



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
IMPACT ASSESSMENT BOARD

Brussels, 09 NOV. 2009  
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## Opinion

**Title**                                    **Impact Assessment on: European Marine Observation and Data Network - RESUBMISSION**

**(draft version of 15 October 2009)**

**Lead DG**                                    **DG MARE**

### **1) Impact Assessment Board Opinion**

#### **(A) Context**

Improving marine knowledge is an objective of the Commission's integrated maritime policy and a strategic objective of the Commission's 2005-2009 work-plan. Accordingly the Commission has proposed a new European Marine Observation and Data Network – EMODNET – to improve Europe's marine data infrastructure. In its EU's Maritime Policy Blue Book, adopted in October 2007 and welcomed by the European Council in December 2007, the Commission undertook further steps towards EMODNET. A roadmap for EMODNET “Building a European marine knowledge infrastructure” was issued in April 2009 setting out broad principles and a timetable. This impact assessment accompanies the Commission's Communication on Marine Knowledge, which EMODNET will be part of.

#### **(B) Positive aspects**

The revised report has clarified the overall objective and timing of the initiative. The strengthened baseline scenario provides a detailed overview of relevant EU legislation, identifies ongoing initiatives at the Member State and EU level, and explains what will be delivered under the preparatory action of ur-EMODNET. The economic analysis of the options is strengthened and the potential limits of the EMODNET operations (in terms of access to data and participation level) are appropriately discussed.

The Board notes the commitment made in Section 3.2.4 of the report to carry out an ex-ante evaluation for any follow-up actions involving a financial component.

#### **(C) Main recommendations for improvements**

**General recommendation: The report has been considerably improved on the basis of the Board's recommendations in its first opinion. There remain some issues where further work is necessary. Most importantly, the report should provide a**

Commission européenne, B-1049 Bruxelles / Europese Commissie, B-1049 Brussel - Belgium. Telephone: (32-2) 299 11 11. Office: BERL 6/29. Telephone: direct line (32-2) 2981898. Fax: (32-2) 2965960.

E-mail: [impact-assessment-board@ec.europa.eu](mailto:impact-assessment-board@ec.europa.eu)

**comprehensive mapping of data availability at the EU and Member State level under the baseline situation. On this basis it should identify different scenarios for the scope of the EMODNET in terms of geographical coverage, data categories, choice of parameters and resolution levels. This assessment, even at a general level, could be used to identify which actions it would be appropriate to carry out before the final decision on the operational phase of EMODNET will be made in 2012-2013.**

**(1) Be more specific on the kind of intermediate actions planned between now and the launch of the operational phase of EMODNET.** The revised report clarifies that the aim of the initiative at this stage is to obtain an endorsement for the financing of further intermediate actions before the final decision on the operational phase of EMODNET could be made in 2012 or 2013. In this regard, the report should be more specific about the kind of intermediate actions necessary to establish a better basis for the final decision about the ambition, scope and shape of the operational phase of EMODNET.

**(2) Provide a fuller description of how the ongoing action in the area of marine data fits together, where the gaps are and what the EU value added of an integrated approach to marine data is.** The revised report provides a more complete baseline scenario describing different actions at EU and Member State level to improve the marine infrastructure. However, the report should (i) map more systematically the baseline situation in terms of the data availability, indicating the geographical scope, range of parameters and resolution of the existing data by all main categories (bathymetry, geology, physics, fisheries, chemistry, biology, human activity and coastal and maritime economy); and on that basis (ii) identify the potential gaps, overlaps and incoherencies. In terms of the assessment of the opportunity costs of the current fragmented approach, the report should, in addition to the USA experience, provide some evidence from Europe, for instance by making use of the interim results of the study on the costs in the Member States, referred to in section 3.3.1. Finally the report should provide examples of the innovative services which can be enabled by providing wider access to coherent marine data.

**(3) Be more specific about the EMODNET data scope and assess the impacts of alternative options with different levels of ambition of data to be 'assembled' and to be 'collected'.** The revised report explains better the envisaged incremental approach on the basis of which the preparatory action of ur-EMODNET will be complemented with intermediate actions which in turn will lead to the operational phase of EMODNET. In addition, the report should discuss, at least in general terms, which data (e.g. category, parameters, sea-basins, resolutions level, etc) would provide the highest value added and hence should be prioritised. Finally, the report should identify how the expected costs and benefits would be distributed between the affected Member States.

#### **(D) Procedure and presentation**

It appears that all necessary procedural elements have been complied with. The length of the revised report should be brought closer to the recommended maximum of 30 pages. This can be done, for instance, by moving Section 2 'Glossary', as well as technical details of Sections 3.3 'Consultation and expertise', 4.2 'Proportionality' and 4.5 'Baseline', into the annexes, while keeping in the main part of the report only the summary findings. For all the cost figures in Section 4.2, the report should specify that the data provided is expressed in annual terms. Table 12 'Comparison of options' should,

in addition to qualitative criteria, contain also cost ranges of economic impacts, e.g. by merging it with Table 11. A column for the baseline should also be added to allow for a clear comparison of the impacts of additional EU action. Such a table, including the caveat on the limitations of the quantitative analysis at this stage, should also be presented in the Executive Summary.

## 2) IAB scrutiny process

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Author DG	MARE
External expertise used	No
Date of Board Meeting	Written procedure
Date of adoption of Opinion	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>09 NOV. 2009</b></p> <p>The present opinion concerns a resubmitted draft IA report. The first opinion was issued on 20 July 2009.</p>