan and performing operational reviews of IODP expeditions.

New opportunities come with difficult challenges.

The new opportunities also bring new and difficult challenges for the IODP. The costs for operations and maintenance of the platforms have greatly escalated since IODP was initially conceived and it has now become clear that funding is not adequate to conduct year-around operations with either *Chikyu* or *JOIDES Resolution*. For the foreseeable future each drillship will probably operate only 7 to 8 months/year for IODP.

IODP will have to develop a more efficient, leaner mode of operation to meet these new budget challenges and also to seek new funding sources. In addition to finding cost savings within the program, prioritization for the remaining ship time for both platforms becomes extremely important. Such a prioritization represents a significant departure from the *Initial Science Plan* that identifies the IODP themes and initiatives without any prioritization. Dealing with this new budgetary and operational reality will require close cooperation between the funding agencies, IODP management, the Implementing Organizations, the Science Advisory Structure, and most importantly, the scientific community (the true stakeholders of IODP).

How do we meet these challenges?

The Management Forum which consists of the heads or chairpersons of the Implementing Organizations (IOs), the national Program Offices, the Science Planning Committee (SPC), SASEC, and IODP-MI, recently met to determine a path forward with respect to these operational and scientific challenges (web site reference). The Forum members considered (i) finding efficiencies to optimize operations with the current IODP system (ii) examining services to identify those that are non-essential and (iii) ways to seek external funding.

An important step will be for SASEC, as part of it plan to publish a revised *IODP Science Plan*, to redefine overall programmatic priorities for IODP through 2013 in light of reduced platform availability. This prioritization should be completed and go into effect as soon as possible. In any event SPC will have to examine and re-prioritize proposals awaiting scheduling by the Operations Task Force (the IODP group, consisting of IODP-MI, IO and SAS representatives charged with scheduling platform operations). The Management Forum recommends that these scheduled projects should include both projects at the cutting edge of exploratory science and project that may have societal relevance.

Along with the prioritization of science, IODP must look to increase efficiencies and reduce costs of its infrastructure. IODP consists of many entities including funding agencies, a Central Management Office, a Science Advisory Structure, Implementing Organizations, and Program Member Offices, which act in concert to conduct the sea-going operations. This complex structure was created based on the assumption of full-year operations. This assumption is no longer valid. Thus IODP-MI, in conjunction with the IOs and SAS, will initiate a cost/benefit analysis of the services provided by IODP in order to determine if the program is optimally-defined and staffed in this new operating environment and if the removal of less essential services can provide significant cost savings.

Finally, IODP must examine the spectrum of external (i.e., non NSF/MEXT/ECORD) funding possibilities for collaborative IODP projects. The prospect of having to secure external funding will require the development of a set of guiding principles and policies to guide the implementation of these new collaborations. Each arrangement that involves sharing of funding will have to obtain the approval of the Lead Agencies, the agreement

of the pertinent IO and the project will need to be reviewed by the Science Advisory Structure. The scientific community will have to play an important role in seeking the opportunities for external funding.

In summary

- 1. Starting in FY 2008 both drillships, the *Chikyu* and the *JOIDES Resolution* will be operating and the Mission Specific Programs will be continuing. This will provide an unprecedented opportunity for the scientific drilling community.**
- 2. Escalated costs will result in the drillships being available for only 7 to 8 months each year.**
- 3. This will require scientific prioritization as well as the necessity to reduce expenditures, that is, creating a leaner IODP.**
- 4. It will also bring about the need for new external funds if the drillships are to be used for IODP for full years.**
- 5. The scientific community is the stakeholder of IODP. We believe therefore that it is very important for members of the scientific community to engage SAS and IODP-MI representatives in discussions to chart the way forward**