



Towards integrated European marine research strategy and programmes

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Second SEAS-ERA Strategic Forum Report

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Second SEAS-ERA Strategic Forum

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Summary

Strategic Research Agendas (SRAs) for the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Black Sea were developed as part of the SEAS-ERA project. These SRAs identify some of the key scientific and societal challenges within these seas basins and provide high-level recommendations on research priorities. The Marine Board organized a 2nd pan-European SEAS-ERA Forum on 6th of February 2013, to allow presentation and an open discussion of the three SRAs among SEAS-ERA partners, the corresponding Baltic Sea initiative (BONUS), the European Commission (DG RTD, DG MARE and DG ENV), JPI-OCEANS, and other relevant stakeholders. The Forum provided an overview on each regional SRA and an opportunity for stakeholder perspectives. A panel discussion concluded the Forum which addressed future applications of the regional SRAs to maximize their use, uptake and impact as well as the improved networking and interaction between the SEAS-ERA research funding organizations.

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Second SEAS-ERA Strategic Forum “Challenges and Priorities in European Sea Basins”

06 February 2013, Brussels

Forum Report

1. Welcome

Niall McDonough (Marine Board-ESF; SEAS-ERA WP1) opened the Forum by welcoming those in attendance. He thanked the Secretary-General of the Flemish Government Department of Economy, Science and Innovation (EWI), Mr Dirk Van Melkebeke, and Dr Rudy Herman for providing the excellent facilities for the meeting venue (Auditorium Maria Baers).

Niall McDonough explained that the SEAS-ERA project brings together 20 major European Marine Research Funding Organizations from 18 countries and the Marine Board-ESF and has both a pan-European and a regional (sea basin) focus. Now entering the 3rd year of the project, each regional sea (Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Sea, which includes North Sea and Irish Sea) has developed a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) or Marine Research Plan¹ to provide high-level recommendations on research priorities relevant to addressing the particular challenges which exist in each basin.

This SEAS-ERA Forum is the second of a series of three such fora organized under Work Package 1 of the SEAS-ERA project. The purpose of the event is to bring together partners from three sea basins and external stakeholders and to discuss the applications of the three SRAs.

The Forum agenda² was therefore designed specifically to provide an opportunity to:

- Present the SRAs of the three regional sea basins in the SEAS-ERA project;
- Promote interaction between the SEAS-ERA sea basin strategies and the Baltic Sea via the BONUS initiative;
- Interact with stakeholders to gain their perspectives;
- Identify the key research priorities at the pan-European level.

About 80 people registered for the Forum with more than 60 attending³ on the day. On behalf of the SEAS-ERA consortium, tributes were paid to previous project coordinator Dr Joan Albaiges who had stepped down as Coordinator upon his retirement from CSIC (Spain).



¹ <http://www.seas-era.eu/np4/34/>

² See Annex I

³ See full list of participants in Annex II.

2. SEAS-ERA: Objectives and progress to date

Beatriz Morales-Nin (MINECO, Spain; SEAS-ERA Coordinator), who took over the role of project coordinator following the retirement of Joan Albaiges, provided an update on the current status of the SEAS-ERA project. She explained the five objectives of SEAS-ERA:



- a. To map existing national and regional research programmes and related strategic priorities, which would contribute to a **European Marine and Maritime Research Agenda**.

She highlighted the high-level objectives and benefits of these SRAs in three aspects: knowledge, innovation and policy support, and the bottom-up approach applied for each sea basin via expert and stakeholder consultations.

- b. To **foster synergies at national and regional level**, mobilising competitive and non-competitive funds for research in a more coordinated way, **through common programmes and joint calls**. The aim is to reach a critical mass in order to address major cross-thematic marine and maritime research challenges.

The common programme has adopted a step-by-step approach whereby funding agencies first specified their requirements and priorities for research, identified existing and planned programmes by the research performing organizations (RPOs), developed conceptual, innovative and integrative approaches, and finally built a common programme with RPOs to increase cooperation and to join efforts and to fill the gaps.

