



March 17, 2011
Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and
Technology

Integrated Ocean Drilling Program Scheduled Expedition 337 by *CHIKYU* Cancelled

The Deep-Sea Drilling Vessel *CHIKYU*, operated by the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC), was in the Hachinohe port in preparation for IODP(*1) Expedition 337(*2), when the large earthquake hit the Northeast Pacific coast of Japan on March 11. In the wake of the earthquake and following tsunami, *CHIKYU* immediately evacuated the port. However one of her six thrusters suffered damage. The *CHIKYU* can still navigate herself under her own power but the dry docking of the vessel is necessary to assess the exact amount of damage. All personnel and visitors aboard including CDEX/JAMSTEC and support staff ashore, are safe and accounted for. In response to this circumstance, JAMSTEC regrets to announce the cancellation of the current schedule of Expedition 337.

***1. The Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP)** is an international marine research drilling program dedicated to advancing scientific understanding of Earth by monitoring, and sampling subseafloor environments. Through multiple platforms, scientists explore IODP principal themes: the deep biosphere, environmental change, and solid Earth cycles. IODP has operated since October 2003, funded jointly by the Japan Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the U.S. National Science Foundation. Additional support is provided by the 17-member European Consortium of Ocean Research Drilling, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, Australia, India, and New Zealand.

***2. IODP Expedition 337:** Deep Coalbed Biosphere off Shimokita- Microbial Processes and Hydrocarbon System Associated with Deeply Buried Coalbed in the Ocean is supported in part by "Strategic Fund for Strengthening Leading-Edge Research and Development" by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) to JAMSTEC. The expedition was scheduled for a total of 68 days from March 15 to May 21, 2011, in the northwestern Pacific Ocean.

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