Meeting Document 3

Central Portal Gateway – Discussion Document

For information and discussion

The idea for a Data Gateway for EMODnet arose in 2019 from the need to improve usability, unify search and download techniques/tools and to modernise the approach within the initiative. Early 2020 DG MARE and EASME decided to move to the next phase of EMODnet following an integrated approach entailing a single point of access for all EMODnet data and data-products, through the Central portal. In addition the DG.COMM has decided to migrate the emodnet.eu Central portal into the Europa domain (europa.eu) and has set a deadline of the end of 2020 for this to happen (will not apply the thematic portals). In response, VLIZ as host of the EMODnet Central Portal and developer of its data services with input from the Secretariat, have developed this discussion document as input to the EMODnet Steering Committee and Technical Working Group for discussion with a view to gain common understanding and elaborate the concept of the EMODnet Gateway into a joint collaborative work plan for the next EMODnet phase.

Central Portal Data Gateway - Discussion Document

Introduction

The idea for a Data Gateway for EMODnet arose from the need to improve usability, unify search and download techniques/tools and to modernise the approach within the initiative. In addition the DG.COMM has decided to migrate the emodnet.eu Central portal into the Europa domain (europa.eu) and has set a deadline of the end of 2020 for this to happen (will not apply the thematic portals).

This move brings with it rules that must be complied with, for example the compulsory use of Europa Analytics. These tasks are separate but not mutually exclusive.

In conceptual terms, the Data Gateway is a single point providing access to all EMODnet data. It allows any user (regardless of category) to:

- Search, visualise and download data(products) or subsets through a single tool, filtered by theme, geographical area, time, depth, data provider, etc

- Find tutorials and examples for accessing and processing data

- Use helpdesk service for any questions and/or comments

The initial approach includes:

- An overview of the portal's content and the development of a common approach for each lot to implement for their thematic content. This should be implemented and overseen by the secretariat.

- The maintenance of the catalogue, including its expansion to accommodate for not just data products but also datasets.

- The improvement of machine to machine services of the lots. These would expand to cover the data, not just the data products.

- The implementation of a helpdesk service that allows user queries and/or comments to be redirected to the appropriate thematic lot.

- Gathering requirements for the move to the Europa domain and understanding the impacts. The move to the Europa domain does not involve moving to europa servers, but is more focused on compliance with rules and regulations on how websites should act and look. We will have more information on this for the TWG.

Content

Coordination will continue to be done by the secretariat and each lot will have dedicated access to the CP content manager and that guidance will be provided on how the content should be presented so that it is standardised (as much as possible) across the lots.

The current portal layout will reflect the changes and might have to be redesigned to accommodate the additional information each lot is responsible for.

Monitoring tools

The existing EMODnet OGC monitoring tool (https://monitor.emodnet.eu/) might require minor enhancements to reflect the changes in the Central Portal, but they are already expected to cover the basic parameters (operational and reliability).

The existing Matomo monitoring dashboard will be replaced by Europa Analytics (which is also a Matomo instance, but managed by DIGIT.D1) which is a requirement of moving to the Europa domain. All information required for the quarterly reports is expected to be available at all times. Any changes will have to be requested to the DIGIT.D1 team.

Prepared by VLIZ with comments from Secretariat

No discussion regarding the reporting has been initiated with DIGIT, but we envisage that every lot will continue to be responsible as is being done currently.

Implementation

The high-level implementation plan drafted by VLIZ envisages a collaborative approach, where each lot will be requested to provide their feedback and discussions will ensue to achieve the best outcome possible for EMODnet.

Feedback from the thematic lots is extremely important and should, at a first stage, focus on data standards, metadata standards and interoperability.

The use of an AGILE approach has been requested by DG Mare/EASE and will allow progress to be made alongside adjustments following the development review at each step.


Progressing from the changes, it is expected that any technical development (e.g. tool development) required by each lot to fulfil their users' needs is done by the lot, in collaboration with VLIZ and the secretariat so that it can be more easily integrated in the CP. Each thematic lot will collaborate with VLIZ and the secretariat to codesign workflows and plan the allocation of tasks with an objective that there will be knowledge sharing across the thematic lots in order to avoid duplication of effort.

Helpdesk services

The idea is to implement a service that will push the enquiries/comments to the designated lot so that they can be answered by the experts in each field. This process should be seamless and invisible to the user.

Timeline

The request from EASME/DG MARE states that data, data products and web services should be implemented for each thematic lot within six months of the signing of the new contracts. The proposed timeline will therefore be as below:
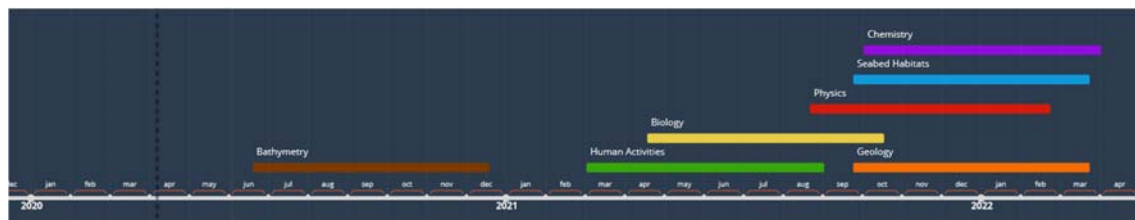
Start date reflects end of existing contracts, end date is 6 months afterwards

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