



EDITORIAL – *MarinERA half way through...*

MarinERA has successfully reached its mid-term stage. This was appreciated by a special review panel initiated by the European Commission. MarinERA partners owe this success to a large extent to the dedicated and skilled coordination team from Ifremer and Marine Board-ESF. When mentioning dedication and inspiring enthusiasm our appreciation should also be directed towards our knowledgeable Technical Committee Chair Geoffrey O'Sullivan. His task has not been an easy one, as he stated when he reminded me of our initial agreement for me to take over as Technical Committee Chair after two years. These first two years seem to have passed by almost too quickly. Looking back we can see that the project has matured, the partners have exchanged information and learned from each others' expertise and procedures. Over the summer this was also documented in the first MarinERA report with a description of the members' marine RTD programmes. Meanwhile a number of workshops have been held on the potential barriers and enablers for cooperation which will soon result in a second report.

A final meeting on common evaluation procedures and benchmarks will also be held in Finland in January 2007. Moreover it should be mentioned that on various occasions we have had very fruitful interactions with other ERA-NETs where we tried to combine efforts to strengthen each others' activities rather than duplicating them.

The initial two year period of trustbuilding has resulted in common appreciation that in the end we all share the same goal of a European Marine Research Area. We should therefore be confident now in taking the next challenging steps towards joint activities. The groundwork for common procedures and a joint approach will soon be completed. Potential topics for joint calls have been identified and will be further elaborated. It will be a difficult but rewarding task to develop joint calls so that at the end of MarinERA lifetime the results will become very visible and even more successful.

Raymond Schorno (NWO - the Netherlands)
Technical Committee Chair as of December 2006

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Transfer of Chairmanship of MarinERA Technical Committee from Geoffrey O'Sullivan (Marine Institute, Ireland) to Raymond Schorno (NWO, the Netherlands) with Niamh Connolly – deputy coordinator.

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MarinERA OVERVIEW

How to position MarinERA in the European Marine Science landscape?

In addition to progress towards common initiatives between its partners, MarinERA aims to provide an overarching structure for pan-European initiatives related to marine sciences (see Figure 1). MarinERA serves this aim not only through interactions with the project's observers, but also by organising external MarinERA fora; two such fora have been organised over the first 18 months (15 December 2005 and 9 March 2006). These events aimed at providing a platform for marine related ERA-NETs and gave the

opportunity to various ERA-NET teams to exchange best practices and learn from each other. These activities also enhanced MarinERA partners' awareness of the work involved in developing joint programmes. Another forum is to be held in February 2007 within the frame of both MarinERA and AMPERA (EU FP6 ERA-NET on accidental marine pollution) to address potential complementary approaches amongst marine related ERA-NETs.

