



MARITIME FORUM

Eleventh meeting of Marine Observation and Data Expert Group

Event date:
30/11/2010 - 09:00

This was the eleventh meeting of the Marine Observation and Data Expert Group and the first since the membership renewal.

The meeting was attended by Audrey Baconnais-Rosez, Vittorio Barale, Jean-Marie Beckers, Sükrü Besiktepe, Antonio Bode, Jean-François Bourillet, Trine Christiansen, Simon Claus, David Connor, Hans Dahlin, Gerben de Boer, Raf Deroo, Yves Desaubies, Nic Flemming, Juliusz Gajewski, Lars Hansen, Neil Holdsworth, David Hydes, Joni Kaitaranta, Gaëlle Le Bouler, Abigail McQuatters Gollop, Cherith Moses, Lesley Rickards, Waddah Saab, Dick Schaap, Angela Schäfer, Iain Shepherd, Stefania Sparnocchia, Terje Thorsnes, and Vasilis Valavanis

Procedure

The membership of the Group had been renewed after the previous meeting so DG-MARE summarised the rules and procedures of the Group. The essential points are that:

1. The group is independent. Members are not mouthpieces for the organisations they belong to.
2. The meetings are open. The minutes will be published on the web and include the opinions and comments of individual members. However comments will not be attributed to individual Members.
3. Belonging to an organisation that participates in Commission projects under the integrated maritime policy will not exclude a member from participating in a discussion. However any interests in a particular subject should be disclosed.
4. Background documents should be distributed in a reasonable time before the meeting.

The Group nominated Franciscus Colijn as chairman. He was not presented at the meeting but was contacted by telephone and accepted the post.

In his absence the meeting was chaired by Hans Dahlin.

Progress of ur-EMODnet

Hydrography

1. MODEG considered that the project was proceeding satisfactorily. Particular issues raised were;
2. 500 metres is very coarse. There is definitely a need for higher resolution - particularly on the

continental shelf. The state of the art is ten to twenty metres in the deep ocean and one metre in coastal regions.

3. It is useful to have contours.
4. The quality assurance procedures are sound but need to be more visible through the portal.
5. The maps should include a longitude-latitude grid
6. The boundary between datasets is visible.

DG MARE said that local authorities had indicated that they collect much data for new developments or the construction of coastal defences and would be happy to make these data available provided that a safe repository could be found and that the handover could be made simple. DG MARE will look at this aspect carefully when assessing the project.

Provided that the budget allocated to the new Financial Regulation for maritime policy is adequate, the next stage would be to develop higher resolution digital terrain models. The sea-basin chosen and the target resolution will depend on the outcome of the inventory of surveys and data that is currently underway.

Moves are ongoing to develop a more structured dialogue between the Commission and national hydrographic offices through the International Hydrographic Office.

Geology

MODEG considered that the thematic assembly group for geology was moving in the right direction. In particular the compatibility with the OneGeology Europe project was considered extremely useful. The portal is promising but much needs to be done:

So far only data on sediments are available. Data on sea-floor geology (age, lithology, origin), boundaries and faults, rate of coastal erosion or sedimentation, geological events and event probabilities (landslides, volcanic, earthquake epicentres), seismic profiles, minerals (including aggregates, oil and gas) still needs to be included.

The portal was tested:

On-line instructions.	Yes
Viewing a catalogue of the data.	Yes
Querying of data (INSPIRE).	Yes
On-line capability to view the position and magnitude of data.	yes
Downloading.	no - only one available format (Google) but does not work
Understanding of the precision of the data and how it has been processed.	Not yet
Users to receive feedback on queries sent by e-mail.	no. Contact is "undefined"
Links to other relevant web-sites (on measurements, standards, similar projects etc)	no link to other EModnet lots but layers of OneGeologyEurope are available

Aspects that could be improved were:

1. A portal that is more compatible with then other lots
2. More data layers - in particular "rate of sedimentation" and "geological events"
3. easier downloading of data
4. Name of the domain "emodnet-geology.eu" rather than <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/emodnet/> [2]
5. better coverage of the Celtic Sea

In a follow-up project the following issues could be dealt with:

1. improved links between Emodnet-Geology project and GeoSeas project (specially or the seismic

- profiles and the samples)
- 2. extended coverage of areas such as Western Mediterranean Sea or Baltic Sea
- 3. improved links between data (samples or profiles) and products
- 4. improved accuracy for areas of high scientific or commercial interest such as the coastal or continental shelf.

Chemistry

It has become apparent that assembling and disseminating information on chemical contaminants in the water column, sediments and biota is extremely challenging. Nevertheless the partnership has made good progress. A number of comments were made.

1. More attention needs to be given to separating precision and accuracy from spatial and temporal variability.
2. The density of sampling and the large variation in concentrations between locations that are close geographically means that contour maps should be treated with great caution.
3. The approach of pre-preparing maps, rather than assembling them from source data in response to user requests should be rethought. If not in this project then at least in the next one.
4. The Commission should promote the role of National Oceanographic Data Centres in order to ensure quality of data collection and processing.
5. Understanding chemical concentrations requires an understanding of other parameters such as salinity and temperature.
6. The portal is delicate. It needs to be robust.
7. A repository of documents describing the data and quality assurance procedures should be available through the portal. The biological portal is better in this respect.
8. The work of an ICES working group on data quality has been taken into account. This should be reported.
9. Cooperation with the web-mapping service of HELCOM should be assured in order to avoid doing the same work twice.
10. Users need to understand the ultimate source of the data
11. efforts should be made to obtain data held by Black sea Commission

Biology

The portal has some useful features including the ability to drill down through options to find the species of interest.

