

# **Processing and analysis of HF radar measurements of currents and sea states in the Iroise and Celtic Seas**

## **MERIFIC Deliverable 3.1.4**

### **Summary**

Large sections of both the Iroise Sea and the northern coast of Cornwall are covered by HF radar systems deployed to potentially provide near real time measurement of surface current and sea-states. Assessment of the ability of such measurement devices to provide relevant information for resource assessment and mapping was studied as part of work package 3 of the Merific project focusing on technology support.

As part of this study, new algorithms for the detection of surface currents were implemented in the data processing chain of the HF Radars owned by SHOM and deployed in the Iroise Sea while methods for the measurement of sea-states were tested with both HF radar systems in Brittany and Cornwall.

Current measurement processing using HF radars consists in selecting a target subarea at the surface of the sea and associate to this target or cell a radial current velocity. The distance of the target to the source is classically identified through radar travel time. The azimuth is formed through some type of digital focusing of the received signal and the radial surface current magnitude is determined by examining the Doppler shift in the received signal associated with the target cell.

Two different approaches can be used for the azimuthal processing: either the Beam forming (BF) method or goniometry, also known as Direction Finding (DF).

In the BF approach, the receive array is numerically oriented towards predefined azimuths. The Doppler frequency associated with the radial current is then estimated from the Doppler spectrum computed in each distance-azimuth cell.

In the DF approach, the process consists of computing the Doppler frequency at first and then estimating the associated direction.

Direction Finding method was implemented in the Iroise Sea installation and shown to provide better results thanks to its ability to achieve a resultant higher azimuthal resolution compared to the Beam forming method. Maps of the statistics of currents over the Iroise Sea area were built based on this new approach.

Analysis of HF radar measurement also allows significant wave height (Hs) assessment. The Hs parameter is classically obtained from HF radar data using the empirical algorithm developed by K. W. Gurgel<sup>1</sup>. This algorithm links the normalized spectral energy density of the radar second order Doppler spectrum to the wave energy spectral density by mean of empirically estimated coefficients. The significant wave height Hs is then computed by

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<sup>1</sup> K.-. GURGEL, H.H. ESSEN and T. SCHLICK, 2006. An empirical method to derive ocean waves from second order Bragg scattering . Prospects and limitations. IEEE Journal of Oceanic Engineering, VOL. 31, NO. 4, October 2006, pp. 804 . 811.

summation of the estimated omnidirectional wave spectrum. This method requires assessment of empirical coefficients. In the case of the Iroise Sea, the classical empirical coefficients determined by K. W. Gurgel from the data set recorded in Norway during the 1980s were found to be inappropriate. In spite of a specific calibration and adaptation of the method, assessment of the significant wave height over the whole area was considered insufficient to provide accurate mapping, mostly because of the radars arrangement, the presence of strong currents and the shadowing effects of the islands in the Molène archipelago.

A similar study was conducted to process data from the HF Radars of Plymouth University placed on the northern coast of Cornwall. It showed that the significant wave height assessed using the empirical methods were in relatively good agreement with the in-situ measurements in this less complex area. A specific calibration was also introduced for this specific part of the Celtic Sea which induced significant improvement of the quality of the measurement.

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#### Résumé

Des systèmes radars HF ont été déployés en Bretagne et en Cornouailles afin de fournir des mesures en temps quasi-réel des champs de courants de surface et des états de mer. La capacité de ces systèmes est évaluée et cartographiée. Les méthodes de mesure des états de mer ont été testées sur les deux systèmes de radar HF déployés en Bretagne et en Cornouailles.

Dans le cadre de cette étude, de nouveaux algorithmes pour la détection des courants de surface ont été développés. Les méthodes de mesure des états de mer ont été testées sur les deux systèmes de radar HF déployés en Bretagne et en Cornouailles.

Le traitement pour la mesure des courants par Radar HF consiste à sélectionner une zone cible à la surface de la mer et à lui associer une vitesse de courant radiale. La distance entre la cible et la source est classiquement identifiée par la mesure du temps de propagation de l'onde. La vitesse du courant est déterminée par analyse du décalage doppler du signal rétrodiffusé et associé à la cible.

Deux approches distinctes peuvent être utilisées pour le traitement azimutal : ou bien la méthode goniométrique, dite Beam Forming (BF), ou bien la méthode de recherche de direction « Direction finding » (DF).

La fréquence Doppler associée au courant radial est alors estimée à partir du spectre Doppler calculé dans chaque cellule distance-azimut.

La direction associée est estimée à partir de la fréquence Doppler.

Après avoir testé la méthode BF, il a été constaté que celle-ci fournit de meilleurs résultats que la méthode DF, du fait de sa capacité à fournir une meilleure estimation de la direction associée.

Le paramètre Hs est classiquement obtenu de la

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 considérée insuffisante pour permettre une cartographie précise de la ressource,  
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Une étude similaire a été conduite pour le traitement des données des Radars HF de  
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