

# Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> EMODnet Steering Committee meeting

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## Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> EMODnet Steering Committee meeting

Date: 16-17/12/2014

Location: JPI Oceans Office, Brussels

Prepared by the EMODnet Secretariat

### List of Actions:

1. Update the EMODnet Steering Committee Terms of Reference according to the comments on timing of meetings with MODEG, proposed timeline of entry portal deliverables and the addition of term 'ad hoc' for the technical working group (Secretariat, 19/02/2014).
2. Develop a draft Terms of Reference for the Ad Hoc Technical Working Group, including topics identified for discussion as part of the Steering Committee meeting (Secretariat, 19/02/2014).
3. Develop a draft Terms of Reference and workplan with proposed deliverables for the Ad Hoc User Group (Secretariat, 19/02/2014).
4. Provide details of technical contacts to sit on the Ad Hoc Technical Working Group (**Thematic portals** to the Secretariat, 19/02/2014).
5. Provide recommendations for external experts or data users to sit on the Ad Hoc User Group (**Thematic portals** to the Secretariat, 19/02/2014)
6. Consider options to develop a Single Sign On (user registration) procedure/system with reference to data downloads as a priority and report back to the Steering Committee (**Ad Hoc Technical Working Group**, May 2014)
7. Provide an overview of different alternative ways to collate user profile information (add login registration, pop up feedback form etc.) at thematic and entry portals and report back to Steering Committee (**Ad Hoc Technical Working Group**, May 2014)
8. Provide proposals to report on progress using meaningful metrics for the agreed indicators (**Thematic portals**, 15/01/2014)
9. Report on the indicators at the next MODEG meeting (Secretariat, 19/02/2014)
10. Remove indicator 11 from the list of agreed indicators (Secretariat, 19/02/2014)
11. Further define reporting guidelines for indicator 10 (Secretariat, 19/02/2014)
12. Provide the thematic portals with a template (style guide) for the bi-monthly report (Secretariat, 31/01/2014)
13. Establish and maintain an EMODnet central contact database with EMODnet partners and stakeholders (Secretariat, permanent)
14. Provide accreditation text for the leaflet (DG MARE, *completed*)
15. Provide feedback on the leaflet to the Secretariat (**Thematic lots**, 15/01/2014)
16. Provide image/video material for use in communication products (**Thematic lots**, 19/02/2014)



17. Investigate options to organize an EMODnet Workshop for Maritime Day in Bremen 2014 (Secretariat, 31/01/2014)
18. Adapt the URL of the thematic portals to the agreed standard format [www.emodnet-XXXXXXX.eu](http://www.emodnet-XXXXXXX.eu) (**Thematic lots**, 19/02/2014)
19. Use standard terminology to refer to the thematic lots on all websites/portals/documents (**Thematic lots**, 19/02/2014)
20. Circulate the style guide for review and obtain feedback by the lots and checkpoints (Secretariat, **Thematic lots and sea-basin checkpoints**, 31/01/2014)
21. Establish Ad Hoc Technical Working Group (**VLIZ** with support from Secretariat, 19/02/2014).
22. Establish Ad Hoc User Group (Secretariat, 19/02/2014).
23. Forward suggestions for use cases to VLIZ (**Thematic lots**, permanent)
24. Update DG MARE website to direct EMODnet users to the entry portal landing page (**DG MARE**, 19/02/2014)
25. Consider interoperability of data products for use case studies and report outcome to the Steering Committee (**Ad Hoc Technical Working Group**, 19/02/2014).
26. Make news section available through RSS Feed to be aggregated on the Entry Portal (Thematic lots, May 2014)
27. Post items to social media accounts for thematic lots if requested (Secretariat, permanent)
28. Investigate options to organise the next Steering Committee at the Oceanology Conference in London in March (**Dick Schaap**, *completed*)
29. Investigate the Maritime Day in Bremen option for a workshop and SC Meeting (Secretariat, 19/02/2014)

