



EMODnet



European Marine
Observation and
Data Network

EMODnet Seabed Habitats

Lot 3 Seabed Habitats" of EASME/2020/OP/0006:

"European Marine Observation and

Data Network (EMODnet)

UPDATED REVIEW OF RSC NEEDS (D5.02)

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to present an updated review of the needs of the Regional Sea Conventions (RSC) regarding EMODnet Seabed Habitats (ESH) project outputs. As part of ESH Phase 3, part 2 (2019-2021), a review of RSC requirements was carried out. This identified their requirements for development of composite products which are being developed in this current phase of ESH.

The Regional Sea Conventions concerned are:

- OSPAR
- HELCOM
- Tehran Convention
- Barcelona Convention
- Black Sea Convention
- Cartagena Convention

2 Scope

The sorts of products that is within the remit and capacity of ESH to produce would be those that:

- Describe seabed habitats
- Are focused on one or more European sea areas
- Include point observations and/or polygons from habitat maps

As ESH continues to grow the most extensive collection of habitat maps and point observations of seabed habitats in Europe, the opportunity arose to build new composite products that show the best available evidence on the extent and distribution of various seabed habitats in Europe, or specific marine regions of Europe. By “composite data products”, we mean those that combine data from multiple sources into a single data product.

Depending on the outcome of the review, it may not be possible to produce all requested products in this phase due to resource limitations. However, all requests will be noted and, if necessary, considered for future phases of the project.

3 Method

The secretariats of the six RSC's involving countries / areas being covered in this phase of ESH were approached. To facilitate this, specific project consortium members were allocated to be the liaison points for each RSC (see Table 1), listed below, the review was supplemented by ad-hoc and informal conversations with other groups and individuals, which are summarized in the Results section.

Region	Name of Regional Sea Convention Secretariat	EMODnet Seabed Habitats liaison
Atlantic/Arctic	Oslo-Paris (OSPAR) Commission	JNCC
Baltic Sea	Helsinki Commission (HELCOM)	SYKE
Black Sea	Black Sea Commission (BSC)	IO-BAS
Mediterranean Sea	Barcelona Convention	ISPRA
Caspian Sea	Tehran Convention	IO-BAS
Caribbean Sea	Cartagena Convention/ SPAW-RAC	JNCC

3.1 Engagement Process

Meeting directly with each RSC would have been ideal, but the Covid-19 situation made this difficult, so RSCs were approached by email and teleconferencing. Each RSC works in a different way, and each ESH liaison person has a different relationship with their corresponding RSC. However, it was felt that it was important to formalise these interactions in a repeatable manner.

Engagement of EMODnet Seabed Habitats with RSCs occurred in three phases:

- 1st Phase (Q2, 2021) comprised direct contact with the conventions in order to secure letters of support for the current phase of ESH. This included contact with two conventions in the new jurisdictions proposed to be covered in this phase of the project – the Tehran convention for the Caspian Sea and the Cartagena Convention for EU Territories in the Caribbean. These letters of support can be found in APPENDIX I.
- 2nd Phase (Q2, 2022) comprised of a formal approach to each convention by the consortium members responsible. A review the text of the letters of support provided to the consortium by the RSC was carried out. A document providing a summary of the tasks and deliverables that are relevant to RSCs, was drafted to assist the ESH partners responsible for RSC liaison with their

interactions (APPENDIX II). WP leaders or deliverables leaders provided the RSC consortium representatives with clarification on the details of the deliverables as required. In contact with the RSC, each of the following deliverables were addressed by way of update, and where relevant, input sought.

- Deliverables of interest to, and relevant to, all RSCs
- Deliverables which are specific to individual RSCs.
- EUSeaMap Development

In some cases, it was more appropriate for the relevant WP leader or deliverable leader to discuss any issues with the RSC. In this case, the RSC consortium representative role was to facilitate these interactions, for example introducing the relevant project partner to the relevant individual, working group or expert group within the RSC.

- 3rd Phase (Q3, 2022) comprised a follow up formal approach to the RSC in order to secure any input that they may have (APPENDIX III).

A document was collated, containing a list of products created in the previous phase that require updating as well as new proposed products to be developed either in this phase or in future phases of the project. The list was developed to ensure that products meet end users and stakeholders' requirements/needs. The final list of selected products (D3.02), agreed with consortium members, was based on the following set of criteria:

- User feedback and stakeholder requirements gathered as part of WP5.
- Impact of product (in terms of number of beneficiaries and coverage).
- Whether a product will contribute to the implementation of EU legislation, help member states fulfil reporting obligations, or support RSCs and ICES.
- Risk/opportunities associated with the delivery.
- Estimate of resources required for creation.
- Whether the method developed could be applicable to a wider area.

As part of this process, the RSCs were requested to directly address the applicability of each of the products, and to identify any potential development for new products as required.

