

Comments on the recent NOWPAP-PICES Joint Training Course on Remote Sensing Data Analysis in Qingdao - China

Anthony Banyouko Ndah
PhD Research Student
Environmental Studies Program
Department of Geography, Development and Environmental Studies
Universiti Brunei Darussalam

I hail from Cameroon and present a PhD research student and teaching assistant at Universiti Brunei Darussalam. Being in the second year of my PhD research and focusing on Remote Sensing for fisheries, the NOWPAP-PICES joint training course on remote sensing data analysis has been a very timely event and one which I believe will be decisive in the final outcome of my work.

The reasons for this are many, of which I will elaborate on the most important ones:

First, previously in my research, I was interested in understanding the fisheries decline in Brunei Darussalam based on fishery dependent data and analysis techniques. After a year of studying the available literature and the stock assessment methods used in Brunei, I came to the conclusion that it is impossible to understand the state of fisheries based on insitu fisheries data alone and without an in-depth knowledge of the physical factors that govern these vital resources. With this realization, I made the decision based on a review of remote sensing literature that my concerns could only be addressed with the application of ocean colour techniques; thus, I started studying satellite remote sensing applications for fisheries.

Second, being new to the field of ocean colour applications for fisheries, I needed a lot of guidance and coaching especially regarding the shortcomings of

ocean colour data and how to overcome them, the use of software for data analysis and the interpretation of results.

In these regards therefore, it is my fervent wish to express honestly that this training course has been one of the timeliest events in my life, coming at a time most needed.

Now, about the training course itself, it was so enriching for two main reasons:

First, The knowledge gained is not only much appreciated for my current research but will also be invaluable in future research and career prospects. Lectures on the analysis of ocean colour data using the Beam-Visat and WIM-WAM software and the interpretation of ocean colour products, delivered by both Dr. Rolland Doerffer and Dr. Mati Kahru respectively were especially very intense and helpful. Moreover, challenges in the use of ocean colour data and techniques of minimizing errors, highlighted by Dr. Ishizaka and all the other trainers throughout the course, and the use of LANDSAT data in the study of different aspects of the marine environment, lectured by Dr. Mitnik, have had an indelible impact on my perception of Satellite Remote Sensing.

The second aspect worth highlighting is the networking opportunity which this training course opened to me, and I believe, to all other participants. Working in a multi national, multiracial and interdisciplinary environment, with students, lecturers and other professionals has been a wonderful learning experience.

In addition, based on large amount of information disseminated and knowledge gained during this training course, within a short period of just five days, is simply an indication of impeccable organizational capabilities of the organizers and coordinators in the like of Mr. Genki Terauchi, his colleague and interns from NOWPAP-CEARAC, to whom I am very grateful and appreciative. The atmosphere of friendship and harmony which they instilled not only made the course less intense, but also made the work load less burdensome. Infact, at the end of every day of training, I found myself anxiously looking forward to the next.

Though I will continue in the quest to enrich myself in the use of ocean colour data, this training course has been the first real step in this direction. I hope for more of such opportunities in future.

Finally, I wish to seize this opportunity to express my sincere and overwhelming gratitude to IOCCG for the scholarship which facilitated my participation in this training course. Being a student, with a tight budget, attending would have meant an enormous sacrifice, but with the scholarship, everything went hitch-free. The opportunity given me not only made it possible to attend the training course but also to finally visit the beautiful city of Qingdao I had heard a great deal about.

What all these words boil down to is a big THANK YOU to all: the organizers, the scholarship providers, the trainers, fellow trainees, and OUC. It is an immense pleasure to have met and worked with you all.