#### Meeting Participants

William Adnams	Lovell-Johns
Jan-Bart Calewaert	EMODnet Secretariat
Simon Claus	VLIZ
Emmanuela Clementi	INGV Bologna
Amelia Curd	Ifremer
Jean Dusart	JRC
Alessandra Giorgetti	OGS
Patrick Gorringe	EuroGOOS (only 17 <sup>th</sup> Dec)
Vikki Gunn	EMODnet Secretariat
Francisco Hernandez	VLIZ
Jonathan Lowndes	BGS
Antonio Novellino	ETT

Marie Pendle	HR Wallingford
Alessandro Pittito	Cogea
Liesbeth Renders	EMODnet Secretariat
Dick Schaap	Maris
Iain Shepherd	DG MARE
Francisco Souza	VLIZ
Alan Stevenson	BGS (only 16 <sup>th</sup> Dec)
Matteo Vinci	OGS
Phil Weaver	EMODnet Secretariat (Chair)

Apologies: Jacques Populus (Ifremer), Alvis Bragadin (Cogea), Nadia Pinardi (INGV Bologna)

## 16<sup>th</sup> Dec 2013 - Day 1

### Session 1: Welcome and Introductions

#### JPI OCEANS

The 1<sup>st</sup> EMODnet Steering Committee meeting was hosted by the Joint Programming Initiative on Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans (JPI Oceans) at their office in Brussels. Kathrine Angell-Hansen (JPI Oceans) provided an introduction to the concept of Joint Programming, which was introduced by the European Commission in 2008 to tackle societal challenges that cannot be solved solely at national level. It allows Member States to participate in joint actions on a voluntarily basis to pool resources. There are ten JPIs in total, which maintain links. JPI Oceans' main focus is on the cross section between the marine environment, climate change, maritime economy and human activities.

Though the meeting was hosted by JPI Oceans it is important to note that this does not indicate a preference towards the EMODnet initiative, but should be considered as part of JPI Oceans' commitment to provide facilities for organizations who work on marine science and technology issues to facilitate progress in this area.

#### DG MARE

Iain Shepherd (DG MARE) presented an overview and summary of the EMODnet programme so far. Phase 1 consisted of six pilot actions delivering thematic portals with limited geographical coverage and parameters. Phase 2, the current phase, extends the geographical coverage to cover all European basins at a set (low) resolution. One additional theme (Human Activities) and two sea-basin checkpoints covering the Mediterranean and the North Sea have been added in EMODnet phase 2. The sea-basin checkpoints will, through the evaluation of a series of defined challenges, test EMODnet functionality and aid in defining the optimum observation infrastructure required to respond to the needs of multiple maritime uses.

DG MARE is currently in the process of defining Phase 3 based on the EC consultation "Marine Knowledge 2020: from seabed mapping to ocean forecasting". The feedback from different stakeholders identified new needs (e.g. private sector involvement, advice to Member States, EU convergence of related marine observation and data initiatives). Some

needs will be supported by complementary instruments (e.g. development of novel sensors for ocean observation by EC's research programme Horizon 2020).

### **Question and Comments:**

Questions focused on the proposed integration of Copernicus marine services and commercial fisheries data and information components with EMODnet activities. DG MARE indicated that the *in situ* monitoring (MyOcean) aspect of Copernicus will become part of EMODnet (Physics lot 6) in March/April 2014. With regards to fisheries data integration, no fixed schedule has been set, as there is an ongoing discussion due to the perceived commercial and data protection sensitivity of the information.

#### [Session 2: EMODnet Secretariat team, its mandate and workplan](#)

The Secretariat presented an overview of the newly-established Secretariat for EMODnet, based at the InnovOcean site in Oostende (Belgium). The Secretariat will provide high-level coordination and technical skills to support the EMODnet programme along three strands (i) internal communication (e.g. standardization of reporting); (ii) external communication (e.g. brochures, videos); and (iii) testing/evaluation (user feedback, technical infrastructure). The EMODnet Secretariat will also oversee the development of the EMODnet Entry Portal to provide access to all seven thematic portals and as a vehicle for additional data services. The overarching aim is to develop a more coherent, effective, efficient and fit for purpose EMODnet.