The coordinator also gave an update on the joint call in 2012 from the Atlantic and Mediterranean partners. Three topics were agreed upon by the participating funding agencies in the areas of (1) ecosystem approach/models, (2) risk assessment of invasive species, and (3) scientific support to the development of the good environmental status (GES) indicators. The total invested budget from 7 countries (Norway, Portugal, France, Belgium Greece, Turkey and Iceland) was €4,4m. Following an external evaluation, five projects were approved for funding under this joint call.

- c. To propose a plan for a **better and sustainable use of the existing Marine Research Infrastructures (MRIs)**, developing a common vision for optimizing the procurement, use and access to MRIs, fostering technological development, and building transnational governance.

For this work package, the report (D4.1.1) was published in October 2012 with a milestone symposium and workshop held in Toulon in November 2012.

- d. To **reduce imbalances among regions through human capacity building (HCB)**. The project devoted special attention to setting up a pan-European training and mobility strategy for human resources.

A strategic document (D5.2.1) has identified problems and barriers to effective human capacity building such as lack of funds and collaborative approaches.

- e. To enhance **public awareness towards marine and maritime scientific and policy issues in Europe** and translate the RTD activities into social, economic and cultural benefits.

To achieve this goal, different approaches/tools such webpages, Forums, e-newsletters and presence at European events, have been used by SEAS-ERA partners.

The coordinator stressed that the outputs from SEAS-ERA can be taken up by high-level science policy structures such as the European Commission (Horizon 2020) and JPI Oceans. Examples of such relevant outputs include:

- The experience in **developing SRAs**.
- The roadmap on management and investments of **marine research infrastructures**.
- SEAS-ERA has addressed the importance of **human capacity building**, which is not a usual structural element of other ERA-NETs.
- The **regional dimension** of SEAS-ERA has facilitated cooperation between neighbouring countries.
- Experiences in **building networks and cross-border funding initiatives** of SEAS-ERA and other ERA-NET projects.

Finally, in order to reach the final aim “**to establish a stable and durable structure for empowering and strengthening marine research all across Europe**”, the coordinator explained that the expected outcomes are:

- The pan-European Forum with regional science plans;
- Evaluations of the call results, methodologies for the use and sharing of MRIs;
- Regional and pan-EU plans for Human Capacity Building;
- Dissemination of research strategy via the EurOcean portal.

3. Black Sea

Çolpan Polat-Beken (TÜBITAK, Marmara Research Centre, Turkey; SEAS-ERA WP8) presented the SRA for the Black Sea, which was completed in early 2012.

The Vision for the Black Sea is to preserve its ecosystem as a valuable natural endowment of the region, whilst ensuring the protection and rational use of its marine and coastal living resources as a condition for sustainable development of the Black Sea coastal states, well-being, health and security of their population.

She explained the methodology for drafting the SRA, including

- An inventory of existing science/strategic plans;
- Two national consultation meetings (Turkey and Romania) with key experts to define priority research areas;



- Two regional workshops (Ankara and Istanbul), held after each draft, with participation of 38 experts, partner institutions, regional organizations and associated partners;
- Written contributions from 19 experts;
- Final review and editing.

Research priorities were identified according to the three major categories which had previously been set in a common template for the three SEAS-ERA sea basins:

- Topics for basic research and fundamental understanding;
- Applied research: science supporting society & maritime economy;
- Research support and cross-cutting issues for fundamental and applied research.

Under each category, several topics and their associated research issues were further addressed by the experts. The identified research priorities were not necessarily gaps but rather concerns and interests of Black Sea experts. In addition, some key issues could be considered holistically as one topic or could be put forward in a managerial view with strategic concerns. For new topics such as deep-sea research, for example, the region faces problems with a lack of expertise⁴.

Çolpan Polat-Beken further explained the **implementation** according to three aspects (1) basic principles (2) human capacity building and (3) convergence.

