

EMODnet Secretariat Achievements to date - 2nd Steering Committee Meeting

High level aim:

The EMODnet Secretariat has been commissioned (MARE/2012/15) to provide high-level coordination and technical skills to support (i) the monitoring of EMODnet projects; (ii) the dissemination of their results, and (iii) the analysis of user feedback and statistics. The EMODnet Secretariat will also oversee the development of the EMODnet central portal as a common gateway to provide access to all seven thematic portals and as a vehicle for additional data services. The overarching aim is to develop a more effective, efficient and fit for purpose EMODnet.

To achieve its mandate, execute its tasks and deliver high quality products, the Secretariat will need input and full support of the various EMODnet lots and activities. The EMODnet Secretariat reports to MODEG and the Commission and will maintain an open exchange of information with all partners involved, including posting of two-monthly progress reports on the Maritime Forum.

The EMODnet Secretariat is hosted by the Flemish Government at the InnovOcean site in Oostende, (Belgium) and administered by Seascope Consultants UK. The Seascope project team provides expertise in professional management, dissemination/communication and marine data handling to help coordinate, monitor, promote and improve EMODnet portals as a support service to DG MARE, the EMODnet Steering Committee and community.

Main tasks of the Secretariat (See Secretariat Remit – Meeting Document 1st Steering Committee Meeting):

- (i) Organise the EMODnet Central Portal Steering Committee
- (ii) Support the Marine Observation and Data Expert Group (MODEG)
- (iii) Monitor EMODnet Portals and overall progress
- (iv) Collect feedback from EMODnet users
- (v) Improve visibility and disseminate EMODnet results

Achievements to date (from October 2012 to May 2014)

Along the main tasks of the Secretariat, following progress to date can be noted:

1) *Organise the EMODnet Central Portal Steering Committee:*

- The Secretariat has established, convened and is chairing a Steering Committee based on an a newly developed Terms of Reference, which has contributed to:
 - o exchange of information about progress achieved and the challenges encountered by the various EMODnet initiatives, in particular the EMODnet thematic portals → ongoing/permanent with live meetings and through email exchanges and updates
 - o guiding the development of the EMODnet entry portal → Landing page online since October 2013; development of the demonstration site and portal ongoing including the set-up of an Ad Hoc technical working group under VLIZ coordination;
 - o Streamlining the interactions between the EMODnet Secretariat and portal teams → ongoing/permanent with live meetings and through email exchanges and updates

- Improve the coherence of the EMODnet projects → harmonization of portals, styleguide.
- The Secretariat is ready to establish an Ad Hoc User Group based on a draft ToR which it has developed for approval by the Steering Committee.

2) Support the Marine Observation and Data Expert Group (MODEG)

The Secretariat actively supports DG MARE in the preparation of the agendas for the MODEG meetings and prepares written summaries of MODEG meetings and publishes them on the EU's Maritime Forum.

3) Monitor EMODnet Portals and overall progress

The Secretariat is tasked to test the EMODnet thematic portals and central entry portal. To this end, the Secretariat has:

- Standardized and synchronised the delivery of two-monthly reports from the thematic portals and checking the portals' progress based on these reports;
- Done a baseline assessment of the thematic portals and is continuously monitoring the portals to identify weaknesses, user-friendliness, coverage of parameters, signing-in procedures, speed of delivery, data quality etc.;
- Has developed (with advice from MODEG) and implemented the use of indicators to measure progress in each portal;
- Prepared regular short reports published on the EU's maritime forum summarising progress in EMODnet

4) Collect feedback from EMODnet users

From September to November 2013 the EMODnet Secretariat conducted an initial baseline survey of the thematic portals which resulted in a set of recommendations to improve the coherence and presentation of the various portals. This document also provided guidelines and templates for the new EMODnet portals and websites from the Human activities lot and the sea-basin checkpoints.

Next, the Secretariat conducted a user evaluation with users, experts and representatives of marine sectors (total of 5-6 users per portal). We refer to 2nd Steering Committee Meeting Document number 6 on User Evaluations which provides high level findings and recommendations of this survey.

5) Improve visibility and disseminate EMODnet results

With input from the MODEG and in collaboration with the EMODnet projects, the Secretariat has been actively working to increase the visibility and dissemination of EMODnet outputs based on a high level Communication Plan/Strategy (See 2nd Steering Committee Meeting Document 10). Key outputs include among others:

- Organisation of workshops, development of dynamic talks/demonstrations of EMODnet and presentations at various meetings (e.g. European Maritime Day 2014);
- Strong presence on the Maritime Forum
- Management and regular updates on EMODnet social media;
- Development of EMODnet ppt for partners;
- an EMODnet leaflet and brochure;
- EMODnet Poster.