3.2 List of Products

ID	Designation	Specifications	RSC Issues/Relevance
1	Live hard coral cover layer update - Essential Ocean Variable (EOV)	Update the existing EOV maps (with metadata): Live hard coral cover to be published on EMODnet Seabed Habitats portals as well as on the Atlas of Marine Life.	Will this serve RSC requirements for reporting / assessments
2	Seagrass cover layer update - Essential Ocean Variable (EOV)	Update the existing EOV maps (with metadata): Seagrass cover, to be published on EMODnet Seabed Habitats portals as well as on the Atlas of Marine Life.	Will this serve RSC requirements for reporting / assessments
	Macroalgal canopy layer update - Essential Ocean Variable (EOV)	Update the existing EOV maps (with metadata): Macroalgal canopy cover, to be published on EMODnet Seabed Habitats portals as well as on the Atlas of Marine Life.	Will this serve RSC requirements for reporting/ assessments
4	New Wetland type maps	Single layer for wetland type datasets across Europe using Ramsar wetland definitions (or an aggregation of these following WET Index)	Which classification system is relevant?
5	New Mangrove cover and composition- Essential Ocean Variable (EOV)	Coastal wetland types data in European coasts as well as French West Indies of Guadalupe and Martinique coasts extracted from CORINE land cover 2018 product from the Copernicus Land portal. UNEP-WCMC Ocean Viewer portal provides global distribution of features such as mangroves, tidal flats and seagrass.	Will this serve RSC requirements for reporting/ assessments
6	New European Essential Fish Habitat maps	Single layer for nursery and spawning areas for valuable pan European exploited marine species	Which species are relevant? Is a multispecies based approach useful?
7	New data products: EUNIS level 3 composite map - OSPAR	In the case of OSPAR, a “EUNIS level 3 composite map” for the regional sea area will	OSPAR Specific Potential Product

		be delivered before the end of the current phase.	
8	New data products: coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions - RAC/SPA	Composite data product showing the extent of “coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions as requested by RAC/SPA	RAC/SPA Specific Potential Product
9	Potential New data products: Habitats Directive Annex I - HELCOM	Harmonised Habitats Directive Annex I habitat maps in the Baltic in partnership with HELCOM	HELCOM Specific Potential Product
10	Updated Biogenic substrate layer (D3.09)	Single layer of biogenic substrates, without overlaps between individual maps, and combined with geogenic seabed substrate layer from EMODnet Geology	Will this serve RSC requirements for reporting/ assessments?

4 Results

4.1 Atlantic/Arctic region

The OSPAR letter of support (Appendix I) states, “There are already established links between OSPAR and EMODnet Seabed Habitats. Through JNCC, the UK are the custodians of the **OSPAR Threatened and/or Declining Habitats database**, which is made available to the public via the EMODnet Seabed Habitats portal. In addition to this, the **OSPAR common indicator assessment of physical damage** has been partially constructed from data available from the EMODnet Seabed Habitats.

The products, data hosting capacity and supporting services provided by JNCC through the EMODnet Seabed Habitats project have been of great importance to the work of OSPAR over the past years. A continuation of the collaboration and services provided through the project in the period 2021-2023 would be of high value to OSPAR, in particular as we develop assessment products for the next OSPAR Quality Status Report (QSR) 2023 during this period”.

Specific deliverables in the project plan:

In the case of OSPAR, a “EUNIS level 3 composite map” for the regional sea area was delivered during the start of the current phase. A new habitat map of MSFD Broad Benthic Habitat Types will be delivered before the end of the current phase:

- D3.08 - Seabed Habitat Map classified to Marine Strategy Framework Directive Benthic Broad Habitat Types

4.2 Black Sea

The letter of support from the Black Sea Commission Permanent Secretary (Appendix I) did not include any specific requirement for composite data products for seabed habitats. It did commit to provision of advisory services to ESH and to act as an end user of products. The letter of support states, “If awarded, in our capacity of Regional Sea Convention for the Black Sea, the BSC PS could facilitate the exchange of relevant information and knowledge through its respective networks.”

4.3 Baltic Sea

The HELCOM letter of support (Appendix I) states that “HELCOM welcomes the possibility to give advice to the consortium on the scope and definition of products and also to monitor development of products and services that are planned to be in line and support both the regional and international data needs”.

“The outcomes of the Seabed habitats lot of the previous EMODnet phases have been welcomed by HELCOM as providing access to Baltic wide habitat map products which were used e.g. in the assessment of cumulative impacts in the Baltic marine area and estimating physical loss and disturbance to seabed habitats. However, further development of the data products is needed in order to increase resolution and make sure that regionally specific features are taken into account in development of the habitat maps. Therefore we welcome in particular the planned improvements of modelled habitats (EUSeaMap) and possibility for cooperation in this process.”

