



**LONG-TERM VISION  
AND STRATEGIC PLAN**

2021  
2023



# **EMSO ERIC LONG-TERM VISION AND STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2023**

## **Observing the Ocean to Save the Earth**

EMSO ERIC

European Multidisciplinary Seafloor and water-column Observatory

European Research Infrastructure Consortium (EMSO ERIC)



ERIC established by  
the European Commission  
Implementing Decision  
(EU) 2016/1757

Designed by Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia (INGV)

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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.5654745

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## THE VISION

**EMSO ERIC will become a world-class Marine Research Infrastructure providing high-quality information on the significance and the dynamics of the deep oceans and the water column, to address global ocean environmental challenges that affect the Earth System, and impact the welfare of society.**

High-quality and timely marine environmental information will nourish mitigation and protection strategies in the face of significant challenges and threats, such as natural disasters, habitat loss, human and species migration, and food security, together with the deprivation due to marine-related industry activities, tourism, and recreation.

EMSO ERIC will provide bio-geophysical, and chemical information needed to monitor the impact of climate change on the ocean system, mitigation of geo-hazards risk, and progress in deep-sea habitat mapping.

EMSO ERIC will promote the creation of new hi-tech jobs, and spur the development of innovative applications and services in strategic industrial sectors such as marine robotics, blue biotech, offshore aquaculture, seabed resources, smart submarine cables, marine renewable energy, pharmaceutical, fishing and tourism.

## THE MISSION

EMSO ERIC aims at promoting the advance in the knowledge of deep ocean and water column processes, through the monitoring, analysis and dissemination of data retrieved by observatories, or similar instruments, able to ensure long-term repeated observations of the state of the ocean. These observations, which include Essential Ocean Variables (EOVs) and other physical and environmental variables, follow FAIR<sup>1</sup> principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable).

The overarching goal is to better understand the complex interactions between the geosphere, the biosphere, the hydrosphere and atmosphere, and to address the major environmental challenges in the thematic areas of Climate Change, Marine Ecosystems and Geo-hazards. EMSO ERIC approach is based on the generation of high-value data by a distributed network of regional facilities operated and maintained by its partners, but sharing the same quality level and a harmonized set of observables.

EMSO ERIC continuous time-series multidisciplinary data, going from the sea surface to the deep seabed, and sub-seafloor address many key processes that affect the entire ocean. The volume of data and information provided by EMSO ERIC allows the description of processes ranging from extreme episodic events to slow trends, difficult to distinguish from the underlying variability of short-term processes.

The continuous, high-resolution, long-time-se-

ries collection of multiple variables at chosen fixed sites across a breadth of environments pursued by EMSO, allows for the development of new approaches to shed light on the complexities of the Earth System.

EMSO ERIC multi-parameter long time-series document and study a broad range of critical episodic events that cannot be addressed by classical short-term marine expeditions: climate change, benthic storms, biodiversity changes, anthropogenic pollution, and gas hydrate (methane) release, dense water cascades, plankton blooms, water mass movements and the influence of eddies, earthquakes, submarine slides and tsunamis.

Innovation fostered by EMSO ERIC will provide the means and the skills to study the complex and fragile deep ocean environments, now under scrutiny related to seabed mining exploration.

EMSO ERIC aims at ensuring the following tasks:

- To monitor and sustain *in situ* a long time series of oceanographic and biogeochemical variables, and geo-hazards<sup>2,3</sup>, enabling the understanding of anthropogenic impacts of climate change.
- To offer comprehensive *in situ* biogeochemical datasets on the European seas to improve biogeochemical and ecosystem modelling. Dissolved CO<sub>2</sub> monitoring is useful to monitor progressive ocean aci-

dification and promote the preservation of marine ecosystems.

- To complement national seismological networks data on seafloor acceleration occurring near the EMSO ERIC Regional Facilities that may impact coastal areas within the European Seas.
- To advance science-based Ocean Policy, providing relevant deep-sea information to EOOS<sup>4</sup>.
- To enhance and promote Copernicus applications, products, and services, focusing on the role of deep ocean processes.
- To support the implementation of European research and innovation policies and strategies (e.g., Marine Strategy Framework Directive ).
- To develop technologies, fostered by the needs of EMSO ERIC partners, to improve the environmental monitoring, measurements quality, and supporting logistics fostering a multiplatform approach.

Climate change, leading to the alteration of ocean ecosystems in different habitats, increased marine hazards and ocean pollution, is the urgent scientific and societal challenge that is at the heart of EMSO ERIC mission.

# REGIONAL FACILITIES

EMSO ERIC distributed infrastructure currently comprises twelve Regional Facilities and three shallow-water test sites, strategically located all the way from the southern entrance of the Arctic Ocean across to the North Atlantic through the Mediterranean to the Black Sea (Fig. 1).