(1) **Basic** implementation principles

- a. Utilization of knowledge, achievements, outputs and products of past and ongoing projects based on lessons learnt and building on current EU and Black Sea Regional initiatives;
- b. Streamlining ongoing project activities to avoid overlap;
- c. Consultation and stakeholder involvement;
- d. Capacity building and networking;
- e. Promoting ownership and public-awareness at the national level;
- f. Regional partnerships and international cooperation.

(2) **Human Capacity Building** activities and programmes are crucial both for supporting and creating new skills and opportunities for marine scientists and managers. Dr Polat-Beken stressed that the aging of scientists in combination with the increased demand from RTD has made it urgent for a review of current education and training programmes.

(3) Implementation via **convergence** could be achieved by:

- a. Reviewing possible tools and synergising with existing structures (e.g. ERA-NETs, ERA-NETs+ and BONUS);
- b. Seeking advice from the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) organization;
- c. Adopting mechanisms from the Black Sea Commission (BSC) for regional support, such as introducing the SRA in their Biannual Scientific Conference;
- d. Continued external funds (EU) for the region;
- e. Making use of the Black Sea SRA in the development of the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) of JPI Oceans.

⁴ Detailed topics and key research issues refer to Black Sea Strategic Research Agenda and presentation slides, available on the SEAS-ERA webpage.

4. Mediterranean Sea

Kostas Nittis (Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Greece; SEAS-ERA WP7) presented the Strategic Research Agenda for the Mediterranean Sea on behalf of the Greek General Secretariat for Research and Technology. Different phases were implemented during the drafting of the Mediterranean SRA:



- a. The Mediterranean SRA was initiated with a **strategic workshop** in 2010 which included participants from national research funding agencies, a regional environmental protection agency (UNEP/MAP) and regional networks for marine science and observations (MOON and MedGOOS). In this workshop, overarching concepts and high-level objectives were identified and agreed. In addition, priority themes for the Mediterranean were highlighted, such as MSFD, marine observations and biodiversity with emphasis on non-indigenous species (NIS).
- b. In the second phase, **expert groups**, proposed by research funding organizations, developed **specific priorities** in the course of two meetings held over a nine month period.
- c. A **common structure** of the SRA was defined by Marine Board-ESF to allow a **coherent content** among three SEAS-ERA regional SRAs.
- d. **Presentation to the broader Mediterranean science community** is still on going. Since its publication in early 2012, the SRA has been presented in at least four regional and European assemblies and symposia.

A Shared Vision *“By 2020 Mediterranean Marine Science should be able to contribute with new knowledge to efficient policy making and sustainable growth of the maritime economy in response to the societal challenges for food, energy, wellbeing, and a healthy marine environment, following the principles of the ecosystem approach to management of natural resources.”*

Dr Nittis stressed that Mediterranean is a shared sea between EU and non-EU partner countries with important economic and cultural gradients. Therefore, **science** can play an **integrating role** to bridge the gaps. However, there were limited joint initiatives from the funding organizations and funding opportunities were not coherent. He gave a general introduction on the regional stakeholders, international/ national/ EU-funded collaborations and Mediterranean ERA-NETs⁵.

To define research priorities, themes were structured based on the interdisciplinary character of marine science and a problem-solving approach from the stakeholders. Three categories and one cross cutting theme included:

⁵ Details see presentation on the SEAS-ERA webpage <http://www.seas-era.eu/np4/19.html>

- (1) Fundamental understanding and new frontiers, including climate change & impacts, deep sea, biodiversity and biological invasions.
- (2) Supporting policies and society, including marine pollution, human health, socio-economics, MSP-ICZM and marine hazards.
- (3) Innovation to Economy, including living marine resources, ocean energy, blue biotechnology and transport.
- (4) Research support, including operational oceanography and training & technology transfer.

