

From marine observations to user applications: The role of the European Marine Observation and data network (EMODnet) in marine knowledge transfer

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The continued safe and sustainable exploitation of European marine resources to support societal needs requires an in-depth knowledge of our seas and oceans, their state and conditions, their variability and their vulnerabilities. Marine knowledge is developed, largely, through monitoring and observation of our seas and oceans. These observation and monitoring activities generate raw data which can be assembled and contextualized to create data products and information. Ultimately, these information products are essential to improve our understanding of the marine environment and the extent and impact of human activities therein.

However, data from marine observation and monitoring activities can only contribute to the creation and application of marine knowledge if they can be found, accessed and applied by users. A recent report on the 'State of Europe's Seas' by the European Environment Agency¹ (EEA) highlighted the lack of data on the marine environment as being a major obstacle to achieving the objectives of the EU's Blue Growth Strategy². This strategy recognizes the potential of Europe's wealth of marine observations to strengthen the growth of a sustainable marine and maritime economy.

EMODnet is the key implementation mechanism of the EU Marine Knowledge 2020 strategy. Based on the principle of collecting data once and using it many times for many reasons, EMODnet's key objective is make available pre-collected marine observation data and data-products free and without restrictions on use for multiple actors from multiple sectors. EMODnet represents a network of 160 organisations, working together to collate and provide access to marine data and products, all of which are accessible via a single access point, the EMODnet Central Portal (www.emodnet.eu). EMODnet sits in a complex marine observation and information landscape, with many potentially overlapping initiatives at local, national and regional level, together with over-arching European portals and repositories including; COPERNICUS Marine Environment and Monitoring Service (CMEMS)³, SeaDataNet⁴, PANGAEA⁵ and the European Atlas of the Seas⁶.

Despite the abundance of initiatives, data portals and repositories are still largely unknown and underexploited by a vast range of actors who rely on marine knowledge during all stages of their activities, from planning to operation. Significant efforts are still required to better communicate the existence of these initiatives and the benefits of using already existing data resources.

Through an interactive session exploring the EMODnet portals, participants will be invited to consider how well EMODnet currently communicates the resources that it makes available to potential users from policy, industry, science and civil society. What are the key factors for success in engaging with users by means of a data portal; a central tool to communicate between marine data providers and users? The bottlenecks to effective uptake of data and data-products by users will also be examined through flash-presentations of specific use-cases. This interactive session will raise the visibility of EMODnet to workshop participants and highlight how it may be able to support their own work. Ultimately feedback from participants will support EMODnet in developing more effective communication and knowledge transfer mechanisms.

References

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- 3 <http://www.copernicus.eu/main/marine-monitoring>
- 4 <http://www.seadatanet.org/>
- 5 <https://www.pangaea.de/>
- 6 http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/atlas/maritime_atlas/