Regional facilities provide essential data and services to understand global environmental processes and to stimulate the development of new technology, innovation and knowledge that

will allow Europe to lead marine environmental research. EMSO ERIC is the coordinating hub of this integrated system of specialized regional facilities. Diverse disciplinary and operational expertise and a broad range of marine environments across regional facilities allow the accomplishing scientific and technological objectives on scales larger than those achievable individually by each organization or country.



Figure 1. EMSO Regional Facilities (empty circles), Test Sites distribution (solid circles)



# SERVICES

The ingredients of EMSO ERIC are:

- The establishment of a comprehensive multi-sensor system in the water column, seafloor, and sub-seafloor as part of an integrated, and distributed ocean observatory.
- The establishment of a single entry-point for the provision of reliable high-resolution data at desirable sampling rates, consistency, comparability, and continuity at the regional scale.
- The assessment of baseline data, and the track of critical changes in the ocean environment.
- The delivery of tools and knowledge to enable Europe to evaluate and develop outlook strategies for the mitigation of harmful global impacts by preparing and adapting to these changes.
- The support and acceleration of innovation through scientific and technological research.

EMSO ERIC coordinates the pooling of resources, capacities and expertise, and the assembling of harmonised and interoperable data into a comprehensive regional ocean image, which will be made available to researchers and stakeholders worldwide via an open and interoperable data access system.

The services are managed through several Service Groups, devoted respectively to Science, Engineering and Logistics, Data Management, Industry and Innovation and Communication.

## SCIENCE SERVICES

A central objective of EMSO ERIC is to deliver quality-controlled data, qualified information and knowledge, based on sustained monitoring of environmental processes by EMSO ERIC regional facilities. EMSO ERIC Science Services address three main topics (Ocean-Atmosphere, Biosphere/Marine ecosystems, and Geosphere/seafloor Geo-hazards and Geodynamics). Several environmental indicators are relevant for a wide range of scientific interests (see Table 1).

Five categories of science services are identified:

- Two categories of services addressing the Geosphere and the Biosphere, namely: (1) Geo-hazards and Geodynamics and (3) Marine Ecology and Biodiversity.
- Two categories of services addressing the Atmosphere and the Ocean/Climate Change, namely: (2) Water-column Physics and Biogeochemistry and (5) Meteorological parameters.
- A fifth category corresponds to environmental monitoring services that meet or have the potential to meet statutory obligations under several legislative frameworks (Marine Strategy Framework Directive<sup>5</sup>, Common Fisheries Policy<sup>6</sup>, Habitats Directive<sup>7</sup>, Water Framework Directive<sup>8</sup>, and Maritime Spatial Planning Directive<sup>9</sup>), namely:

SCIENCE SERVICE	MULTINODE SERVICE NAME	WORKFLOW	REGIONAL FACILITIES
<b>Geo-hazards and Geodynamics</b>	<b>Seismicity</b>	Geo-hazard service workflow	Azores, Hellenic Arc, Ligurian Sea, OBSEA, Western Ionian Sea
	<b>Tsunami and geodesy</b>	Geo-hazard service workflow	Azores, Hellenic Arc, Ligurian Sea, Western Ionian Sea
<b>Water-column Physics and Biogeochemistry</b>	<b>Ocean temperature and salinity</b>	Operational oceanography and climate workflow	Azores, Black Sea, Canary Islands, Hellenic Arc, Ligurian Sea, OBSEA, Porcupine Abyssal Plain-Sustained Observatory, SmartBay, Western Ionian Sea, Nordic Seas
	<b>Ocean oxygen content</b>	Operational oceanography and climate workflow	Azores, Black Sea, Canary Islands, Hellenic Arc, Ligurian Sea, Porcupine Abyssal Plain-Sustained Observatory, OBSEA, SmartBay, Nordic Seas
	<b>Ocean CO<sub>2</sub> and pH</b>	Operational oceanography and climate workflow	Canary Islands, Ligurian Sea, Porcupine Abyssal Plain-Sustained Observatory, Nordic Seas
	<b>Ocean Nutrients, chlorophyll</b>	Operational oceanography and climate workflow	Ligurian Sea, Porcupine Abyssal Plain-Sustained Observatory, Nordic Seas
<b>Marine Ecology and Biodiversity</b>	<b>Marine Ecology and biodiversity</b>	Statutory monitoring workflow	Azores, Porcupine Abyssal Plain-Sustained Observatory, OBSEA, SmartBay
<b>Environmental indicators (MSFD<sup>5</sup>)</b>	<b>Marine sound</b>	Statutory monitoring workflow	Azores, Canary Islands, Hellenic Arc, Ligurian Sea, Porcupine Abyssal Plain-Sustained Observatory, OBSEA, SmartBay, Western Ionian Sea
	<b>Marine litter</b>	Statutory monitoring workflow	Canary Islands, Porcupine Abyssal Plain-Sustained Observatory
<b>Meteorological parameters</b>	<b>Meteorological parameters and waves</b>	Operational oceanography and climate workflow	Azores, Black Sea, Canary Islands, Hellenic Arc, Ligurian Sea, Western Ionian Sea, Porcupine Abyssal Plain-Sustained Observatory, OBSEA, SmartBay, Nordic Seas

Table 1. Science service categories vs multinodes service, proposed workflow and Regional Facilities involved

(4) Environmental indicators (Marine Strategy Framework Directive<sup>5</sup>).

