

21st EMODnet Steering Committee (Closed Session), 13 November 2024

Meeting minutes

Date and time: 13 November 2024, 9:30-13:15 CET (Closed Session; Online)

Location: Zoom

Meeting Chair: Jan-Bart Calewaert, Senior advisor to EMODnet

Participants: EMODnet Secretariat, EMODnet Thematic and Data Ingestion Coordinators, CINEA, EC DG MARE, EC DG DEFIS, DG RTD

Table 1. List of Actions 21st EMODnet SC

N°	Action	By whom?	Deadline
10	EMODnet Geology and the Secretariat to explore how Geology story maps could feature on the EMODnet Central Portal.	EMODnet Geology, Secretariat	31 January 2024
11	Explore the creation of an EMODnet dataset on marinas	EMODnet Human Activities	30 September 2025
12	Secretariat and EMODnet Data Ingestion (including partner RBINS) to further review and finalise a 'data sharing success stories' webpage on EMODnet Central Portal.	EMODnet Secretariat and Data Ingestion	20 December 2024
13	Coordinators to self-nominate for mentor or coach roles, and nominate potential jury members for the OSL 4.0 Hackathon in the shared google sheet provided by the Secretariat	EMODnet Coordinators	6 December 2024
14	The EMODnet SC are invited to provide ideas for OSL 4.0 prizes to the EMODnet Secretariat	EMODnet SC	24 January 2025
15	Coordinate EMODnet presence at, and inputs to, key external events in 2025 including Ocean Days 2025, EGU 2025, EMD 2025 and One Ocean Congress 2025	EMODnet Secretariat and all Coordinators, in collaboration with DG MARE	31 January 2025 and ongoing
16	Explore the possibility to develop an EMODnet-wide Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with each of the Regional Sea Conventions OSPAR, HELCOM, UNEP-MAP and BSC	EMODnet Secretariat, in collaboration with EMODnet Coordinators and EC DG MARE	30 September 2025

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 13 November 2024, 09:30-13:15 CET

EMODnet Closed Session*

**Only SC members*

1. Welcome and Updates (Chair, EMODnet Secretariat and DG MARE)

Jan-Bart Calewaert (JBC, senior advisor to EMODnet) opened the closed session of the 21st EMODnet Steering Committee (SC) meeting. He welcomed all participants, namely EC DG MARE, DG DEFIS and DG RTD, CINEA, EMODnet Coordinators and the Secretariat. He ran through the housekeeping rules. He presented the general agenda and highlighted that the focus of the meeting would be on operational developments, including actions of the last meeting, Ocean Observation, EMODnet partnerships, EMODnet for policy, EMODnet flagship events 2025 and the EMODnet Vision 2035.

JBC then passed the floor to Zoi Konstantinou (ZK, EC DG MARE), who noted that the new Commission for Ocean and Fisheries is almost ready, and that EMODnet should grasp this opportunity. She explained that the evolutions that are going to happen to the marine knowledge services (i.e. EMODnet, Copernicus and EU DTO), will be a common EC decision, which will be important for the way priorities are set. This presents an opportunity for EMODnet to strengthen its position and delivery of the service, to adjust to the new expectations.

2. Operational updates from the Secretariat (EMODnet Secretariat, ALL)

Kate Larkin (KL, Head EMODnet Secretariat) reiterated outstanding actions from the Spring 2024 SC meeting (20th SC), calling upon the coordinators to share updates on actions assigned to them. Regarding Action 1 “EMODnet Chemistry, Biology and Seabed Habitats to look at the use of seafloor imagery collected for marine litter also for biodiversity uses”, Alessandra Giorgetti (AG, Coordinator EMODnet Chemistry) explained that EMODnet Chemistry is collecting marine seafloor litter from trawling. The thematic lot is setting up a database for marine litter data coming from images. AG clarified that EMODnet Chemistry team extract data from the images, not always the images themselves who are maintained by the data providers. The coordinators from EMODnet Biology and Seabed Habitats were not (yet) present at the meeting. It was requested they come with a collective status update before/at the next SC so this action can be closed.