Specific deliverables added to the project plan:

In the case of HELCOM, a “Annex I polygon data product” for the regional sea area will be delivered before the end of the current phase.

- D3.08 - Polygon Data Product: Habitats Directive Annex I for the Baltic in partnership with HELCOM

4.4 Mediterranean Sea

As the Barcelona Convention letter of support (committed by RAC/SPA - Appendix I) states, RAC/SPA is responsible for the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for the conservation of marine key habitats, namely:

- Marine vegetation
- Coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions
- Habitats and species associated with seamounts, underwater caves and canyons, aphotic engineering benthic invertebrates and chemosynthetic phenomena (also known, collectively, as ‘dark habitats’)

The letter of support states that an important action towards achieving these actions plans is a “summary of knowledge on these important marine key habitats and their distribution around the Mediterranean. Also, EMODnet will be useful in the implementation of [the] Ecosystem approach within [the] Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) System as ecological objective 1 (EO1) deals with habitat distributional range”.

SPA/RAC could complement the data gathered in other non-European countries to enhance the resolution of the modelled habitat layers of EUSeaMap and contribute to the library of digital habitat maps, further mapping or ground truth data.

4.4.1 Coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions

Based on the Barcelona Convention requirement and the conversations with SPA/RAC and the Archipelagos Institute, it was agreed that the project would update the product showing “coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions” in the Mediterranean Sea. EMODnet Seabed Habitats is well-placed to produce this product as:

- We have a remit to “Construct products from one or more data sources that provide users with information about the distribution of parameters in time and space create data products” (Task 2 of the tender specification)

- We are custodians of the most comprehensive library of seabed habitat maps in Europe
- We are custodians of the most comprehensive collection of point observations of seabed habitats in Europe
- We have partners with close ties to RAC/SPA, who can ensure that the product is fit-for-purpose.

Specific deliverables added to the project plan:

- D3.08 Updated composite data product showing the extent of coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions as requested by Barcelona Convention

4.5 Caspian Sea

The ESH project proposes the collation and standardisation of data sets describing seabed habitats and coastal wetlands. This would be of great benefit across the region.

There are two broad areas that would benefit from cooperation between EMODnet Seabed Habitats and the Tehran Convention:

- Understanding requirements for data and data products under the Tehran Convention.
- Investigating potential links between the EMODnet Seabed Habitats web portal and Caspian data systems.

4.6 Caribbean Territories

The regional activity center for specially protected areas and wildlife of the Caribbean or SPAW-RAC is a technical center dedicated to supporting the United Nations Environment Program - Program for the Caribbean Environment (UNEP-CEP) and the Caribbean countries and territories in order to help them to implement their commitments on the protection of biodiversity within the framework of cooperation projects.

There are two broad areas that would benefit from cooperation between EMODnet Seabed Habitats and SPAW-RAC:

- Answering the Caribbean territories requirements for data and data products
- Building links between the EMODnet Seabed Habitats portal and Caribbean data systems.

In both case, there is a strong requirement for cooperation to optimise the available resources and share the results to both The GCRMN-Caribbean database in development and to the Carib-coast Carib'Coast (Caribbean network for coastal risks prevention related with climate change), another cooperative EU-project (INTERREG) also aiming at a better knowledge of the major marine ecosystems including some seagrass beds mapping in the French territories and 6 other territories of the Caribbean Sea. SPAW-RAC is involved in both.

4.7 Conclusion

We have consulted the six regional sea commissions within the expanded spatial extent of the project and concluded that a more integrated engagement with RSC / ICES WGS in order to align Seabed Habitats outputs will better facilitate RSC assessments.

The priorities for new composite data products to be produced in the 2021-2023 phase of EMODnet Seabed Habitats will be:

- (i) D3.08 - Seabed Habitat Map classified to Marine Strategy Framework Directive Benthic Broad Habitat Types
- (ii) D3.08 - Polygon Data Product: Habitats Directive Annex I for the Baltic in partnership with HELCOM
- (iii) D3.08 Updated composite data product showing the extent of coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions as requested by Barcelona Convention

These will be complimented by new and updated project deliverables including a classified habitat map for both the Caspian and Caribbean territories as well as:

- D3.02 – Essential Ocean Variable – Live Hard Coral Cover Update
- D3.03 - Essential Ocean Variable – Seagrass Cover Layer Update
- D3.04 - Essential Ocean Variable – macro-Algal Canopy Cover Layer Update
- D3.05 – Wetland Type Maps
- D3.06 – Essential Ocean Variable – Mangrove Cover and Composition
- D3.07 – European Essential Fish Habitat Maps
- D3.09 – Biogenic Substrate layer Update

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I LETTERS OF SUPPORT



To Whom it May Concern

Subject: Letter of Support - EASME/2020/OP/0006

Dear Sirs,

This letter is to acknowledge that the Black Sea Commission' Permanent Secretariat (without any financial responsibilities from our side) supports the JNCC, GeoEcoMar (Romania) and Institute of Oceanology -BAS (Bulgaria) proposal to be submitted in the call for tenders "Operation, development and maintenance of a European Marine Observation and Data Network" (EMODnet), referenced EASME/2020/OP/0006 and specifically its Seabed Habitats lot.