EMSO ERIC science services will support:

- marine biologists studying marine fauna, ecology and biodiversity, effects of environmental natural and anthropogenic changes on marine life.
- oceanographers studying the ocean waters circulation and the effects of climate change in the oceans such as ocean acidification.
- geophysicists studying geo-hazards, such as earthquakes and tsunamis, the structure and submarine slope stability of ocean floor and the structure and functioning of submarine magmatic systems and volcanoes.

## ENGINEERING AND LOGISTICS SERVICES

All engineering and logistics services are performed according to a set of “best practices” developed earlier within the EMSO community and established in the period 2017-2020. Two categories of services are considered: services for the benefit of the research organizations managing the regional facilities and services for the

benefit of the users and stakeholders, including industry.

Standardization tools when measuring physical and chemical parameters in the ocean increases the potential scientific impact of the data collected at the Regional Facilities. Homogeneous long-term data or *in situ* ocean measurements are critical issues not yet fully solved, since the sensors suffer extreme ambient conditions, corrosion, high pressure, mechanical stress, sudden changes in temperature and their electronic components suffer a remarkable wear.

Long-term maintenance of observatories is planned to be based on a coordinated action plan agreed primarily with European Research Vessel Operators<sup>10</sup>. This will optimize a significant part of maintenance and/or equipment and sensor exchange interventions between nearby regional sites and will aim at a better use of the resources reducing the costs of sea operations.

The standard observatory EGIM (EMSO Generic Instrument Module) developed under the EMSODEV<sup>11</sup> initiative (Fig. 2) is a step forward of the Engineering Services, to ensure increased coordination, integration, interoperability and standardisation across sites and disciplines, and easy extension to other observation sites.

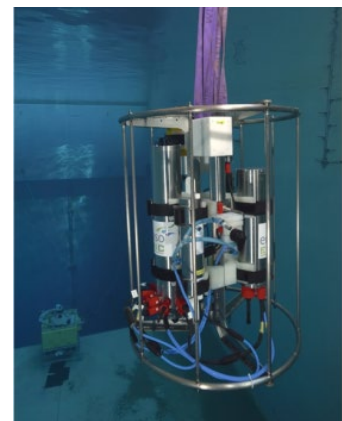
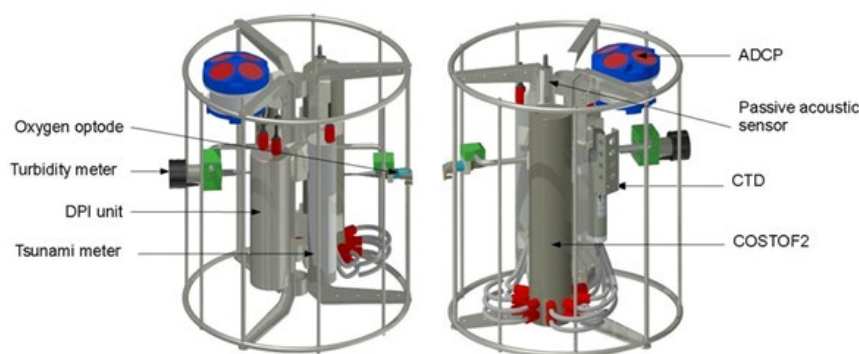


Figure 2. EGIM for the acquisition of different parameters (left) and a photo of the system (right)

## DATA MANAGEMENT SERVICES

EMSO ERIC data management e-infrastructure supports a massive volume of data from geographically dispersed, multi-parameter, platforms, to which it directs users via a single central access point for data and data products visualisation and downloading.

The core of the infrastructure, outlined in Fig. 3 includes the EMSO Data Management Platform, complemented with an ERDDAP<sup>12</sup> federation and a series of data, metadata and Quality Control harmonization processes. The users, portals, and tools can access data and products through requests to the platforms' interfaces. EMSO ERIC data are harmonized and standardized, enhancing the interoperability between different oceanographic data platforms, such as EMODnet<sup>13</sup> and OceanSITES<sup>14</sup>.