KL then ran through actions that arose from the Open Session of the 21st SC (7 October 2024). The following remarks were noted:

- Action 2: Producing a short guidance document and PPT presentation on EMODnet Data Ingestion for EC project officers and European projects: ZK underlined that EMODnet Data Ingestion are best placed to lead this, building on a guidance document already produced in Spring 2024. The Secretariat can facilitate, including input to the PPT presentation. JBC flagged that IODE plan to update their guidance document for developing data management plans. It would be interesting to see how EMODnet can contribute to this, and look at opportunities for alignment;

- Action 6: Copernicus Marine Service satellite mission data on Aquaculture sitings: Alessandra Cacciari (AC, DG DEFIS) indicated that she is available to provide information on potential data for use by EMODnet Human Activities. Alessandro Pititto (AP, Coordinator EMODnet Human Activities) was invited to organise a dialogue with DG DEFIS to explore this further;
- Action 7: EMODnet and EDITO presentation at future MSFD Marine Directors' Group: ZK noted that DG MARE and DG ENV continue to work closely together to have EMODnet at a more central role, and that the possibility to present EMODnet at MSFD governance meetings would be explored. She indicated that the Nature Restoration Law also opens new windows of opportunity. She reminded EMODnet Coordinators to keep EC DG MARE in the loop of any requests made by EC services /agencies for advice or input related to EU Policy.

KL concluded that the minutes of the 21 SC Open Session in October 2024 will be brought together and finalised together with the minutes of 21 SC Closed Session, and then circulated to the SC for review.

3. Updates from 16th Technical Working Group (EMODnet Secretariat, VLIZ)

Conor Delaney (CD, Technical Coordinator EMODnet) took the floor and ran through the list of actions from the 16th Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting that took place on 8 October 2024 in-person in Brussels, attended by EMODnet technical coordinators, EMODnet Secretariat, DG MARE and CINEA. He noted the next (17th) TWG would take place online in Spring 2025 (date/time to be confirmed).

4. EMODnet Communications (EMODnet Secretariat, ALL)

4.1 Updates on EMODnet communication channels, metrics and upcoming activities

Angeliki Karampourouni (AK, EMODnet Secretariat) presented updates on the EMODnet communication channels and metrics. She explained that the number of subscribers to the EMODnet newsletter had grown by almost 8% since April 2024. In addition, a marked increase of 23% was observed in the number of followers on LinkedIn, bringing the total to almost 2,500 followers. AK noted that LinkedIn is a good social networking platform for EMODnet, given that many EMODnet experts are members, and noting it is very popular for communicating on professional activities, also by the private sector.

She reminded the SC that in Spring 2024 EMODnet had initiated the EMODnet technical blogs, led by CD and the Secretariat. She noted that this is published quarterly with and that three blogs have been published to-date, promoted on the EMODnet Portal, in the EMODnet newsletter and on social media. AK invited all Coordinators and TWG members to contribute ideas for new blogs.

AK further explained that the EMODnet Secretariat updated its Communication Strategy to reflect event outcomes and new initiatives. She noted that the website was enhanced, which is an ongoing activity. It was further mentioned that new sections were added to the EMODnet newsletter, to highlight activities in the framework of the UN Ocean Decade as well as Digital Twin Ocean.

A question was asked where story maps could be published on the EMODnet Portal. It was indicated that depending on the content, it could either be published under the dedicated Communication page on each thematic entry-page or become part of the Use Case section. JBC reiterated the importance of copyrighting visual material.

ACTION 10: EMODnet Geology and the Secretariat to follow up on the review and publication of Story maps (EMODnet Geology and Secretariat, 31 January 2024).

CD added that EC DG COMM run bots that survey the EMODnet website and the European Atlas of the Seas, and that a separate one is run in JavaScript to look at the link between EMODnet and Europa Analytics. The EMODnet Central Portal Tech Team is currently dealing with both surveys.

AK presented the list of upcoming events and communication activities in 2025. Coordinators were contacted to have a pan-EMODnet presence at EGU 2025 (27 April-2 May 2025, Vienna, Austria). We are also looking to have a Townhall and exhibition booth on EMODnet. Dick Schaap (DC, EMODnet Bathymetry) raised another upcoming event in Brest, France, i.e. Oceans 2025: <https://brest25.oceansconference.org/>. Nicolas Segebarth (NS, EC DG RDT) flagged that he has submitted an abstract on the Digital Twin Ocean for the One Ocean Congress (June 2025, Nice, France).

