



PANEL REVIEW REPORT

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Short description	Midway through the project, a Panel of experts was convened along with Project's representatives to assess past work and assist the project in its upcoming achievements. The Panel consisted in eight - mostly scientific - experts covering the variety of the challenges. The Panel was convened from 7-8 Dec. 2016 in Eurogoos Brussels and delivered its preliminary findings on the spot. This report results from shaping up these preliminary findings along with a few additional comments emanating from a couple of experts during Jan. 2017.
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Table of contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Short summary of the Atlantic Checkpoint	4
3	Panel composition.....	4
4	Documents provided	5
5	Feedback from Panel.....	5
5.1	Thematic coverage.....	5
5.2	Methodological soundness.....	6
5.3	Presentation of the results.....	8
5.4	Checkpoint outreach	8
5.5	Additional comments from Panel.....	9
	Appendix 1 - Panel meeting agenda.....	11

1 Introduction

The Panel was established in the tender and the submission as a group of 9 experts whose remit is to assess the Project's work and help steer it towards proper achievement of its objectives. Two panel meetings are planned at month 15 (Dec. 2016) and month 33 (May 2018), immediately after the delivery of the two Project Data adequacy reports (DAR).

This first Panel meeting remit is to assess two deliverables, namely the Literature survey delivered in Aug. 2016 and the first Data Adequacy Report (DAR) delivered in Nov. 2016, and assess whether the Project's trajectory is likely to lead to the results described in the Grant agreement.

2 Short summary of the Atlantic Checkpoint

The concept of sea-basin checkpoints was introduced within the "Marine Knowledge 2020" Communication and refined in the Roadmap. Although EU initiatives such as the European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet), Copernicus and the Data Collection Framework for Fisheries have managed to deliver seamless layers of marine data across national boundaries, there are still some shortcomings with Europe's marine data architecture.

In order to save costs and improve marine knowledge, the EU is now moving to a new paradigm where data must be collected once to satisfy multiple uses to support the sustainable Blue Growth at the scale of the EU Sea basins. This has led the Commission to establish a formal way of assessing these uses by launching the Checkpoint concept.

EMODnet checkpoints are monitoring system assessment activities aiming to support the sustainable Blue Growth at the scale of sea basins by:

- clarifying the data collection and warehousing landscape of all compartments of the marine environment and highlighting the existing programs at national, European and international level;
- evaluating their fitness-for-use by building indicators that will show the accessibility and usability of observation and modeled data sets and their roles and synergies based upon targeted applications (called Challenges);
- defining priorities to make existing monitoring systems better meet present and future challenge needs.

3 Panel composition

The Panel is composed of the following experts, who arguably cover altogether the broad thematic scope of the eleven challenges:

- Jon Davies (JNCC, UK)
- Hugues Benoît (Fisheries and Oceans, Can)
- Gilles Reverdin (CNRS, France)
- Begoña Pérez Gómez (Puertos del Estado, Spain)
- Paul Tréguer (Univ. Brest, France)
- Emily Corcoran (OSPAR)
- Neil Holdsworth (ICES)
- Max Carcas (Caelulum, UK)

4 Documents provided

The documents provided by the Project to the Panel were:

- The Literature review delivered on 01/07/16
- The first Data adequacy report delivered on 26/11/16
- The Tender

5 Feedback from Panel

5.1 Thematic coverage

- **Do you think the eleven challenges fully cover marine issues?**

Panel: These challenges are not fully comprehensive. There are specific examples of gaps, for example, other types of marine energy projects, oil and gas, shipping, aquaculture, acidification, marine litter. However we understand the challenges were set by the tender, not the project and it may be that the challenges are representative of other marine issues.

Project: No specific comment. No doubt this comment will be taken on board by DG/MARE as future prospects.

