

EMBRC HQ Update - N.02

21st July – 15th October 2016

Prepared by: *Ilaria Nardello, EMBRC-ERIC Executive Director*

Background: *The EIB requested the ED to regularly prepare an update on the work progress, with a monthly-bimonthly frequency.*

Scope: *to Update the EIB on progress of main items of the work activity at the Headquarters.*

ERIC application

- The Commission provided their evaluation of the EMBRC step-one ERIC application, in early August. We consider that the review was extremely positive, with only few comments to the Statutes and the TSD.
- The Executive Director is working with our Legal Consultant to address the points raised by the Commission. This work has revealed a discrepancy in the description of the Governance, between the Business Plan v1.0 from the EMBRC preparatory phase (PP_EMBRC), the Statutes v3.2, and the current Technical and Scientific Description (TSD).
- A new draft of both the Statutes and the TSD shall become available at the end of October, based on a governance proposition largely based on the original description in the Business Plan v1.0.
- All other documents (i.e. a letter from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs recognizing the EMBRC-ERIC) are in order for our final ERIC application. Only a need to translate the documents into French, for the French Ministry, may ensue before the application, after final approval of the application by the EIB.

Towards the EMBRC-ERIC Operational Phase

- **Rules of Operation (RoOs)**

- Second Draft (V2.0) of EMBRC-ERIC RoOs received and reviewed;
- Revised Draft (v.2.1) expected on October 30th. If mature, this will be submitted to the EIB for discussion.

- **Service Level Agreements (SLAs)**

- We have started looking into drafting the SLAs with our legal consultant. This item is parked, however, until the basic documents for EMBRC-ERIC application are approved, as they will form the basis for our SLAs. In the meantime, we are writing the terms of reference for this legal service request.
- A public procurement procedure will be initiated to obtain these and other legal services.

EMBRC Development

- **E-Infrastructure**

- **WG E-Infrastructure** – A second meeting was held in September 2016, among EMBRC representatives only. The meeting agenda and minutes are available in [Appendix 1](#);
- **Access Portal** – A two-day workshop will be organized in December to demonstrate and perfect this component, delivered by VLIZ through EMBRC_PP2. The target audience is the CoN Members and Liaison Officers.

Recruitment/Personnel

- **Project Management Officer**

The Interview Panel unanimously selected Mr. Arnaud Delimoges among six interviewees. He started his position on the 12th of September. His immediate challenge was to package some communication material for the upcoming high-level events, in which EMBRC is involved (ICRI2016, Biomarine2016). After this emergency, he'd support the development of a work plan and associated expenditure plan for the EMBRC-HQ, 2016-2017.

- **EU Project Officer**

The in kind-contribution of 0.5FTE EU-Project Officer, through the Host Premium, is on hold until UPMC formally redefines the mission of A. Desclos to fulfil the tasks envisaged for this role.

- **Business Consultant**

Due to changing priorities, the French Ministry for Education, Higher Education and Research has withdrawn the support of 0.2FTE business consultant (Matthieu Merciecca) from the

EMBRC case. While we will be able to present to the EIB the relevant part of the work which we could address with Matthieu (namely a draft business model), the timeline for a fully articulated draft of the business plan will be delayed. We are evaluating the pros and cons of finding an adequate substitute operator for this piece of work.

- **Legal Consultant**

Collaboration with consultant Oscar Uzun is in fair progress. The work will be initially limited to RoOs and revision of statutes, as well as open to non-exclusively adopting Oskar's services for the preparation of specific documents, such as consultancy agreements, terms of reference for legal consulting needs, SLAs, policy advice, etc.

- **ERIC Team**

The ERIC team was completed with the contributions of our legal consultant and business consultant, easing the supportive activity of Antonio Villanueva and Marco Borra. However, the loss of our business consultant will require that support from our officers is continued.

EU relations

- **EU Lobbying**

- Meeting with Mrs. Sigi Gruber, Head of the Marine Unit of the DG Research and Innovation planned on November 24th, 2016.
- Invitation to attend the Commission's Workshop on RI sustainability, 25th of November 2016.

