

Minutes of 9th European Marine Biological Resource Centre (EMBRC) UK Node meeting – 21st January 2016 – telephone conference call

Present:

Ian Johnston – University of St Andrews
Colin Brownlee – Marine Biological Association
Nick Pade - Marine Biological Association
Martyn Cox - Marine Scotland
Vincent Janik – University of St Andrews
David Paterson - University of St Andrews
Alistair Main – University of St Andrews

Beatrix Schlarb-Ridley – British Antarctic Survey
Axel Miller – SAMS
Claire Gachon - SAMS
Gavin Grewar - Marine Scotland

Apologies:

Colin Moffat – Marine Scotland
Mark James - MASTS
Melody Clark – British Antarctic Survey

Welcome and introduction

1. New members Vincent Janik and David Paterson (as new UK EIB representative), both St Andrews University, and Claire Gachon (SAMS) were welcomed to the UK Node. It was noted that Ian Johnston was retiring from St Andrews and would be stepping down.

Agreement for UK Node chair in light of Ian's retirement

2. It was agreed that Ian chair this meeting as he had been keeping up to date with EMBRC activities recently by direct contact with the EMBRC HQ. As the new UK Node EMBRC academic representative David Paterson was prepared to chair future meetings. It was also noted that the UK MoU required a Deputy Chair to be appointed.

ACTION: 9.1: UK Node members to comment /nominate to Marine Scotland on UK Node chair / deputy chair positions.

Minutes and review actions of last meeting

3. Minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting subject to a small change at paragraph 5 (provided by Nick Pade). The Actions were all complete or were underway and would be covered as part of the agenda.

ACTION 9.2: MC to upload minutes of 8th meeting to web site.

Feedback from 16th November EIB meeting (Bilbao)

4. The Bilbao meeting, which Colin Moffat and Ian Johnston attended, reached agreement on the budget arrangements. The final formula, after much negotiation, was based on 60% a fixed rate, 20% GDP based and 20% GDP/capita with a maximum contribution of €100,000. The proposed budget now forms an Annex to the draft statute. The UK contribution will be €88,000 per annum for the first five years, shared between the 6 partners. On this basis the EMBRC HQ budget will be €1.169M per year which although slightly smaller than initially expected was a fair reflection for the HQ spend to be proportional to the overall EMBRC Business Plan. It was anticipated that the first UK payment would be requested in F/Y 2016/17.

ACTION 9.3: to note 1st EMBRC subscription payment required in 2016/17.

5. It was also noted that

- a. the UK was taking a watching brief on the Nagoya Protocol matters.
- b. much work remained to complete the infrastructure side of the EMBRC overall structure and the EMBRC Director was aware of the need to focus on this.
- c. a workshop was planned for Faro (early February) to study how to implement the Full Economic Cost model as part of the EMBRC initiative. Nick Pade was attending and happy to take questions on behalf of UK Node members. The full agenda for Faro was not expected until post Eilat meeting.

ACTION 9.4: UK Node members to pass Nick Pade any questions on FEC model by 2nd February..

ACTION 9.5: Nick Pade to report back on Faro meeting.

INFRAIA application and INFRADEV3 possibility

6. The bid to the potential €10M INFRAIA fund had a closing date of 31st March 2016. It was intended to cover all European marine stations, but it was envisaged that EMBRC would have a lead role. In addition to EMBRC partners marine institutes from Poland, Finland, Ireland and Sweden and the MARS network of marine stations had been invited to join the application. The Committee of Nodes had been scoring the various bids for Joint Research Activities from across EMBRC partners and a meeting in Lisbon had identified 4 or 5 themes to be taken forward. IAJ expressed concern that the application lacked strategic focus with a large number of partners each receiving relatively little money which might make it hard to deliver value for money on the overall €10 million programme. It was also apparent that EMBRC needs to develop other streams of income for access to supplement INFRAIA, particularly private sector users. Private sector users are likely to have a focus on large scale facilities. The Director of EMBRC has been made aware of the UK view on these issues.
7. There was also concern expressed that there was very little time left to complete the application by the 31st March deadline. It was noted that Colin Brownlee was part of the application writing team.
8. As for UK facilities being offered for the INFRAIA application, it was necessary for the documents requested by EMBRC HQ to be completed by each institution to identify the necessary infrastructure on offer. It would also be beneficial for there to be a UK wide inventory held by the UK Partners (potentially on the UK EMBRC web page) so that use of each other's facilities could be maximised.
9. The possibility of making an **INFRADEV3 application** for Long-term sustainability of the Infrastructure had emerged only recently and its closing date was also in March 2016. Since EMBRC has not completed the ERIC process it is not clear whether it will be eligible to apply. It was hoped to have clarification on the eligibility of EMBRC by the time of the Eilat meeting, though initial indications suggest that the ERIC is not a prerequisite for applying, but it must be in place by the start of the project. It was recognised that people in the UK would need to

take their share of any work to develop a robust and competitive application were it to go ahead.

10. Gavin reported that Spain & France were currently working on a proposal for under H2020 “Integrating Activities for Advanced Communities”, to explore quality certifications among EMBRC members with the scope to eventually work on an EMBRC-wide quality management system. First thoughts were to map existing systems; map similar initiatives in other Ris (e.g BBMRI); identify best practice and produce recommendations for stations pursuing a QMS. Plan may also be to implement a QMS within the EMBRC core activities (project office initially). MSS was asked to feed into this as we’ve got experience of this in research. There has also been some discussion lately around a more ambitious activity under INFRADEV-3.

ACTION 9.6: All to pass EMBRC list of facilities to both EMBRC and to David Paterson and Axel Miller. Consider adding inventory to EMBRC web page in due course.