- **Do you have comments about the vocabulary? Do you find the SeaDataNet vocabularies (specifically P02) suitable or would you recommend another way of selecting key characteristics (also relating to EOVS or Essential Oceanographic Variables) to form a representative data subset to target our efforts?**

Panel: Generally the vocabulary was found to be suitable by the Panel, however standards should be further developed. Four letter acronyms are not clear and should be made clear to non-experts.

Project: Standards (SEaDataNet, ISO) are going to be developed in a specific section. Acronyms for groups of characteristics (P02) were not detailed in the glossary. Full names will be added in brackets next to each occurrence to make reading easier.

- **In our literature review, are we missing important data sources?**

Panel: It is hard to tell at the moment, based on time to review and info provided. There seems to be missing the state of the art. This could be resolved by tighter definition for challenges and date stamping of these. Some challenges don't seem scoped enough e.g. Eutrophication where dead zones and oxygen are missing.

Additional comment (Max Carcas): Are there missing items of data for each challenge that are not currently readily available but that would be desirable? This would be valuable to highlight by the challenge leaders but also with feedback from the panel.

Additional comment (Jon Davies): The approach taken of selecting case studies similar to the challenge and only reporting the reference(s) in those studies makes it very difficult to determine what literature has been considered. It is not possible to determine what literature beyond that mentioned in the case studies was reviewed to select the case studies themselves. For the MPA challenge, the case studies do not appear to access key data sources (such as OSPAR data/EC data/EMODNET data), and CH2_UC3 is missing

from the Appendix. I understand these data will be considered but it is not clear from the literature review.

Project: For fear of overloading them, the experts were not given the “Description of work”. They received the Literature Survey report, the Data Adequacy report and the Tender. It is true though that challenge descriptions were substantially more detailed in the DoW and that neither of the two deliverables made up for this gap. To answer the specific issue about oxygen, in Appendix 2 (Consolidated list for Atlantic, Black Sea and Med Sea Checkpoint characteristics), the Eutrophication Challenge 8 actually lists Dissolved gases (P03) and specifically DOXY/Dissolved oxygen parameters in the water column (P02) so this is covered to some extent.

5.2 Methodological soundness

- **Comments on metadata base: are there any missing fields?**

Panel: Why not use the same metadata and/or make clear if different. Is it an internal resource or external tool? Have another field that tells you this – see ISO19115.

Project: Our metadata is an internal resource and is different to the providers’. Our metadata base attributes are fully described in Appendix 1. As can be seen there a number of these attributes were created and edited for our own assessment purposes.

- **What do you think of the quality assessment of metadata edition?**

Panel (Jon Davies): It is important to demonstrate the project has completed a QA check on the assessments completed by the challenge leaders. The confusion arose because it was not clear why the second assessment was completed and then reported so extensively. On one hand, the second assessment could simply be a QA check on the metadata. The project could then state how the results were used to improve the metadata if any generic or specific errors were identified. On the other hand, if the contract required an independent verification step (to simulate someone else using the metadata) then it is necessary to provide a more extensive report of the second assessment. So the main outcome is how the project is going to address the findings of the QA check?

Project: There will be a second round with availability when challenge leaders actually prepare their products. They are expected to inform the appropriateness indicators and at the same time review availability based on the outputs of our quality check.

- **What do you think of the double adequacy assessment requirements per challenge and per group of characteristic? Which of these two is more useful and where should we place more efforts?**

Panel: The adequacy per challenge is more useful. Better signposting by challenge would be useful. This comments relates to a general feeling as a stakeholder of ‘so what’, or ‘what does this mean for me’? If an independent stakeholder wanted to complete one of the challenges, the DAR gives lots of stats on these indicators derived from the data sources the challenge leaders identified (and accessed), but does not give any general points on overall data accessibility by challenge or how they might find out where data are located so they can use them for their work.

Additional comment (Jon Davies): The problem was trying to work out whether the data sets listed for a challenge (for example MPAs) were actually relevant to that challenge, and how they would be used. The absence of any information on how the challenge would be undertaken meant that it was impossible to determine whether the data accessed were relevant to the challenge, and how important those data were to the challenge.

