

**Minutes of 21<sup>st</sup> European Marine Biological Resource Centre (EMBRC) UK  
Node meeting – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019 – Marine Scotland Laboratory**

**Present:**

**Nick Owens** (NO), Scottish Association  
for Marine Science (SAMS) (Chair)

**Jon Parr** (JP) – Marine Biological  
Association (MBA)

**David Paterson** (DP) - USTAN /  
MASTS

**Gavin Grewar** (GG) - MS

**Andronikos Kafas** (AK) – MS

**Ian Davies** (ID) – (Vice chair) MS

**Ollie Payne** (OP) - BEIS Brexit item  
only

**Emma Harding** (EH) - BEIS

**Anuschka Miller** (AnM)– SAMS  
(Comms Group chair)

**Apologise**

**Melody Clark** (MCK) - BAS

**Claire Gachon** (CG) - SAMS

**Martyn Cox** (MCx) - Marine Scotland  
(MS)

**Beatrix Schlarb-Ridley** (BSR) – British  
Antarctic Survey (BAS)

1) Minutes and actions from EMBRC-UK 20<sup>th</sup> meeting – NO

Minutes approved, update on actions below:

**ACTION: 17.1:** External funding and resources - map of funding opportunities – this had been raised at November's General Assembly. DP reported that a document was to be prepared in due course. In the absence of any central funding map it was noted that opportunities were raised at the CoN meetings.

- Discussed in Powerpoint below

**ACTION 20.01:** now **Business as Usual**

**ACTION 19.01:** Node email address [info@embrc.uk](mailto:info@embrc.uk) now running **Business as Usual**

**ACTION 19.02:** Plymouth University Dive Centre JP will make investigations about what the PUDC might have to offer. **C/F. – No progress ongoing discussions as below**

**ACTION: 17.3:** WW to contact Plymouth University to check nature of association with MBA for applications and involvement with EMBRC. **C/F. – No progress ongoing discussions NO in Plymouth shortly and may be able to offer assistance.**

**ACTION 17.9:** Discussed in Powerpoint below

**ACTION 19.04:** Draft Rules of Operation (RoO) – Updated draft by ID, he suggested circulating to the node before general assembly for comments. Not to be circulated to the partners lawyers until after general assembly.

**ACTION 20.02:** AK to obtain copy of the current draft RoO for circulation to the Node for comment as appropriate. See above.

**ACTION 20.03:** MCx to arrange upload of minutes of last meeting to web site. – go ahead now minutes are approved

**ACTION 20.04:** Discussed in Powerpoint below

**ACTION 20.05:** GG to draft a letter that all can sign in Aberdeen to cover a one year extension. Letter now prepared GG to circulate and all partners to sign by the end of the year.

**ACTION 20.06:** DP to reconcile T&S with all partners. Most recent claim in progress. (Bi-Annually Jul/Dec) T&S to be submitted ahead of the end of this year 2019.

**ACTION 20.07:**

- a. EMBRC-UK metadata and biobank database – See Action 14.14 – agreed to keep on agenda. Nothing to discuss at this meeting. Best practice guidelines were in development.

2) Context setting – AK – See presentation.

EMBRC-UK limited strategic direction due to a lack of ownership, from the top (UK Node Steering Committee Meeting) down to the technician operating the specific scientific service. We have big ambitions, but little to no resource. This mismatch puts us in an awkward position given BREXIT. As the rest of the EU may not chose to work with us as we are not proactive, and putting in minimal action but expecting a lot in return. We need to set aside our short term gains for the long term gains. The risk of lack of involvement is high, as the other nodes are building momentum and will leave us behind if we do not engage.

AK to ask a lot of questions, not expecting answers immediately but expecting a timeline for responses. These are from his understanding of the current situation and he is happy to take feedback and comments.

AK gave an overview of the large amount of his time committed to EMBRC. Liaison and delivery is key, but we are reaching a point where a full time member of staff may be required to meet this resource requirement.

3) CoN14 meeting update – AK - See Presentation.

Held in Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Heraklion, Crete, Greece. HQ and all Nodes present.

EMBRC-HQ Communication Officer currently under recruitment.

AK suggested a mitigation strategy if 4<sup>th</sup> round of recruitment fails. Nicolas suggested paying an organisation to do the business critical items until an Officer can be employed.

JP how do we interact with HQ and the infrastructure if we do not have guidance or an Officer in place? AK suggested dissemination through the main HQ EU website, and communication with national resources through our national website. Discussed later in the meeting in Exercise 2.

**Prospective Projects** – AK disseminated upcoming projects to the group. ID – now that we have visibility of these projects, what do we do with these projects? SAMS and MBA have some interest in bioprospecting but not core. More interested in the outcomes of the project rather than the ground work. Liaison Officer can put SAMS and MBA in touch with the project if interested, suggesting a contact could be added to prospective projects section if individual components are interested. This is highlighting the resource issue, for the UK Liaison Officer to keep an eye out and disseminate this would require a full time resource, and so we need to work smart with limited resource. Again the risk of BREXIT means you may apply for these funds but you may not receive the funds.

EMBRC-FR applied for a project as a group, could EMBRC-UK could apply with one or more members of the institutions using the EMBRC-UK badge to increase the likelihood of success?

