

EMBRC HQ Update - N.14

15 November 2018 – 15 February 2019

Prepared by: EMBRC HQ

Summary: The GA requested the ED to prepare, on a regular basis, an update on progress with a monthly-bimonthly frequency. The present report covers the period 15 November 2018 to 15 February 2019.

Scope: to update the GA on the progress of main items of the work activity at the EMBRC-ERIC Headquarters.

ERIC Status - Entering the operational phase

- **Funds paid in to EMBRC bank account:** in December 2018 EMBRC-ERIC received the first transfer of funds into the CIC Paris Gobelins bank account. This meant that several payments were made before year-end using the newly acquired bankcard. Two further cards were issued in January 2019 – to Dr Pade and Nathalie Marek – and these are now the only cards in circulation.
- Most of the **Member Contributions** have now been received for 2018 and one contribution (from Universidad del País Vasco) was made for 2019. Payments made since the previous HQ Update include Belgium, Israel, Portugal, Spain and the UK. The Secretariat is in communication with the outstanding countries to ensure payments are made. The team has discussed the issuing of invoices for the 2019 contributions and highlighted the importance of reminding contributors to pay into the EMBRC-ERIC bank account.
- The **Transfer of Assets** was written, agreed and signed in the period leading up to 15 February 2019. A clause pertaining to retroactive effect is to be added soon. Following end-of-year reporting, EMBRC-ERIC has funding available to access through Sorbonne

Universities and this must be spent by the end of 2019. Discussions are ongoing regarding the nature of expenditure that this can cover.

- Significant progress was made on the **Hosting Agreement** with Sorbonne at the start of 2019. At the time this report was finalised, the first draft of the Hosting Agreement was in the process of being verified by the EMBRC-ERIC Legal Officer and EMBRC HQ.
- A system of analytical accounting was implemented as part of a continued effort to manage the EMBRC budget. The 2018 end-of-year Expenditure Report compiled information on the nature of expenditure. Ongoing consultation with the accounting cabinet Expertens has seen the implementation of a three-step categorisation system to classify expenses.
- The **Reimbursement Agreement** between Sorbonne Universities and EMBRC has been written and passed. The **Host Premium Contribution** is in the process of being signed and reimbursed.
- An application to the European Commission to change the **LEAR** over to Dr Pade was submitted in early February and EMBRC is now awaiting confirmation of the transfer.
- EMBRC HQ implemented a system of monitoring access enquiries and recording on the outcomes of events with the intention that this information will eventually feed in to EMBRC indicators.
- The **EMBRC Rules of Operation (RoOs)** are currently being reworked after considerable input from the RoOs working group. A consolidated version will be finished by 01/03/2019, although the sections on human resources, procurement, ethics, and IPR still need to be finalised. The **Service Level Agreements** are ready for review by the GA.
- EMBRC signed two important **Memoranda of Understanding** with the European multidisciplinary seafloor and water-column observatory (**EMSO ERIC**) and **AIR CENTRE**. Juanjo Dañobeitia, Director General of EMSO ERIC, said the MoU “sends a strong signal on the importance of working together to implement the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals and the key challenges we face in assuring the sustainability and the cleaning of oceans”. In the Letter of Intent signed with AIR CENTRE the signatories agreed to a number of objectives, among them to present a collaborative framework for trans-regional access.

HR Recruitment

- Following interviews and contractual liaison in the final quarter of 2018, the following roles were appointed:
 - **Executive Director:** Dr Nicolas Pade began the role of Executive Director on 14 January 2019. Until 31 March 2019 Dr Ilaria Nardello will accompany Dr Pade in her capacity as outgoing Director by means of a transition period. Professor David Paterson, chair of EMBRC-ERIC General Assembly, made an official announcement of the change in Director on 21 January 2019, in which he welcomed Dr Pade and thanked Dr Nardello for her excellent contribution to EMBRC-ERIC.
 - **Scientific Officer and Project Manager:** Sidonie Gras joined EMBRC-ERIC on 10 February 2019 following a 6-month internship with the association in 2018. Sidonie is to play a pivotal role in the ongoing and nascent EMBRC-ERIC projects and has already represented EMBRC-ERIC at international events and meetings.
 - **Administrative Assistant:** Katharine Worley started at the association on 3 December 2018. Priorities of her role include ensuring the smooth running of the EMBRC HQ and communication tools, supporting the team and financial administration.
- The selected candidate for the role of **Communication Officer**, a post that was due to be filled in February, withdrew their acceptance of the position due to personal reasons. EMBRC-ERIC is mindful of the need for this role and will proceed with the re-interviewing the second-choice candidate for the position.
- EMBRC-ERIC employed its first salaried staff, not affiliated with the Sorbonne. Recent personnel have been registered for ACMS (professional **health insurance**) and one member of staff has been registered with Allianz under its “mutuelle” health insurance scheme.