4.2 EMODnet for Business

EMODnet for Business: highlights of workshop ‘Ports, marinas and boating’ and next steps for uptake

KL explained that each year a different sector is chosen, this year the EMODnet for Business event focused on boating, marinas and ports. She noted that there was a lot of cross-thematic and data ingestion representation. The event was co-organised with various key organisations. A very good attendance was observed with over 70 participants from different countries and sectors (from 100 registrations). Key discussions covered key data needs and requirements, data collected by port marinas and boating sector, and challenges of data sharing.

Antonio Guarnieri (AnG, EC DG MARE) indicated that JPI-Oceans has initiated a scoping action on Marinas, and that they are willing to open the data stream to EMODnet. He flagged it is important to keep contact with JPI Oceans. KL confirmed that the Secretariat and JPI Oceans have ongoing dialogue and that the Secretariat had facilitated for Alessandro Pititto (AP, Coordinator EMODnet Human Activities) to attend a scoping meeting of the JPI Oceans Marinas activity in July 2024. AP added that EMODnet Human Activities could look at possibilities to create an EMODnet dataset on marinas, given there’s also a dataset on ports and it is within the remit of the thematic lot.

ACTION 11: Explore the creation of an EMODnet dataset on marinas (EMODnet Human Activities, 30 September 2025)

DS noted the relation with the Horizon Europe project LandSeaLot, given TransMarina is a partner. EMODnet partner ETT is acquiring sensors, and there is the possibility to equip marinas with new sensors.

4.3 EMODnet use cases and success stories

KL indicated that currently there are 118 use cases published on the EMODnet Portal, of which 10 were published this year. The distribution between thematic groups and sectors remains diverse but not homogeneous. KL urged all thematics to stay engaged and look out for more use cases. She indicated that the Secretariat is already actively following up on and developing use cases following the EMODnet for Business events. She reminded that use cases show the demand for EMODnet, because it is hard to track user metrics. A couple of SCs it was agreed to make the criteria of a use case more concrete. The user case stories from EMODnet Data Ingestion are not really use cases, so the Secretariat had explored options of adding those to the EMODnet Portal.

Nathalie Tonné (NT, EMODnet Secretariat) presented a mock-up draft for a webpage on EMODnet success stories, with the proposal to add the web page under the Solutions tab, beside the section with use cases.

ACTION 12: Secretariat and EMODnet Data Ingestion (including partner RBINS) to further review and finalise the ‘success stories’ webpage on EMODnet Central Portal (EMODnet Secretariat and Data Ingestion, 20 December 2024).

4.4 EMODnet webinar 2025: Guidelines on data ingestion for EU projects

KL noted that the Secretariat would like to check the timing for the next webinar, to start planning communication and stakeholder mapping. She noted that currently, the end of April or end of May 2025 is a possible option, which could be timely for just before or after EGU 2025 to promote EMODnet to the European research community. It was flagged that EMODnet Biology is organising a thematic-specific webinar on the topic of biodiversity data ingestion to EMODnet in November 2024, and that this could be an example for other thematics. The Secretariat noted they would be in contact with the EMODnet Coordinators in early 2025 regarding the planning for the pan-EMODnet webinar, to kickstart the process and help promote it.

NS welcomed EMODnet’s activity in this area, noting that it would be useful for EMODnet to continue providing guidance so that EMODnet would be included in the data management plan of all EU projects, to ensure the data and information flow into EMODnet. Furthermore, project officers in the executive agencies would value having a few slides to promote EMODnet so that they could communicate about EMODnet to all projects, even where there are no EMODnet partners involved.

4.5 EMODnet Flagship events (EMODnet Secretariat, ALL)

Open Sea Lab 4.0 operational updates

AK presented updates on the Open Sea Lab (OSL) 4.0 planning. She explained that this edition will focus on EMODnet’s role in the Digital Twin Ocean (EDITO). The scope will be global, but we aim for more specific stakeholder mapping and invite relevant organisations. She noted that building on the concept note prepared, the Secretariat and EC DG MARE had kicked off the planning for the OSL 4.0 in summer 2024, including meetings with external service providers. Coordinators had been invited to provide input to draft Challenges during the summer and at a planning meeting on 9 October 2024. And she reminded Coordinators that the Secretariat still seek nominations for mentors, coaches and jury members.

