

Minutes of 6th European Marine Biological Resource Centre (EMBRC) UK Node meeting – 21st July 2015 – telephone conference call

Present:

Ian Johnston – University of St Andrews
Mark James - MASTS
Colin Moffat – Marine Scotland
Gavin Grewar - Marine Scotland
Martyn Cox - Marine Scotland
Colin Brownlee – Marine Biological Association

Nick Pade - Marine Biological Association
Axel Miller – SAMS
Beatrix Schlarb-Ridley – British Antarctic Survey
Melody Clark – British Antarctic Survey

Apologies:

Alistair Main – University of St Andrews

Minutes (paper) and review actions of last meeting

1. Minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and Nick Pade's factual addition about the EMBRC web site noted. The Actions were all complete, in hand or to be discussed as part of the agenda, except for:
 - a. **UK Node MoU** – Gavin reported that a new version had been circulated Monday 20th July with the request for views by mid-August. It had now moved onto a legal / contractual basis and had incorporated views from the UK partners.
ACTION: All to comment on MoU
 - b. **UK Node T&S** – reminder to all to submit claims to MASTS by 25th July.
 - c. **MASTS event workshop** – Ian reported that text had been submitted to MASTS to advertise the intended workshop at which the new EMBRC Director, Ian and Colin would make presentations and lead a discussion.
 - d. **Identifying success of EMBRC** – Ian reported that the EMBRC phase 2 preparations had been successful in obtaining approx. €1M for which all members were thought to have gained benefit.
 - e. **Updating MSCC**- to be tabled at MSCC September meeting.

ACTION: MC to upload minutes of 5th meeting to web site.

ACTION: MC submits short update to MSCC on EMBRC progress in September.

Update from Implementation Board (Edinburgh 13th July)

2. Ian reported that the Edinburgh meeting had been successful and concentrated on the two key aspects of the ASSEMBLE+ application and the infrastructure contribution to be made to the ERIC by the various members.
3. Two views of the vision for the ERIC seemed to be emerging with one quite focused and concentrating on the member institutions with the other very wide spread and being inclusive of all marine institutions in a member state. There was a consensus amongst UK partners that the more focused model was what was more likely to be successful in gaining recognition from the EU and effort was needed to influence this outcome through the work of the Business Planning working group. It was becoming clear that some countries had yet to consider the details as to how the ERIC would operate at a practical level. It was also recognised that industrial partners would play a key role in future although take

time to build up and how, for example, samples could be sourced for them had to be carefully thought through and presented.

4. Nick reported that Ian's presentation of the UK contribution has been very professional and focussed.
5. In light of Ian, Colin and Nick's feedback, there was also a discussion about the nature of the EIB meetings and their organisation. A more strategic focus was required to facilitate decision making and consideration should be given to a central venue to ease traveling for all. It was agreed that the UK would make such suggestions to the new Director. It seems that the Bergen meeting (was due in September) will not now go ahead, as Norway was currently revising its domestic EMBRC bid. The Secretariat is thought to favour the next meeting being held in October.
6. For the ASSEMBLE+ application, for which the key period would be the writing between now and the March 2016 submission deadline, it was agreed that Ian and Colin (Brownlee) would contribute to the writing and the group to be established under the chair of the new EMBRC Director. Ian and Colin would draw in other UK Node members with specific writing tasks for their particular interests. It was important that all members should be eventual beneficiaries of the application. There would be three key elements to the work: guiding a robust application; the political dimension; and providing text for the actual application forms. As yet there wasn't a decision as to whether EMBRC would employ professional assistance with the application.
ACTION: IJ and C Br to take forward ASSEMBLE+ application.
7. It was agreed that Axel, with assistance from Nick, would act as the UK Node representative to support the new EMBRC Director once in post.
ACTION: AM to act as UK Node representative with NP in support.
ACTION: IJ contact RM to advise of names for ASSEMBLE+ application and UK Node Representative. DONE
8. On other matters from the EIB meeting:
 - a. There wasn't any progress to report on the EMBRC budget yet. It was anticipated that the EMBRC October meeting would have a budget to consider, which would identify a first level of subscription. It was thought that an initial subscription for 2016/17 would move to a full subscription for 2017/18.
 - b. It was noted that the current chair, Ricardo Migueis was standing down and nominations had been invited for a successor. Clarification was needed of the process to elect the chair and the UK Node would hold off-line discussions on whether it would make any nominations.
 - c. As a result of the EIB discussion, the nature of the UK signature at stage 1 was also discussed, given there were two stages to the ERIC application. It was understood that when the initial application (stage 1) was submitted to the EU in late 2015 it would be an electronic submission by the host country without any MS signatures. Following feedback from the EU during

2016 a stage 2 formal request would be made to the Commission. At this stage the UK partners would need to satisfy themselves that they wanted to continue in the process and a signature would be required. It would be helpful for Nick to seek feedback from other UK bodies involved in an ERIC at the September 4th STFC arranged meeting so that EMBRC UK Node can learn from other UK experience in the ERIC process. At this stage it was agreed we thought that the EMBRC initiative was going in the right direction.

AOB

9. A couple of points were discussed:

a. The MBA had recently met with the other marine institutes based in Plymouth to appraise them of EMBRC progress and discuss their involvement. The concept of the groups in Plymouth being considered as 'one partner' under the management of the MBA was being discussed; the UK Node was happy with this idea of inclusiveness. The MBA has asked for statements of intent, details of intended active participation and the nature of the infrastructure to be offered, with an emphasis on a focussed contribution, to be made by early September. There was the possibility that this one partner may offer a larger share of the subscription, the implications of which would need further discussion. In answer to a query it was confirmed that the Scottish Government would be making a subscription contribution.

b. Next meeting

ACTION: MC to cancel meeting proposed for end August (pre Bergen meeting which is not now going ahead)

ACTION: MC arrange Doodle Poll for a meeting pre w/c 6th October pre the 13th October EIB meeting.

Martyn Cox
Marine Scotland
July 2015

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