



European Marine Board Communications Panel
(EMBCP)

Terms of Reference

Authors:

- Nan-Chin Chu, EMB Science Officer & EMBCP facilitator
- Jan Seys, VLIZ Head of Communication & EMBCP chair

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1. Missions and objectives

EMBCP Mission Statement: *The European Marine Board Communications Panel (EMBCP) provides a pan-European platform for marine science communicators to promote Marine Board activities, to synergize outreach activities, and to advocate ocean literacy.*

The European Marine Board Communications Panel has five E-M-B-C-P objectives.

1. **Exchange** ideas on events, communication methods and best practice.
2. **Mutually assist** its members in promoting and communicating marine science across Europe.
3. **Be (re)present(ed)** at major European (marine) science events.
4. **Communicate** Marine Board activities and outputs at the national level through press-releases & twining activities.
5. **Popularize** marine science by advocating more ocean literacy.

2. History of EMBCP

The former body of EMBCP was first set up at the end of 2000 as the **Public Awareness of Marine Science Group** and held its first meeting in Strasbourg on 5-6 February 2001. The Public Awareness group was involved in the launch and preparations of two Marine Board Position papers “Navigating the Future I: Towards a Marine European Research Area” in 2001 and “Navigating the Future II: Integrating Marine science in Europe” in 2003. The launch of the latter triggered the re-activation of the group as the **Marine Board Communications Network (MBCN)** in 2003 with a new mandate and a renewed membership. The MBCN contributed substantially to the EuroOCEAN Conference 2004 in Galway. In June 2008, upon request from the group members, the MBCN became the Marine Board Communication Panel (MBCP). Since 2013, following the change of the name from ‘Marine Board-ESF’ to ‘European Marine Board’ (EMB), the Panel also adopted the **European Marine Board Communication Panel (EMBCP)**.

3. Membership

The EMBCP is composed of experienced communication professionals: communication directors (officers), public relations officers, outreach experts or press officers, working for research performing organizations and research funding organizations. The EMBCP benefits from a variety of expertise—members are either:

- Initially trained as (science) communicators, or
- Marine scientists who embraced a marine science communications career, or
- Active scientists with *ad hoc* communications duties, or
- Working in a specific activity remit (e.g. education or media relations), others are led to address a wide scope of communications related activities.

3.1. Eligibility for EMBCP membership

Members should be from/ affiliated to EMB Member Organizations (MO) and based on one membership per MO. The application of EMBCP membership is through the nomination by delegates of the European Marine Board, including nominee's CV, to the EMB Secretariat. The application will later be approved by the sitting EMBCP Chair. This process can be carried out by e-mail.

The member can nominate an alternate to attend meetings as appropriate.

3.2. Role of EMBCP members

- Prepare for and attend EMBCP meetings;
- Submit inputs (e.g. ideas for new activities) and contribute to activities as appropriate;
- Advice and support in communicating EMB outputs (at the national level);
- Channel relevant information from the organizations they represent and their respective national scientific communities to the EMBCP, and *vice versa*.

3.3. EMBCP Deliverables/Instruments

- EMBCP meeting reports;
- EMBCP updates by the EMB Secretariat in Marine Board activity and annual reports;
- EMBCP self-evaluation report during the review process.

4. Governance

The EMBCP has no legal status and operates along the structure described below:

4.1. EMBCP Chair

The EMBCP Chair is selected amongst the EMBCP members. The EMBCP Chair's role is to

- Act in the best interest of the EMBCP and its objectives;
- Chair the EMBCP meetings;
- Oversee the progress of EMBCP activities, and initiate new ones;
- Liaise with the EMB Secretariat on priorities to be addressed;
- Report (every 1 to 1.5 years) to the EMB at one of its Plenary Meetings;
- Review reports of the meetings chaired.

4.2. Duration of the Chairmanship and Voting Quorum

The duration of the Chairmanship is 2 years, and can be re-elected by voting. Call for nomination will start 3 months before an EMBCP meeting, approaching the end of the term. The EMB Secretariat will verify with these nominees that they agree to this nomination.

Candidates, who would have been EMBCP for a minimum of one year, will provide a letter detailing their interests and suitability for the position one month prior to the election. A list of candidates will be made available to the EMBCP members 2 weeks before the meeting.