The main advantages of this platform are:

- harmonized and unified access to EMSO ERIC data;
- application programming interfaces for easy access to data as they are available;

- development of added value services (e.g., visualization and analysis of multi-node data services);
- enhanced interoperability and streamlined processes to interoperate with third-party systems.

## INDUSTRY AND INNOVATION SERVICES

Industry's main interests relative to EMSO ERIC marine-related services and applications are focused on key sectors like renewable energy, deep-sea mining, sustainable fisheries, marine traffic, and geo-hazard mitigation. Accordingly, the priorities for EMSO in its interaction with the economic sector are encouraging the development of advanced technological research in marine sensors together with the offshore industry. To develop fruitful relationships with the industry, EMSO plans to establish an Industry Innovation Services Contact Hub, consisting of the EMSO Industry Contact Officer, the Engineering and Logistic Officer and the Science Officer.

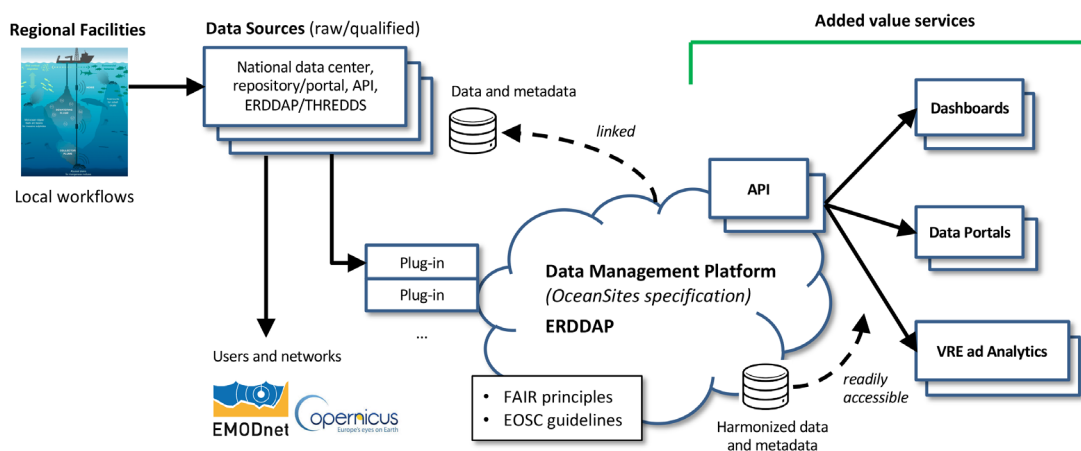


Figure 3. EMSO Data Management: components from the Regional Facilities (left) to the added value access services (right)

The Hub will:

- Produce useful documentations, as providing template documents for frequently occurring technology transfer situations like Material Transfer Agreement, Confidential Disclosure Agreement, or another.
- Organize an annual joint workshop on innovation, knowledge sharing and procurement policy development.
- Develop guidelines for the regional facilities on best practices and lessons learned to build and maintain collaboration with industry.
- Give access to specialist knowledge concerning business development and legal, regulatory, or ethical aspects to the EMSO community.
- Develop, on a case-by-case basis, collaboration and negotiation cases towards the creation of spin-off or start-up EMSO-derived/owned companies.
- Develop an internal Intellectual Property policy in close connection with the Financial Officer.

The Hub is also part of the vision developed by EMSO as one of the main contributors to the H2020 project ENRIITC<sup>15</sup> that aims to build a permanent pan-European network of Industrial Liaison and Contact Officers enabling the industry to become a full partner of research infrastructures whether it is as a user or a supplier.

## COMMUNICATION SERVICES

The EMSO Communication Services aim to increase the visibility of EMSO ERIC in the scientific community, the policymakers and business communities, as well as to the wider public at the European and global level. In particular, the Communication Service Group is committed to keeping the stakeholders informed of the EMSO activities and spreading the message that the European marine sciences are entering into a new knowledge paradigm that encompasses a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to studying the Earth and its processes.

To enhance EMSO's socio-economic impact and promote new business development, outcomes are openly made available to scientists, industry, the public, and politicians through EMSO's communication channels made of targeted communications, the institutional website, the EMSO biannual conference, and the social media platforms. The main objective is to involve and inform stakeholders about all EMSO initiatives and to develop closer relationships between them and the infrastructure.

In addition, EMSO established a dedicated platform for internal communication to address the challenges of being a geographically distributed organization to connect the national and European dimensions of infrastructure. To this end, anthropogenic impacts on the marine ecosystems, research programs, funding opportunities and achievements among Regional Facilities are collected centrally to foster and optimize collaboration in achieving EMSO goals. EMSO internal communication aims to be the glue to hold together all the governance entities in an efficient ongoing collaborative dialogue and effort.



