



MARITIME FORUM

Sixth meeting of European Marine Observation and Data Expert Group

Event date:

30/09/2009 - 14:00 to 01/10/2009 - 16:00

This was the sixth meeting of the Marine Observation and Data Expert Group. Fifteen members of the Group were present - Colpan Beken, Jean-François Bourillet, Peter Burkill, Gianna Casazza, Hans Dahlin (chairman), Yann-Hervé De Roeck, Robert Gatliff, Lars Hansen, Neil Holdsworth, Remi Laane, François Le Corre, Ilaria Nardello, Dick Schaap, Henry Vallius and Christopher Zimmerman. Five others Frederique Blanc, Antonio Bode, Ralph Rayner, Lesley Rickards and Anastasios Tselepidis had apologized for their unavoidable absence. Manfred Reinke has left the group to take up a post as Executive Secretary of the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat. Nic Flemming was invited to continue his input to the impact assessment. From the Commission there was Waddah Saab, Iain Shepherd, Mikko Strahlendorff and Pascal Le Grand. And from the European Environment Agency, Trine Christiansen. The contractors responsible for the study on costs and benefits – Ian Payne and Stephen Hodgson attended during discussions on this point.

The GMES implementation group was also present during the discussions on MyOcean and the marine core service.

ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

Inform MODEG of outcome of discussions with Royal Caribbean Lines on Ferry Boxes

A representative from RCCL (Paul Randal) met with the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton (NOCS) in June to discuss how to take the Ferrybox discussion forward. At the time, NOCS had just entered the early stages of a discussion with the Passenger Shipping Association, on how the PSA's members could be involved in any projects with NOCS. Due to this partnership already being established, RCCL stated that they would be interested in any agreement the PSA reached with NOCS and would wait to hear of any developments. Unfortunately nothing has been heard of to date from the PSA.

An EU research project, PROTOOL, has just started looking at optical sensors that might be used in Ferryboxes. The next opportunity for a more comprehensive project on Ferryboxes is the 2011 work programme.

Given the importance of this subject for a sustainable marine data infrastructure, the Commission asked if any further action was needed from MODEG at this point. MODEG thought it best to wait and see what happened.

Invite presentation on Guardians of the Sea initiative for next meeting

Little progress has been made on this initiative. The action is postponed to the next meeting.

Provide feedback on impact assessment

The Expert Group were sent the Impact Assessment Board's opinion of the impact assessment. Basically they wanted more details on what legislative steps the Commission was proposing and to narrow down the implementation costs. This has been clarified in the new document

Distribute revised interim report by MRAG on costs of producing and using marine data

This was distributed.

Invite presentation of marine research strategy

This was included in the agenda for the meeting

Provide more information on ur-EMODNET lots

Progress reports are posted on the new maritime forum.

Invite presentation on marine core strategy and MyOcean

This was presented later in the meeting.

GLOBAL MONITORING FOR ENVIRONMENT AND SECURITY

Progress in MyOcean

Bahurel presented the MyOcean project which is developing a three dimensional global model at 1/12° resolution and finer resolution regional models as well as a number of products based on measurements from satellites and in-situ instruments. Although MyOcean is funded from the research budget, it is seen as a forerunner for a sustainable "Marine Core Service". 12 production centres are active, MODEG admired the effort that had gone into setting this up. The following points came up in the discussion::

1. A number of MyOcean partners are also participating in SeaDataNet, which offer good conditions to exchange views and tune interfaces, but a meeting to discuss possible collaboration between the 2 projects could benefit both parties.
2. It takes an enormous effort to ensure that products from different sea-basins are interoperable.
3. The open data policy is compatible with EMODNET principles
4. The MyOcean project has been asked to estimate the needs for in-situ (non-space) data. The European Environment Agency have asked the European topic centre for water to map who needs what.
5. The web-site could be improved to make it easier to identify what will be delivered. Bahurel said an action on this is already underway.
6. The physical parameters are largely clear. The others less so. Nobody knew what was meant by biogeochemistry. Bahurel said that the user demand still needed to be clarified for non-physical parameters.
7. Costs of a future marine core service