Each EMBCP member has the right to vote for the new Chair. Voting for EMBCP Chair should be done in person and anonymously at an EMBCP meeting. However, remote voting may in some cases be possible upon recommendation by the EMB Secretariat and upon approval of the sitting chair. Votes in writing (including e-mail) will be accepted where 14 days' notice has been provided. When written votes are accepted, the identified voter can be counted toward the quorum.

EMB Secretariat will assist the procedure and prepare the ballot paper. Election procedures, in accordance with EMB election procedures, are described below based on the number of candidates:

4.2.1. *One candidate only*

In this scenario, there is no competition for the vacant seat. Nonetheless, a secret ballot is used to provide elected candidates with a clear indication of their mandate. Ballot papers are distributed and the members are asked to tick "yes" or "no" on the ballot paper.

Do you wish to elect [*name of the candidate*] to the vacant position of EMBCP Chair?

Yes No

Ballots papers are retrieved by the EMB Science Officer and counted immediately. If the number of *Yes* votes is more than 50% of the number of valid votes cast then the candidate will be deemed elected. If the number of *Yes* votes is less than or equal to 50% of the number of valid votes cast then the candidate will not be deemed elected and the seat will remain vacant until another election can take place at the following meeting.

4.2.2. *Two candidates*

In this scenario, a simple "first past the post" voting procedure is used. Ballot paper are distributed and the members are asked to choose the person as the preferred candidate.

Please place a tick in the box next to the name of your preferred candidate for the Chair?
(tick only one box)

Name of Candidate A

Name of Candidate B

Ballot papers are retrieved by the EMB Science officer and counted immediately. The candidate with the highest number of votes is deemed elected. In case of a tie, members are asked to vote for a second time. If the second ballot results in a tie, then the candidate who has served as EMBCP member for a longer period of time is deemed elected.

4.2.3. *More than two candidates (instant run-off voting)*

Instant Run-off Voting is used in this scenario to take into account the second and third preferences of voters and better reflects the general preference with respect to all of the candidates in relation to each other. Ballot papers are distributed and the members are asked to vote for the candidates in order of preference with 1=first preference, 2=second preference, 3= third preference etc.

Please vote the <i>candidate</i> in order of preference: 1, 2 & 3	
<i>Name of Candidate A</i>	2
<i>Name of Candidate B</i>	1
<i>Name of Candidate C</i>	3

- (i) A majority is determined. Any number of votes greater than 50% of the total number of valid votes will be deemed a majority.
- (ii) Votes are counted according to first preferences on all ballots.
- (iii) If none of the candidates reach a majority then the candidate with the fewest number of first preference votes is eliminated and the ballots of that candidate are redistributed to the remaining candidates according to their second preference votes.
- (iv) In the case of a tie for last place the process of eliminating a candidate will be achieved by counting the number of second preference votes cast for each tied candidate in the ballot papers of all other candidate. The tied candidate with the lowest number of second preference votes will be eliminated.

4.3. EMB Secretariat support to the EMBCP

The EMB Secretariat actively supports the EMBCP and assigns a Science Officer as EMBCP facilitator whose main tasks are to:

- Maintain the contact between the EMB and the EMBCP;
- Support the EMBCP Chair in his/her functions;
- Organize EMBCP meeting (incl. drafting agenda, preparing meeting reports, and etc.);
- Assist during the procedure of Chair election;
- Report on EMBCP activities to the EMB (inputs to the biannual secretariat activity report and to the EMB Annual Report);
- Update EMBCP on EMB activities, future Position Papers or events, and request advice and support from EMBCP members in communicating EMB outputs at national level;
- Invite nomination to the EMBCP from EMB Delegates.

The EMB Secretariat does not financially support the EMBCP beyond the in-kind contribution of the EMB Secretariat staff time.

4.4. EMBCP Meeting

The EMBCP normally meets twice a year, and if appropriate in between to complete agreed activities. The location of the meeting is volunteered and hosted by EMBCP members and their home organizations.

Any decisions made during the EMBCP meetings are carried out by a majority vote of 50% of the participants.

4.5. Review by the European Marine Board

In accordance with the EMB Guidelines, progress and activities of EMB panels are considered annually by EMB members (at plenary meetings) to evaluate the role of each panel and its strategic positioning within the European marine research landscape. The EMBCP is subject to periodic review by the EMB based on a self-evaluation report, which reflects on the panel's mission, highlighting past achievements and outlining future directions.