#### [Session 3: Steering Committee Terms of Reference](#)

Jan-Bart Calewaert (EMODnet Secretariat) summarized and requested feedback on the objectives, roles and responsibilities, deliverables, ad hoc working groups, and an indicative timetable for the Steering Committee (SC) as outlined in the Meeting Document 5 (draft Steering Committee Terms of Reference). This document was provided for consultation to all participants prior to the meeting. The Steering Committee Terms of Reference were approved in principal, upon minor modifications (outlined in Action 1).

### **Question and Comments**

Questions were raised with regards to the potential overlap with MODEG remit and mandate and the timings of SC meeting and MODEG. The Secretariat outlined that MODEG currently does not have a Terms of Reference, and that it provides advice to the Commission at pan-European level while the EMODnet Steering Committee acts as a platform to discuss and provide advice on EMODnet at the operational level. To avoid too many separate meetings/travels, DG MARE agreed with the proposal to organise the Steering Committee and MODEG meetings back to back when representatives of the EMODnet lots are expected to present at MODEG Meetings.

Sea-basin checkpoint representatives highlighted that attendance of Steering Committee meetings had not been part of their proposed tender budget. Therefore they would prefer to remain Observers providing them with the flexibility to attend meetings ad hoc.

### **Actions**

- Update the EMODnet Steering Committee Terms of Reference according to the comments on timing of meetings with MODEG, proposed timeline of entry portal deliverables and the addition of term 'ad hoc' for the technical working group (Secretariat, 19/02/2014).
- Develop a draft Terms of Reference for the Ad Hoc Technical Working Group, including topics identified for discussion as part of the Steering Committee meeting (Secretariat, 19/02/2014).
- Develop a draft Terms of Reference and workplan with proposed deliverables for the Ad Hoc User Group (Secretariat, 19/02/2014).



- Provide details of technical contacts to sit on the Ad Hoc Technical Working Group (Thematic portals to the Secretariat, 19/02/2014).
- Provide recommendations for external experts or data users to sit on the Ad Hoc User Group (Thematic portals to the Secretariat, 19/02/2014)

#### Session 4: Updates from the thematic assembly groups

Each of the seven thematic lots provided updates on the current state of their portal and the proposed activities and the main challenges towards meeting their deliverables in Phase 2.

#### **Questions and Comments**

Discussions focussed on the integration and visualisation of coarse and high-level resolution and coverage of gaps in data available across European basins. Thematic lots take different approaches to address this. The Bathymetry lot integrates their information with GEBCO, which has joined as a partner in the current phase. The Geology lot provided an example of how 'hot spots', i.e. where better resolution data for a specific area is available, can be represented in a GIS portal. This would ensure that more detailed data and information is not lost to the user as a result of data products produced at a coarser but universally available scale across Europe.

In terms of challenges, the ongoing process of standards and definition (EUNIS re-classification, MSFD & WFD coastal region definition) has the potential to affect the timelines of deliverables.

The Seabed Habitats lot stressed their dependence on other thematic portals to provide data to be able to create their own data product. They requested thematic portals to provide data at specific timelines, which include a measure of confidence (good/medium/bad).

Issues with regards to the proposed integration and/or interoperability of the registration process for users to be able to download data from different systems (SeaDataNet, MyOcean) was outlined by the Physics lot.

#### **Action:**

- Consider options to develop a Single Sign On (user registration) procedure/system with reference to data downloads as a priority and report back to the Steering Committee (Ad Hoc Technical Working Group, May 2014).