**ACTION 20.8** – AK to put NO and Bernard into an email in regards FNR-11-2020

**ACTION 20.9** – NO to discuss MC RISE with Nicolas and give an update at the next meeting of any progress.

### **EMBRC Scientific Strategy 2020-23**

Lobbying from Greece and France has helped to add Bioprospecting and Genomic Observatories to the overall EU strategy. We as a node could improve upon our lobbying if there are areas of research we are particularly interested in. We as a node need to be better prepared to input into these Strategies.

**H2020 INFRADEV III 2019 EMERGE Update** – denied, looking for dreams we sold a reality, arising issues, how do we deal with the data created through our activities? who owns the data?

### **Other items**

E-Infrastructures Working Group to discuss this issue – JP might have a resource who is interested.

Technology Transfer Network – Portugal – Someone actively seeking industry clients to transfer outcomes of research to industry.

External Facing International Concurrent events to show off the UK node services to industry.

Public Facing presentations or workshops to communicate the services of EMBRC at conferences. Lack of funding to progress properly.

We should be proactive in understanding collaborative projects/communities and decide if we are interested in getting involved. Should EMBRC get involved with DISSCO (network of Museums sharing access and processes)? No specific actions but watch this space and see what might happen in the future from HQ as they have defined certain communities which they wish to create MoUs with.

HQ proposing funding a workshop or stand at the European Marine Biological Seminar.

Do we want to send someone to one of the WGs?

Are there events we want to attend?

#### 4) (10:00) BEIS & ERIC group update – Ollie Payne and Emma Hardy

No issues from BREXIT on EMBRC, everything is in place for us to continue involvement in EMBRC given the political uncertainty.

AK – Funding for research infrastructures availability landscape

No one pot funding infrastructures, following the Infrastructure Report published last week, how to you fund and support them moving forward given the uncertainty of the political climate. More thinking required UKRI has already begun this exercise. Ollie keen to hear if there are any challenges he can escalated to an ERIC level. Emma will now support EMBRC going forward, with Emma as a main point of contact.

ID – EMBRC has had no funding through UKRI. Is UKRI keen to fund EMBRC or other ERICs?

Look carefully at the Infrastructure Report in particularly the capabilities where UKRI can help. UKRI somewhat risk adverse given the political climate. But UK Gov targets keen to encourage funding to UK Science and Research.

NO – At some point in the future, is there any likelihood of new schemes emerging for us to apply to for funding?

Unknown if there will be any new schemes with UKRI. Ollie recommends discussing directly with them, and through NERC and relevant ERIC leads.

NO – Is there any likelihood of being an ERIC will provide future benefits to us in the future relationship with the EU.

The relationship with the EU through ERICs does seem to be important as they are specifically mentioned in the government's proposal documents regarding the future EU relationship.

AK – would you prefer a more frequent high level overview from EMBRC or is through the ERIC sufficient?

Yes, open to more frequent updates and open to continuing involvement in meetings such as these. Or another format if preferred?

Out coming Questions: Competitive tender at ERIC level for funding through UKRI? Is EMBRC-UK capable of competing for a tender as it is not a legal entity? Potentially a consortium could apply such as MASTS. Questionnaire regarding the Infrastructure Report with clear missing items.

#### 5) EMBRC Access workshop – AK see presentation

Purpose of the “Access” document – “manual” to coordinate access to EMBRC services by 29 operators in 9 countries.

Adopt principles and guidelines for access and related services by the European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures for ERICs at European Commission Level.

Legal Resource required to review contracts. Need of a comparison between current contracts and the new template EMBRC contracts.

**ACTION 21.0** Organise the next meetings Virtual meeting Jan/Feb & June London UK Node Meeting with BEIS/UKRI to discuss funding opportunities.

- 6) GA5 documents (Draft SLAs and RoOs) – ID
- 7) Signature of MoU extension – GG
- 8) Plenary discussion and future of the node – All – See the presentation.

Structure of the Node review began in July '19 now Nov '19, limited responses.

National Level Responsibilities: Internal coordination, strategic direction, Dissemination of requests from ERIC and reporting to ERIC.

AK tried to discuss with UKRI and had do response over several attempts over the last month.

**ACTION 21.1** MSS and BAS representation to the Comms subgroup

**ACTION 21.2** All Organisations, Local access officers need to be defined and increased internal communication within organisations.

AK gave a comprehensive reviewed other National Nodes to show potential options for the structure of EMBRC-UK.

AK also encouraged members to further contribute to the UK service offer. Struggled to get complete responses from individual institutions. Ideally underutilised resources which could be better used.

**ACTION 21.3** Request staff to finish compiling the service officer for each institution, by filling out the spreadsheet from HQ. AK to send the spreadsheet to each institution lead, plus the job description of the local access officer, and get Institute Leads and Local Access Officers report on KPIs as defined by HQ. Define who is the target market for EMBRC, AK to communicate with AM.

**ACTION 21.4** ID GA Rep to seek clarification of KPIs at the GA.

**ACTION 21.5** AK to Email organisations to identify any resource available to help split the burden of AKs current role.

**ACTION 21.6** AK to Populate Risk Register by the 9<sup>th</sup> of December.

Success of EMBRC looks like an expansion and increased uptake of the offerings.

Do we include new parties and expand to include potential training events?

**ACTION 21.7** AK to respond to BEIS with outcomes, prior to doing so he is to check with all partners.

9) AOB

- T&S Reconciliation
- EMBRC-UK metadata and biobank database
- Date of Next Meeting