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# EMSO AS A PARTNER OF THE LARGE EUROPEAN MARINE AREA

EMSO ERIC integrates the EOOS Operations Committee which is part of the EOOS<sup>4</sup> governance representing the European ocean monitoring data providers. EMSO contributes to long-term observations, and strengthen coordination, strategy and sustainability using state-of-the-art technology.

EMSO ERIC contributes to the sustainable development of the Planet with objectives in line with those of the "UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)"<sup>16</sup>. To achieve its goals, EMSO promotes the complementarity and harmonization of information from different European Research Infrastructures as an essential objective.

EMSO ERIC pursues to implement the links between European Marine Research Infrastructures, such as EuroARGO ERIC<sup>17</sup>, ICOS-ERIC<sup>18</sup>, EMBRC-ERIC<sup>19</sup>, LifeWatch ERIC<sup>20</sup> and others, to enhance collaborations toward a comprehensive and integrated strategy<sup>21</sup>.

This integration represents a sustainable model to incorporate a variety of ocean variables contributing significantly to fully highlight the 4-D vision of the ocean. EMSO ERIC contributes to ocean observations, from sea-surface to deep-sea, by integrating these observations into comprehensive and manageable data in the European seas in line with the G7 Future of the Oceans initiative. It will also support trans-disciplinary research addressing societal needs to manage a sustainable ocean and to respond effectively to

global environmental changes, according to the Belmont Forum<sup>22</sup> and the International Ocean Governance<sup>23</sup>.

EMSO ERIC interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral infrastructure will demonstrate integration, capacity and potential (scientific, economic, etc.) in line with the indications of the European Marine Board<sup>24, 25</sup> and with the JPI-Oceans Strategy Framework (2021-2025)<sup>26</sup>. EMSO ERIC actively works on the harmonization of existing observation tools and systems (e.g., EOOS<sup>4</sup>, EMODnet<sup>13</sup>, Copernicus Marine Service<sup>27</sup>).

Integration is necessary to take advantage of information, data, web services and communities already available or for es, to avoid duplication of effort. Also, effort must be made to the identification of common areas of research, technological development and innovation, through common investments. A great deal of these approaches is already on the way through projects such as ENVRI-FAIR<sup>28</sup> and EOSC Future<sup>29</sup>.

## PROMOTING BLUE INNOVATION

The objectives of EMSO ERIC are aligned with the use of new and innovative technologies that integrate the acquisition of a wide range of ocean variables across the entire water column and underneath the seabed. These objectives can be achieved by using multiple sensors frame (e.g., EGIM) to measure key variables for aquaculture, fisheries, micro- and nano-plastics, and marine macro- and micro-litter, and to demonstrate a novel multi-platform approach to observe the ocean with multiple underwater vehicles and observatories.

EMSO ERIC intends to include sensors measuring some in situ biogeochemical and biological EOVs (such as dissolved carbon, oxygen, methane) combining with mobile multi-sensor platforms (e.g., ARGO floats, AUVs and gliders). EMSO ERIC will promote the use of the same sensor devices in these different configurations and platforms as an innovative approach to support SDGs 13 and 14 of the United Nations<sup>30</sup>.

## EMSO ERIC AS RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION INITIATIVE

EMSO ERIC follows and promotes the principles established by the European Commission (EC) for Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI). This implies that societal actors (researchers, citizens, policymakers, business, third sector organizations) work together throughout the research and innovation processes to better align both processes and their results with the values, needs and expectations of scientists, a variety of stakeholders and society.

RRI is being promoted in EMSO ERIC via actions on thematic elements (public engagement, open access, gender, ethics, science, education), specifically applied to the scientific and technological fields of ocean observing and monitoring surveillance. EMSO ERIC implements Responsible Research and Innovation as a "cross-cutting issue" in its work programme and objectives. The activities developed by the multi-node distributed infrastructure can focus on thematic elements, as well as on more integrated approaches to promote uptake. This includes user groups and stakeholders in both the public and private sectors and in multiple scientific, technological, policy and educational fields, that can be organized in the well-known quadruple helix framework:

- European, national, regional and local governmental agencies.
- Research centres and Academia.
- Industry and Private sector.
- Civil Society and General public.



# EMSO ERIC DRIVEN BY USER NEEDS

A central objective of EMSO ERIC is to deliver to its stakeholders the data, information, and knowledge that they need, based on sustained monitoring of environmental processes. EMSO stakeholders include marine science researchers, marine technology engineers as well as other ERICs, resource managers, policymakers, marine industries, and the public for both data collection and use, as well as promotion of new uses and users of the infrastructure.

Stakeholders at the European level include those working to meet the statutory obligations of several legislative frameworks including the Marine Strategy Framework Directive<sup>5</sup>, Common Fisheries Policy<sup>6</sup>, Habitats Directive<sup>7</sup>, Water Framework Directive<sup>8</sup>, and Maritime Spatial Planning Directive<sup>9</sup>.

