Press Releases

Japan And European Countries Sign Memorandum of Understanding
On Scientific Ocean Research Drilling

The International Ocean Discovery Program (IODP) is a multinational program of scientific research in the oceans, which has been started on October 1st, 2013, and which uses drilling and logging to undertake research on earth system processes ranging from changes in the earth's climate to the rifting and drifting of continents. The IODP builds on the scientific results of the Deep-Sea Drilling Project (DSDP) initiated in 1968, the Ocean Drilling Program (ODP) which succeeded the DSDP in 1985, the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program which began in 2003, and the encouragement that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) has provided to international cooperation in marine scientific research.

In the framework of the recently started new phase of scientific ocean drilling the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC; Asahiko Taira, President) executed a memorandum of understanding with European Consortium for Ocean Research Drilling (ECORD) (*1) regarding the participation in the *Chikyu* Program under the International Ocean Discovery Program 2013-2023 (*2). The signing ceremony was conducted on 17 Feb 2014 in cooperation with the Delegation of the European Union to Japan.

The memorandum of understanding stipulates that JAMSTEC and ECORD collaborate further especially by exchanging on-board scientists between the JAMSTEC's scientific drilling vessel "*Chikyu*" and the ECORD's Mission Specific Platforms (MSPs) (*3). D/V *Chikyu* will continuously engage in tackling scientific challenges in IODP over the next 10 years.

The ambitious scientific challenges in the new framework of IODP are addressed in the science plan *Illuminating Earth's Past, Present, and Future*, which includes scientific questions such as "How do ice sheets and sea level respond to a warming climate?", "What are the limits of life in the subseafloor?", and "What mechanisms control the occurrence of destructive earthquakes, landslides, and tsunami?". The IODP science plan addresses four major research themes:
1. Climate and Ocean Change: Reading the Past, Informing the Future
2. Biosphere Frontiers: Deep life, Biodiversity, and Environmental Forcing of Ecosystems

3. Earth Connections: Deep Processes and Their Impact on Earth's Surface Environment
4. Earth in Motion: Processes and Hazards on Human Time Scales
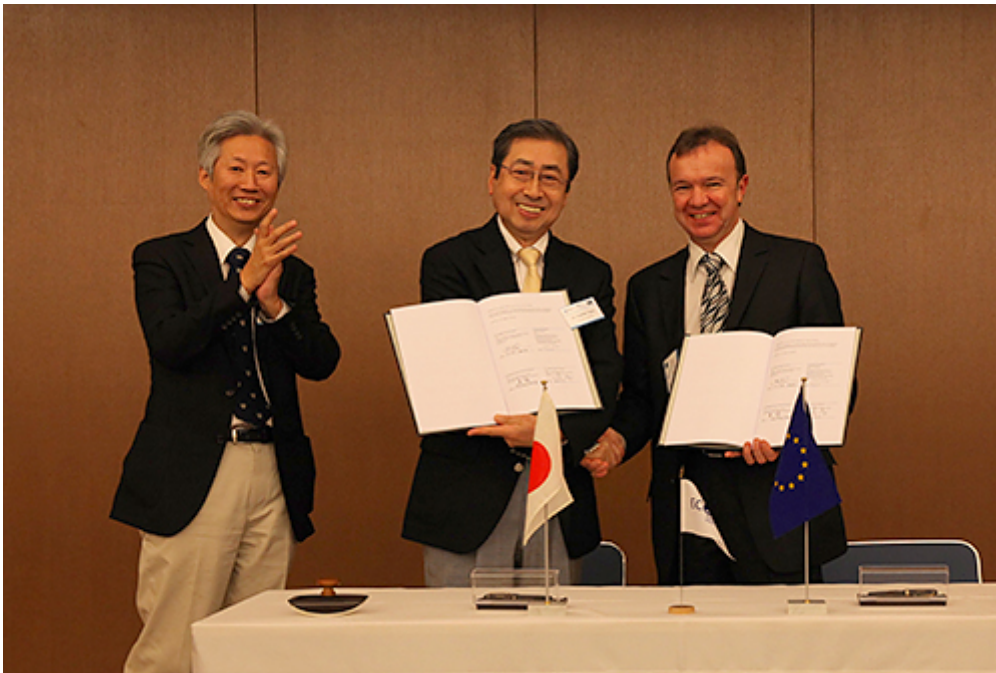
Signing Ceremony at the Delegation of the European Union to Japan
(From left to right: Dr. Azuma, Director-General of CDEX/JAMSTEC, Dr. Taira, President of JAMSTEC, and Dr. Camoin, Director of ECORD Managing Agency)

*1
European Consortium for Ocean Research Drilling (ECORD) The consortium consists of 19 members including European countries as well as Canada and Israel as of Feb 2014.

*2
International Ocean Discovery Program (IODP) IODP is an international collaborative marine research-drilling program started in 2013. Currently totaling 27 nations are participated, including Japan, the US, the European Consortium of Ocean Research Drilling (ECORD), the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand (ANZIC), and the Federal Republic of Brazil. Multiple platforms, such as the D/V *Chikyu* provided by Japan, the JOIDES Resolution provided by the US and Mission Specific Platforms (MSPs) provided by ECORD, are utilized for IODP expeditions to study the Earth system. In addition, IODP is guided by the science plan, "Illuminating Earth's Past, Present and Future" with four primary research themes: Climate and Ocean Change, Biosphere Frontier, Earth Connections, and Earth in Motion.

*3
Mission Specific Platforms (MSPs) MSPs conduct expeditions in areas where other platforms are unable to work: ice-covered areas or shallow water areas, etc.

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