Bahurel presented the output of a study lead by the UK Met Office (BOSS4GMES FP7 project), which estimated that it would cost €50 million per year to set up 5 Thematic Assembly Centres for sea level, ocean colour, sea surface temperature, sea ice, wind, in-situ data and 7 Monitoring and Forecasting Centres. This was broken down into 8% for coordination, 13% for R&D, 21% for maintenance & implementation, 40% for production, 18% for calibration, validation and quality control. Approximately 20 organisations would be involved.

MODEG wondered what was currently being spent. One of the original ideas behind setting up a core service was to save costs.

To put this in perspective, according to information from the European Space Agency, about €400 million

per year is being spent on measurements from space. An equivalent is being spent on other measurements although there is no consensus yet as to whether this is enough.

Irish GMES Service

Ireland has not traditionally been very active in the use of remote sensing measurements but has now created a GMES, marine working group which is focusing proposals to use data from ESA satellites. €4.5 million has been allocated through the Earth Observation Envelope Programme.

USING THE NEW EU MARITIME POLICY FORUM

The aim of the forum is to allow groups (such as MODEG) to communicate amongst themselves and to disseminate information outside. Registered MODEG members can comment on content and insert their own content but it requires the permission of a moderator before the content can be disseminated outside the group. Users can flag interest in a specific content and ask to be informed when anything new is uploaded.

Some MODEG members had found the prototype unwieldy. The principal difficulty was the default option being set to "Commission" rather than "External" in logging in. MARE will work on improving the system and move towards using the forum for all communication with MODEG.

EUROPEAN MARINE AND MARITIME RESEARCH STRATEGY

The EU's marine and maritime strategy aims for the first time to producing a coherent research programme covering both innovation to boost the maritime economy and environmental concerns. Cross-cutting calls have been issued. In 2009 and 2010 the main focus, as far as sea-basins are concerned, is long-term planning for the Mediterranean and Arctic

MODEG emphasised the importance of global cooperation; for instance on the IOC global assessment. It is very difficult to align EU and US research programmes in order to set up joint projects.

It might be useful if the European Environment Agency could follow some research programmes relevant to their mission. In the past some had been claiming to develop indicators but in the end they turned out not to be useful. There are of course exceptions. The HERMES deep project had made great and successful efforts to involve those involved with framing or monitoring policies affecting the deep sea.

The wider consultation envisaged in the strategy was welcome. An interesting debate would be whether it was more cost-effective for Member States to charter existing vessels for ocean surveys rather than commissioning new special-purpose ones.

There is still no long-term strategy for ocean observatories. According to the Commission, monitoring coastal waters is a Member State responsibility. The deep sea is an EU concern but Member States will still need to bear most of the responsibility and should present coherent proposals.

EMODNET CONSULTATION

A draft Commission working document on the EMODNET public consultation that took place in April and May 2009 was presented. It showed a general unhappiness with the status quo and an endorsement of the Commission principles for moving forward. MODEG were given till the end of the following week, 16 October 2009, to provide comments.

COSTS AND BENEFITS OF MARINE DATA INFRASTRUCTURE

MRAG presented the latest figures for the costs of collecting and assembling marine data. The following points were made:

1. The definitions need tightening up. The word data centre is misleading. In the UK it has certain connotations, referring to an accredited centre for safe archival and dissemination. "Data holder"

might be better.

2. There is very little time before the impact assessment on EMODNET has to be submitted to the Board. There are few figures in the report on the cost of today's infrastructure that are robust enough to be included in the assessment.
3. The average cost of a research vessel makes little sense. There are different size categories. The total cost is needed for the impact assessment. The Eurofleets project might have some information on the cost of fleets. DeRoeck and Bourillet said that they would send information to MRAG and the Commission.
4. The Commission accept that better ocean data infrastructure is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for reducing uncertainty in sea-level rise. However the analysis is still useful in providing ball-park figures on the cost of uncertainty. Maybe the Stern report has some information. Schaap said that the oil industry has produced a report on the savings to be made by better information on extreme wave events. The European Environment Agency has a report on the cost of harmful algal blooms that might be useful.