Projects

- **EMBRIC**

The EMBRIC 1st GA, 12th-13th September 2016, in Naples was very beneficial to have a first insight into the project. However, an identity overlap between EMBRC and EMBRIC is becoming increasingly noticeable. This is creating great concern, because the EMBRC Director has no direct relation with the governance of the EMBRIC project, which, appears to be moving in an independent fashion along the track traced for and by the EMBRC partners.

A request by Ilaria, to include the RIs' directors (EMBRC, ELIXIR, MIRRI, EU_OpenScreen) into the governance of EMBRIC, as it is the case for the other RI Cluster projects (CORBEL, ENVRIPlus) resolved with an invitation to join an Advisory Board, starting with the GA of next year, i.e. when the project has reached half its lifetime. While EMBRIC is an important strategic development for EMBRC, the concern remains that the project is too distant from the RIs, which it aims to operate, and that a conflict of interest may ensue.

- **Corbel**

The first Corbel General Assembly (GA) meeting was on 18th-19th October. Ilaria Nardello and Klaas Deneudt were in attendance and respectively are the EMBRC representatives on the WG “Innovation” and WG of E-Infrastructure. Antonio Villanueva is participating WG “Quality” (although excused for this meeting). A representative is being sought for WP9 – training, potentially Tim Deprez.

The meeting also included the 6th Corbel Executive Board meeting and a meeting of the BioMedicalSciences (BMS) group, which Ilaria participates on behalf of EMBRC.

Ilaria was nominated vice-Chair of the BMS group, stepping up to chair next year. This will likely increase the visibility of “the marine” in the BMS group.

- **PP2**

The final review of pp2EMBRC took place in Bruxelles, 15th of September 2016. The review was handled by the project Coordinator, Adelino Canario, with presentations from WP leaders and a final presentation by the ED on the project’s potential impact on the development of the EMBRC. From their final remarks and warm congratulations for our results, the Commissioners appeared fully convinced that the project funding was wisely allocated and that EMBRC will be a valid instrument for our society. Congratulations to all involved.

- **ENVRI Plus**

This project represents an important opportunity for EMBRC to be involved in the Environment area of competence of the ESFRI RIs. Through recent events, a connection has finally been established between the ED and the Coordinator of ENVRIPlus, Werner Kutsch (also Director of ICOS-ERIC) and collaborations have ensued as it can be seen through mutually supportive exchanges on social media platforms.

- **RISCAPE**

We have been approached by the RISCAPE project which is mapping the RIs outside Europe to be part of their consulting reference pool of RIs. We will be glad to support the project’s objectives, which can be functional to the internationalization strategy of EMBRC.

- **AssemblePlus**

The project was positively evaluated and is on the reserve list (n.17). From the information filtered through various NCPs (FR, PT, IL), we are hopeful that the project will be funded through the INFRAIA budget 2017.

State of the Union

- **Members**

- EMBRC-NO: Arild Folksford, University of Bergen (UiB), led a new application for EMBRC-NO to be considered in the national roadmap of research infrastructures; the EMBRC Headquarters have participated in this effort since the beginning and we are hopeful the outcome will be positive. On any event, Norway has committed to the EMBRC membership contribution 2016.

- **Potential New Members**

- Submission of an expression of interest were received by Finland, Netherlands, and Poland.
- Ireland: The ED, in agreement with the Chair, has forwarded the EMBRC-ERIC Statutes to the Marine Institute (MI). Further conversations with MI representatives portray a very interested community with some budgetary issues. The country may not be ready to join the Funders before final application but they are considering signing the MoU, in the new year.

Other relations

- GOOS Bio-ECO: Apparent impossibility to have a representative on the Panel although the request for collaboration was initiated by GOOS Bio-ECO. For the moment, an informal collaboration is envisaged.