Finally, Dr Nittis summarized that the SRA, developed with a mixed top-down and bottom-up approach, should continue to **target wider stakeholders**. This is because currently it is clear that only a limited part of the SRAs were being used to define the SEAS-ERA common programming and joint call activities. The aim of the Mediterranean SRA would be to affect or to be combined with other initiatives, such as the JPI Oceans, Horizon 2020, a possible Article 185 for the Mediterranean and National programmes.

Questions and Answers:

Participants enquired on:

- *The selection criteria of the priorities:* it was based on their importance and exclusivity in each scenario.
- *Any substantial corrections after the consultation phase during the SRA process:* Some, but not much. Major divergence occurred in the domain of new and emerging science, for example and the strength and opportunities of deep sea research.
- *The views, e.g. a feasible structure, of combining with other initiatives:* It is necessary to ensure marine research is aligned in the future, that the efforts of SEAS-ERA and its SRAs will not be wasted. It would be useful, for example, to bring them to the European level and to apply them as a marine component on subsequent initiatives.



5. Atlantic Sea

Geoffrey O’Sullivan (Marine Institute, Ireland; SEAS-ERA WP6) presented the Marine Research Plan for the European Atlantic Sea Basin.

A Shared Vision *“The European Atlantic Sea Basin Strategic Research Agenda/ Marine Research Plan seeks to improve our understanding and protection of the European Atlantic and its ecosystems in order to catalyze a dynamic maritime economy, in harmony with the environment, which has sustainable development at its core. This will be achieved through building on existing good practices, science and technology, and harnessing new and emerging science, technology and innovation to add value and competitiveness to traditional sectors and create new and dynamic maritime sectors in a spirit of regional partnership and international cooperation.”*



The process to draft the Atlantic Plan involved:

- a. A **Discussion Document** (WP6, Task6.1) was published in October 2011 and widely distributed.
 - The general feedbacks were collected and collated.
 - As an open ocean, it was felt that that the **Atlantic spatial area** should not be considered based on national jurisdiction, but rather on the needs without imposing geographical constraints. This is especially relevant for issues such as fish migration.
 - Depending on the target stakeholder, there was an issue on the classification of research topics as either basic or applied.
 - There is a need to cooperate with the Americas, namely Greenland, Canada and USA, who share the same interest in the Atlantic Ocean.
- b. **Three consultative workshops** in 2012, covering aspects including science, governance and approaches to joint funding with N. America.
 - There was a good representation on a wide range of topics at the **Science Workshop** (Ostend). Gaps were identified in the areas of ecosystem complexity and marine geology. Issues on the prioritisation of topics reflected individual sectoral/stakeholder interest and were time bound, for example related to the economic recession.
 - At the **Governance Workshop** (Lisbon), the focus was very problem-solution oriented among regional managers from different sectors. It was also highlighted that a research agenda must **link science and management** and involve stakeholders from the earliest

stages such that the solutions/methodologies arrived at are **within the capabilities of the end-users**.

- In the discussions on the **Joint Funding** with USA and Canadian RFOs (Dublin), the Belmont Forum mechanism was flagged as an example to be further explored. This event has also brought up future trans-Atlantic collaborations in the marine area.
- c. **One on-line open consultation and survey**, with limited feedback.
- d. SEAS-ERA Atlantic partners also presented the document in various meetings/workshops at National or Pan-European levels.
- e. Given the parallel development of a European Union Strategy for the Atlantic (EUSA), the Atlantic SEAS-ERA partners actively input to the definition and content of the EUSA Atlantic Action Plan (2014-2020). SEAS-ERA was actively presented and participated in all **five EUSA workshops** (Horta, Brest, Bilbao, Cardiff and Cork). The Discussion document was also referenced by DG MARE as a support document for these workshops.

As there is no implementation plan included in the document, the term ‘Research Plan’ was used for the Atlantic document. However, other initiatives including sister ERA-NETs, JPI Oceans, and EUSA Action Plan, are also producing Strategic Agendas. A three columns comparison (see presentation⁶ for details) from the Discussion Document (2011), updated Document (2013) and existing/current SRAS/activities demonstrated that it is “**an on-going process**” and it will be necessary **to incorporate the expertise from other initiatives** with specific targets.