Established to implement the provisions of the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (as defined in Article XVIII), the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (BSC) through its Permanent Secretariat acts to promote the implementation of the Convention, makes recommendations on necessary measures and cooperates with competent international governmental and non-governmental organizations to achieve the purposes of this Convention.

Keeping in mind the need to recognize further opportunities for closer cooperation, such as improving links between the EMODnet Seabed Habitats portal and the Black Sea Commission and providing a mechanism and support for Contracting Parties to submit habitat data for future assessments and indicator development, we

support the objectives of this project proposal and hope that its successful implementation would considerably contribute to the improvement of the Black Sea marine environment.

If awarded, in our capacity of Regional Sea Convention for the Black Sea, the BSC PS could facilitate the exchange of relevant information and knowledge through its respective networks.

The BSC PS may also provide advisory services to the project during its course of studies and act as end-user of the deliverables produced.

Overall, the activities to be undertaken in the frame of this project proposal are considered of interest to the BSC PS and its expert network in the Black Sea region and beyond.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. Halil Ibrahim Sur

BSC PS Executive Director

Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution Permanent Secretariat Tel: +90 212299 2940 or 90 272299 2946
0212299_2944
Email : secretariat@blacg@onissiqns.org.
Maslak Mah. Büyükdere Caddesi, No 265,,34398 Sarver,
Istanbul, Turkey



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

13 July 2020

Letter of Support for tender European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet)

Dear Madam/Sir,

Our organization, the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), has learned of the initiative by a consortium, in which the Finnish Environment Institute, SYKE, is one of the leading partners, to prepare a tender to the new Call for Tenders of the EU for “European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet)” with reference “EASME/2020/OP/0006” and Lot 3 – Seabed habitats.

One of the main functions of HELCOM is to act as a regional data hub for the Baltic Sea area and produce indicator-based assessments. Thus, HELCOM has been following and contributing to the development of EMODnet, as far as resources allow, for mutual benefits, and we intend to do so also in the future.

The outcomes of the Seabed habitats lot of the previous EMODnet phases have been welcomed by HELCOM as providing access to Baltic wide habitat map products which were used e.g. in the assessment of cumulative impacts in the Baltic marine area and estimating physical loss and disturbance to seabed habitats. However, further development of the data products is needed in order to increase resolution and make sure that regionally specific features are taken into account in development of the habitat maps. Therefore we welcome in particular the planned improvements of modelled habitats (EUSeaMap) and possibility for cooperation in this process.

In case SYKE with its partner organizations are awarded the contract for the project, HELCOM will cooperate and nominate experts to the expert meetings and workshops as planned by the consortium, subject to availability of funding. HELCOM welcomes the possibility to give advice to the consortium on the scope and definition of products and also to monitor development of products and services that are planned to be in line and support both the regional and international data needs.

We look forward to further interaction and cooperation with the awarded consortium in the project to enhance EMODnet.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Rüdiger Stempel'.

Rüdiger Stempel
Executive Secretary

Katajanokanlaituri 6 B
Phone: +358 207 412 649
E-mail: Rudiger.Strempel@helcom.fi
Web: <http://helcom.fi>
helcom.secretariat@helcom.fi
FI-00160 Helsinki Finland

Natalie Askew MA (Cantab), MRes
Head of Marine Evidence
By email

Date: 06 July 2020

Dear Natalie

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR EMODNET SEABED HABITATS: REFERENCE EASME/2020/0P/0006

I am writing to express OSPAR's strong support for JNCC's involvement in the further development of the EMODnet Seabed Habitats thematic area.

Habitats included on the OSPAR List of threatened and/or declining species and habitats (OSPAR List, Agreement 2008-06) have been identified regionally as requiring priority policy action. An important collective action identified by OSPAR is to increase the available information on the distribution and occurrence of these OSPAR listed habitats. This has been an ongoing effort since the establishment of the OSPAR List and has resulted in the OSPAR database for threatened and/or declining habitats. The database for threatened and/or declining habitats is an important component of the scientific evidence generated by OSPAR to inform policy decisions and is used by OSPAR as the main source of occurrence and distribution data on the habitats, for example when OSPAR carries out status assessments (Agreement 2019-05) or as input information to the assessment of common indicators (e.g. BH3 Extent of physical damage to predominant and special habitat¹). OSPAR has also used modelled habitat distribution maps created by EMODnet Seabed Habitats, where the information in the threatened and/or declining database has been used in addition to other seabed information to create comprehensive maps.