She further indicated that a save-the-date for 25-27 March 2025 will be included in the EMODnet newsletter November edition. The event website is in finalisation and registration for OSL 4.0 officially opens in December, at which point the Secretariat would seek the help from the Coordinators and the wider EMODnet SC to further promote the registration for the OSL 4.0 within their networks. There will be an in-person meeting in Brussels in February 2025 (date tbc) with coaches and mentors, and the Secretariat invited the EMODnet SC to consider potential prizes for OSL 4.0 (ideally non-monetary) and to share ideas with the EMODnet Secretariat.

ACTION 13: EMODnet Coordinators to self-nominate for mentor or coach roles, and nominate potential jury members for the OSL 4.0 Hackathon in the shared google sheet (EMODnet Coordinators, 6 December 2024).

ACTION 14: The EMODnet SC are invited to provide ideas for OSL 4.0 prizes to the EMODnet Secretariat (EMODnet SC, 31 January 2025)

EMODnet Open Conference 2025

KL updated the EMODnet SC of a concept note, produced by the Secretariat, for the next edition of the EMODnet Open Conference (OC), foreseen to take place in October-November 2025, noting this was a meeting document. She invited the SC to consider the high-level theme for the Open Conference 2025, referring that the timing of the Conference would come after almost a year of the new European Commission in position, and noting the opportunity for the EMODnet Open Conference to align with the EC vision for integrated marine knowledge. She added that the Conference was a platform to showcase the EMODnet community Vision 2035, for example in a key session of the event. KL then presented a high-level planning timeline from end of 2024 until the OC 2025 and welcomed the SC to provide initial ideas or suggestions for the timing or concepts. EC DG MARE flagged it is exploring options for having the EMODnet OC 2025 back-to-back with the Digital Ocean Forum and Copernicus Marine General Assembly, as part of a 'Marine Knowledge Week', most likely taking place in October-November 2025. She noted that there would be more communication by the EC on this in early 2025. ZK noted that the Open Conference 2023 had been a large success, mobilizing many stakeholders and with engaging sessions. For the 2025 edition, she suggested to include even more space for open discussions, exchanges and engagements with the stakeholder community. KL noted that this aligned with feedback from EMODnet Coordinators, partners and stakeholders on the EMODnet Conference and Jamboree 2023. On this basis it was proposed that the EMODnet Conference would benefit from a slightly longer (e.g., 2 days in place of 1.5 day) programme, allowing more time for Plenary dialogues and parallel session Townhalls. She added that the back-to-back Jamboree for the EMODnet partnership would still take place, however with the planned Marine Knowledge multi-event week in mind, it was prudent to consider a short, more focused Jamboree. She reflected that the 1.5 day Jamboree 2023 had been extensive including many cross-thematic and pan-EMODnet dialogues, and that this was much needed in 2023 since it was the first physical Jamboree in many years. Going forward, the Jamboree 2025 was proposed to be focused on 0.5 day for individual thematic/data ingestion meetings, whilst wider dialogues were proposed to move into the EMODnet Open Conference, to increase involvement from wider stakeholders in cross-cutting topics. It was further suggested to include in the EMODnet OC 2025 programme a component on user feedback, building on previous events and the multiple ways that EMODnet already collects feedback e.g., user survey, EMODnet helpdesk, EMODnet for Business events, etc.

AK then noted that in addition to key flagship EMODnet events, the Secretariat also maintain an events list, inviting Coordinators to continue collaborating with the Secretariat to coordinate EMODnet's presence at key events.

ACTION 15: Coordinate EMODnet presence at, and inputs to, key external events in 2025 including Ocean Days 2025, EGU 2025, EMD 2025 and One Ocean Congress 2025 (EMODnet Secretariat and all Coordinators, in collaboration with DG MARE, 31 January 2025 and ongoing)

4.6 EMODnet for Ocean Observing

KL presented a brief overview of the activities of the Secretariat workplan in the area of Ocean Observation, including dialogues, activities and communication outputs to strengthen EMODnet's connection with the *in situ* Ocean Observation community as the start of the EMODnet value chain, and undertaking targeted studies supporting the EC Ocean Observation initiative

