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Since its official launch in November 2004, the MarinERA project, through the involvement and commitment of the 15 partner institutions (13 countries) and their representatives, has developed its structure and gained momentum towards its overall objective: **the Coordination of National and Regional Marine RTD Activities in Europe**.

The first year's progress involved primarily background achievements on Project Management (such as developing the various working committees and the web portal, etc.) and Information Exchange. Unlike most ERA-NETs, which have either a thematic or regional focus, MarinERA's scope is very broad as it encompasses Marine Science as a whole, including programme management, infrastructure needs and research funding strategies. This broad scope is further reflected in the MarinERA partnership, since the consortium involves four Research Councils, four Research Agencies, six Government Ministries and an international research consortium, the Marine Board-ESF.

EDITORIAL



These specificities are challenging for the project's partners: first in terms of setting up the project's structure, identifying and involving the relevant roles, and also in terms of identifying relevant information to be gathered on programmes and infrastructures.

The scene has been set over the past year. 2006 will see the activation of all the Work Packages together with the involvement of all the project partners. This full speed mode will result in concrete outputs such as retrospective clustering of existing programmes and "fast track" development of common calls for programmes.

Making a difference – As stated above, the MarinERA scope is broad in terms of disciplines, and also in terms of its geographic representation. This broadness, the maturity of the partnership and the network the project has created (in particular with the Forum of Programme Managers, the Forum of Marine Infrastructure Managers and the Advisory Group) enable MarinERA to take a pro-active role within the European marine science landscape, a role that goes far beyond the formal aims and objective of the project. Indeed, by catalysing information and know-how exchange between not only other marine-related ERA-NETs, but also Networks of Excellence and the EUROCORES scheme, MarinERA sets itself as a key facilitator and an important platform to support marine science in the European Research Area.

**Maurice Héral – Coordinator
Ifremer (France)**

MarinERA IN BRIEF

MarinERA, a European Union 6th Framework Programme (FP6) ERA-NET project, operates from 2004 to 2008. It involves 15 partners in 13 EU Member States, coordinated by the French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea (Ifremer) and the Marine Board of the European Science Foundation (MB – ESF). In addition, a range of Advisory Members, including International networks (EFARO, EuroGOOS, ICES), marine FP6 ERA-NETs (BONUS, ECORD-Net, Amp-ERA, MARIFISH and European Polar Consortium), FP6 Networks of Excellence (NoEs), an FP6 Integrated Infrastructures Initiative (SEADATANET) and three national advisory members (German Research Foundation – DFG, UK Inter-Agency Committee on Marine Science and Committee Technology – IACMST, French Ministry of Research – MNRT) have associated themselves with the project.

MarinERA aims to:

- Provide a strategic and operational network of national, EU and international initiatives;
- Reduce fragmentation and duplication;
- Enhance coordination of marine research infrastructures;
- Facilitate reciprocal opening of national marine research programmes;
- Establish common marine research funding programmes.

MarinERA's overall objective is to:

Network the Partners Marine RTD Programme Managers and build confidence to create a favourable climate in which to pursue the central MarinERA objective of enhanced co-operation and reciprocal opening of Member State Marine RTD Funding Programmes.

MarinERA Partners

- 15 partners
- 13 RTD funding organisations
- 13 countries
- +
- 15 advisory members



- **French Institute for Exploitation of the Sea (Ifremer), France - Coordination**
- **Marine Board - ESF, pan-European – Executive management**
- Marine Institute, Ireland
- Research Council of Norway (RCN), Norway
- Jülich Research Centre GmbH –Project Management Organisation Jülich (FZJ-PTJ), Germany
- Spanish Ministry of Education and Science (MEC), Spain
- Academy of Finland (AKA), Finland
- Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), The Netherlands
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), UK
- General Secretariat for Research and Technology, Ministry of Development (GSRT), Greece
- Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), Portugal
- Belgian Federal Public Planning Service Science Policy (BELSPO), Belgium
- Science and Innovation Administration, Ministry of the Flemish Community (AWI), Belgium
- Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST), Malta
- Ministry of Scientific Research and Information Technology (MSRIT), Poland

Work Phases

The steps necessary to implement the MarinERA process are addressed through 5 Work Packages (WP).

- **WP 1 - INFORMATION EXCHANGE – Marine Institute (Ireland)**
(See next section)

- **WP2 - STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES – MEC (Spain)**
(See next section)

- **WP3 - JOINT ACTIVITIES – NWO (Netherlands)**

Based on actual programme and infrastructure issues, WP3 will result in the **implementation of joint activities and trans-national interdisciplinary research** with regard to both research programmes and infrastructures.