¹ <https://oap.ospar.org/en/ospar-assessments/intermediate-assessment-2017/biodiversity-status/habitats/extentphysical-damage-predominant-and-special-habitats/> ² <https://odims.ospar.org/maps/1313>

The threatened and/or declining habitats database has been very successfully hosted by JNCC through the capacity generated in the EMODnet Seabed Habitats project. The data hosting capacity of JNCC has enabled integration of the database to the OSPAR Data and Information System (ODIMS). An operational web service has been established so that the latest version of the database can be viewed through ODIMS². This benefits



OSPAR aims in developing ODIMS as a regional data portal, with live data streams to the databases where the information is hosted.

The OSPAR threatened and/or declining habitat database is updated through regular data calls to the Contracting Parties of the OSPAR Convention. It has been very beneficial to these parties that the data host through EMODnet Seabed has been able to facilitate the efforts of processing and submitting data.

The products, data hosting capacity and supporting services provided by JNCC through the EMODnet Seabed Habitats project have been of great importance to the work of OSPAR over the past years. A continuation of the collaboration and services provided through the project in the period 2021-2023 would be of high value to OSPAR, in particular as we develop assessment products for the next OSPAR Quality Status Report (QSR) 2023 during this period.

OSPAR looks forward to continuing the successful and productive engagement with EMODnet Seabed Habitats through JNCC and expresses its strong support for JNCC in the next phase of the EMODnet bid.

Best wishes,

Dominic Pattinson
Executive Secretary
OSPAR Commission

Tunis, 8 July 2020

Dr Leonardo Tunesi

Head of the Area "Marine biodiversity, habitat and species Protection"
Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research -
ETC/ICM member
Via Vitaliano Brancati, 60 I-00144 ROMA - Italy
Tel: +39 06 50074776 | Mobile: +39 334 6243333
Fax: +39 06 50074955
E-mail: leonardo.tunesi@isprambiente.it

Subject: Letter of support - EASME/2020/OP/0006

Dear Dr Tunesi,

With reference to the call for tenders "European Marine Observation and Data Network" (EMODnet), I would like to confirm SPA/RAC support to such initiative and express its desire to be part of the project implementation and participate in its relevant meetings and workshops. In fact, and as you may know, SPA/RAC has the charge of the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for the conservation of marine key habitats namely:

- The Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Vegetation in the Mediterranean Sea (adopted in 1999 and updated in 2012 and 2019).
- The Action plan for the protection of the coralligenous and others calcareous bio-concretion in the Mediterranean, adopted in 2008 and updated in 2016.
- The Action Plan for the conservation of Habitats and Species associated with seamounts, underwater caves and canyons, aphotic engineering benthic invertebrates and chemo-synthetic phenomena, in the Mediterranean Sea (Dark Habitats Action Plan) adopted in 2013 and will be updated during 2020-2021.

The first and most important action provided for in these Regional Action Plans is the summary of knowledge on these important marine key habitats and their distribution around the Mediterranean in the form of a georeferenced information system. EMODnet will be also useful in the implementation of Ecosystem approach within MAP System as the ecological objective 1 (EO1) deals with habitat distributional range.

Moreover, SPA/RAC has finalised with the Contracting Parties, the updated Reference List of Marine Habitat Types for the Mediterranean region. Getting knowledge of the distribution of the habitat types of the reference list could help in their conservation and build a comprehensive and representative network of MPAs.

This said, SPA/RAC is supporting this project "Operation, development and maintenance of a European marine observation and data network" and expresses its will to participate to its implementation. SPA/RAC could complement the data gathered in other non-European countries to enhance the resolution of the modelled habitat layers of EUSeaMap and contribute to the library of digital habitat maps.

Mr Atef OUERGI, Programme Officer in charge of Habitats and Ecosystem Conservation will be your vis- a-vis to follow up with you on this project, on behalf of SPA/RAC.

Best regards,

Khalil ATTIA
SPA/RAC Director



Mrs Natalie Askew JNCC Support Co.

Monkstone House

City Road, Peterborough

PE1 1JY, UK

24 July 2020

Subject: Letter of Support – EASME/2020/OP/0006

Dear Mrs Askew,

Following our exchanges, I clearly express my interest and support for JNCC's involvement in the expansion of the EMODnet Seabed Habitats thematic area to the Caribbean Sea.

In the call for tenders "European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet)", reference EASME/2020/OP/0006, the geographic scope has now been expanded to include jurisdictional waters of the Caribbean Sea. It also states that: "Thematic groups are strongly encouraged to include data and data products from outside these areas", i.e. in the Caribbean Sea the aim is to cover waters of as many countries as possible. The call for tenders states that each thematic project should ensure the involvement of regional sea conventions.