Questions and Answers:

Participants enquired on:

- **Ana-Teresa Caetano** (EC DG-RTD, SEAS-ERA Project Officer) enquired on the completion status of the Atlantic SRA: Completing the Atlantic SRA is in progress (to be completed in 3rd Reporting Period) but we are also stress testing it against the outputs of the EUSA Atlantic Fora Meetings of which there is still one critical Workshop on Research & Innovation to come (Cork, 4th March 2013). We are also anxious to ensure consistency between the SEAS-ERA Atlantic SRA and the EUSA Atlantic Plan (2014-2020) such that they are mutually complementary and supportive. In this way we can ensure that the work undertaken can have a lasting and very positive impact.
- **The inclusion of estuarine/transitional waters in the SRA**: There were comments from those interested in ICZM to focus more on coast/land interface during the consultation process. Estuarine waters are usually addressed in those sections dealing with environment but will also be addressed in the later Atlantic document.



⁶ <http://www.seas-era.eu/np4/34/>

6. Baltic Sea

Kaisa Kononen (BONUS EEIG) presented the SRA developed within BONUS: the Joint Baltic Sea Research and Development Programme⁷.

BONUS Vision *An economically and ecologically prosperous Baltic Sea region where resources and goods are used sustainably and where the long-term management of the region is based on sound knowledge derived from multidisciplinary research.*



A brief history of BONUS:

Under ERA-NET

- 2004-2008: BONUS ERA-NET

Under ERA-NET Plus

- 2007-2011: BONUS+, with a first joint call to test the collaboration mechanism of national funding institutions.

Under Article 185 of the EU Treaty

- 2010-2012: BONUS strategic phase, by drafting a SRA and developing a framework for calls.
- 2012-2017: BONUS implementation phase, with a collaborative programme, joint calls, deep integration of research policies, infrastructures, training programmes, and end-user focused dissemination.
- 2018-2022: BONUS and Horizon 2020. The consultations are ongoing in the National Funding Agencies.

In the BONUS SRA development, BONUS has **delivered several documents**:

- (2006) BONUS-169 Science Plan and Implementation Strategy, including 7 themes and focused on the marine environment.
- (2010) Outline of the BONUS-169 Joint Baltic Sea Research Programme.
- (2011) BONUS Strategic Research Agenda 2011-2017, which included both marine and coastal aspects. Other emphases were on interdisciplinary, transnational, fit-for-purpose, policy-driven and stakeholder & end-user focus.

To draft this agenda, the methodologies applied were drawn from an internet poll, stakeholder analysis, appointment of BONUS advocates from each member state, forums, and national and strategic orientation workshops before final approval of the SRA by the Steering Committee. The structure of the research agenda includes 5 strategic objectives with 19 themes.

- (2013) Policy framework analysis in the fields relevant to the BONUS programme.

⁷ <http://www.bonusportal.org/>

The document, available in early 2013, will serve as a background for updating the BONUS SRA. It aims at identifying the knowledge needs arising from the relevant policies at the global, European and the Baltic Sea Region levels and covers more than 80 policy documents and initiatives in the areas of e.g. environment, maritime activities, fisheries, climate change, agriculture, and research strategy and knowledge management.

For the **joint call activities**:

- The pilot call was in 2007 on the theme ‘*Ecosystem approach to management*’, to which FP7 contributed a third of the total funding of 22 million Euros. Sixteen projects were funded during 2009-2011 with the participation of over 100 research institutes. The results were satisfying as funded projects have contributed to numerous consultations and had significant impacts on Baltic policies.
- The second round of calls started at the end of 2012 following a process to ensure compliance with FP7 rules. According to the characteristics of the 19 themes, the calls were classified as thematic and innovation calls. A requirement in each call was the participation of a minimum of 3 countries, including 2 BONUS member states. Both types of call were additionally funded by the EU and for the Innovation Call there was further support from the innovation funders. Two more calls will follow in 2013 and 2014.