Events

ICRI 2016 - 3rd International Conference on Research Infrastructures, Cape Town, South Africa, 3-5 October 2016. Co-organised by the European Commission and the South African Department of Science and Technology, it addressed issues from long-term sustainability, socio-economic impact, expanding partnerships, and human resources. Our presence was considerable:

- EMBRC presentation in parallel session 3: Expanding Partnerships across disciplines, sectors, and world regions;
- EMBRIC/EMBRC stand;
- Corbel Stand
- ENVRIPlus Stand;

The event conclusions and presentations can be found at: www.icri2016.org

IFIB 2016 (Italian Forum on Industrial Biotechnology and Bioeconomy)

Invited to give a talk at IFIB2016, the ED was replaced by the Italian Liaison Officer, Marco Borra.

Appendix 1

2nd EMBRC Working Group on E-Infrastructure (WGEI) Meeting

September 7th-8th, 2016

EMBRC Headquarters, 4 Place Jussieu, Paris.

Present members

- Klaas Deneudt (WGEI Chair; VLIZ, EMBRC-BE);
- Ilaria Nardello (EMBRC HQ);
- Marco Borra (SZN, EMBRC-IT);
- Erwan Corre (SBR, EMBRC-FR);
- Mark Hoebeke (SBR, EMBRC-FR),
- Lennert Tyberghein (VLIZ, EMBRC-BE);
- Georgios Kotoulas (HCMR, EMBRC-GR)
- Stefanie Dekeyzer – rapporteur (VLIZ, EMBRC- BE)

Excused Members

- Dan Lear (EMBRC-UK), Claire Gachon (EMBRC-UK), Michel Groc.

Meeting Report

- **Introductory presentation**

The Terms of Reference and the expected output of WGEI were summarized and the agenda of the meeting discussed and approved.

- **Ongoing and planned e-infrastructure developments in the framework of EMBRC.**

An overview presentation was given, mainly based on the pp2EMBRC, EMBRIC an Assemble Plus project documentation. Important **e-infrastructure components** mentioned were:

- EMBRC service access system;
- Knowledge Transfer Platform and underlying information system;
- Data catalogue and repository; and:

- Virtual data access and analysis platform.

Next, a list of the **e-infrastructure services** of the different EMBRC nodes was presented. This list was created as part of the pp2 inventory, where the EMBRC partners had to fill in a template to describe the offered services. In the framework of pp2, this inventory will be made available through the EMBRC access system. This presentation was followed by a discussion on the service descriptions and the web access system.

- **Access system**

- Interoperability between central access system (new) and local systems (existing)** - Developments are necessary to make existing local systems interoperable with the upcoming central access system. Resources to implement these extensions to local systems will need to be accounted for in the national EMBRC budgets. Guidelines and training will be provided centrally.
- Service Inventory - The categorization of the services and the granularity utilised to describe them are in need of some homogenization.

A **workshop** will be organized, before year end, with Node Directors, Liaison Officers and relevant Operator representatives to test the access system, discuss the issues emerged through WGEI and develop operational solutions.

- **EMBRC e-infrastructure use cases and requirements.**

Part of the use cases were rediscovered from a PP_EMBRC exercise and EMBRIC; additional use cases being explored are, over various areas: research, community engagement, management, policy:

- Long-term monitoring, Ecosystem assessment and mapping (MSFD-related);
- Digital library;
- Central management and administration services (financial administration, project administration, access administration);
- Education & training;
- Virtual communication platform.

It was agreed that many recurring requirements for each use case could be listed as general requirements for all use cases, also in line EU context of e-infrastructures: (1) Tools and services (user applications), (2) Data (data layer and services), (3) Computing, (4) Storage, and (5) Networking and connectivity (including security). Also (5) Human resources and (6) training should be seen as general requirements that cross-cut these categories.

During the next **WGEI meeting (October 26th-27th)**, the working group should be able to wrap up the requirements. It should also be discussed and prepared how to interact with the experts (e.g. questionnaire). Also during this meeting, additional experts should be identified (e.g. BBMRI, EU-OPENSREEN, EMBRIC)