KL first updated the SC on an ongoing task related to the legacy of the Sea-basin Checkpoints (SBCP) and data adequacy. She reminded the SC that annual tele-meetings take place with the EMODnet SBCP Coordinators, the last one being in September 2024 to gather feedback also for the EMODnet Vision 2035. The recent meeting also discussed the scope for an activity in 2024-2025 on assessing the EMODnet offer at regional sea-basin scale,

Vicente Fernandez (VF, EMODnet Secretariat) explained that for its current workplan, the Secretariat will perform a high-level study on the EMODnet offer at regional sea basin level, together with designing a survey for users to provide input on EMODnet's data adequacy and FAIRness for diverse applications. The aim of these two tasks, VF noted, are to improve the interaction with users on their data needs and requirements, and also to enrich the EMODnet portal with information on what the EMODnet offer is on regional sea level. It was indicated that input to co-design the survey and to help in distribution of the survey from EMODnet Coordinators and the wider SC would be highly welcome.

ZK noted that in the Deliverable, it is important to make clear that data not available doesn't necessarily mean an ocean observation gap. She added that assessing the data adequacy is very relevant for EMODnet, but the gap between ocean observation and data availability is also relevant for the ocean observation community.

JBC suggested the creation of an EMODnet User Forum, to expand and take further the engagement with the user community, and to allow physical contact in addition to regular remote/virtual contacts. ZK supported the idea and further proposed EMODnet to coordinate with Copernicus and EDITO on this – potentially in the context of the Marine Knowledge week 2025 in Autumn 2025 - to allow for a stronger community engagement. DG DEFIS and DG RTD added their support for this suggestion. KL confirmed this had been proposed by the Vision 2035 Drafting Group and would be reflected in the community Vision 2035 document.

KL then presented an overview of Secretariat's work on a study on regional ocean observation coordination and the data pipelines, with a focus on regulatory data collected by Member States in the framework of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the data pipeline from the regional level e.g., the European Regional Sea Conventions (RSC) and ICES, among others, to EMODnet. She noted that for this study the Secretariat works together with the European Marine Board (EMB), in dialogue also with the European Ocean Observing System (EOOS) Steering Group which includes EuroGOOS, Copernicus Marine Service and JPI Oceans. She presented some initial results of the study, noting that the information gathering had included assessing not only data pipelines, but also standards utilised at the regional level and compatibility with EMODnet, assessing also the RSC data services and opportunities for EMODnet to harvest data from these regional services into EMODnet. In addition, information on how EMODnet data and data products are being used by RSCs for regional sea-basin assessments and quality status reports. She noted that based on information collected from RSCs and presented is preliminary, and that in November – mid December 2024 the Coordinators would be contacted by the Secretariat to review findings from the Secretariat study – including a survey currently with Coordinators on data pipelines - and to refine existing interactions between EMODnet thematics, data ingestion and the Regional Sea Conventions on data pipelines from regional services into EMODnet, the use of EMODnet data by RSCs, and existing challenges and gaps (e.g. funding or technical nature), so that recommendations could be made on overcoming these.

There was a brief discussion on how to move forward with EMODnet - Regional Sea Convention interactions, which is reported in the agenda item on EU Partnerships: Regional Sea Conventions.

4.7 EMODnet for EU Policy: Short de-brief from open session and next steps (DG MARE, ALL)

ZK took the floor, indicating that it is important to reflect on EMODnet's role in the policy interaction, in order to be and stay compatible and useful for various purposes. In the next period, she flagged, opportunities will rise to shape this work and to feed into the permanent workflow. AG (EC DG MARE) confirmed that the Nature Restoration Law will be a big opportunity for EMODnet to collaborate and contribute. ZK added it is also relevant for EMODnet to explain what data is missing and when we know why the data is missing (e.g. Marine Protected Areas (MPA) in EMODnet Human Activities: there are difficulties receiving information from the European Member States on measures implemented in MPAs). AG (Coordinator EMODnet Chemistry) confirmed that interacting with European Member States (MS) is rewarding, and the MSs require the support from EMODnet to better structure their work.

4.8 EMODnet Partnerships: Targeted discussion and operational planning (ALL)

EMODnet – Research Infrastructures

KL highlighted that EMODnet has been having long-standing interactions and cooperations with many research infrastructures. She invited the SC to discuss what could be done more to strengthen data sharing and flows and have more structured dialogues with the research infrastructures. ZK noted that EC DG MARE and DG RTD will organise in 2025 a more structured dialogue with the marine research infrastructures to ensure optimisation of the data flows and a clear understanding of where data should go and how data should be presented, structured and managed.

