

**MARINE DATA RESCUE, ARCHIVAL AND MANAGEMENT PROJECT  
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**1. BACKGROUND**

The idea of developing a project to rescue marine meteorological and oceanographic data was borne out of a visit to our Port Meteorological office in our port city of Mombasa. There I saw a collection of heaps of old dusty ship log books some of which had missing pages pulled off through years of manual handling and shifting from place to place. On perusing through the pages of the logbooks I saw valuable amounts of meteorological and oceanographic data collected and recorded over a period of many years going back to as many as forty years from the 1960's to late 1970's by mariners through the Voluntary Ships Observing (VOS) programme of WMO. These data are in WMO code formats covering weather and oceanographic parameters ranging from wind speed and direction to wave heights and periods as well as sea surface temperatures. In as far as I knew this information was used in weather forecasting at the time it was collected and disseminated to our National forecasting centre but apart from those manuals which were fast deteriorating there was no other record of this valuable information which can be used in research, climate study and even in national development.

I imagined that in other countries in the region around the Western Indian Ocean there could be similar volumes of valuable data wasting away in various institutions and in danger of being lost forever unless quick action is taken to rescue the data and storing them in more permanent and easily accessible media and format. That is how I came up with the idea of developing a project which if funded can see a lot of useful marine meteorological data being saved from imminent loss.

**2. OBJECTIVE**

As already mentioned in the background in 2 above, the aim of the project is to extract marine meteorological and oceanographic data suspected to be lying in raw form in ship log books in various institutions in the countries in the Western rim of the Indian Ocean and store them in permanent electronic forms which can be easily accessed for processing into products useful in research, climate studies or for socio-economic development of the participating countries. The countries targeted for this project include Kenya, Tanzania, Somalia, Mozambique, Seychelles, Comores and Mauritius. It is expected that once the data is collected they will add to the data in National Oceanographic Data Centres already established in most of these countries under ODINAFRICA Project of IOC. There will therefore be close collaboration with these centres during the period of the Project.

### **3 METHOD**

The following will be the steps to be followed in the implementation of the project once the funding is obtained

#### **STEP ONE : Identification of the Location of the Raw Data**

This will be an important step since it is necessary to confirm that the target data actually exist and where. This stage of the project will be very cheap since most of the communication with the relevant institutions will be through e-mail or where necessary through writing to the institutions. It is expected that the heads of these institutions should have no problems in revealing the existence of such information. Assistance of WMO and IOC will be sought in asking the countries/institutions to reveal the availability of the data and to make it available for the study.

#### **STEP TWO Acquisition of human and Material resources for the Project**

In order to keep the cost of the project at the minimum the participating countries/institutions will be requested to provide one or two staff under their employ to work for the project for a period and within the institution. Such staff are the ones who will go through the available ship logs or other raw records extracting decoding and keying in the data in prescribed formats into the computer memory. The project will be expected to purchase a computer and software for but the institution will be required to provide an office where the local staff will work from . This plus the staff will be the contribution by the participating country to the project.

#### **STEP THREE Quality Control and Storage in Electronic Media**

Once the raw data has been entered into the computer it will be quality controlled using simple methods which will apply to each parameter in the data set. After the quality control the data will then be transferred to CD-ROMS or other suitable media for storage

### **3. PROJECT COSTING**

The current write up is a brief draft. A more detailed Project Document will be prepared which will include detailed costing . However the following will be the factors which will be considered in costing the project:

- ✍ Initial cost of mailing and Internet access in gathering information about the availability of raw data in the various institutions in the targeted region

- ✍ ✍ Purchase of computers and software for use in the various institutions by the local staff assigned by to the project
- ✍ ✍ Payment of Honororia to Project Coordinator and local staff working on the project
- ✍ ✍ Air fare and subsistence allowance for the Coordinator for two round trips visiting participating countries during the period of the project. The project is expected to take no more than one year.
- ✍ ✍ Cost of e-mails and mailings during the project between various people and institutions participating in the project

NB: It is expected that Project Coordinator will be an employee of one of the institutions in one of the participating countries who will be deployed to the project and who will be receiving regular continuous reports of the progress of work from the local staff in the participating countries

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The foregoing is a brief explanation of the proposed project on marine meteorological and oceanographic data rescue. It is hoped that the project will be a success and that through it the many thousands of data held in raw form in ship logbooks and which are in danger of going to waste will be saved us and posterity.