The IERS in 2011 built upon the foundation laid in the previous year from the renewal of all the essential IERS products and the reorganization of the GGFC. On 1 February 2011, the EOP system was changed from 05 C04 to 08 C04. This change was made in order to improve the consistency between EOP data and the underlying ITRF2008. From December 2011, only final values are provided in the C04 series. The original two-year validation of GGFC Provisional Products was completed and these were upgraded to GGFC Operational Products.

As part of the ongoing work to continually improve the IERS products, the IERS co-organized the Third GGOS Unified Analysis Workshop, Zurich, Switzerland, 16 – 17 September 2011 with goal of improving the integration of modeling and data analysis among the space geodetic techniques. The ITRS Combination Center at DGFI demonstrated for the first time the realization of the ITRS and the ICRS consistently in one common adjustment. Input data were time series of normal equations derived from the analysis of the space geodetic techniques VLBI (a combined series of DGFI and IGG, Bonn), SLR (DGFI), and GPS (TU München). To further such combination analysis a new Working Group on SINEX Format was established.

Starting in September 2011, the IERS Rapid Service/Prediction Center began the operational generation of two solutions per day. The additional solution is part of an ongoing progression to improve the accuracy of the EOP solutions by reducing their latency.

It is essential for the mission of the IERS to continue to improve the quality, consistency and utility of the IERS products. There are certainly challenges in the future as the scientific and societal expectations for accuracy, stability, coverage, latency and distribution increase, and IERS should be in the vanguard as well as the solid foundation.

Chopo Ma
Chair, IERS Directing Board (2005–2012)