A question was raised what the split in roles is between EMODnet Data Ingestion (DI) and the National Oceanographic Data Centres (NODC). It was clarified that EMODnet Data Ingestion is underpinned by National Oceanographic Data Centres (NODC), and hence that data ingestion into EMODnet is a joint effort. It was further explained that there are two channels of data flow: (i) some research infrastructures are operational observation networks which provide a real-time flow of data to EMODnet; (ii) delayed mode data needs additional validation and formatting, done by the NODCs, to make it for-for-purpose (e.g. modelling).

European projects and initiatives: EMODnet representation, data ingestion

KL indicated that there are hundreds of European projects, where in some we have direct EMODnet representation. In some cases, researchers or organisations are not aware of EMODnet. She highlighted there remains some confusion on the marine data landscape in Europe. It was discussed that communication in this regard is key, and to spread representation as widely as possible. ZK noted that EMODnet partners have the responsibility to promote EMODnet as *the main in situ* marine data service.

EMODnet Memoranda of Understanding (EU focus)

KL presented an overview of the long-standing MoUs that are currently in place for EMODnet with several regional, European and International initiatives, noting the most recent one was an MoU between EMODnet and Scuba Schools International (SSI) on a large citizen science initiative providing physical ocean observations from sensors worn by scuba divers. She added that an MoU with JPI Oceans is in development, following an increase in dialogue with JPI Oceans over the past 1.5-2 years, which included increased and ongoing contributions from EMODnet Secretariat and thematic in JPI-Oceans activities, including input to the JPI Oceans – Climate Knowledge Hub on Sea Level Rise which had produced the First European

Assessment of Sea Level Rise (*post-meeting note: launched on 8 November 2024 online*), and to the ongoing input of EMODnet Seabed Habitats to a Knowledge Hub on Blue Carbon and to EMODnet Human Activities' ongoing input to a new JPI Oceans scoping activity on Marinas, all facilitated by the EMODnet Secretariat. She noted that the MoU aims to be mutually beneficial, with added value for EMODnet in providing guidance to JPI Oceans on data /metadata standards and data ingestion, to achieve a more systematic data flow of JPI-Ocean's data coming from JPI Oceans joint actions and knowledge hubs into EMODnet, and that dialogue with JPI Oceans could also strengthen EMODnet's visibility at National level, including with ministries which are members of the JPI Oceans network and with which EMODnet currently has less direct interaction, with only very few national authorities and/or ministries in the EMODnet partnership. She noted that the draft MoU with JPI Oceans is currently being further updated by both Secretariats and would go to EC DG MARE for final review, most likely by early December 2024.

AnG asked why an MoU was needed and that data sharing should already be achieved. KL responded that in an ideal world this would be the case, but it was not yet systematic and having the MoU was seen as a good way to formalise this.

KL then asked if the SC there are any other MoUs that EMODnet should consider, referring to the earlier discussion on interactions with Regional Sea Conventions (RSCs) and proposing that EMODnet could consider MoUs with RSCs, noting there was interest from some RSCs including the Black Sea Commission (BSC) to extend an existing MoU to a pan-EMODnet MoU.

ZK agreed that there should be an EMODnet-wide Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with each of the RSCs. She further reiterated that an MoU should not only indicate the interactions between EMODnet and the RSCs, but identify specific actions, which can be thematic-specific, that require to be developed in the next period of time for as long as the MoU stands. She added that existing MoUs with the RSCs (e.g., EMODnet Chemistry with the Black Sea Commission) could feed to or be included in these overarching MoUs.

ACTION 16: Explore the possibility to develop an EMODnet-wide MoU with each of the Regional Sea Conventions before the EMODnet Open Conference 2025 (EMODnet Secretariat and EC DG MARE, 29 August 2025).

The importance of the timeframe of an MoU was reiterated. For example, JBC explained that the MoU between EMODnet and the Chinese National Marine Data Information Service (NMDIS) has expired as its duration was linked to the EMOD-PACE project, and it has not been renewed as there were no concrete actions to follow up.