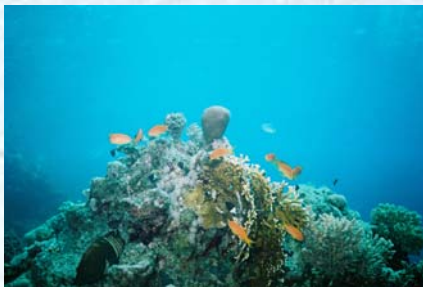
- **WP4 - TRANS-NATIONAL - ACTIVITIES - NERC (UK)**

By accelerating the **mutual opening of national marine RTD Programmes**, WP4 will **enhance trans-national coherence between Marine Programmes**.

- **WP5 – MANAGEMENT OF MARINERA – Ifremer (France)**

“WP5 establishes and operates the **strategic and management aspects of MarinERA**”.

Secretariat
Marine Board - ESF



Telmo Carvalho

[1] Similar conclusions were drawn in the recent EU Report “Increasing the impact of National Research Programmes through Transnational Co-operation and Opening” (October 2005), EU Contract No. Ref: PP CT M 204 004.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Information Exchange (WP1) represents the baseline aspect of MarinERA, providing essential background information on MarinERA partner marine research funding programmes (Table 1). It is therefore the building block for future co-operation and coordination between Member State Marine Research Programmes.

Deliverables include:

- A description of Member State Marine Research Funding Programmes.
- Inputs to *A Guide for Best Practice in Marine Research Programme Management*.
- A directory of Specialist Marine Research Infrastructures.

Working with MarinERA Marine Infrastructures Managers Forum (MIF), WP1 has identified key portal sites for Specialist Marine Infrastructures (Table 2) and is currently working to develop a directory to provide access to the specialist marine research infrastructures available in our respective Member States”.

As we go to press, the WP1 Team is analysing MarinERA questionnaire returns. It is clear that European Marine Research Programmes are **diverse, complex and dynamic, with a wide range of funding structures and organisations** [1].



Participants at Brest meetings, June 2005.

This diversity of funding organisations is reflected in the fact that some of the partners are Research Councils, some are Offices within Government Ministries and some are independent Research Institutes or Offices with a mandate and budget to fund competitive marine research (Table 1).

Indeed, as we go forward, one of the most challenging obstacles to be addressed will be that of the synchronisation of Funding Programmes. With different start/finish dates and cycles (10, 7, 5, 3 – year and annual), aligning joint calls and committing funding to joint projects will demand an innovative approach.

The WP1 Report “*Preliminary Description of Marine Research Funding Programmes and Implementation Procedures*” is due in April 2006.

MarinERA Coverage: Whilst WP1 has focussed on describing the marine research programmes of MarinERA partner states, it is hoped to extend these descriptions to other European coastal states in the latter part of 2006.

Geoffrey O’Sullivan
Marine Institute (Ireland)

Nina Hedlund
Norway Research Council

Barbara Tanner
Project Management Organisation
Jülich (Germany)

COUNTRY	NAME OF RTD PROGRAMME	DURATION	MANAGED BY	WEBSITE
Belgium	SPSDII. Second scientific support plan for a sustainable development policy	2000 - 2006	Belgian Science Policy	www.belspo.be
	SSD. Science for a sustainable development	2005 - 2013		
	STEREO. Research programme for Earth Observation	2001 - 2006		
Greece	Natural Environment & Sustainable Development	2003 - 2007	General Secretariat for Research and Technology	www.gsrt.gr
	Food- Agriculture Development & Aquaculture			
Portugal	Programme for the Enhancement of Marine Science and Technology (PDCTM)	2005 - 2007	Science and Technology Foundation (FCT)	www.fct.mctes.pt
Spain	Spanish Programme of Marine Resources and Technology	2004 - 2007	Ministry of Education and Science	www.mec.es www.csic.es www.ieo.es www.boe.es
Finland	BIREME. Baltic Sea Research Programme	2003 – 2005 Russian collaboration cover 2006	Academy of Finland	www.aka.fi
Netherlands	System Earth National Cruise Programme	2003 – 2007 1999 - 2009	Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research	www.nwo.nl
Norway	Oceans & Coastal Areas (2006 - 2015)	2006 - 2015	The Research Council of Norway	www.forskningssradet.no
UK	Science for a Sustainable Future	2000 - 2004	Natural Environment Research Council	www.nerc.ac.uk/funding
Germany	Marine Research	Annual 1993-Replacement by new program	Julich (PTJ), Division MGS	http://www.fz-juelich.de/ptj/
Ireland	Marine RTDI Measure (2000 - 2006)	2000 - 2006	Marine Institute	www.marine.ie/marinertdi
Malta	National RTDI Programme for Malta	Annual	Malta Council for Science & Technology (MCST)	www.mcst.org.mt
France	French Oceanographic Fleet Scientific Use National Coastal Environment Programme (PNEC)	Annual 2004 - 2008	Ifremer	www.ifremer.fr/

Table 1. Summary of MarinERA partner Marine Research Programmes (as received to date)
Colour coding: Dark blue (Ministries), Blue (Research Councils), Light blue (Research Institutions).

	RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE	INFORMATION SOURCE OR WEB-SITE
1	Research Vessels	EurOcean RV database www.eurocean.org
2	Large Scale Mobile Instruments	To be addressed by MarinERA/EurOcean
3	Underwater Vehicles	EurOcean ROV-AUV database http://www.eurocean.org/
4	Sub-sea Observation Systems	European Sea Floor Observatory Network www.abdn.ac.uk/ecosystem/esonet
5	Aerial Reconnaissance	European Fleet for Airborne Research http://www.eufar.net/
6	Monitoring and Observing Networks	European Directory of Ocean Observing Systems http://www.edios.org/
7	Testing and Experimental Facilities	Liaise with MARTEC (ERANET dealing with maritime infrastructure)
8	Marine Laboratories and Institutes	Network of Marine Research Institutions and Documents http://www.marenet.de/MareNet/
9	Archiving & Data Processing Facilities	Pan-European Infrastructure for Ocean and Marine Data Management http://www.seadatanet.org/

Table 2. Preliminary classification of Marine Research Infrastructures and sources of information

STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES

WP2 will identify **future priorities and opportunities to coordinate Europe's needs for marine research** (including infrastructure aspects), in addition to potential barriers to co-operation. In tandem with undertaking an analysis of research management approaches and identifying “best practice” at national levels, WP2 will result in the development of Common Evaluation Procedures and Performance Indicators for co-operative programmes.



Aurélien Carbonnière

WP2 is led by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science (MEC) and involves the Academy of Finland (AKA), together with the Norway Research Council and Ifremer (France).

The first WP2 meeting will be held in Madrid on March 2nd, 2006. The aim is to coordinate the activities of the different tasks based on WP1 inputs. Answers from the “Barriers to co-operation” questionnaire will be reviewed and a timetable for future activities will be established.

**Secretariat
Marine Board – ESF**

MEETINGS WITH OTHER ERA-NETS & NoEs

MarinERA aims to establish and reinforce links between several European initiatives and schemes in order to share information, exchange best practice and avoid duplication of efforts.

Hence, the project acts as a platform for exchanging and disseminating information among marine-environmental **ERA-NETs, Networks of Excellence (NoEs)** and where relevant with the **EUROCORES [2]** scheme.

In December 2005, the MarinERA Secretariat launched the **first forum of ERA-NETs** gathering marine-environmental ERA-NETs coordinators and EC representatives. The aim of the forum is to enable ERA-NET coordinators to meet on a regular basis and to exchange information of mutual interest including: best practice and standardisation in information sharing (questionnaires), common development of databases, methods of co-operation with the NoEs, interaction/connection with EU initiatives, common strategic activities and implementation procedures, etc.

The **second forum**, scheduled on March 9th, 2006 in Brussels, will also involve **EUROCORES** coordinators.

In the meantime, the **MarinERA Co-ordination team** (Ifremer and the Marine Board-ESF) is consolidating its interaction with the different **MarinERA Advisory Members**. The first meeting took place on February 14th and 15th, 2006, in Brussels.

Finally, the MarinERA Secretariat maintains its proactive and pragmatic approach regarding the evolving Marine European landscape through its regular contacts with **European Commission Directorates** (DG Research, DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs and DG Environment).

**Secretariat
Marine Board - ESF**

[2] EUROCORES (ESF Collaborative Research) Scheme is an innovative ESF instrument to stimulate collaboration between researchers based in Europe to maintain European research at an international competitive level.

MarinERA PORTAL

According to the MarinERA dissemination strategy, an electronic portal is an important component of the MarinERA project, being the main tool for communicating and disseminating information among the project participants and with other end-users exterior to the project.

The website is on-line since June 2005, and is operated by EurOcean – FCT, via WP5.

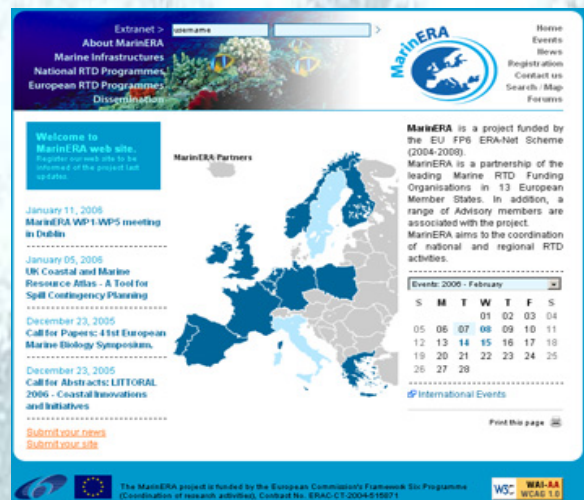


Figure 1. MarinERA website homepage

- Principles considered for the definition of the specifications of the portal were to:

- Be the focal point of information and dissemination of the results of the MarinERA project;
- Build up a structure with two main functionalities: dissemination of information with open access and a working area of restricted access to the participants of MarinERA;
- Be a high quality web site in terms of ease of use and speed of access to information, and in terms of quality of the on-line information;
- Be a portal wherein the contents can be managed by authorised users of the MarinERA project.

