

European Marine Board



“Land Beneath the Waves”

A joint geoscience-humanities strategy for
European continental shelf prehistoric research

SUBLAND

Webinar on Impact Assessment, October 2020

Nic Flemming

Land Beneath the Waves

Submerged landscapes and sea level change

A joint geoscience-humanities strategy
for European Continental Shelf Prehistoric Research

Position Paper 21



Started work October 2013, published October 2014



Distribution of submerged prehistoric sites and artefacts derived from the SPLASHCOS Action TD0902, 2010-2013.

The European Marine Board Position Paper 21 was published before the final books of SPLASHCOS in 2017 and 2020, but the writing and editing of those books had started before 2014.

In this Webinar we will address not just the development of Conshelf Prehistory, but how EMB Position Paper 21 “SUBLAND” has changed official policies.

Methods for assessing impact of SUBLAND report

1. Citations in academic literature (36 +?)
2. Impact assessment by EMB (about normal)
3. Evidence that recommendations have been implemented (Yes=32; No=15; Maybe=18).
4. Evidence of governments changing policy (Germany, Italy, UK...more?)
5. Evidence for increased funding for consheft prehistoric research (...?)
6. More institutions, universities, and teaching of the subject (hearsay?)
7. Influence outside Europe, USA, Australia, etc...

Outline data on questions raised in previous slide

1. Citations appearing on my Researchgate are 36, but there may be more.
2. The EMB conducted a standard review of the impact of the document published, and the citation in other European official programmes etc was average for EMB Position Papers.
3. There were over 60 recommendations in Annex 4 of the SUBLAND paper. I have worked through these to see how many have been implemented by one organisation or another. The hit rate is listed in the previous slide. Activities by UNESCO, EMODNET, technical developments in 3D digital underwater photography, improvements in acoustics, use of AUVs, have all helped the “Yes” score. More input of ideas needed.

Comments on questions, continued

4. SUBLAND was aimed at changing government and institutional policies and priorities. SPLASHCOS has continued very actively as an informal organisation, with a good website, and this is facilitating several of the SUBLAND recommendations. Correspondence confirms policy changes in Germany influenced directly by SUBLAND. Input of ideas during the Webinar will be important to confirm impact on other countries.
5. Evidence for increased funding. The year 2020 is not typical because of the Covid-19 virus. Nevertheless, a scan of the academic literature suggests that more projects in more countries, and indeed also outside Europe, are obtaining funding.

Comments on questions of impact, continued..

6. Institutions and universities conducting research in continental shelf prehistory, and more teaching of the subject. Casual correspondence shows that there have been many more projects devoted to consshelf prehistory in the last 5 years.

Before 2005 the annual rate of publications on consshelf prehistory was of the order of 5 to 10 globally. The annual rate rose to 50-90 articles per year during SPLASHCOS, and remained at the level of 30- 50 until 2016. (Sturt et al 2018). Since SPLASHCOS did not fund research, the combination of the COST Action and SUBLAND does seem to have resulted in continuously more funded projects.

UNESCO lists courses in marine archaeology and this may show an increase in consshelf prehistory.

Questions of impact assessment, continued....

- 7 Influence outside Europe... The review by Sturt et al (2018) shows that many papers have recently been published from the Americas, South Africa, and Australia, in addition to all European coasts. This has increased since 2010, presumably influenced by both SPLASHCOS and SUBLAND.
- 8 The SUBLAND draft was peer reviewed in Australia , which may have had some influence within that country. I have not checked the countries which have cited the SUBLAND report, but that would suggest where it has had influence outside Europe.

Summary of Introduction by Nic Flemming

1. SUBLAND & SPLASHCOS have had overlapping impacts, and it is difficult to separate them. SPLASHCOS has had a very strong influence intellectually and stimulated ideas. But funding agencies may be suspicious of what appear to be “fashions” in research. SUBLAND makes the case to administrators that investment in continental shelf prehistory is essential to comply with UNESCO conventions, important for protecting national heritage, and an issue that needs constant negotiation with offshore industries.
2. Continental shelf Prehistory is a rapidly growing subject.
3. SPLASCHOS continues to run an active website with news.
4. Both programmes have been very influential.

The following report by Francesco Chiocci will illustrate the success and growth of the subject in recent years.

Thank you for
listening.





The next
contribution
is by
Francesco Chiocci