

EMBRC HQ Update - N.21

15 June 2020 – 15 September 2020

Prepared by: EMBRC HQ

Summary: *Following the fourth EMBRC-ERIC General Assembly, the GA requested that the ED continue to prepare an update on progress, moving to a quarterly frequency. The present report covers the period from 15 June to 15 September 2020.*

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

General activities

- EMBRC-ERIC submitted our 2019 Annual Report to the European Commission in September.
- The Genomics Observatory Working Group has been having monthly meetings. Progress is being made on defining the scope of the observatory and the protocols. A position paper stating EMBRC's intent is in preparation for publication.
 - Nicolas Pade visited the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR) to work on the development of Genomic Observatories with colleagues based in Greece.
- EMBRC formalised its support to the proposed JERICO-RI project applying to the ESFRI roadmap 2021. EMBRC sees potential to collaborate with JERICO-RI in several ways, namely on improving methodologies and data standards within biodiversity observation.
- The Bioprospecting Working Group met again and worked on taking inventory of current bioprospecting capabilities, using EMBRC outcomes as starting blocks.

Communication

- EMBRC held its second Communications Working Group on 7 July.
- Further developments in communications include the finalisation of the designs for the new EMBRC website and initiation of the website development. The new site is expected to launch by the end of October.

- EMBRC's Communication Officer Sabrina Gaber worked with national nodes to develop ideas and guidelines to make it easier for EMBRC nodes to align their website with the new ERIC site.
- A social media audit and strategy was conducted throughout July and August with the aim of identifying EMBRC's current social media audiences and to identify any gaps in the social media strategy that should be addressed.
- As part of a drive to improve EMBRC's communication material, updated document templates have been implemented and a new style guide will be available soon.
- EMBRC produced a video for the European Research and Innovation Days virtual event taking place from 22-24 September 2020. The European Commission asked EMBRC to prepare a 2-minute video for the occasion, presenting the research infrastructure (RI), the work we do, and the impact that EMBRC's work has had and is planning to have. The video is online and can be watched here: <https://youtu.be/MRbjK9rbMy8>

Access

- A second "Access to EMBRC" workshop will take place at the end of September 2020 (the first workshop was held on 15-16 October 2019). It will cover topics including KPI implementation and defining access information in advance of the 2021 Annual Report.
- Access Officer Davide Di Cioccio has liaised with and provided advice to the team working on the project IS_MIRRI21. On 21-22 September, Davide will present his experiences of Transnational Access and give recommendations to assist with their TNA Pilot Programme.
- EMBRC nodes have also been working on updating the EMBRC service list. This information will be available on the website and via the forthcoming ARIA portal.

Governance Meetings

- The 21st Committee of Nodes (CoN) meeting took place via videoconference on 26 August. The meeting included updates on the Genomic Observatories and Bioprospecting working groups as well as a discussion on increasing remote access to EMBRC and adapting to challenges posed by COVID-19.
- EMBRC launched its Science and Innovation Board (SIB), our external advisory body, and we are very pleased to be working with Prof Felicity Huntingford (Glasgow University), Dr Philippe Cury (Institut de Recherche pour le développement), Mr Antonio Villanueva (Biomar), and Mr Erik Steinfelder (Thermo Fisher Scientific). The first meeting of the board took place on 8 July.

Projects

- EMBRC contributed to the Symbiotech project proposal, which was submitted for evaluation by the European Commission on 8 September. The title of the proposal is: “Unlocking the hidden potential of aquatic symbioses”.
- The DOORS (Developing Optimal and Open Research Support for the Black Sea) project proposal was also submitted on 8 September with input from EMBRC.

Recent events

- Nicolas Pade participated in the IMBRSea graduation ceremony on 28 August. The event celebrated the achievements of 92 students and included a few special prizes.
- Nicolas Pade, Sidonie Gras and Alexandra Vasic participated in the ERIC Forum Policy Seminar on 14-15 September. The seminar, titled “Funding models for access to ERIC transnational services”, covered topics including national funding schemes, regional funds, ERC funding, TNA and Horizon Europe.

Upcoming events

- Kick-Off of AtlantECO project, 21-25 September 2020, online
- ASSEMBLE Plus General Assembly, 13-15 October 2020, online
- Sea Tech Week, 12-16 October 2020, Brest, France
- European Algae Industry Summit, 20-21 October 2020, Reykjavik, Iceland
- EMBRC-ERIC General Assembly VII, 2-3 December 2020, Paris, France

The next HQ Update will be available by Friday 18 December 2020.