

DRAGONESS Kick-off Workshop Held in Beijing, China

A coordinated concerted action between Europe and China in ocean monitoring kicked-off with its first workshop held on 11-12 October 2007 in Beijing, China.

The project named DRAGONESS (“DRAGON in support of harmonizing European and Chinese marine monitoring for Environment and Security System” is funded by the European Union’s (EU) Framework Programme for 3 years. Researchers from the two continents will establish an inventory of Chinese and European capacities in marine monitoring for environment and security in the framework of challenges identified within international programs such as Global Ocean Observing System, Global Earth Observing System of Systems and Global Monitoring for Environment and Security. In particular the project aims to:

- assess existing Chinese and European information products and services arising from integrated use of remote-sensing, in-situ observations, models and data assimilation methods;
- identify monitoring gaps and barriers, such as for instance restrictive data availability;
- stimulate exchange and initiation of new European-China partnership in Earth Observation science and technology in support to global environmental monitoring.

The DRAGONESS project is both benefiting from and complementing the joint European Space Agency (ESA) and the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) of China collaboration initiative (called Dragon) with focus on Earth observations from satellites. Dragon will run until 2012.

More than 30 participants from five research institutes in Norway, Germany, and France and eight Chinese institutes attended the workshop, hosted by MOST and the Ocean University of China. An official welcome was provided by the director of the National Remote Sensing Center of China, Dr. Guocheng Zhang. A detailed revision and discussion of the project background, objectives, tasks and milestones followed. Monitoring of the marine environment is urgently needed to advance understanding of mesoscale and sub-mesoscale processes and physical and biogeochemical interaction. It is also needed for pollution and extreme event monitoring, and operational oceanography and climate change study require sustainable monitoring. In this context the five work packages in the project, notably: review of *in situ* observing systems; review of spaceborne observing systems; specification of data integration and information management; specification of ocean and coastal information products and services; and capacity building are therefore highly relevant. The project is now evolving around these work packages with the first progress reporting planned for April 2008, followed by the 2nd workshop to be held in Norway in the autumn of 2008. The 3rd and 4th workshops and a final symposium will be coordinated with Dragon program to secure a wider promotion of the DRAGONESS achievements.

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