

Minutes of 3rd European Marine Biological Resource Centre (EMBRC) UK Node meeting – 30th January 2015 – telephone conference call

Present:

Ian Johnston – University of St Andrews
Mark James - MASTS
Alistair Main – University of St Andrews
Axel Miller – SAMS
Francis Neat - Marine Scotland
Gavin Grewar - Marine Scotland

Colin Brownlee – Marine Biological Association
Nick Pade - Marine Biological Association
Martyn Cox - Marine Scotland
Beatrix Schlarb-Ridley – British Antarctic Survey
Melody Clark – British Antarctic Survey

Apologies:

Colin Moffat – Marine Scotland
Paula Lister SAMS
Andrew Brown - Marine Scotland

Update from EMBRC EIM Board meeting 27 January (Paris)

1. Ian Johnston (IJ) provided an update on the EMBRC Implementation Board (IB) meeting. The main items were:
2. Management update –
 - a. the new EMBRC web site had been launched as well as a training portal which listed all the Masters courses and PhDs across Europe. It was the intention that this was developed further.
 - b. INFRADEV4 bid – the result had not been known on Monday. The results were announced on Wednesday and EMBRC had success in 2 applications. UK partners will benefit from €2.054 million plus the opportunity to bid into the €1 million pilot access fund from the ~ €9 million EMBRC-led proposal to cluster research infrastructures (RIs) in marine biotechnology and aquaculture. All 6 EMBRC-UK partners will receive funds plus members of ELIXIR and MIRRI based in the UK. In addition, SAMS, MBA and St Andrews were part of the successful proposal to cluster environmental RIs.
3. Timetable for next steps
 - a. INFRADEV 2 fund was for Research Infrastructures (RIs) passed the preparatory stage but not yet ready to be an ERIC. It had been suggested to EMBRC that given the recent new MoU signatories (Spain, Israel, and Norway) there was scope to apply despite EMBRC considering itself passed this stage. An application by April would not affect the ERIC timetable.
 - b. ERIC timetable – the first stage should be completed by June 2015 with the need for a simple document along the lines of the existing MoU. It has been agreed to complete the formal ERIC process by end 2016.
4. Report on Exec Director – IJ was on the selection committee. From 27 applications, a short-list of 6 has been invited to interview on 2nd/3rd March.
5. Assessment of Implementation – the update had to be submitted to the Commission by 30th January. EMBRC IB saw a draft after the meeting although it had been seen by various working groups. It basically summarised progress of

the EMBRC process to date and the intention to stay on the European Road Map. There was a lack of clarity as to whether the EMBRC UK Node needed to be included in the UK ESFRI Road Map or not. It was not clear if a deadline for submission of UK forms to BBSRC by 1st February was needed to place EMBRC on the UK Road Map. One form had been submitted but the 2nd could not be obtained to complete. An initial BBSRC reply suggested it was for new projects not ongoing ones.

ACTION: Nick Pade will speak to Gabriela Pastori at BBSRC to clarify the position and report back.

6. Colin Brownlee (CB) reported that there had been a UK Large Scale Facilities Road Map submission although nothing further had been heard. He also reported that the MBA had been involved in the NERC National Capabilities Exercise in which EMBRC had been mentioned, so there was an awareness of EMBRC within UK.
7. The next EMBRC IB was due on 3rd March (pm) (Paris) after the Director interviews and then again in late April / early May (Lisbon).
8. As EMBRC develops towards the ERIC, the UK will need to nominate one government representative and one science representative, currently roles undertaken by Colin Moffat and Ian Johnston. This will be in the gift of the MoU signatory. There will also be a Committee to support the Exec Director (needed by late summer 2015?) for which the UK Node partners will need to nominate a representative. A nomination and voting process was envisaged for this.
9. In summary, EMBRC was going well so far. There was good progress so far, and an early financial success for the UK.

Update on Working Groups

Business Planning Working Group (1)

10. CB reported that the WG hadn't met and there wasn't a date set. However, on the basis of progress at the recent IB meeting, it was expected the WG would gather momentum soon.