#### Session 5a: Indicators to monitor progress and reporting template (continued on day 2)

The Physics lot provided feedback on the proposed indicators (Meeting Document 6) and envisaged challenges to report back to the Secretariat on them as part of their presentation. This led to an initial discussion which continued the following day.

#### **Questions and Comments**

Questions focussed on how to provide meaningful/comparable user statistics as the EMODnet services are provided through different infrastructures (SeaDataNet, MyOcean, Sextant etc.) or through services provided through WMS/WFS when analytics do not reside with the thematic portal itself. Despite these challenges the need of this type of information was highlighted by DG MARE in order to provide user profiles and statistics to validate future funding of EMODnet.

#### **Action:**



- Provide an overview of different alternative ways to collate user profile information (add login registration, pop up feedback form etc.) at thematic and entry portals and report back to Steering Committee (Ad Hoc Technical Working Group, May 2014)

## 17<sup>th</sup> Dec 2013- Day 2

### Session 5b: Indicators to monitor progress and reporting template

The Secretariat proposed to continue with the discussions focusing on issues of common concern rather than specific to individual thematic portals. The indicators and reporting template were approved in principal, upon minor modifications (outlined in Action 1 & 2).

#### **Questions and Comments**

Concerns were voiced in relation to Indicator 3, which reports on the organisations which have been approached but have not supplied data as it could result in a 'blacklist'. The Secretariat outlined that the intention was not negative, but rather to identify common bottlenecks and develop synergies between thematic lots facing similar issues. The Secretariat was requested to consider reporting on this indicator annually.

Indicator 11 proposed by DG MARE related to the management of the budget. It was contested as being outside the clauses of the current contracts of the thematic lots. In response DG MARE proposed to gather as much information as possible on a voluntary basis, removing the indicator and obligation to report on it by the thematic lots.

#### **Actions:**

- Provide proposals to report on progress using meaningful metrics for the agreed indicators (Thematic portals, 15/01/2014)
- Report on the indicators at the next MODEG meeting (Secretariat, 19/02/2014)
- Remove indicator 11 from the list of agreed indicators (Secretariat, 19/02/2014)
- Further define reporting guidelines for indicator 10 (Secretariat, 19/02/2014)
- Provide the thematic portals with a template (style guide) for the bi-monthly report (Secretariat, 31/01/2014)

### Session 6: Information about the SeaBasin Checkpoints

Each of the sea-basin checkpoints presented an overview of their activities. As the overall deliverables of both checkpoints are comparable, both presentations are summarized together.

A new feature of EMODnet Phase 2 comprises the set-up of two sea-basin checkpoints: one for the Mediterranean and one for the North Sea. These checkpoints have been tasked to evaluate current marine data availability and identify gaps in their respective regions from the perspective of identified 'use challenges', mostly in relation to data needs for activities by maritime stakeholders (e.g. offshore wind-energy). The approach taken is to make use of data and systems already in place as much as possible. The checkpoint challenges will be reviewed and assessed by their own expert panel of advisors (separate from MODEG & SC), and results will be disseminated through a portal. The information collated will not solely be based on EMODnet but also on other sources identified through the checkpoints surveys. The Mediterranean Sea-basin checkpoint has included a user feedback work package which is not an activity being conducted by the North Sea project.

#### **Questions and Comments**



Further clarifications were requested in terms of the proposed links in activities between the thematic lots and the checkpoint. The Sea-basin checkpoints highlighted that EMODnet is not the sole data and information component which they will consult, but that they will engage with the thematic lots as part of their work on the challenges. Both sea-basin checkpoints remain in close contact and will disseminate information jointly.

DG MARE stated that the North Sea and Mediterranean checkpoints are the pilot case studies, and that an additional Sea-basin checkpoint will be added next year to provide further geographical coverage.

Comments were made regarding the potential confusion for users with an increasing number of portals being created as new lots and checkpoints continue to be added. It was proposed that the Entry Portal should ensure that it is the principle gateway for the user to access the individual portals.