It was noted that EMODnet had previously explored an MoU with the World Ocean Council, but that this had not been further pursued at this stage and could be further explored.

Suggestions for other MoUs were raised, including with Blue Mission BANOS¹. Patrick Gorringer (PG, EMODnet Physics) proposed POGO (Partnership for Observation of the Global Ocean), Erasmus Maris and Satlink company. KL suggested that for some of these e.g., Satlink, it could be interesting to first explore EMODnet Associated Partnership, to which PG agreed.

EMODnet Vision 2035 (Secretariat, EMODnet Coordinators, ALL)

¹ <https://bluemissionbanos.eu/>

KL presented the status of the EMODnet Vision 2035, a community vision on EMODnet service evolution to 2035. She noted that the vision development is coordinated by the EMODnet Secretariat, co-developed by the EMODnet Vision 2035 Drafting Group (VDG) consisting of 32 members that represent all key components of EMODnet, also including some key stakeholders. She noted that the VDG has already convened three times in 2024 and would meet for a fourth meeting on 27th November 2024. In addition, a public consultation had been launched in summer 2024, and targeted stakeholder meetings had taken place including with the EMODnet Associated Partners, Sea-basin Checkpoint Coordinators and global experts. This collective stakeholder feedback is also being considered by the VDG for inclusion in the Vision 2035 which will be a public-facing visual document showcasing EMODnet's current achievements and key priority areas for evolution according to several pillars e.g., EMODnet for Policy, EMODnet digital services and EMODnet for the European Digital Twin Ocean.

ZK thanked everyone in the EMODnet VDG for the work put into the Vision. She reiterated that the EMODnet service is mature, and we need to evolve the service, focusing on the very specific scope for EMODnet, which is access to data, and the provision of added value data products, removing any remaining barriers regarding access to data. She noted that the EC understand there may be appetite to expand EMODnet in different directions, but that this is not a realistic vision, especially when the proposed actions overlap with what other services of the Commission are developing (for instance the EU DTO). EMODnet will continue to focus on open data access to *in situ* marine data and this remains EMODnet's core work. It is important to see in the EMODnet Vision 2035 how we can evolve the service as it stands now, to improve existing services and reach 100% potential, and where can we go in 10 years from now in terms of how we can increase expand our service e.g., temporal and spatial resolution, parameters, speed of delivery and quality of delivery. On this, she added that it would be useful to bring into the Vision how EMODnet has contributed to the various Directives. She also noted that the Vision also needs to reflect how much this evolution is going to cost, and this needs to come from the community. Building on this, she proposed that EMODnet considers Vision priorities according to three levels:

- What is absolutely necessary to happen to maintain and strengthen core EMODnet services according to key evolution priorities;
- What is desirable i.e. not currently fully funded but realistic and impactful over a 5-10 year time-frame;
- What is a wish list if financial considerations were no problem.

AG and DS asked for further clarification on EMODnet evolution in the context of other services e.g., EDITO, noting that technology is moving fast and that EMODnet could develop a data lake and also interactive notebooks.

CD confirmed that EMODnet already contributes to a data lake for EDITO, and that the centralisation of EMODnet had enabled this, also noting that EMODnet already offers several key data and web services, including Jupyter notebooks and open-source methodologies.

ZK noted that indeed there was ongoing investment into the EDITO data lake and that EMODnet should not duplicate this. She added that EMODnet needs to consider the bigger picture of Marine Knowledge in Europe, with the EC (inter-service) vision on Marine Knowledge being three EU services, namely EMODnet, Copernicus Marine Service and the European Digital Twin Ocean (EDITO). She underlined it was crucial to eliminate any current overlaps between these and based on this, EMODnet should focus on priorities to

strengthen its offer in terms of open, uninhibited provision of *in situ* marine environmental and human activities data, data products and metadata. Nicolas Segebarth (NS, EC DG RTD) also underlined the need to align with other initiatives, including the European Digital Twin Ocean, and to avoid duplication of effort, and Alessandra Cacciari (AC, EC DG DEFIS) added that if we avoid overlap it is much easier to look for the best funding and to allow sustainability in future of key operational services, including Copernicus Marine Service and EMODnet. KL noted that EDITO is an addition toolbox on top of EMODnet and Copernicus Marine Service and that the user-interface of EMODnet remained crucial to serve the diverse EMODnet user community, whilst EDITO further expanded EMODnet users, including those needing access to big data from both *in situ* and satellite, together with modelling and high-performance computing capability.