Statutes and Governance Working Group (2)

11. Francis Neat (FN) reported that Gavin Grewar (GG) (Marine Scotland) had agreed to be involved in this WG and brings relevant statutes / governance experience. The WG also had identified a new Chair who had previous ERIC experience. There were no updates on the WG but GG had been in contact with Peter Fletcher (STFC) to identify other UK ERIC contacts from which we may be able to learn from their experience. It was agreed we need to raise awareness of the EMBRC UK work and also to support the STFC idea for a UK ESFRI process workshop.

ACTION: GG to maintain contact with STFC and make other contacts.

Host Country Working Group (3)

12. This was now disbanded. The UK will have to identify representative for the Governance Board in due course.

UK Node MoU

13. Alistair Main (AM) had circulated an initial MoU drafted by the University of St Andrews solicitors to start off the process. There hadn't been any prior agreement with the members of the UK Node to the exact terms to be included so these remained to be discussed. It was agreed:

- a. that as Scottish Government was signing the EMBRC document, it would, through Marine Scotland, develop the UK partners MoU.
- b. there were a number of comments by current partners, for example, the unlimited liability issue, and these would be passed to MC.
- c. SG (MS) would also confirm for partners' benefit that BIS had agreed to SG leading for the UK.
- d. the purpose of the MoU was to provide a framework to decide how the UK Partners operate within the ERIC. There would be a subscription (about €80-100 paid to EMBRC HQ in Paris), once a proper EMBRC Business Plan was in place, so the MoU needed to allow for its payment.
- e. At MC's request, all institutes agreed that there should be provision in the MoU (as currently drafted) for the sharing of T&S to ensure that the UK Node operated on an equal basis. Many institutes could not make payments for such scenarios unless there was an MoU in place.
- f. It was anticipated that the MoU was needed by June 2015.

ACTION: those with comments on draft MoU to pass to MC.

ACTION: Marine Scotland to take forward drafting of a suitable MoU and liaise with other ERIC partnerships for suitable material.

ACTION: Marine Scotland to confirm about BIS position on SG lead.

ACTION: Mark James to forward MC a sample EU consortium agreements.

Communications

14. The MBA will arrange with EMBRC Paris HQ (Judith Fuchs) that all EMBRC general communications will be sent to Nick Pade (MBA). NP will set up a generic EMBRC UK mailbox at MBA. IB papers will continue to go direct to IB members of course.

15. It was agreed to use this meeting circulation list as Nick's UK circulation list. Axel confirmed he will be single point of contact for SAMS.

16. It was also recognised that we needed internal communications within our organisations to maximise the benefits from EMBRC.

17. It was agreed that holding an EMBRC UK session at the 2015 MASTS Annual Science meeting (ASM) (Technology & Innovation Centre, Glasgow: 30 Sept – 2 Oct) was a good idea. It was also noted that it was up to the UK Node to determine how it would operate. It was noted that there were a range of models

across Europe so far. The French EMBRC Node consisting of 2 institutions, whilst in Norway it was 8. There were six in the UK.

ACTION: NP set up mailbox.

ACTION: All consider appropriate internal communications.

ACTION: MJ to confirm EMBRC Workshop within the MASTS ASM Programme

Identifying success of EMBRC

18. There was a need to develop metrics to evaluate the success of the EMBRC ERIC and show value for money. It was agreed that this would be an agenda item at each meeting and brief details of all **direct** (e.g. INFRADEV 4) and **indirect** (e.g. where being part of EMBRC was used in a grant application to support it) would be passed to MC. A list would be developed that we could review to determine if any more was necessary.

ACTION: All to pass MC details of any successful EMBRC associated applications

Updating MSCC - update for March 2015 meeting

19. A paper was being submitted to MSCC secretariat next week for the MSCC March meeting.

ACTION: MC submit short update to MSCC on EMBRC progress.

AOB

20. A few points:

- a. NP reported on a recent Biological and Medical Science RI meeting he attended.

ACTION: NP to circulate notes.

- b. It was noted there was much EMBRC UK activity that was covered by the BBSRC rather than NERC e.g. aquaculture and marine biotechnology.

- c. Next meeting will be in early May 2015 (avoiding a Friday).

ACTION: Doodle Poll to be circulated.

Martyn Cox
Marine Scotland
February 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.