

The Way Forward

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January 2011 National Ocean and Coastal Mapping Inventory Workshop Executive Summary

In response to the findings of the U.S. Ocean Action Plan (2004) and in support of the Ocean and Coastal Mapping Integration Act of 2009, the Interagency Working Group on Ocean and Coastal Mapping (IWG-OCM) of the Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (SOST) began development of a comprehensive national inventory of ocean and coastal mapping data and activities in 2007. This ocean and coastal mapping inventory was envisioned as a clearinghouse for data and interpretive information as well as a registry of completed and projected mapping activities, accessible through a single web portal. The inventory would reduce duplicate mapping efforts, facilitate cooperative mapping activities, and improve data discovery and accessibility. Although the IWG-OCM has made significant progress over the past three years with respect to registering OCM metadata in Geospatial One-Stop, for a variety of reasons we have fallen short in realizing the vision of an integrated and publically-accessible national OCM inventory.

In an effort to reinvigorate the OCM inventory development effort, the IWG-OCM sponsored a two-day workshop hosted by the National Geophysical Data Center in Boulder, CO, on 12 and 13 January 2011. The objectives of this workshop were 1) review the requirements for a national inventory, 2) understand the progress made and lessons learned by the IWG-OCM since the initial September 2007 inventory workshop, 3) understand the holdings, capabilities and roles of the primary Federal OCM data repositories, 4) understand existing or developing OCM data discovery and delivery activities and identify gaps, areas of overlap and leveraging opportunities, and 5) identify the next steps for moving forward in the development of an integrated and publically-accessible national OCM inventory.

On-site and remote workshop participants represented NOAA, USGS, USACE, BOEMRE, U.S. F&WS, NPS, NSF, National Ocean Council, and Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory. The workshop participants reaffirmed that the pending Report to Congress on Progress Made in Implementing the Ocean and Coastal Mapping Integration Act accurately captures the following inventory goals:

- it will be built on and integrate the individual web map services of the primary Federal data repositories,
- it will provide metadata and depict geographic coverages of the data,
- it will utilize common terminology/vocabularies,
- it will be dynamic in that the integrated web mapping services will reflect changes in the data repositories, and
- it will adapt to changes in technology.

The participants agreed that the inventory should be capable of searching for metadata in a meaningful way and metadata should be able to answer the basic question, “are the data useful for and in a format that supports my purposes?” Additionally, the inventory should provide users with the capability to develop data collection partnerships by providing information regarding what organizations need OCM data or are planning to collect data, where and when data is to be collected, and for what purposes.



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Recommendations and actions emerging from the workshop include:

- Develop a high-level OCM Inventory Requirements document describing what services the inventory should provide, necessary inventory properties, constraints on the development and use of the inventory, and the requirements of customers, end-users, and inventory developers. This requirements document will guide the continued development of the national inventory.
- The national Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP) framework will require access to a variety of dynamic data inventories, including a OCM data inventory; CMSP is an opportunity to demonstrate the requirement for and utility of a functional national OCM inventory. In particular, an inventory of ocean bathymetry and coastal topography data is essential for CMSP, and is one of the early priorities for the OCM inventory. The OCM inventory will serve as a model for other data inventories needed to support effective CMSP.
- The IWG-OCM will brief and provide updates to the SOST and the National Ocean Council on the OCM inventory development efforts.
- Knowledge of available Federal OCM data repository web mapping services (WMS) is critical. A survey of available data repository WMS will be undertaken and those repositories requiring WMS support will be identified.
- Adequate metadata and standardized vocabularies are essential to a functional OCM data inventory.
 - The IWG-OCM will review metadata requirements for supporting a national OCM inventory and minimal metadata fields will be identified and proposed for adoption.
 - The IWG-OCM will review existing or developing controlled vocabularies applicable to the OCM framework data layers (elevation: topography and bathymetry, imagery: land and seafloor, and sub-bottom data) and appropriate vocabularies will be proposed for adoption. Gaps in available vocabularies will be identified and addressed.
- To date, Geospatial One-Stop (GOS) has been the platform on which the OCM inventory has been built. However, the ongoing transition of GOS to data.gov raises a number of concerns about the future utility of GOS to the development of OCM inventory. Given the number of uncertainties, the IWG-OCM and the GOS/data.gov administrators have agreed to stay closely engaged as the transition takes place.
- Partnerships with related activities are essential to the development of a successful OCM data inventory. Partnerships will be explored with the CMSP Information Management System and Data Portal effort, the Multipurpose Marine Cadastre, and Digital Coast, and others as appropriate.

The January 2011 workshop was the first of two planned workshops that are necessary to keep the development of the OCM inventory on track. A second workshop, tentatively scheduled for April 2011, will focus on addressing the technical challenges of moving forward with the development of the inventory, proposing solutions for meeting the needs identified in the Inventory Requirements Document, and addressing gaps identified during the January workshop. Workshop location, dates, and invitees with the appropriate technical background will be identified and an agenda will be developed over the next few months.

A complete January 2011 inventory workshop summary and copies of presentations will be available at the Geospatial One-Stop Oceans and Coasts Community site (under Library):

http://gos2.geodata.gov/wps/portal/gos/kcxml/04_Sj9SPykssy0xPLMnMz0vM0Y_QjzKL9443sfQASYGYfpb6kehCFqghX4_83FR9b_0A_YLc0lhyR0VFACF_vIU!/delta/base64xml/L3dJdyEvUUd3QndNQSEvNEIVRS82X0ffNEFF