Again there were some comments about the lack of fisheries data. However, as was indicated the previous day, there is a medium-term objective of aligning the Data Collection Regulation with the European Marine Observation and Data Network. For the moment though we need to avoid the suspicion that we are funding the same activity twice.

There is some room for improvement in the portal. As with the other portals, it is essential to mark the precision of data and signal their origin. Most users thought it would be easier to include the maps and metadata in separate windows rather than trying to squeeze them into one.

Physical Habitats

The project team have made excellent progress on this challenging project.

MODEG remarked that alternative data sources in the Baltic might be more accurate than the ones used. DG-MARE replied that with a limited budget and tight deadlines, it is impossible to track down and stitch

together the best possible data for any given job. Instead datasets are favoured that are easy to access and complete over the sea-basin. This is exactly the challenge that real life researchers and private companies are faced with and one that the whole marine knowledge 2020 initiative is squarely aimed at.

The ability to import data layers from other portals was felt to be useful. Presentation of the legend could be improved. It is clearly beyond the capabilities of the human eye to decipher 500 colours. Some grouping of habitats would be useful for presentation. There should be links to descriptions of the methods used including the (excellent) interim reports.

Ostend Declaration

The Ostend Declaration, delivered in October 2010 during the Eurocean 2010 conference, calls upon the European Union and its Member States to support the development of a truly integrated and sustainably funded "European Ocean Observing System". Waddah Saab, From DG-RTD, explained that an Expert Group has been established to see how the different research infrastructures, EURO-ARGO, EMSO, AURORA BOREALIS, SIAOS, EMBRC, ECCSEL, ICOS, LIFEWATCH fit together and how they relate to EU policy.

It is intended that the Expert Group looking at these issues should cooperate closely with MODEG - possibly through a joint meeting.

MODEG felt that we do not yet have a picture of the best way to spend money in order to obtain the desired results. The present combination of fixed measuring stations, research ships, vessels of opportunity and earth orbiting satellites has developed haphazardly. The sea-basin checkpoints to be set up under the marine knowledge 2020 initiative may provide a better overview.

Vessels of Opportunity

[presentation](#) [3]

David Hyde of the Southampton National Oceanographic Centre summarized the work of the international OceanScope activity that aims to coordinate and improve monitoring through vessels of opportunity. Much is being done but there is potential to increase still further the number of parameters measured and the number of vessels fitted. Infrequent scattered observations are unable to capture the phenomena adequately.

Carbon dioxide concentrations from Ferrybox measurements will play a significant role in the proposed integrated carbon observing system, ICOS.

Most measurements of ocean current are near the surface. Acoustic Doppler Current Profilers can measure to a depth of 1200 metres. The velocities at these depths are low so many measurements are required to obtain the required precision. Few are deployed so far.

European Atlas of the Seas

A new version of the European Atlas of the Seas is now on-line with many more layers than previously. It was presented to MODEG by Anne-France Woestyn from DG-MARE. The feedback for the look and feel of the Atlas was very positive. It is intuitive and looks "professional". However MODEG are perfectionists and offered some suggestions for future versions. It would be useful to:

1. combine layers; for example to include background information such as the name of the sea or the country.
2. download data in an INSPIRE-compliant way. DG-MARE explained that the aim of the Atlas is to communicate policies and statistics on the sea. The Atlas can point people to the source data but setting up a downloading facility is not planned - at least in the medium term.
3. develop links and synergies with EMODNET. This will start once EMOdnet can deliver complete sets of data over all sea basins

4. include images, and video streams
5. support the disseminating of major RTD projects. This might be possible with Framework Programme funding.
6. improve the map projection. Northern territories appear unrealistically large
7. replace miles with nautical miles in the map scale

Updated layers are not replaced continuously but through a series of updates. There are about three updates in a year.

WISE marine

WISE-marine is the system by which Member States report the state of the marine environment in order to satisfy the requirements of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. A contract has been issued to develop reporting sheets. Data from the thematic assembly groups should feed into the process but it will be necessary to complete the sea-basin coverage. This is planned for 2011-2013 within the framework of the new financial regulation for maritime policy.

State of the Environment Report

presentation [4]

The European Environment Agency's latest State of the Environment report had just been published. It manages to condense masses of information into readily understandable indicators and statistics. Trine Christiansen summarized the most significant factors. There are some good signs from accidental oil spills is decreasing and nutrient concentrations are decreasing. However there are still some areas where there has been little improvement - notably the state of Europe's fish stocks.

There was some discussion about the use of chlorophyll as an indicator. It is widely used because it is easy (compared to many other parameters) to measure. However turning measurements into indicators requires much effort. High levels in some regions may be acceptable but in other regions the same levels are an indicator of poor health.

Evaluation of ur-EMODnet preparatory actions

A contract has been issued for an interim evaluation of ur-EMODnet preparatory actions. The contractors will assess the user-friendliness of the portals and download data for processing in their own statistical packages and geographical information systems. Preliminary results will be ready in April 2010

Next meeting

The next meeting of the marine Observation and Data Expert Group is planned for 10 and 11 March, 2011.

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Links

[1] <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/node/1438/ical.ics>

[2] <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/emodnet/>

[3] [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/system/files/101130MODEG Ocean Scope v4.ppt](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/system/files/101130MODEG_Ocean_Scope_v4.ppt)

[4] https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/system/files/TchristiansenmarineSoER2010_nov2010.ppt