

**Minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> European Marine Biological Resource Centre (EMBRC) UK  
Node meeting – Liaison Officer Role discussion - 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016 –  
telephone conference call**

**Present:**

David Paterson - University of St Andrews  
Colin Moffat – Marine Scotland  
Martyn Cox - Marine Scotland

Axel Miller – SAMS  
Melody Clark – British Antarctic Survey

**Apologies:**

Mark James - MASTS  
Ian Johnston – University of St Andrews  
Alistair Main – University of St Andrews  
Vincent Janik – University of St Andrews  
Colin Brownlee – Marine Biological  
Association

Nick Pade - Marine Biological Association  
Beatrix Schlarb-Ridley – British Antarctic  
Survey  
Claire Gachon - SAMS  
Gavin Grewar - Marine Scotland

**Purpose of meeting**

1. The purpose of the telephone conference call was to discuss the role of the Liaison Officer (LO) that had been identified by the Committee of the Nodes (CoN). The CoN meeting minutes of 28<sup>th</sup> January had outlined the key tasks and stated that the ERIC team would draft Terms of Reference by April 15<sup>th</sup> and requested the nomination for an EMBRC Liaison Officer in each country also by 15<sup>th</sup> April.
2. David Paterson chaired the meeting.

**Discussion**

3. It was agreed that the CoN had identified a significant role and not one for which a need had been identified amongst the UK partners previously nor any budget provision made. It was (i) noted that unfortunately the UK had not been represented at the CoN meeting in Israel so had not yet input to the discussion on this post; and (ii) the role of LO had not been raised at the EIB meeting in Israel that was held immediately before the CoN meeting.
4. It was agreed that we needed to identify where we thought value can be added by having an LO and nominating someone to undertake it. The UK Node would write to the EMBRC Executive outlining our position.
5. The various duties as identified by the CoN were considered:
  - a. Commercial agents for the EMBRC Node and EMBRC EU –Partners were aware that EMBRC expected industry to become involved in future activities but any liaison or commercial negotiations were expected to be handled by contracts' officers already employed by their organisations. It was not clear what value a specific EMBRC LO would bring.
  - b. Writing up the offer responding to a user's request – UK partners agreed that this was for the research station themselves, as expert on the particular facility, to write up rather than a broader role LO. Many have already identified a person within their organization to undertake this role.

The LO could act as a conduit between the Node partners and the applicant but it was not considered a full job.

- c. Responsible to the Director of the Node and the EMBRC Executive Director – it was agreed that any LO should only be responsible to the Node Director and not two Directors. The UK LO would be responsible to the UK Node chair that linked to EMBRC Executive Director via the two UK (science and government) representatives, of which the UK chair was one.
- d. Support the functioning of the Node's services – it was agreed that without further clarification, this task was not clear.
- e. Support the EMBRC Executive Director in retrieving information about the specificity of the nodes and operators, to appropriately represent EMBRC – it was agreed that the majority of this role, particularly retrieving information, has already been undertaken by various form filling to populate the central database of available infrastructure and services. Whilst it was reasonable to provide EMBRC HQ with further information this could easily be collated via the UK CoN representative.
- f. Provide support in writing proposals which may have specificity to the nodes location and/or technological specialization – it was agreed that there were already people identified in the various organizations who undertake this type of role. There wasn't a need for additional resource. The UK Node can be contacted by the National Contact Point, the CoN representative.
- g. Update and review the inventory of the EMBRC Service offer – this was agreed as being a duplicate of (e). If any further information from the UK Node was necessary then the CoN representative would be able to provide / organize it.
- h. Convene with other liaison officers to define the ontology of data and data standards – it was agreed that this was making too much of the LO role. The ontology of data, as well as the standards, should be defined in the EMBRC Data Management Plan. The level of expertise required to do this is significant and should not be the role of the LO.
- i. Send press releases to HQ, photos, information to animate the social communication activity of EMBRC – it was noted that all partners already have their own press officers / offices who would deal with any matters directly related to their organizations and include the EMBRC office should it be appropriate to do so e.g. funding from EMBRC. There may be a part role for a LO where a matter was cross-organization.
- j. Participate in projects representing EMBRC – the LO undertaking this role had the potential to be useful but there were already sufficient people involved for the scale of what was being achieved and the funding

available. The UK CoN Representative could act as a conduit as necessary.

6. In summary, the UK partners agreed that a full time post had not been justified to date and there would be a potential difficulty in funding such a post. The duties that were seen as necessary / critical for EMBRC success in the UK could be undertaken by the CoN representative with some assistance (although EMBRC had yet to agree Terms of Reference for the CoN Rep) and as such Axel Miller was prepared to do this on a trial basis. Marine Scotland and MASTS were prepared to offer Axel support to ensure that the duties, once defined could be delivered effectively. It was important to ensure the role was carefully defined.
7. It was also agreed that David Paterson would respond to the EMBRC secretariat (c.c.'d to Axel as CoN Rep) stating the UK position and nominating Axel. The UK's reservations about the Liaison Officer role would be raised at the next EIB to ensure that any Terms of Reference were at an appropriate level.

**ACTION: 10.1.** DP to respond to the EMBRC secretariat stating the UK position and nominating Axel Miller (SAMS).

8. The next EIB meetings were scheduled for 25/26<sup>th</sup> May and 20<sup>th</sup> September

Martyn Cox  
Marine Scotland  
March 2016