MarinERA Secretariat

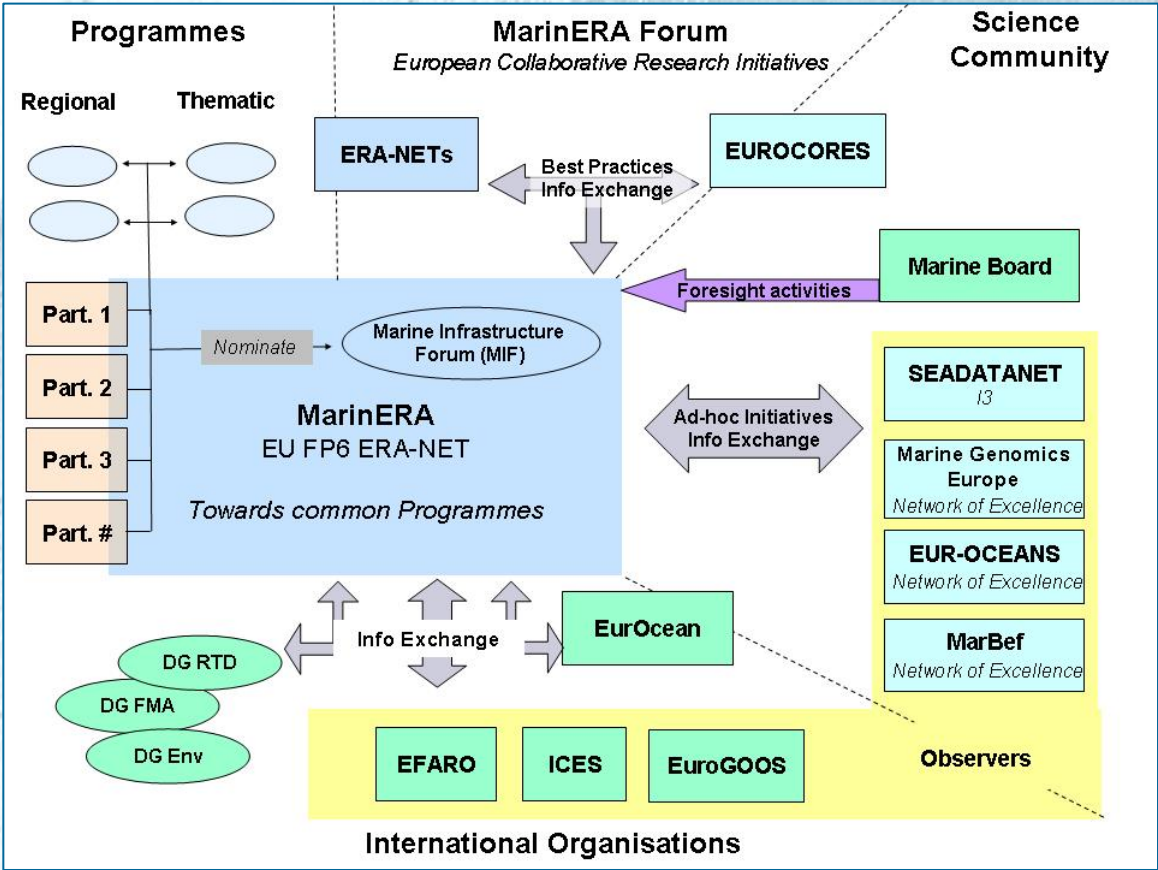


Figure 1: MarinERA position in the European Marine Science landscape

MarinERA PROGRESS

Publication - “A Preliminary Description of MarinERA Member State Marine Research Funding Programmes and Implementation Procedures” (May 2006)

A defining characteristic of MarinERA partners national competitive Marine Research Programmes, as described in this report, is their inherent dynamics and flexibility. All Programmes are continually evolving and changing in response to new research challenges, increased understanding of the marine environment, improved technologies and social and economic conditions. Hence, this Report describes the situation as it is now. As Research Programme Managers increasingly recognise the advantages of international cooperation in sharing the cost (and risk) of major research projects and in providing access to a greater pool of research expertise and specialist infrastructures, it is anticipated that co-operation will increasingly become the norm. MarinERA provides a forum in which Marine Research Funding Programme Managers can share information and “best practice” on how National Funding Programmes are managed and implemented. It thus represents a catalyst for the organisation of multilateral European Marine Research Funding Programmes that will characterise the European Marine Research Area of the future. Furthermore, it is hoped that national non competitive research funding will be addressed in a second phase of the work in 2007.

Report's Executive Summary - Extracts

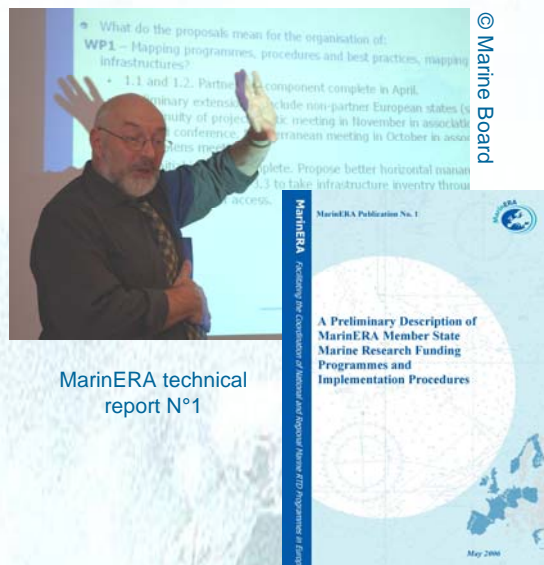
Download report from:

http://www.marinera.net/dissemination/tec_reports.html

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Working aboard a buoy



MarinERA technical report N°1

MarinERA Infrastructure Strategy

Marine infrastructures and research facilities represent one of the driving forces for the implementation of joint activities and possible future common strategies among MarinERA partners. In September 2006 the first MarinERA Infrastructure workshop was held in Brest on “Observing and Monitoring Systems” with national experts and Networks of Excellence representatives. Both thematic related issues and regional case studies were presented along with recommendations. A first set of recommendations addressed the reinforcement between similar initiatives on deep-sea observatories. The group also welcomed the challenging initiative to launch an Integrated Observing Systems and Monitoring Programme in the North Sea, as a test site. Moreover, the group considered the access to a shared Regional Class Fleet as a major challenge in the future. Topic of the second MarinERA Infrastructure Workshop will be chosen to support the MarinERA joint call accordingly.