The regional activity center for specially protected areas and wildlife of the Caribbean or SPAW-RAC is a technical center dedicated to supporting the United Nations Environment Program - Program for the Caribbean Environment (UNEP-CEP) and the Caribbean countries and territories in order to help them to implement their commitments on the protection of biodiversity within the framework of cooperation projects. As such, and also as the chair of the GCRMN-Caribbean node, I see two broad areas that would benefit from cooperation between EMODnet Seabed Habitats and SPAW-RAC:

1. Answering the Caribbean territories requirements for data and data products;
2. Building links between the EMODnet Seabed Habitats portal and Caribbean data systems.

In both case, there is a strong requirement for cooperation to optimise the available resources and share the results. I'm thinking here immediately to the GCRMN-Caribbean database in development but also to the Carib-Coast (Caribbean network for coastal risks prevention related with climate change), another cooperative EU-project (INTERREG) also aiming at a better knowledge of the major marine ecosystems including some seagrass beds mapping in the French territories and 6 other territories of the Caribbean Sea. SPAW-RAC is deeply involved in both.

While not directly involved, I'm thinking also about the CLME+ Project implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and co-financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Far larger as it concerns

also the North Brazil Shelf, this important project also aims at assisting in improving the management of their shared Living Marine Resources through an Ecosystem-Based Management approach and links may be developed as well.

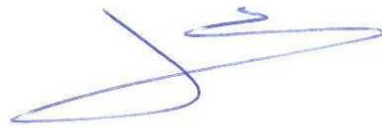
I strongly believe that the collation and standardisation of datasets describing seabed habitats and coastal wetlands will be of great benefit across the region. Furthermore, there is already a voluntary commitment between the Secretariats of the Caribbean Environment Programme and the OSPAR Commission to explore opportunities for inter-regional cooperation. As EMODnet Seabed Habitats intend to work closely with OSPAR, we can see opportunities to develop shared activities to help deliver the aims of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

I consequently confirm SPAW-RAC's strong interest and support to this initiative and our willingness to participate in its relevant meetings and workshops so the WCR and its territories can benefit from the project and the cooperation between projects.

I look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Sandrine PIVARD, director of SPAW-RAC

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a smaller loop and a final flourish.

APPENDIX II PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT DOCUMENT

“Hi all,

This is an important email regarding your responsibilities for Regional Sea Convention outreach in the EMODnet Seabed Habitats project.

Each of you is the person responsible for outreach to the regional sea commission in your region, and MI is leading WP5 Communication, which includes this important activity. This is as per Task 6: ‘Ensure the involvement of regional sea conventions’, in the tender specification.

Please find attached the outputs which will be delivered by this phase of the project and a list of issues specific to RSCs. It can also be found here on SharePoint:

[RSC Outreach MI March 2022.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

The first output that will be generated (by the MI) on the basis of the responses from your interactions with RSC will be a report (**D5.02 - Updated review of RSC needs**). The original deadline is 31st March 2022, but this will need to be extended. I suggest a revised deadline of the end of April, but accept that this will be dependent on a number of factors and be influenced by the evolving European situation.

In order to facilitate this new deadline, I would like you to revert with notes on your engagement by 15th April.

If required, each RSC lead can separately set up an initial meeting between myself, Helen, Mickaël to:

1. Discuss the relationship with the relevant RSC and how you plan to engage with them.
2. Ensure that the right questions are asked (and responded to in time) to give us enough information for the review of stakeholder needs.

I am looking forward to hearing from you during the next week or so,

Kind Regards

Fergal”

This document provides a summary of the tasks and deliverables that are relevant to RSCs, to assist the ESH partners responsible for RSC liaison with their interactions.

In this document we make a distinction between three types of ESH project deliverable, which are listed below:

- Deliverables relating to Interaction with RSCs/ICES etc.
- Deliverables of interest to, and relevant to, all RSCs.
- Deliverables which are specific to individual RSCs.

WP leaders or deliverables leaders will be able to provide you with clarification on the details of the deliverables if you need it. Lead partners for each deliverable can be found in on the ‘Deliverables Milestones’ tab of [ObjectivesDeliverablesMilestones.xlsx](#) in the WP6 folder. Further details of each task may also be found in the [technical proposal](#).

DELIVERABLES RELATING TO INTERACTIONS WITH RSC/ICES	
D5.01	Evidence of efforts to ensure maximum coherence with data delivery to and from regional sea conventions
D5.02	Updated review of RSC needs [see previous review of stakeholder needs here]
D5.03	Liaise with ICES in advance of WG meetings to ascertain products they require for reporting on ToRs
D5.07	Evidence of engagement with relevant working groups and expert groups to gather feedback and needs of habitat data requirements and products that will help Member States to fulfil reporting obligations
D4.16	Direct link to Regional Sea Conventions OGC services where feasible

In contact with your RSC, please address each of the following deliverables by way of update, and where relevant, seek input.

- Deliverables of interest to, and relevant to, all RSCs
- Deliverables which are specific to individual RSCs.