- The portal consists of:

- A public access website with the domain (URL): www.marinera.net
- An Extranet/Virtual Office of restricted access to the project members, accessed via a login area located in the portal home page.
- An administration area permitting the input and editing of information (according to user privileges of access), as well as to change the page structure if necessary and to modify access privileges to users.



Figure 2. MarinERA extranet homepage

In the public Website a number of functionalities are available to all users: News, Events; a Forum tool; Forms to submit news/events or websites [3].

During the first semester of 2006, the public website will disseminate the project outputs: technical reports (e.g. National RTD Programmes) and on-line databases (e.g. Marine Research Infrastructures).

Telmo Carvalho
EurOcean – FCT (Portugal)

NEWS FROM OUR PARTNERS

Norwegian “Oceans & Coastal Areas” Research Programme

The first call for proposals for the new Norwegian *Oceans & Coastal Areas Research Programme (2006 – 2015)* (www.forskningsradet.no/havkyst) has resulted in over 180 research project proposals.

The proposals are currently being reviewed by independent international experts and it is anticipated that some 34 projects will be funded. Results will be posted at: www.forskningsradet.no



Vidar Vassvik

The *Oceans & Coastal Areas Research Programme* has an enviable span of 10 years from 2006 to 2015 and an annual budget of circa € million/annum. This programme is just one of a number of Marine Research Programmes managed by the Norwegian Research Council. Other Norwegian Research Council Programmes cover Aquaculture, Fisheries, and Maritime Transport.

Marine research funding in Norway has been increasing over recent years demonstrating the commitment of the Norwegian Government to the sustainable development of marine resources. Overall investment in Norway in 2003 was €200 millions or 6 % of the national research budget.

The *Oceans & Coastal Areas Research Programme* is also designed to better coordinate national oceans and coastal research, to contribute to greater interdisciplinary and institutional cooperation and facilitate Norwegian participation in international research. The *Oceans & Coastal Areas Programme* is also designed to improve the efficiency of investments and of the use of specialist marine research infrastructure needed to monitor global and regional oceans.

Nina Hedlund
Research Council of Norway

[3] <http://www.marinera.net/forum/index.jsp>

Launch of Spanish RV Sarmiento de Gamboa

The *Sarmiento de Gamboa*, Spain's newest Research Vessel (RV) was officially launched in Vigo on January 30th, 2006.

The *Sarmiento de Gamboa*, is multidisciplinary RV with a diesel propulsion twin engines (DC), and low vessel-noise radiated into the sea. It can support oceanography, fishery, seismic and geological missions. It is also designed to support deep sea unmanned vehicles (ROVs, AUVs). There is already a significant level of co-operation with Ifremer in order to accommodate the deployment of the submersible Victor-6000. The *Sarmiento de Gamboa* can accommodate 15 crew members and 25 scientists.

The design and construction of this new vessel have taken into account matters such as: interoperability, safety, reliability and ability to undertake multidisciplinary research.

**Secretariat
Marine Board - ESF**

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Main Technical Specifications:

Overall length: 70.50 m

Beam: 15.5 m

Draught: 4.90 m

Depth to design load-line: 7.90 m

Gross Tonnage: 2.979 GT

Total Power: 3 x 1400 diesel w Propulsion twin engines DC electric 2 x 1200 kW fixed propeller

Service speed: 15 knots

Range of operation:

11500 miles / 12 knots /40 days

GLOSSARY

AUV: Autonomous Underwater Vehicle
DG: Directorate General
EU: European Union
EFARO: European Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Organisation
EuroGOOS: European Global Ocean Observing System
FP6: 6th Framework Programme
IACMST: Inter Agency Committee on Marine Science and Technology
ICES: International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
I3: Integrated Infrastructures Initiative (EC FP6)
MIF: MarinERA Marine Infrastructure Managers Forum
MPM: MarinERA Marine Programme Managers
NoE: Network of Excellence (EC FP6)
RTD: Research and Technology Development
ROV: Remote Operated Vehicle
RV: Research Vessel
WP: Work Package



Brest, 2005



Athens, 2005



Brussels, 2005