EMSO ERIC will provide a large variety of services of great value not only to scientists but also to academic, institutional and industrial users. The provision of top-quality services is based on high-quality data, data products, instrumentation and physical access will generate a great impact on the furthering of knowledge, capacity building, innovation, literacy and education.

Allowing user access to EMSO Regional Facilities is central to EMSO service operation. The targeted users come from the academic and industrial worlds. Different kinds of access are proposed, ranging from installing and running a scientific experiment or testing an industrial prototype device on a Regional Facility asset -

be it at sea or onshore - to specialized training provided by Regional Team members as well as tailored marine data acquisition.

Providing infrastructure access is a crucial factor in the development and sustainability of the formation of ERICs, including EMSO. The concept of access has been advanced through projects of the Integrating Infrastructure Initiative. Transnational Access is a key issue within a distributed infrastructure offering combined access in different nodes.

To date, technical assistance within the open ocean observing community has until recently been restricted to situations where essentially one Member State can get access to the observatory facility of another Member. Thus, users can access more than one node simultaneously in different EU areas, and EMSO ERIC assists with best practices on how to manage national access in practical terms, as well as guidance on how both national and trans-national efforts can enhance the capability of EMSO in addressing priority themes, activities and services.

In 2016 the EC published a European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures<sup>31</sup> with the support of stakeholder organizations such as Science Europe and the European Universities Association. As reported in the document:

*"The Charter has the purpose of setting out non-regulatory principles and guidelines to be used, on a voluntary basis, as a reference when defining or re-defining rules and conditions for Ac-*

## EMSO ERIC IMPACT

*cess to Research Infrastructures”.*

In line with the Charter, EMSO ERIC will provide access based on science quality and market-drivers. The science quality assessment will be based on the research excellence, originality, ethics and feasibility of an application through peer-review by international independent experts.

The EMSO ERIC has established a web-based management system for access to the regional facilities and services from different end-user categories. The access system has been developed within the activities of the EMSO-Link project<sup>32</sup>. The access system has some steps, the applicant can select available nodes from the list of the available EMSO sites, choosing the access mode between Remote and In-person (“hands-on”). In the first case, the presence of the user or user group is not required, while in the second is required during the whole access period.

EMSO added value in providing access to regional facilities lies in the harmonization of access information across Europe, enhanced visibility of each regional facility and mutualised legal support, including model contracts with users. Five Regional Facilities were selected for the implementation of access. The access will then be extended to the others.

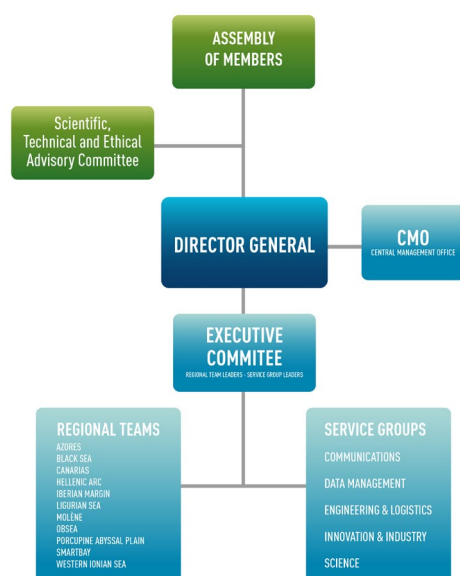
The main impact expected from EMSO implementation and further development includes:

- Provision of new services and products for stakeholders (e.g., EMODnet<sup>13</sup> and Copernicus<sup>27</sup>) in order to (a) understand and manage the consequences of climate change, ocean acidification, natural risks; (b) deliver outstanding information and applications to understand the interacting processes in the marine environment among other key topics.
- Improvement of the health of the European oceans through the research and the interdisciplinary approach in the framework of a European-international collaboration with other environmental research infrastructures, programmes, initiatives and organizations.
- Exploitation of new sources of knowledge, information and education to advance oceanic literacy and understanding of the phenomena that affect our daily life and our economy through initiatives such as the EU Blue Growth<sup>33</sup>, and by taking advantage of the potential of Europe's oceans for the creation of blue jobs and economic growth.

Commitment to address major societal environmental demands by encouraging close collaboration with industry by means of joint initiatives or explicit actions in promoting innovation in products and technological processes.

# EMSO ERIC GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The formal structure of the EMSO ERIC Governance is shown below



**Figure 4.**  
Services connection to EMSO ERIC Governance and Regional Facilities

The funding sources which support EMSO ERIC sustainability are defined as it follows (EMSO ERIC Statutes, art.16). EMSO ERIC's main long-term sustainability goal is to ensure the financial coverage of the following main activities to be carried out by the research infrastructure:

- A. The development and the sharing of data and scientific and technology services** among the participating Regional Facilities

is the core mandate and mission of the Research Infrastructure and should be financed through the direct contributions of the member countries as senior investors, both in cash and in-kind. In the mid-term, the sustainability should also be guaranteed by the funding sources.