Finally, Dr Kononen stressed the benefits to BONUS from the **EU macro-regional policy** (DG REGIO) that has created a platform for networking of **innovation funders**. She used the example of the 2012 ‘Innovation Call’ based on the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) flagship programme ‘BSR Stars’, which aims to speed up innovation in the Baltic Sea Region using transnational cooperation to create strengthened competitiveness and sustainable growth.

Questions and Answers:

Participants highlighted:

- *The importance/ contribution of a centralised Secretariat*: The fulltime work of the Secretariat has motivated the project. RFOs also rely on them for the communication and dissemination functions.

7. Marine Strategy Framework Directive

Anna Cheilari (European Commission, DG ENV-Marine & Water Industry Unit) gave an updated overview of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and progress on its implementation.

The Marine Directive is the EU’s legal instrument for the protection of European seas, with an overarching goal **“to achieve Good Environmental Status of EU marine water by 2020”** and three pillars designed to:

- Protect ecosystems in clean, healthy and productive seas;
- Promote sustainable use of Europe’s marine resources;
- Implement common approaches and cooperation at EU and regional level.



The MSFD implementation steps are:

- By 2012: an initial assessment, determination of good environmental status, targets and indicators;
- By 2013: the first report on implementation by the Commission;
- By 2014: monitoring programmes;

The core purpose for the establishment and implementation of coordinated monitoring programmes is the **on-going assessment of the environmental status**. The monitoring programmes must be **coordinated, compatible, coherent** and **consistent**. This will **integrate** with existing monitoring programmes fit for MSFD purpose, e.g. those used for compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives, the Water Framework Directive and other relevant EU legislation, Regional Sea Conventions and international agreements.

- By 2015: development of programmes of measures;
- By 2016: implementation of programmes of measures;

The previous two steps will include spatial protection measures contributing to coherent and representative networks of MPAs. Therefore, the member states shall make publicly available MPA information by 2013.

- During the period of 2018-2021: a six-year review of the different elements of the strategy.

Updates were given on the implementation reports⁸ submitted by each member state, on (Art. 26) transposition, (Art. 7) competent authorities, (Art. 8) initial assessment, (Art. 9) determination of GES, and (Art. 10) environmental targets and indicators. A first analysis of these reports showed the following general characteristics:

- Extensive amounts of qualitative information;
- Very limited precise/quantifiable GES and targets;
- Low level of ambition and repeats of existing policies;
- Little or no coherence between member states and between marine regions;
- Little or no forward-looking perspective, no integrated and holistic policy vision per marine region;
- Variety of assessment scales (spatial, temporal) limiting comparability and coherence of assessments;
- Gaps in information and knowledge identified without always a clear plan to address them;
- Limited pressure and impact analysis (e.g. accumulation of pressures) and limited linkages between Article 8 and Articles 9 & 10.

It was also highlighted that many SEAS-ERA joint call projects have supported MSFD and GES objectives.

More research is needed to support an ecosystem based approach to the management of human activities having an impact on the marine environment. The Marine Directive is a continuous effort, cyclical in nature, which will continue to demand new knowledge and insight.

Questions and Answers:

Participants enquired and highlighted:

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/eu-coast-and-marine-policy/implementation/scoreboard_en.htm

- *Given that the observation/monitoring system in the Mediterranean is incomplete for the southern part of the sea basin, how can a European Directive have a coordinated, coherent and consistent impact on the non-EU neighbouring countries:* MSFD is ensuring the collaboration with the regions and coherence with regional sea conventions, such as the Barcelona Convention, that can be applied to the non-EU Mediterranean member states.
- *How can member states join the data collected via existing monitoring programmes with MSFD needs:* The *ad-hoc* monitoring meeting will open the dialogue on efforts to integrate existing national data collection with MSFD requirements. A call for a Parliamentary pilot project has been launched on “new knowledge for an integrated management of human activity in the sea” and currently proposals are under evaluation.
- A current EU FP7 Project STAGES⁹, funded by DG RTD and supported by DG ENV, is designed to collect information on existing research relevant to the implementation of MSFD from research institutes and research funding organizations.