EMBRC 12th EIB meeting (Eilat 26-27th January)

11. A draft agenda for the meeting had been circulated but there weren’t any papers yet. It was noted that day one would cover:

- a. **EMBRC chair** - there was a single nomination. The UK would support the nomination.
- b. **Statutes** - Gavin reported that since the Statutes Working Group had wound up the matter had been dealt with by the EIB. The draft was almost finalised. Some issues about minimum time of membership (being amended from 3 to 5 years); observer status (being amended from 2 to 3 years) and how the Exec Director would work with the Committee of the Nodes, would be discussed at Eilat.

It was thought that the draft was correct in broad terms and had been seen by all legal representatives of the UK partners. There was also legal advice from the Scottish Government just available but not considered yet. It was noted that the EMBRC Statutes were much tighter than those for other ERICS and concentrated more on high level principles, leaving the detail to the rules of operation Overall it seemed to be a reasonable document.

- c. **Business Plan** - It was understood that this was having a narrative added to give it a strategic direction. This was something the UK had commented upon previously. A final draft had yet to be seen.
- d. **Final budget** – it was expected that this would be approved.

12. Day two would focus on the Work Plan for the year ahead and administrative matters. Colin Moffat would be attending for the UK. David Paterson’s appointment as the UK Academic Representative for EMBRC had been reported

to the EMBRC HQ but unfortunately David was not able to attend this meeting due to commitments made prior to his appointment.

EMBRC Committee of Nodes Actions

13. There were some action arising from the last **Committee of the Nodes** meeting that Axel brought to the Node's attention:

- a. **EMBRC centres' affiliation in H2020 calls** – there had been a request that at least for the current INFRAIA proposal that institutes in EMBRC will support only the EMBRC proposal, i.e. no EMBRC affiliated lab should be participating in a rival INFRAIA-1 consortium.
- b. **EMBRC website & related E-infrastructure** e.g. event manager. There was the capability to input information to these EMBRC facilities. The UK Node doesn't have a formal IT person and it was agreed that as the EMBRC web site allowed anyone to register to input information those who were aware of meetings etc. would publicise their own events. Martyn would place relevant items on the UK Node web page.

ACTION 9.7: David Paterson to enquire about possible communications assistance from within MASTS.

- c. **EMBRC Full Economic Cost Activities** – it was queried whether the UK Node needed a 'Head of Finance'. At the moment MASTS was dealing with the reconciliation of T&S (see below) and has been exploring the possibility for handling the UK subscription payments once collected from partners.

ACTION 9.8: David Paterson to check with Mark James re financial arrangements re subscription. Node also agreed to discuss how the 2016/17 subscription would be paid at the next meeting.

UK Node matters

14. UK Node **MoU / Agreement** – Gavin reported that based on the latest legal advice from SG only tidying up and a couple of questions from St Andrews remained before the MoU would be ready for signature.

ACTION 9.9: Gavin to finalise MoU for signature.

15. **Membership** - Plymouth University Electron Microscopy Centre(PUEMC) has joined the 'Plymouth EMBRC Cluster'. This would be a valuable addition to the facilities being offered by the UK. The MBA was meeting with the PEMC in February to discuss the nature and level of their involvement. It was agreed that as a potential beneficiary from EMBRC the PEMC was expected to contribute financially to the UK subscription. For the MoU it was confirmed that, at the moment, the MBA was the only Partner from the Plymouth cluster.

ACTION 9.10: MBA to meet with PEMC and confirm how they will be involved and contribute financially.

16. **T&S** – T&S claims should have been submitted to MASTS in December. A further reconciliation date will be agreed at the next meeting. A reconciliation of amounts due was requested to allow any adjustments to be made in the current F/Y. It was confirmed that T&S would be shared for approved EMBRC travel which covered attendance at Committee of the Nodes meetings, EIB meetings;

EMBRC working groups (with travel undertaken as economically as possible). Other meetings would be supported with prior authorisation. Other costs should be picked up through any EMBRC grants awarded etc.

ACTION 9.11: MASTS to reconcile 2015/16 T&S.

ACTION 9.12: Agree future reconciliation date at next meeting.

AOB

17. There were a few items:

- a. A formal thank you was made by all to Ian Johnston for all his hard work and commitment over the last 7 years in taking forward the EMBRC initiative and putting the UK partners in a strong position. Ian confirmed that he will remain involved in EMBRC activities in his new venture.
- b. **Work Package 3** questionnaire – had been received by Axel. Martyn was making enquiries of Defra to establish the necessary UK contacts to cover the Nagoya Protocol and Convention Biological Diversity to return to EMBRC.

ACTION 9.13: Martyn liaise with Defra and respond to Axel

- c. **INFRAIA Contacts Table and Declaration of Non-Disclosure** form – Axel had been passed these by the Committee of the Nodes. It seems that each partner institute within the UK needs to complete their contact details and have the Declaration of Non-Disclosure signed by the appropriate legal representative (usually Chief Exec level).

ACTION 9.14: Axel to circulate forms for completion and signature. Axel will reply to EMBRC as Committee of the Nodes representative.

- d. **Date of Next Meeting** – this will be arranged 'just in time' to collate views ahead of the EIB meetings once the 2016/2017 meeting programme was known – to be decided in Eilat.

ACTION 9.15: MC arrange Doodle Poll for a meeting pre next EMBRC EIB meeting.

Martyn Cox
Marine Scotland
January 2016

EMBRC Web page available on the Marine Scotland web site
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/science/EMBRC> includes a flyer that could be used to promote EMBRC.