- B. The institutional and scientific European networking activities**, to be mostly financed through the participation to EC projects or other publicly funded. This segment of activity should not be prevalent with respect to the overall EMSO ERIC activities.
- C. EC or extra EC grants projects** can also support (i) **the carrying out of specific and R&D projects enhancing the scientific excellence of the ERIC**; (ii) development of additional technical services and activities.

The long-term financial sustainability model of EMSO ERIC is presently under revision with respect to two major areas:

- A. Financial commitment from Members:**  
EMSO ERIC financial commitment from Members is ensured for 2021 and 2022. A new mechanism is currently under discussion to secure funding from the Members over periods of 5-years based on the phased delivery of the services. An improved financial support mechanism can be envisaged on a multi-year basis, following a proposal to be presented by the Director-General.

**B. Revision of the monetary and non-monetary contributions from member states:** Monetary contributions can remain fixed or could be calculated using a combination of criteria and approaches. This will allow all Members and new Members to join on a fair basis, ensuring a balanced contribution from all the Members.

Other possible funding sources, such as national and regional funds - which support the development and the implementation of the Regional Facilities and the achievement of the institutional goals - will also be activated.

EMSO ERIC requires resources over a three-year plan (from 2021 to 2023) according to the full deployment of the services as part of the work programme.

Table 2 shows the 2020 (reference as real data) and 2021-2023 (estimate) EMSO ERIC Income Statements: the net results show a sustainable financial and economic perspective for the next three years, though the cash carry-over (net results) by the end of 2023 shows a prudential estimation of -200.000 €. However, this prudential estimate is expected to be offset through the start of new R&D collaborative projects and the activation of private industry contracts.

REVENUES	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>INGV</b>	<b>220.000</b>	220.000	220.000	220.000
<b>In-kind/additional fees</b>	<b>251.337</b>	299.000	290.000	355.000
CSIC	<b>91.705</b>	92.000	92.000	70.000
Other contributors	-	-	-	95.000
INGV	<b>159.632</b>	207.000	198.000	190.000
<b>Revenues generated by the projects</b>	<b>415.004</b>	400.000	350.000	150.000
<b>Other revenues</b>	<b>475</b>	-	-	25.000
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>1.131.816</b>	1.199.000	1.140.000	1.030.000
<b>Cash carry over</b>	<b>678.182</b>	806.982	806.982	606.982
OPERATIONAL COSTS				
<b>Personnel</b>	<b>708.347</b>	780.200	800.000	850.000
In kind contributions	<b>251.337</b>	299.000		
Personnel	<b>457.010</b>	481.200		
<b>Services</b>	<b>111.767</b>	100.000	100.000	100.000
<b>Access services</b>			50.000	75.000
<b>Travel and promotional expenses</b>	<b>20.410</b>	30.000	30.000	30.000
<b>Other Expenses</b>	<b>157.373</b>	160.000	160.000	175.000
<b>Total operational costs</b>	<b>997.897</b>	1.070.200	1.140.000	1.230.000
<b>Net result</b>	<b>133.919</b>	128.800	-	-200.000

Table 2. Financial sustainability data 2020-2023







# THE NEXT THREE-YEAR PERIOD

According to the High-Level Expert Group assessment<sup>34</sup> EMSO is ranked at RL5 and is progressing to RL6 in compliance with FAIR<sup>1</sup> principles for data and services, as defined by the European Open Science Cloud<sup>29</sup>. This means greater efficiency and effectiveness to the Research Infrastructure must be achieved in the next three years. From the current advanced pre-operational phase, it is foreseen that EMSO ERIC will achieve in the next few years the full operation of the services, guaranteeing the long-term sustainability of infrastructure operations and the continuous updating of its cutting-edge technology.

EMSO Regional Facilities were originally built by different teams of different countries at different times, for various scientific purposes and with site-specific technical constraints. This results in a wide range of technologies, designs and operational procedures employed throughout the infrastructure, which makes them poorly interoperable to the detriment of global efficiency.

The priority actions are:

- Harmonize Quality-Control of multidisciplinary data, to achieve interoperability across the infrastructure and make it easily accessible for data aggregators, such as Copernicus<sup>27</sup> and EMODnet<sup>13</sup>, and in view of EOOS<sup>4</sup>.
- To extend the infrastructure to extreme areas and nations by improving understanding of global environmental changes and strength-

ening international collaboration with special emphasis on Polar observations.

- To establish strong links with key marine industries for the benefit of the ocean observing systems.