In some cases, it may be more appropriate for the relevant WP leader or deliverable leader to discuss an issues with the RSC. In this case your role would be to facilitate these interactions, for example introducing the relevant project partner to the relevant individual, working group or expert group within the RSC.

If you need any support/assistance in your interactions with the RSCs from either the WP5 lead, Fergal, or the coordinator, Helen, then we are happy to provide this.

REPORTING

“Ensure the involvement of regional sea conventions” is one of nine key tasks of all EMODnet lots, so it is vital that we demonstrate our progress towards RSC engagement. Therefore:

- Remember to record all meetings in the [Publicity log](#) – this is where we extract the information we need to report on in the quarterly reports to the Commission.
- Also, in the [WP5 folder](#) on SharePoint, there is a folder for each RSC. Please save copies of relevant emails or documents regarding RSC outreach in these folders.

If you could reference any notes with the deliverable number (below), this will facilitate the report drafting.

TASK 1 and **TASK 2** are Detailed as follows:

TASK 1:

We recommend that you begin by:

1. Reviewing the text of the letters of support provided by the RSC as part of our tender submission. These sometimes mention specific requirements or uses of our products.
2. Familiarising yourselves with the [previous review of stakeholder needs](#). This will remind you what happened in the last phase and what sort of information we need from them in terms of requirements for composite products.

Update your RSC on the following deliverables, seeking input on formatting requirements, classification issues and data availability in the region from them.

The current version of EUSeaMap is classified to the new version of EUNIS. We need to investigate if this has made EUSeaMap more applicable in some regions. We also need to identify data sources within regions – especially Caribbean and Caspian.

We need to confirm what the requirements are in each region for composite data products. By composite data products, we mean those that combine data from multiple sources into a single data product showing the extent and distribution of specific habitats. For example, the EOVs and coralligenous habitat products.

DELIVERABLES RELEVANT TO ALL RSCS	
D1.11	EUSeaMap
D2.01	An expanded library of maps of communities, biocenoses, biotopes and habitats.
D2.02	An expanded collation of point records of communities, biocenoses, biotopes and habitats
D2.05	An expanded library of modelled maps of specific habitats.
D2.10	A library of maps of Essential Fish habitats maps for major fish species in the Mediterranean, North East Atlantic and Baltic Sea ingested and converted to a standard format, with metadata for every map - all remaining data.
D3.09	An updated combined, harmonized data product showing the best evidence for the extent of biogenic substrate in all regions, with metadata (updated).
D3.11	Report(s) detailing the construction of the data products defined by stakeholder needs (new).

TASK 2:

Specific engagements required with certain RSCs and specific issues for follow-up from the last engagement:

HELCOM	
D1.09	Halocline layer for the Baltic Sea ready for EUSeaMap
D1.17	For Swedish waters, a modelled habitat map based on Geology's novel type of seabed substrate map for habitat modelling [dependent on applicability if this new type of map to habitat modelling]
D4.16	Direct link to the HELCOM Mapping and Data Service
ISSUES	EUSeaMap translated to HUB. New version of EUNIS integrates much HUB much better, so we need to find out whether this would be resolved by translating to the new version of EUNIS.

OSPAR	
D2.14	A standard transformation between OSPAR T&D data schema and OBIS Schema to enable import into OBIS, including a test pilot run using the 2022 OSPAR T&D database
D2.15	Agree a protocol with the OSPAR commission for the continued archiving of the public database within the OBIS network, pending success of D2.14
ISSUES	

CASPIAN	
D1.05	EUNIS-style habitat classification in the Caspian Sea for broad-scale habitat mapping
D1.07	Environmental layers for the Caspian Sea ready for EUSeaMap
ISSUES	Data Sourcing – UN Environmental Climate Monitoring programme for the Caspian Basin will collate some of the same data sets as ESH. We have agreed in principle to share where there is overlap.

CARRIBEAN	
D1.06	EUNIS-style habitat classification in the Caribbean Sea for broad-scale habitat mapping
D1.08	Environmental layers for the Caribbean Sea ready for EUSeaMap
ISSUES	Data Sourcing and formatting.

MEDITERRANEAN	
ISSUES	<p>New version of EUNIS is not aligned with the latest developments in the Barcelona Convention marine habitat list. Therefore, we need to work out whether there is a need to produce an alternative version of EUSeaMap in the Med using the Barcelona list.</p> <p>Supporting the process of the identification of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas in the Western Mediterranean, with the support of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Mediterranean and with the assistance of the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA) – Related to the above - Has this been addressed?</p>

BLACK SEA	
ISSUES	<p>New version of EUNIS does not adequately represent Black Sea habitats and that they did not take into the hard work carried out by EMODnet in developing a suitable classification for EUSeaMap. We could ask the BSC what classification they would find most useful. Black Sea Commission has expressed a strong interest in using the product, through the EMBLAS project⁵, which deals with monitoring according to MSFD. Has this been addressed?</p>

APPENDIX III PHASE 3 ENGAGEMENT DOCUMENT

“Hi all,

This is follow up email regarding the second phase for Regional Sea Convention outreach in the EMODnet Seabed Habitats project.

