

**MARINE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH –
A SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIENCE OF UNCLOS PART XIII**

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Abstract

The experience outlined in this paper spans the last three years. It was triggered by the establishment of a project to manage South Africa's extended continental shelf claim, under the provisions of UNCLOS Article 76.

The project required rapid access to geophysical and bathymetric survey data within the Exclusive Economic Zone and beyond, to allow scoping of potential new territory. It soon became clear that very little of the huge amounts of foreign academic data acquired over past decades is actually archived accessibly in South Africa and that the South African government was not fully exercising its rights and responsibilities under UNCLOS, Part XIII. Applications from foreign research institutions were being correctly delivered through diplomatic channels but were either not being responded to or the permits issued did not require a supply of the full data sets. Much of the explanation for this situation relates to the limited relevant capacity within government.

A system has now been established to ensure the reliable and timeous issuance of permits that specify data delivery and other requirements, which are based, where possible, on prior discussion with the chief scientist of each cruise.

However, a number of difficulties and uncertainties remain to be resolved, and which should be based on a better understanding of not just **our** rights and responsibilities as a coastal state, but also those of the academic institutions wishing to conduct research and of their own governments.