#### Session 7: EMODnet communication

The Secretariat provided background information about the planned internal and external communication activities as outlined in the Meeting Documents 7 and 10. For the purpose of selective mass mailings, the Secretariat will be establishing a contact database, and invited the thematic portals to provide a list with contact details of their partners and organization/persons potentially interested in general EMODnet information. In terms of external communication the deliverables are a leaflet, videos and a proposed event at the maritime day in Bremen, Germany in 2014 or Piraeus, Greece in 2015. The Secretariat requested feedback on the proposed communication strategy and associated activities and deliverables.

#### **Questions and Comments**

Participants discussed potential events to showcase EMODnet, including the European Maritime Day (Bremen, May 2014) and Oceanology (London, March 2014). The Secretariat welcomed the proposal for additional events to further investigate the options.

Suggestions were made to improve the draft EMODnet leaflet.

#### **Actions:**

- Establish and maintain an EMODnet central contact database with EMODnet partners and stakeholders (Secretariat, permanent)
- Provide accreditation text for the leaflet (DG MARE, *completed*)
- Provide feedback on the leaflet to the Secretariat (Thematic lots, 15/01/2014)
- Provide image/video material for use in communication products (Thematic lots, 19/02/2014)
- Investigate options to organize an EMODnet Workshop for Maritime Day in Bremen 2014 (Secretariat, 31/01/2014)

#### Session 8: Harmonization of portals

The Secretariat sketched the background to Meeting Document 11 on the harmonisation of the thematic portals/websites. Feedback and/or approval for the proposed activities is documented below (listed per sections of the document).

#### Uniform Web addresses (URL)/domain registration

Consensus by all thematic portals to standardise URL's according to the [www.emodnet-XXXXXX.eu](http://www.emodnet-XXXXXX.eu) format (with XXXX the agreed standard name for the thematic lots).



## Standard nomenclature of thematic lots

After discussion, it was agreed to use following standard terminology to identify the thematic lots in all communication, including on the websites/portals:

- Lot 1: Bathymetry
- Lot 2: Geology
- Lot 3: Seabed habitats
- Lot 4: Chemistry
- Lot 5: Biology
- Lot 6: Physics
- Lot 7: Human Activities

## Style Guide

A style guide was created as part of EMODnet Phase 1, but it was considered timely to review and update it.

## Single Sign on

It was agreed that a Single Sign On is an activity that should be addressed by the Ad Hoc Technical Working Group as a priority.

## User flow between entry and thematic portals

No general agreement to the preferred scenario's among the coordinators of the thematic portals. Discussions focused on ownership of the website, the responsible party to update the information, the user flow experience. Conclusion: each thematic portal will select their own preferred scenario (1 or 2).

## Core information requirements for the thematic portal

As the thematic lots are free to choose the user flow scenario that they want to follow, the delineation of core elements between the Entry and Thematic websites/portals will have to be determined portal per portal. The Secretariat proposed to make this topic a standing item on the Steering Committee agenda to evaluate as part of the development of the Entry Portal.

## Proposed concept design of thematic portals landing pages

Feedback focussed on the user flow process with regards to the requirement to register to obtain data. The Secretariat proposed that if registration was required this would need to be prominently indicated to the user. Discussions identified that data products were the main EMODnet deliverable for some lots and that these are freely available, whereas the underlying data may have restricted access requiring registration (Note: this is not the case for all the thematic lots). Notifications to make the user aware of the need to register may therefore vary across the various portals.

## Actions:

- Adapt the URL of the thematic portals to the agreed standard format [www.emodnet-XXXXXXX.eu](http://www.emodnet-XXXXXXX.eu) (Thematic lots, 19/02/2014)
- Use standard terminology to refer to the thematic lots on all websites/portals/documents (Thematic lots, 19/02/2014)
- Circulate the style guide for review and obtain feedback by the lots and checkpoints (Secretariat, Thematic lots and sea-basin checkpoints, 31/01/2014)



VLIZ presented the current EMODnet landing page and illustrated the current navigation menus. They asked each thematic lot to verify the partners currently listed on the landing page to ensure that the information is up to date and correct (including use of logos).