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MarinERA Infrastructures Portal:

<http://www.marinera.net/marine/index.html>

Infrastructures Workshop presentations:

http://www.marinera.net/dissemination/infrastructure_workshops.html

MarinERA PROGRESS

MarinERA Review

In the lifecycle of an ERA-NET there are normally three major reporting periods: 1 - 18 months, 19 – 36 months and from month 37 to the end of the project.

In April 2006 MarinERA reached the deadline of the first reporting period. Several reports were sent to the European Commission for assessment. In June 2006 a review meeting was then organised by the European Commission in Brussels. This fruitful meeting provided ground for frank discussions on strategies, on ERA-NETs in general, and on the specificities of MarinERA's approach and particular objectives in support of marine research challenges.

Key observations and recommendations from the reviewers included:

- The support for MarinERA infrastructure initiative, in particular the transversal approach recently instigated.
- The support for the fast track initiative to identify a first clustering of programmes.
- The relevance of MarinERA's link with MariFish (EU FP6 ERA-NET on marine fisheries science).

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Barriers to Cooperation

Task 2.2 *Barriers to Cooperation* is close to completion. After three workshops and a number of informal meetings, two documents will be produced. The first one, currently under review, is entitled *Barriers to Cooperation in MarinERA Partner States Marine RTD Programmes*. The second one will be a position paper on barriers and enablers to cooperation (foreseen publication: February 2007).



MarinERA meetings in Sant-Feliu (Spain, Oct. 2006)



MarinERA 3th TC meeting (Belgium, April 06)

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To achieve these goals a questionnaire was developed and distributed to obtain partners information on administration and programmes. From this, the barriers were identified. These, and the respective enablers, were analysed according to the four funding models identified by the consortium.

Beatriz Morales Nin (MEC, Spain)
WP2 leader

Towards MarinERA joint call

2006 has seen the activation of all MarinERA Work Packages. This mode of increased activity amongst the partners will result in concrete outputs regarding retrospective clustering of projects and fast track development of common initiatives.

Following the 4th MarinERA Technical Committee meeting (Spain, 5-6 October 2006), MarinERA partners identified two research themes with potential for joint programmes based on a possible call in late 2007, with possible funding in 2008. The identified themes were:

- *Regional Drivers to Ecosystem Change*;
- *RAPID II* - Thermohaline Circulation in North Atlantic.

In a separate development, MariFish is likely to investigate a pilot project on Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries focused on the region encompassing Celtic Sea, English Channel, North Sea and Baltic Sea.

If the theme *Regional drivers to Ecosystem Change* is selected by the MarinERA consortium, this may facilitate the development of potential complementarity between calls within MarinERA and those developed by MariFish.

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AGENDA

14 December – Brussels

2nd MarinERA Steering Committee meeting.

19 December – Brussels

European Commission's meeting on *FP7 ERA-NET scheme in support to Research Infrastructures activities* – presentation of MarinERA Infrastructure Strategy

9-10 January – Helsinki

Task 2.3 *Common Evaluation Procedures and Performance Indicators*: workshop on Performance Indicators.

16 January – Brussels

European Commission / IGLO Conference on *Marine Sciences and FP7* - MarinERA presentation

February (date to be confirmed) – Galway

Task 3.1 *A posteriori clustering of existing projects*: first meeting.

February (date to be confirmed)– Brussels

MarinERA – AMPERA forum.

19-20 April– Oslo:

5th MarinERA Technical Committee meeting.

GLOSSARY

DG: Directorate General

EU: European Union

EFARO: European Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Organisations

Env: Environment

EUROCORES: ESF EUROpean COllaborative RESearch scheme

EuroGOOS: European Global Ocean Observing System

FMA: Fisheries and Maritime Affairs

FP6, FP7: 6th, 7th Framework Programme

ICES: International Council for the Exploration of the Sea

I3: Integrated Infrastructures Initiative (EU FP6)

MIF: MarinERA Marine Infrastructure Forum

NoE: Network of Excellence (EU FP6)

RTD: Research and Technology Development

WP: Work Package

ANNOUCEMENT

MarinERA is in the process of preparing a poster profiling the aims and objectives of nine marine related ERA-NETs - available soon from the MarinERA Secretariat.

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Copies of this newsletter (and previous issue) can be downloaded from MarinERA website

<http://www.marinera.net/dissemination/newsletters.html>



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