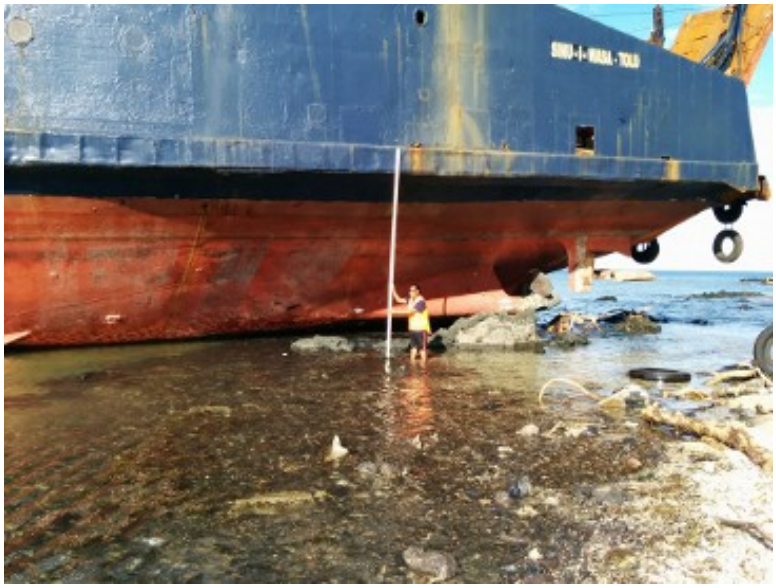


Ocean science experts from the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Institute of Research for Development (IRD) are among those convening in Noumea this week to build understanding of ocean processes, ocean observations and data applications, and advance the design of a Pacific Islands ocean observation network.

The Pacific Islands Training Workshop on Ocean Observations and Data Applications, being held at the IRD offices, will contribute to increasing the capability within the Pacific region to collect, analyse, and communicate oceanographic data across a number of sectors, such as meteorology and climate services, fisheries, marine trade and tourism.

The workshop is organised by the Joint World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology (JCOMM) in coordination with IRD, SPC and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP).

“Much of the development assistance undertaken by SPC and our in-country partners relies on ocean information , yet there’s limited oceanographic expertise in the region and limited skill in using ocean data,” SPC Deputy Director-General, Cameron Diver, said today during the workshop opening.

“The specialised training being delivered this week by experts from SPC, IRD and others is an important part of the way forward, along with greater coordination,” Mr Diver said.

“There is a very long history of ocean observation and ocean sciences here at the IRD centre in Noumea,” IRD Director, Georges De Noni, said at workshop’s opening session. “The IRD

Centre in Noumea was established in 1946 and our research programmes initially aimed at studying the ocean aboard our scientific vessels: Le Vauban, Le Coriolis, le Jean Charcot and nowadays the famous Alis.

“The IRD manages several time series about the ocean in the Pacific Islands, collecting and analyzing data both at the biological and physical levels. We have a sound expertise here in developing and using ocean data applications and marine biodiversity knowledge and we’re keen to share and promote it with our partner institutions and Pacific islands countries,” Mr De Noni said.

One Pacific island nation that is leading the way in developing ocean monitoring and forecasting is the Solomon Islands.

“The Solomon Islands Met Service is now trying to establish an ocean unit within the climate unit, so we can expand to provide ocean services,” Solomon Islands Meteorological Services Director, David Hiriasia, said at the Australian Government-funded Climate and Oceans Support Program in the Pacific (COSPPac) Meeting in Nadi, Fiji, earlier this month.

“Last year we had the COSPPac Ocean and Tides Workshop and on a recommendation from that workshop, we’re putting together a cabinet paper that will hopefully attract financial support,” he said.

Mr Hiriasia has organised for two of his staff to attend and present at the workshop.

Experts from SPC’s Geoscience Division, Cyprien Bosserelle, Herve Damlamian and Molly Powers-Tora, are also among the presenters and will provide an introduction to waves and coastal hazards and Pacific Sea Level Monitoring data products, as well as presenting in-depth applications of ocean data used to assess damage caused by severe tropical cyclones Pam and Winston.

Other presenters and supporters of the workshop include IRD, New Caledonia Meteorological Service, EU- PACENET-plus, Pacific Island Global Ocean Observing System (PIGOOS), Australia’s Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS), the Australian Bureau of Meteorology, China’s National Center of Ocean Standards and Meteorology (NCOSM), World Meteorological Organization (WMO)/Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), and the USA National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Climate Observation (OCO).

The workshop follows on from the first Pacific ocean observations workshop held in Palau last year.

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