VLIZ presented an overview of the first three suggested 'use cases' to develop added-value functionality on the Entry Portal combining data from at least three thematic portals:

- **Use case 1** aims to provide the user with the possibility to obtain combined output (e.g. an Index table) from different data products for a specific geographical location.
- **Use case 2** aims to calculate a benthic index (BEQI), a biological index that can be used for Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) indicator reporting.
- **Use case 3** will focus on manipulation of coastal data collated by EMODnet although the precise approach and functionality is yet to be specified. VLIZ requested feedback or ideas to further develop this third use case.

The Steering Committee unanimously agreed to proceed with the development of the proposed use cases. Additional ideas for other use cases can be forwarded to the Entry Portal Developers (VLIZ).

To be able to deliver the envisaged functionality for the three use cases, the required data products from the thematic lot will need to be standardized up to a certain level of interoperability. To monitor this process, VLIZ proposed a rating system to identify the level of compliance towards data product interoperability based on the OneGeology system.

### ***Questions and Comments***

Questions and challenges were raised for further consideration by the Ad hoc Technical Working Group. For example, the Physics lot does not produce data products (continuous surface), but data at fixed points, which makes it less clear how their information could be integrated in some of the use cases.

A suggestion was made to deliver the outputs of use cases in a viewer (example - functionality of the sextant catalogue) rather than in an index table VLIZ would investigate the possible option of viewers and functionality. However, it was considered that most thematic portals offer viewers and it may not be a priority for the Entry Portal at this stage.

### **Actions:**

- Establish Ad Hoc Technical Working Group (VLIZ with support from Secretariat, 19/02/2014).
- Establish Ad Hoc User Group (Secretariat, 19/02/2014).
- Forward suggestions for use cases to VLIZ (Thematic lots, permanent)
- Update DG MARE website to direct EMODnet users to the entry portal landing page (DG MARE, 19/02/2014)
- Consider interoperability of data products for use case studies and report outcome to the Steering Committee (Ad hoc technical working group, 19/02/2014).

## Session 10: Social Media

As part of the Entry Portal, VLIZ has initiated social media accounts for EMODnet (facebook, linkedin, twitter). The Secretariat requested feedback from the thematic lots on the preferred procedure going forward with regards to news and other communication items. Should the information be aggregated on the entry portal? Who is the responsible party for updating the social media account? Should the news reflect wider communication on activities within the marine sector? (e.g. updates from GEBCO, OBIS etc.)

### **Questions and Comments**

Thematic lots agreed to an aggregated news section on the entry portal. Suggestions were made to link to other news releases from projects and organisations in the same sector and providing them through the entry portal to ensure a dynamic service.

### **Actions:**

- Make news section available through RSS Feed to be aggregated on the Entry Portal (Thematic lots, May 2014)
- Post items to social media accounts for thematic lots if requested (Secretariat, permanent)

## Session 11: EMODnet secretariat inauguration & Next SC meeting

The Secretariat provided an overview of the programme for the Secretariat Inauguration in February which will coincide with the MODEG meeting being held at the InnovOcean site. It was proposed to organise the next Steering Committee meeting back to back with the European Maritime Day in Bremen (19-20 May 2014).

### **Questions and Comments**

DG MARE indicated that the next meeting of MODEG after February would most likely be after June 2014. The Oceanology Conference in March in London was suggested as a potential alternative venue/data for the next Steering Committee meeting

### **Actions:**

- Investigate options to organise the next Steering Committee at the Oceanology Conference in London in March (Dick Schaap, *completed*)
- Investigate the Maritime Day in Bremen option for a workshop and SC Meeting (Secretariat, 19/02/2014)

End of Meeting