

EMBRC HQ Update - N.15
15 February 2019 – 15 April 2019

Prepared by: EMBRC HQ

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

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

General activities

- The requests for the 2019 Member Contributions were sent to the member countries during the second week of April. The Secretariat has been in continued communication with a number of countries still to pay the 2017 and 2018 contributions. Payment of the 2018 Member Contribution for Greece has been received. The Sorbonne is due to refund the UK for its contribution for 2018 as this was erroneously paid into the Sorbonne account and, once this has been reimbursed, it is hoped the 2018 contribution can be paid into the EMBRC account.
- On 21 February members of the Accounting team from Expertens – the independent accounting cabinet used by EMBRC – visited the EMBRC HQ to carry out an initial overview of EMBRC expenses since the start of the contract. This resulted in the successful implementation of an accounting tool, by way of a system of categorisation based on a table of options, which will ensure all expenses can be classified by project and by the nature of expenditure. A second batch of documentation – including invoices issued, received and paid – was sent to Expertens on 29 March for inputting into the accounting system.

- The **Reimbursement Agreement** between Sorbonne Universities and EMBRC has been written, passed and paid. The Agreement has been signed by Sophie Cluet on behalf of the President of Sorbonne Universities.
- Dr Pade became the EMBRC **LEAR** on 10 April. This also allowed him to sign the ERIC Forum Grant Agreement, which was done on the same day. EMBRC now has an Account Administrator and LEAR to take responsibility for the EU Commission Funding and Tenders portal.
- Dr Pade, Professor Adelino Canário, and Dr Tim Deprez attended the **EU-LAC** study visit in Lisbon and Faro from 25 to 27 March. The visit included a presentation of the EMBRC RI and a visit to CCMAR.
- EMBRC signed **Letters of Support** and **Letters of Intent** in response to a number of requests. These included:
 - **NERC** – Assessment of Large-Scale Ecological Responses to Environmental Change (ALERT) proposal, signed 10 March;
 - **JERICO-S3** – Joint European Research Infrastructure of Coastal Observatories: Science, Service, Sustainability, signed 11 March;
 - **MIRRI** – Implementation & Sustainability of MIRRI for 21st century (IS_MIRRI21), signed 13 March;
 - European Spallation Source ERIC – European Network of Research Infrastructures & Industry for Collaboration (**ENRIITC**), signed 13 March;
 - **ENVRI** – Letter of Intent “To create more sustainable collaboration forms for the Community of European Environmental Research Infrastructures”, signed 15 March
- EMBRC has been in touch with a contact from **Romania**, based at the Romanian National Institute of Marine Geology and Geoecology. The discussions have focussed around the invitation to attend the “Sustainable Development at the Black Sea” conference, at which Professor Adelino Canário will represent EMBRC. Dr Pade is likely to hold further discussions with Romania regarding the Danubius-RI.
- The **Ministry for Education and Science of Ukraine** contacted EMBRC with a view to collaborating with EMBRC in an effort to develop the ministry’s international cooperation. Their questions focused on the procedure for joining EMBRC, the assistance available and the possibilities for participation in joint projects.

- The Research Infrastructures **Euro-Biolmaging** and **LifeWatch** have expressed an interest in establishing formal ties with EMBRC.
- The **BMS RI Directors** meeting took place in Amsterdam on 22 March, attended by Dr Pade. The meeting included a discussion of common positioning towards EOSC and in relation to other clusters; a group TC; and an open discussion on positioning Horizon Europe. The group is changing its name to become the Life Sciences Research Infrastructures Group.

HR

- Following a transition period, on 29 March Ilaria Nardello officially left her role as **Executive Director** of EMBRC. Dr Nardello will keep some of her links with EMBRC, including an involvement with ASSEMBLE Plus.
- As of 18 February, the team at the HQ will hold a **Team Briefing** every Monday morning. This will be an opportunity for everyone to report on their progress with various tasks and update the team on their tasks for the week ahead.
- Dr Pade offered the role of **Communication Officer** to one of the original candidates, following a reference check. Due to personal circumstances, it is not possible for them to take up the post.
- The post of **Financial and Administrative Officer** was advertised due to the current contract being up for renewal at the end of April. The job advert, which closed on 29 March, received some interest. Interviews were arranged for 17 April.
- The team discussed possible responses to **spontaneous applications** for internships within EMBRC, which are frequently sent to the EMBRC HQ email. Discussions are ongoing and one suggestion is to create a page on the EMBRC website to share possible internship opportunities across the sector. Members of the Committee of Nodes have suggested any spontaneous applications should be accompanied by a CV and Letter of Motivation if they wish to be considered by EMBRC.
- EMBRC received confirmation of our registration with the **work insurance** provider ACMS. The initial registration payment was made and we are now awaiting a notification to attend a medical visit.
- EMBRC is looking in to necessary **refurbishment** works at HQ to make room for around 6 members of staff, in addition to the Director. A member of the technical team from Sorbonne Universities visited the offices on 29 March to discuss possible options and is due to provide the association with an estimate of the total cost.