Therefore, achieving gradual technological and methodological convergence between the Regional Facilities is a major long-term stake for EMSO. To this end, two practical services favouring the use of common equipment and increasing technical interaction between Regional Facilities are being considered.

**The milestones to be pursued in the incoming 3 years are summarised in the following:**

## 2021

- Continuous with the Quality Management System (QMS), so that "EMSO" meets the needs of its users and other stakeholders more effectively (ISO 9001).
- Ensure that the EMSO website has a high-level "Industry" or "Innovation" section.
- Define the suitable target of annual revenues (%) that should come from the cooperation with Industry.
- Grant that the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and the EMSO Intellectual Property

Policy will be clearly presented to the industry on the EMSO website.

- Define an annual Training Action Plan and Program for Industrial Contact Officers (ICOs) as annexes to the Business Plan.

## 2022

- Start-up services are being deployed with harmonized data management and specific science services backed by the process of establishing the Environmental Management System (ISO 14001).
- Development of the EMSO ERIC “Service Catalogue” which will be published on the EMSO website. The procedures and systems for submitting a proposal to access EMSO Services that require an assessment (for example, physical, virtual or remote access to the infrastructure) will be designed by the end of the first semester of 2022. The cataloguing exercise is meant to help identify what needs to be done to upgrade these services, and to develop EMSO science services in each of the three EMSO domains (Ocean-Atmosphere, Biosphere/Marine ecology and biodiversity, and Geosphere/Geo-hazards and Geodynamics).
- The Communication Services Group will be in charge of both designing and managing the evaluation process launched by the Peer Review Panel, as well as interacting with users to guarantee the success of the entire process. The data model for presenting the EMSO ERIC Catalogue of Services has been already developed and will be deployed on MySQL technology.
- Develop a Research Infrastructure Talent-Attraction Exchange Program with industry and academia as part of the EMSO training planning.

- Development of EMSO data-based services offering EOVs up to TRL8, for the rest TRL6-7, they will be fully operational throughout 2022.
- EMSO ERIC strategic priority is to incorporate into the Consortium other European countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden.
- Integration of new challenging services and implementation of a wider Quality Control and Risk Management (QARM) Policy. The consolidation of the Services will focus on the links and relations with the industry especially with Small-Medium Enterprises. This can enhance sustainability and appropriate participation of key industrial partners in joining development tools and testing of new devices
- Twelve Regional Facilities out of fifteen use dissolved oxygen sensors. According to the best practices mentioned above, those sensors require periodic calibration. Furthermore, using the same calibration method throughout all Regional Facilities is a necessary requirement for a synoptic exploitation of the dissolved oxygen measurement data. Therefore, EMSO ERIC will offer the service of dissolved oxygen sensor calibration to its Regional Teams. The service will rely on the use of a calibration bench specially designed for EMSO in the framework of the H2020 EMSO-Link project<sup>32</sup>. The dissolved oxygen bench will be operated by skilled personnel from a selected institute managing a facility by mid 2022.

Moreover, in 2022 the Communication Services Group will participate in the organization of internal and external training sessions on topics of interest to the EMSO community.

## 2023

- Full operational system and design of a long-term maintenance plan.
- Data-based Science Services are user-specific and in most cases, as is fitting for EMSO, multidisciplinary. They may each be based on several datasets, from both connected and standalone instruments, and from in situ experiments and sampling. Most require adequate Quality Control and metadata, for which standards are still a matter of debate and collective work.
- Development of the Advanced Training Framework (ATF) that aims to support young researchers and engineers in developing knowledge and skills relevant to European Marine science and technology. EMSO Advanced Training Framework components will be: (a) EMSO Doctoral Summer Schools at some of the EMSO observatories to train the young researchers, technologists and technicians on marine environmental science and technology topics, put them in contact with the cutting-edge technology developed in the EMSO Regional Facilities; (b) Onsite Training Camps: oriented towards university students in marine-related disciplines and also to professionals of the sector. The objective is to train in developing theoretical and technological skills to grow the next generations of marine researchers, technologists, technicians and officers.
- Availability of a shared pool of equipment to be used by Regional Facilities.
- Central procurement service for critical or massively used components. Beyond the primary benefit of technical convergence, this service will i) mutualise the solving of legal issues associated with the spending of public money by preparing and launching the corresponding public tenders, ii) increase EMSO's global negotiating leverage in the marketplace.



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## Acknowledgements

EMSO ERIC Long-Term Vision and Strategic Plan 2021-2023 is a significant effort of synthesis and has been carried out mainly with the participation of the Science, Technology and Ethics Advisory Committee (STEAC), the Executive Committee (ExCom) and the Central Management Office (CMO) under the leadership of the Director-General Juan José Dañobeitia.

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November 2021