In a discussion on the EMODnet pillars, NS (EC DG RTD) proposed that the EU Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters (Mission Ocean) should not be an EMODnet pillar, but rather could be considered as a framework with EMODnet's marine knowledge offer feeding into the Mission Ocean. KL noted this recommendation would be taken to the next EMODnet VDG meeting on 27th November (post-meeting note: the EMODnet VDG agreed on this recommendation and the EMODnet for Mission Ocean pillar has been removed from the Vision 2035, with EMODnet's key role contributing to the Mission Ocean being made clear in other sections).

ZK concluded that it was important for the EMODnet VDG to have realistic expectations of how the community vision of EMODnet to 2035 will be adopted in the future. On this, she noted that whilst the EC welcome a community vision for EMODnet, we need to be clear on the fact that since EMODnet is an EU service, the European Commission is the final decision-maker, notably DG MARE, but also with other EC services that DG MARE collaborate with in the framework of marine knowledge. She reiterated that any evolution of EMODnet needs both the stamp of approval from the EC and needs to be in general in-line with open access to data, taking away any boundaries we have currently in the access of data, open technologies, in general the adoption of things that are in-line with EU Directives and with EU priorities for FAIR data and open science. If the EMODnet Vision 2035 content was presented in this way, it would provide very useful input to the EC and three services working on Marine Knowledge and wider services as users of Marine Knowledge, which would have the potential to be taken up and used to achieve a vision that is as close as possible to the community vision proposed. As a final statement she noted that there would be an upcoming call for stakeholder consultation related to the Oceans Pact and that it would be important for EMODnet to respond to this call for evidence, even if the Vision is not finalised yet.

4.9 EMODnet external events: Overview (ALL)

Events List: Updates on recent and upcoming events

The EMODnet SC was invited to note the list of upcoming events (meeting document 8), and to continue updating the EMODnet Secretariat of any EMODnet-led or third-party events where EMODnet experts would be attending, and where there would be an opportunity to raise awareness about EMODnet and further strengthen stakeholder engagement, including the use of EMODnet services and data sharing opportunities.

4.10 Next SC (ALL)

It was agreed that the Spring 2025 EMODnet SC will be online. The Secretariat will launch a poll in the coming weeks to find the best suitable date for the next EMODnet SC in April-May 2025.

5. Closing of Closed Session (DG MARE, EMODnet Secretariat, Chair)

Annex I: List of participants

Table 2. List of participants for the EMODnet Open Steering Committee meeting.

Entity	Name	Affiliation
EMODnet Secretariat	Kate Larkin	Seascope Belgium
EMODnet Secretariat	Jan-Bart Calewaert	Seascope Belgium
EMODnet Secretariat	Conor Delaney	Seascope Belgium
EMODnet Secretariat	Nathalie Tonné	Seascope Belgium
EMODnet Secretariat	Tim Collart	Seascope Belgium
EMODnet Secretariat	Angeliki Karampourouni	Seascope Belgium
EMODnet Secretariat	Vicente Fernandez	Seascope Belgium
EMODnet Secretariat	Matteo Mikos	Seascope Belgium
EMODnet Secretariat	Vicente Fernandez	Seascope Belgium
EMODnet Bathymetry	Thierry Schmitt	SHOM, France
EMODnet Biology, Central Portal	Bart Vanhoorne	VLIZ, Belgium
EMODnet Chemistry	Alessandra Giorgetti	OGS, Italy
EMODnet Geology	Anu Kaskela	GTK, Finland
EMODnet Geology	Henry Vallius	GTK, Finland
EMODnet Human Activities	Alessandro Pititto	COGEA, BIP Group, Italy
EMODnet Physics	Patrick Gorringe	SMHI, Sweden
EMODnet Seabed habitats	Ville Karvinen	SYKE, Finland
European Commission	Alessandra Cacciari	DG DEFIS
European Commission	Zoi Konstantinou	DG MARE
European Commission	Antonio Guarnieri	DG MARE
European Commission	Fabrice Pourceau	CINEA
European Commission	Juan-Carlos Fernandez Gomez	CINEA
European Commission	Nicolas Segebarth	DG RTD