REVISED IMPACT ASSESSMENT- COSTS OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Following the advice of the Impact Assessment Board to be more precise, the Commission has sharpened its estimate for the cost of implementing an infrastructure for assembling data. The total cost was estimated as €120 million spread over 10 years. Thereafter the cost would decrease and cover maintenance and updating. More observations (eg for Argo floats or sea-bed surveys) would be on top of this. The estimates were based on an extrapolation of the preparatory actions to an end-point with higher resolution and more parameters. The following comments were made:

1. A 500 metre resolution bathymetric grid can be constructed from existing charts. If the proposed bathymetric grid is at 50 metres resolution, it will require information from surveys and include large gaps.
2. The preparatory actions chemical lot covers less than 40% of the parameters that might be required for measuring global cycles and coastal pollution. 20% might be a better estimate.
3. Sediment geochemistry mainly been collected and held by geological organizations and would thus naturally fall into the geology "lot", especially as marine geologists are the professionals for such sampling. It requires considerable sampling if we wish to have a good overall picture of the geochemistry of the seafloor of the EU seas. This would greatly increase the costs of the geology part.
4. There is almost an infinite amount of biological data that can be collected and assembled. It is difficult to know where to draw the line.
5. The World Meteorological Organisation WIS system is an effective way of sharing information. A presentation will be made at the next meeting
6. The definitions of "collecting" and "assembling" need tightening up.
7. The definitions of the different phases if the process chain could be tightened up. These could be:
 - a. observation or collecting data- automatically through permanently moored or mobile instruments or through samples collected at sea and analysed in the laboratory. Observational data are usually stored by the data originator for their own use, or within specific programmes. Data may be transferred to a Data Centre for permanent archive, sometimes at national level.
 - b. assembling data from many sources so as to provide complete coherent, quality-checked data over wider sea areas such as marine basins, with ability to select and compare or combine different data parameters over the same area.
 - c. applying the data to compute statistics, make forecasts, assimilate and process through models, predict extreme values, or provide environmental indicators,- for instance of water quality, coastal erosion, fish population, or tsunami risk.

Flemming and de Roeck have already provided written comments on the impact assessment. The rest of MODEG were invited to provide them before 9 November, 2009

EMODNET LOGOS

The Commission's publication office are preparing logos, banners and powerpoint templates for EMODNET. As a first step they have prepared three concepts – an observer, a network and waves.

The geologists were in favour of the "observer" because it showed the sea bottom. However on the whole MODEG preferred the other two designs.

MODEG were invited to provide further comments during the week –preferably through the maritime forum.

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/node/395> [2]

PREPARATORY ACTIONS 2010

The Commission has a preliminary budget of €1.2 million for next year's preparatory actions. This could be for one or two projects. There was some support for assembling near-coast physical data – a gap that is not covered by GMES.

NEXT MEETINGS

The next meetings will be 24 and 25 November in Brussels. They will last two complete days. The first day is devoted to a review of the preparatory actions.

The following meeting will be 23 and 24 February.

ACTIONS

Presentation of Guardians of the Sea at future meeting	DG-MARE
Presentation of WMO WIS system at next meeting	DG-ENTR
Provide document on benefits of better wave forecasts	Schaap
Provide document on economic damage of harmful algal blooms	European Environment Agency
Comment on Consultation, impact assessment and logos by 9 October 2009	MODEG
Communicate difficulties of external users with using maritime forum to IT support team.	MARE
Communicate Eurofleets contact to MRAG and DG-MARE	De Roeck and Bourillet
Follow developments with Royal Caribbean Lines and ferryboxes	MARE

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