Each of you is the person responsible for outreach to the regional sea commission in your region, and MI is leading WP5 Communication, which includes this important activity. This is as per Task 6: ‘Ensure the involvement of regional sea conventions’, in the tender specification.

The project has engaged with the RSCs via the letters you each sent over the last 4 months. I would like to collate any feedback from this **first phase** by early September, so would appreciate you sending me any notes you may have or notification if nothing has yet been received.

The next phase of engagement is to discuss composite products from the project with the RSCs in order for them to identify any that they can engage with. This will also serve as a reminder to the RSC to revert to you with any notes if they haven’t already.

In order to facilitate this new deadline, I would like you to revert with notes on this second phase of engagement by 28th September.

The first output that will be generated (by the MI) on the basis of the responses from your interactions with RSC will be a report (**D5.02 - Updated review of RSC needs**). This has a revised deadline of Q3, 2022.

Kind Regards

Fergal”

The [RSC] kindly provided a letter of support dated [DATE] and expressed interest in the project "Operation, Development and Maintenance of a European Marine Observation and Data Network" (EMODnet), referenced EASME/2020/OP/0006 and specifically its Seabed Habitats lot.

In follow up to our initial engagement with you on our review of stakeholders' specific needs [DATE], we would like to receive your feedback on relevance to you of the composite data products* being generated by the project (appended). We would also welcome input from you on requirements you may have for development of new products. Please review the 'RSC Issues / Relevance' column in the products table and revert with any comments.

This list of selected products, agreed with consortium members, was based on the following set of criteria:

- User feedback and previously gathered stakeholder requirements.
- Impact of product (in terms of number of beneficiaries and coverage).
- Whether a product will contribute to the implementation of EU legislation, help EU Member States fulfil reporting obligations, or support RSCs and ICES.
- Risk/opportunities associated with the delivery.
- Estimate of resources required for creation.
- Whether the method developed could be applicable to a wider area.

* Composite Data Products are harmonized layers based on collected data from multiple sources.

List of Products:

ID	Designation	Scope	RSC Issues/Relevance
1	Live hard coral cover layer update - Essential Ocean Variable (EOV)	Update the existing EOV maps (with metadata): Live hard coral cover to be published on the EMODnet portal	Will this serve RSC requirements for reporting / assessments
2	Seagrass cover layer update - Essential Ocean Variable (EOV)	Update the existing EOV maps (with metadata): Seagrass cover, to be published on EMODnet Seabed Habitats portals as well as on the Atlas of Marine Life.	Will this serve RSC requirements for reporting / assessments
3	Macroalgal canopy layer update - Essential Ocean Variable (EOV)	Update the existing EOV maps (with metadata): Macroalgal canopy cover, to be published on EMODnet Seabed Habitats portals as well as on the Atlas of Marine Life.	Will this serve RSC requirements for reporting/ assessments

4	New Wetland type maps	Single layer for wetland type datasets across Europe using Ramsar wetland definitions (or an aggregation of these following WET Index)	Which classification system is relevant?
5	New Mangrove cover and composition- Essential Ocean Variable (EOV)	Coastal wetland types data in European coasts as well as French West Indies of Guadalupe and Martinique coasts extracted from CORINE land cover 2018 product from the Copernicus Land portal. UNEP-WCMC Ocean Viewer portal provides global distribution of features such as mangroves, tidal flats and seagrass.	Will this serve RSC requirements for reporting/ assessments
6	New European Essential Fish Habitat maps	Single layer for nursery and spawning areas for valuable pan European exploited marine species	Which species are relevant? Is a multispecies based approach useful?
7	Data products: EUNIS level 3 composite map - OSPAR	In the case of OSPAR, a “EUNIS level 3 composite map” for the regional sea area will be delivered before the end of the current phase.	OSPAR Specific Potential Product
8	Data products: coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions - RAC/SPA	Composite data product showing the extent of “coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions as requested by RAC/SPA	RAC/SPA Specific Potential Product
9	Potential New data products: Habitats Directive Annex I - HELCOM	Harmonised Habitats Directive Annex I habitat maps in the Baltic in partnership with HELCOM	HELCOM Specific Potential Product
11	Updated Biogenic substrate layer (D3.09)	Single layer of biogenic substrates, without overlaps between individual maps, and combined with geogenic seabed substrate layer from EMODnet Geology	Will this serve RSC requirements for reporting/ assessments?

We would be very keen to have your feedback on this as soon as possible in order to facilitate any requirements you may have regarding the products and outputs from EMODnet Seabed Habitats Project,

Ends