Projects

- **EMERGE (INFRADEV-3)** proposal was submitted to the H2020 portal in advance of the 20 March deadline. From 6-8 March the team spent three days in Bilbao working on the proposal and work packages. News of the outcome of the proposal should be released in the summer of 2019. If successful, EMBRC will recruit a Communication Assistant and Project Manager to ensure the smooth running of the project.
- Dr Pade attended the **RI-VIS Kick-Off** meeting on 25-26 February, in Oxford. RI-VIS is due to run until 2021 and the funding will be allocated to EMBRC-ERIC and EMBRC-PT (CCMAR). A draft report of the meeting, provided by the meeting organisers, is available on SharePoint. The attendees agreed that the results of the project should be applicable to all RIs, not just RIs represented by the RI-VIS consortium. Actions that directly impact upon EMBRC include the development of a communication strategy for RIs and the preparation of a high-level event at ICRI2020.
- **EOSC-Life** held a Kick-Off event in Amsterdam from 20-22 March, attended by a large number of EMBRC representatives. The first AGM for EOSC-Life will take place from 2-4 March 2020 in Florence, Italy. EOSC-Life brings together 13 biological and medical ESFRI research infrastructures, creating an open collaborative space for digital biology.
- Nicolas Pade attended the **CORBEL** 16th Executive Board meeting on 21 March in Amsterdam. The decisions made include holding the final CORBEL meeting on 2-4 March 2020 in Florence, Italy; development and production of an Impact brochure in the frame of CORBEL; priority for unused resources in CORBEL to be used for work to help achieve sustainability for access tracks and services developed in the Open Calls; and all WP folders on EOSC-Life Google Drive will be set to “everyone with the link can edit”.
- EMBRC signed the Consortium Agreement and Financial Identification Form for **ERIC Forum**. The project, co-funded by the European Commission’s H2020 programme, is to run until December 2022.
- **ASSEMBLE Plus** has officialised Nicolas Pade in his role as Scientific Coordinator of the project. A meeting with the Project Implementation Committee will be held on April 17 in order to move forward.

Communication

- On 1 April an article written collaboratively by Nicolas Pade and Sidonie Gras was published in the Open Access Government online magazine. The article – “A look below the surface of marine genomics” – focused on genomic observatories. According to a

Statistical Report issued to EMBRC by Open Access, in February 2019 EMBRC content on their site saw a total engagement of 170,351.

Governance Meetings

- A draft agenda for the **EMBRC-ERIC 4th General Assembly**, taking place at the University of St Andrews on 13-14 May 2019, was circulated on 21 March.
- **CoN Meeting XII** took place in Paris on 3-4 April 2019.

Other events

- Nicolas Pade attended EMBRC-FR GA on 12 March (Villefranche sur Mer)
- Nicolas Pade attended the French **ERICs** meeting on 2 April
- The **ABS Working Group** held a meeting by Teleconference on 11 April

Upcoming events

- EMBRC-BE visit: 25-26 April 2019, Ghent
- 5th High Level Dialogue, AIRCentre: 28-30 April 2019, Nigeria
- 4th ERIC FORUM Meeting: 7-8 May 2019, Oslo
- RI-Paths Participatory workshop at DESY: 8 May 2019, Hamburg
- RI-Paths Participatory workshop at ELIXIR: 9 May 2019, Cambridge
- Meeting with EMBRC Norway: 9 May 2019, Bergen
- SUST-BLACK, Conference on Sustainable Development at the Black Sea: 8-9 May 2019, Romania, to be attended by Professor Adelino Canário
- FutureEarth Day: 9 May 2019, Paris
- EHUSEA Workshop: Euromarine and COFASP: 27-29 May 2019, Sicily
- ENVRI event & BEERi meeting: 4-6 June 2019
- EurOcean Conference: 11-12 June 2019
- BlueMed Conference: 13-14 June 2019