Projects

- **ERIC-Forum** kicked off in Amsterdam on 1 February 2019. Dr Nardello attended the event, which provided an opportunity for discussion of the ERIC Forum project and presentations of WPs 1-7. The project, co-funded by the European Commission’s H2020 programme, is to run until December 2022. EMBRC-ERIC shared a press release for the event on our website and social media.

Following successful completion of transferring the LEAR over to Dr Pade, EMBRC-ERIC will be able to sign the Grant Accession Form as a priority.

- The consortium agreement and financial agreement for **RI-VIS** were signed in January 2019. RI-VIS is due to run until 2021 and the funding will be allocated to the EMBRC-ERIC and EMBRC-PT (CCMAR).
- **EOSC-Life** received EMBRC-ERIC's account details for pre-financing at the end of January. EOSC-Life brings together 13 biological and medical ESFRI research infrastructures, creating an open collaborative space for digital biology. The project officially kicks off 20th March 2019.
- **EMERGE (INFRADEV-3)** progressed thanks to a writing team meeting in Paris from 4-6 February to review the Work Packages of the INFRADEV-3 proposal. Following consultation with all participants, the team selected OpenAIRE to participate in the project and create a Research Initiative dashboard for EMBRC to monitor the scientific impact of the RI.

A further writing session, just prior to the deadline, is due to take place in Bilbao from 6-8 March 2019. The full proposal is due on 20 March 2019.

- Completed in the Paris (FR) 4-6 of February meeting:
 - Iron out WPs & leaders
 - Finalise name
 - Identify consortium members
 - Identify advisory board members to reach out to about EMERGE
- The **CORBEL 2nd** Open Call for research projects closed on 31 December 2018 and 16 applications were accepted as CORBEL user projects, three of which have requested EMBRC facilities: users are working with CNRS; the Marine Laboratory at Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn; and the Scottish Oceans Institute at St. Andrews University. Due to extension of CORBEL until the end of May 2020, the final CORBEL General Assembly will be held in spring 2020.

Governance Meetings

- In January, details were announced of the **EMBRC-ERIC 4th General Assembly** taking place at the University of St Andrews on 13-14 May 2019.
- **CoN Meeting XII** will take place in Paris on 3-4 April 2019. A Vice Chair for the Committee of Nodes will be elected.

Other events

- At the **ESFRI meeting** on 19-20 November, in Milan (IT), a workshop addressed the need to develop a proper methodology for the periodic update on the State of Play of ESFRI Landmarks. Dr Nardello spoke as part of a panel on the Use of KPIs – a useful tool for

implementation, operation and sustainability. Other members of the panel included a representative from CERIC ERIC and ESRF.

- Dr Nardello attended **AIR Centre**, the 4th High Level Industry-Science-Government Dialogue – Implementing the Atlantic International Research Centre (Air Centre), from 25-27 November in Las Palmas (PT). Dr Nardello participated in a round table on “The challenges and opportunities of trans-regional access to research infrastructures in the Atlantic”. The panel included representatives from LifeWatch ERIC, PLOCAN, INIP and SINTEF.
- Sidonie Gras represented EMBRC at the **Blue Bio brokerage event** in Oslo, Norway, on 30 January 2019. The event kicked off with presentations, including a 10-minute presentation by Sidonie focussing mainly on EMBRC-ERIC services, and parallel sessions in dedicated meeting rooms and elevator pitches. The event generated a number of new contacts for EMBRC and discussions/requests about:
 - EMBRC-ERIC finding options for partnership for one project;
 - Interest from the Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries in Split (Croatia) to join EMBRC;
 - Interest in learning more about the kinds and specifics to resources that EMBRC provides;
- Dr Pade attended the **EuroMarine 2019 General Assembly** on 30-31 January. The event included presentations that focussed on the outcome, steps forward, networking and leverage effect of EuroMarine funding as well as a workshop on the potential relationship between EuroMarine and research infrastructures.

Coming events

- **RI-VIS** is due to kick off in Oxford on 25 February 2019 and Dr Pade will attend.
- **EMBRIC BlueEconomy** Event: 5 March 2019, Brussels (BE). A European Parliament facing workshop, symposium and roundtable showcasing European research in mining for valuable bioactive and enzymes from marine algae and bacteria.
- **EMBRC France General Assembly**: 11-14 March 2019, Villefranche-sur-Mer (FR), the event will include a presentation of **Assemble+**.
- **EOSC-Life** kick-off meeting in Amsterdam on 20 March will be attended by Dr Pade and Sidonie Gras.
- **International Atlantos Symposium**: 25 March 2019, UNESCO HQ, Paris (FR)
- **French ERICs meeting**: 2 April 2019, MESRI, Paris (FR)
- **4th ERIC FORUM Meeting**: 7-8 May 2019, in Oslo (NO)