

Survey Programme for Ireland.

Hydrographic Services

The Geological Survey Office of Ireland (GSI) in association with the Marine Institute has been engaged in gathering data, including hydrographic data, and publishing the findings as part of the Irish Government-funded INFOMAR survey programme and its predecessor project the Irish National Seabed Survey (INSS). Other hydrographic data, navigational warnings and port information is collated by the Commissioners of Irish Lights, local Lighthouse Authorities (County Councils etc), and the Naval Service, Port and harbour authorities, Waterways Ireland etc. Commercial companies and entities involved in marine works also gather regular updates to data as part of their activities e.g. offshore hydrocarbon exploration projects, harbour development works etc.

Irish National Seabed Survey

Total mapping coverage of the INSS to end of 2005 was 432,000 km² and taken along with an earlier DCENR Petroleum Affairs Division survey, over 81% of the Irish designated seabed area (at end 2005) had been mapped. The INSS mapped to approximately the 200m contours and delivered a national asset that has provided Ireland with a data set to underpin present and future economic, environmental, infrastructural, and social and policy issues.

In addition significant capacity building has taken place both in terms of Irish marine surveying infrastructure and the development of personnel skilled in the design, planning, implementation and management of a large scale integrated marine resource evaluation programme.

There remained a crucially important body of work to follow in mapping commercially valuable inshore and other waters outside the scope of that achieved by the INSS. A range of diverse navigation, environmental and cultural international legislative obligations also needed to be addressed.

INFOMAR

The **IN**tegrated Mapping **FO**r the Sustainable Development of Ireland's **MA**rine **R**esource (INFOMAR) programme is a joint venture between the [Geological Survey of Ireland](#) and the [Marine Institute](#). It is a successor to the Irish National Seabed Survey (INSS). Covering some 125,000 square kilometres of underwater territory, the INFOMAR project is producing integrated mapping products covering the physical, chemical and biological features of the seabed. The Irish Government, through [the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources](#) is funding the programme as part of the National Development Plan, 2007 – 2013.

The INFOMAR Programme is intended to address the outstanding issues while also delivering an enhanced data management and delivery service for data gathered under both the INSS and INFOMAR. This data delivery strategy is intended to promote the creation of value added products. Use of the data obtained under the project include:

- The development of offshore energy, with the mapping key to identifying suitable sites and cable routes for wind, wave and tidal generators.
- Safer offshore navigation due to updated charts
- Supports work being carried out under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, whereby Ireland has been successful in extended continental shelf submissions
- Simulation of tides which is useful for the aquaculture and coastal protection engineers
- Production of maps on the nature of the seabed (whether mud, sand, rock or gravel), which is used in both environmental protection and more efficient fishing practices.
- Provision of updates for the national shipwrecks database maintained by National Monuments Service and used by sport fishermen and divers.

The INFOMAR programme commenced in mid-2006 and information on the progress of surveys, number of bay surveys completed and data collected etc is available on the website - www.INFOMAR.ie/surveying

The INFOMAR programme is planned to run until 2025 when the complete coastal area is scheduled to be completed. As part of the programme, reviews are carried out on a regular basis with the next one scheduled to take place during 2012 which will decide the funding situation going forward from 2014. Funding is presently in place until the end of 2013.

The up to date survey situation is illustrated on the following page.