Project: It's true the DAR (as a report) does not say where data are located but the Sextant metadata base does provide this information and that is freely open to stakeholders upon registration.

As pointed out elsewhere, we are aware that this early panel meeting, disconnected from products, was not meant to deal with data appropriateness, the side of things panelists were most concerned with.

- **What do you think of this ISO-based approach (quantitative and repeatable) as opposed to a more narrative approach?**

Panel: ISO is great but ISO terms may not be fully descriptive. Both would be good, but worked examples should be elaborated since they may reveal the need for more descriptors.

Project: We are going to think about worked examples.

- **Indicator framework: among availability indicators, in your view what are the ones most suitable to convey the right messages to providers and people building up data policy?**

Panel: The number of indicators should be slimmed down, with fewer indicators focusing on key issues (e.g. Easy to find, Readiness). Banana obviously is a very powerful tool but it needs to be cross-browser and is probably too resource heavy. Is this supposed to be public eventually?

Project: Yes Banana is supposed to be public and to enable providers to see by themselves how easily available their productions are.

- **Do you have suggestions about indicator value scale: are they too detailed - leading to misinterpretation - or would you simply rank them in three categories reflecting good/average/bad?**

Panel: The three categories are suitable.

- **Likewise in terms of appropriateness what do you think are the key indicators to answer questions raised in the terms of reference?**

Panel: The question was very unclear since we had not been provided with a 'Terms of Reference'. The Proposal document does not describe the indicators. WP14 (in the proposal) describes the DAR but does not mention indicators. Indicators are mentioned in the description of WP1 but notes 'to be defined'. DAR1 does not provide any indicators for 'appropriateness'.

Project: The project has already identified (based on current knowledge and also other challenges ahead of us that 2 or 3 core appropriateness indicators should be fine to qualify data sets.

5.3 Presentation of the results

- **DAR publication: How do you think these indicators should be rendered: a) in statistics (bar or pie charts as was done here) or b) spatially in GIS? In the latter case what geographic level of detail would be needed?**

Panel: There should be a mixture of both. Maps would be misleading and incomplete since they would only refer to the specific datasets accessed by the project so showing maps would be a waste of effort unless it were possible to offer something more generic (overall data accessibility by challenge) for discrete regions at a finer scale than the 'Atlantic'.

Project: In fact 10 out of the 11 challenges have a remit for the whole Atlantic (only Windfarm siting is limited to test sites). So a geographic view of gaps would be useful. We take the recommendation that this should be done for discrete regions (the size of which has to be decided on), along with statistics and narrative explanation.

- **What would you expect from the second DAR, both in terms of content and outlook?**

Panel: a) More clarity on purpose, b) a clear indication of what data had been used in each challenge, c) taking into account the present recommendations, d) a breakdown per challenge, e) making clear what difficulties were, perhaps by examples and recommendations for improvement.

Project: from this list we take on board the following: a) the need for us to make an effort of clarity about the checkpoint methodology, b) naming data according to SeaDataNet P02 groups did not seem convincing to the Panel, however we cannot think of an alternative, c) the absence of products - not yet made at month 15 - seemed to be a drawback to the Panel, who perhaps found it difficult to deal with data as "abstraction", d) the idea of worked examples is again pointed out here: further to just statistics there is a need to stress some particular difficulties.

5.4 Checkpoint outreach

- **If you are put on a "user's cap", what do you expect from these checkpoints? How are they going to help you in everyday's life?**

Panel: Is a user a data provider? Who is the user? Do they (or will they) know this work exists? How will the checkpoints affect users' experience (and experience of what)? Presumably there will be an indirect benefit from the checkpoints?

Project: It is very hard to make the checkpoints so widely known, especially with users being of so many kinds and so scattered all over the place. We can expect to trigger users' interest through challenges products, provided these are of high quality. From the products users will be directed to data sets (using products lineage), probably a beneficial experience for them.

