

bodies of water, such as buckets, compared with their use on large expanses. If several pellets are put together onto a water surface they can act like a single large object, giving a small value of L and hence a good chance of sinking. With widely scattered pellets, each acts a single individual, with a large value of L , and they can be prone to floating.

Of course all the work here has been for the effectively two-dimensional case of a long cylindrical object. However, the same qualitative behaviour is to be expected for more general shapes: the larger the body (and the smaller the contact angle), the smaller the density has

to be for it to float. It will be possible to do similar calculations as here, and to get to the same qualitative conclusions, for spherical pellets when there is axial symmetry about the vertical (z) axis.

References

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CIM EARLY HISTORY

The near origins of CIM can be traced to the end of 1990 at the foundation of the European Mathematical Society (EMS) and to an initiative of the Portuguese Mathematical Society (SPM, Sociedade Portuguesa de Matemática), which was one of the EMS founding members.

Since then, the need of a forum of European Research Centres in the Mathematical Sciences was recognized and the SPM had promoted the idea of creating a Portuguese Center. In particular, it would have the aim to cooperate with similar centres and to enhance the development and promotion of research in Mathematics in Portugal, as well as to assist mathematicians in developing countries, priority being given to the Portuguese speaking countries in Africa (Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe).

Several mathematicians gave their personal and institutional support to the idea, such as J. M. Lemaire, at the time director of the CIMPA from Nice (France) who came to Portugal for a visit in 1991, Angelo Marzollo from UNESCO, and F. Hirzbruch, the first president of the EMS, who expressed his support on behalf of the Society.

During 1992 a national discussion took place among the Portuguese mathematical community and the Department of Mathematics of the University of Coimbra offered to house the future Centre on the campus of its

Astronomical Observatory. Delegates from the Mathematics Departments of all public Portuguese Universities, the president of the Portuguese Mathematical Society and a representative of the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon were invited to participate in the constitutive meetings. Indeed almost all of them had participated in the two meetings that have created the consensus that the new Centre should promote activities to encourage the development of Mathematical Sciences in general and to foster international cooperation, as well as to help the improvement of the level of Mathematics and its Applications in Portugal.

CIM was legally incorporated on December 3, 1993. Until the election of its first direction, on July 1996, CIM was run by an organizing committee formed by the president of the Portuguese Mathematical Society and other mathematicians from the Universities of Coimbra, Lisbon, Porto and Minho. Since then CIM is managed by a Board of Directors elected by the associates in the General Assembly.

CIM started to publish its Bulletin in December 1996, the first meetings were organised in the following year and the first Thematic Term was held in 1998. It has been regularly in operation as can be seen in the list of events, in particular, with sponsorships from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and from the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology. In March 2008, CIM has hosted the annual ERCOM meeting in Coimbra, Portugal.