- **If you put on a "provider's cap", what would you fear these checkpoints could reveal and what feedback would you expect to improve your data dissemination?**

Panel: We think most providers would look forward to feedback. But there needs to be a mechanism designed for providing this feedback and taking action where concerns were raised.

Project: This is where we think most outreach lies. We take on board the recommendation from the Panel to get providers in the loop and closely associate them through a formal mechanism of update and feedback.

- **How often would you deem necessary to carry out this type of Checkpoint assessment? Do you see a justification to maintain Checkpoint services?**

Panel: The assessment could be carried out routinely, depending on a good feedback process and the potential for improvements resulting from this. Questions raised by the challenges need to be carefully considered by data providers and data managers to improve data delivery. The challenge concept is essential but it should apply to real issues, some of the challenges are too 'artificial' and not related to likely real-world use. The panel were concerned about the lack of clarity on how DG MARE would use the results of the checkpoint to feed back into improvements/changes to EMODNET and more generally, into EC data policy.

Project: The policy defended by the Atlantic Checkpoint is to have a set of open source technical tools enabling quick update in future.

5.5 Additional comments from Panel

- **Panel:** For future work a method should be devised to ensure a process for continuous improvement

Project: Taken on board, however we must make sure this is not overburdening partners.

- **Panel:** Active feedback to providers should be organized

Project: Taken on board (see above)

- **Panel:** Clarity on what has been considered for each challenge area and the process that has been arrived at to determine what is/was appropriate (particularly for expert panel to review this)

Project: The second panel review is going to be more practical since it will be based on real examples from the challenges.

- **Panel:** Clarity on data time stamping of data

Project: The clear distinction is usually made in metadata between creation date and assessment date. When dealing with products, of course creation date is essential in product .

- **Panel:** Clarity on the input expected from experts, with more time for experts to properly review work and prepare their input.

Project: For second panel one additional day for preparation by experts to be added.

- **Panel:** Clarity of purpose of the Front End Service

Project: The Sextant data catalogue and associated tools (referred to as Front Edn Service) we provide access to in our checkpoint shows datasets and indicators as assessed by the Project, which is only a very partial view of the data landscape. It is designed to be maintained and updated over time and be a source of information for providers to get a view of how the Project appreciates their data sets. It is not meant for routing users to data.

This catalogue may be of interest to providers

In the product catalogue

- **Panel:** Better benchmarking with the other checkpoints and using what has worked well is recommended, particularly if their work is further advanced (although experts appreciate this is difficult with checkpoints being done in parallel and at different speeds).

Project: The coordination with the other checkpoints should be strengthened. The February 2017 EMODnet stakeholders meeting and steering committee meeting will provide two opportunities of confronting methods and acting for more inter-basin benchmarking.

Appendix 1 - Panel meeting agenda

The Panel was convened from 7 Dec. noon to 8 Dec. noon on Eurogoos premises at 231 Av. Louise in Brussels. The attendees were the eight experts and 10 project representatives (Project coordination plus one representative for each partner/challenge) as well one person from the EMODnet Secretariat.

The first half day was devoted to presentations from the partnership and questions from the Panel to ensure a good understanding of the Project's targets and status. In the second half day, the Panel run its own deliberation and came up with a draft panel report it before wrap up. The meeting agenda was as follows:

Day 1

- Introduction to the Atlantic Checkpoint (Jacques Populus)
- From tender to Checkpoint methodology (Eric Moussat)
- Checkpoint services and tools (Frédérique Blanc)
- Data adequacy assessment results (Jacques Populus)
- Discussion and questions from Panel (All)

Day 2

- Discussion and questions from Panel (cont')
- Other Sea-basin checkpoint approaches: the Arctic example (Belen Martin, EMODnet Secretariat)
- Report structure (Panel)
- Report drafting session (Panel)
- Presentation of conclusions by Panel and wrap-up (All)