8. Horizon 2020

Arnoldas Milukas (European Commission, DG RTD, Environment Directorate) presented Horizon 2020¹⁰, the next EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation to run from 2014 to 2020.

The Framework Programme has been a major instrument of EU research policy since the 1980s. Two objectives are:

- To strengthen the scientific and technological base of European industry, and
- To encourage its international competitiveness, while promoting research that supports EU policies.

The next Framework Programme, Horizon 2020, will have three main pillars: Excellent Science, Societal Challenges and Industrial Leadership. Marine research¹¹ related to these pillars and objectives will be supported through:

- **Excellent Science**
For example: marine research infrastructures, ERC grants, Marie Curie Fellowships.
- **Industrial leadership**
For example: blue biotechnology, innovation in SMEs for ‘Blue Growth.’



⁹ <http://www.stagesproject.eu/>

¹⁰ www.ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index_en.cfm?pg=marine

- **Societal challenges**
For example: the role of the ocean in climate, maritime transport, ocean renewables, fisheries & aquaculture.
- European Innovation & Technology Institutes
For example: Knowledge & Innovation Communities (KICs)
- Promoting **partnerships** with Member States in the definition of strategic marine research agendas.
For example: SEAS-ERA and BONUS Strategic Research Agendas

A number of EU funded R&D activities have contributed to major EU policy developments such as: BONUS-185 which became the science pillar of the Baltic Strategy (2009); SEAS-ERA Mediterranean Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) and PERSEUS both feeding the Integrated Maritime Policy for the Mediterranean (2009) process; SEAS-ERA Atlantic SRA for the Atlantic Strategy (2011) and the new trans-Atlantic initiative in Marine and Maritime cooperation. Similar initiatives may emerge linked to the recently adopted strategies for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas (2012). He stressed that SEAS-ERA is expected to constitute a platform for developing a European integrated policy oriented structure in the whole spectrum of marine and maritime research.

Questions and Answers:

Participants enquired:

- *Concerning the first H2020 call, planned in 2013, what would be the identified programmes and topics:* This issue will be consulted with the Programme Committee and decided accordingly.
- *Regarding trans-Atlantic cooperation, from the ICES experience, there is no practical funding mechanism in the EU to facilitate initiatives:* the Commission’s current position is to encourage collaboration at the programme level.
- *The strategy of the European Commission to support efforts of governments to collaborate and structure/develop the European Research Area (e.g. via ERA-NETs and JPIs):* the Commission is doing a lot to support Member States to join forces. A number of Articles 169/185 have been supported and also JPIs are actively supported. Nevertheless these are and should be a Member States initiative with the European Commission acting as a facilitator.

9. Basin Strategies- Atlantic

Matthew King (European Commission, DG MARE, Maritime Policy) presented the Atlantic Strategy. The main aim of the Strategy is to **achieve job growth** by focusing on the **offshore economy**, termed as ‘Blue Growth.’

Five challenges and opportunities of the Atlantic Strategy were defined¹² to find the key R&D drivers:

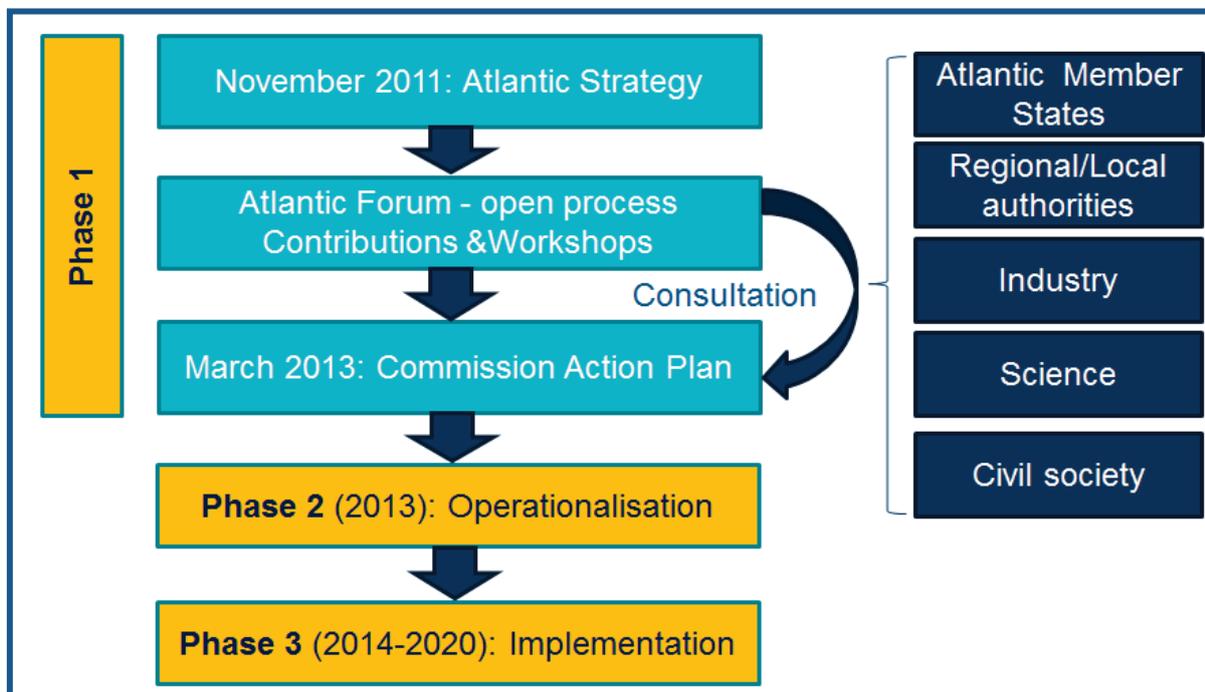
- Implementing the ecosystem approach
- Reducing Europe’s carbon footprint
- Sustainable exploitation of the Atlantic’s seafloor natural resources



¹² http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/sea_basins/atlantic_ocean/documents/com_2011_782_en.pdf

- Responding to threats and emergencies
- Socially inclusive growth

The current stage of the Atlantic Strategy process is the consultation via the Atlantic Forum workshops¹³, with some funding from the European Parliament (see diagram below, extracted from the presentation).



The consultation results will contribute an agreed set of priorities for **European economic development** in the Atlantic region. This Action Plan will come in good time to be taken on board in Horizon 2020. The idea of this Strategy is to provide a framework for **the Member States**, who will make the final decision for implementation at the national level.

10. JPI Oceans

Kathrine Angell-Hansen (JPI Oceans) presented JPI Oceans and its current stage of development.

Currently, JPI Oceans has 18 participating countries and is overseen by a **Management Board**, composed of high-level representatives of Member State Ministries, to deliver a joint action plan and potential funding initiatives across Europe. The JPI has also put in place a **Strategic Advisory Board (StAB)**, drawn from scientific, industrial, public authority and civil society organizations. The StAB has a role to provide strategic advice, in particular on the development of the JPI Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA). The implementation of JPI actions will be



¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/sea_basins/atlantic_ocean/atlanticforum/events

based on variable geometry whereby those who are interested in participating can contribute resources to a particular action.

Kathrine Angell-Hansen reminded the audience that JPI Oceans is not only about programmes and funding calls. Key goals of JPI Oceans are:

- To develop a knowledge based maritime economy;
- To achieve good environmental status of Europe’s seas;
- To optimize the response to climate change and its impacts.

She highlighted the **vision document**¹⁴ of the JPI Oceans that illustrates the key focus of JPI at the intersections between marine environment, climate change and maritime economy. She compared the scope of JPI with that of SEAS-ERA, illustrating synergies and differences between the two initiatives (see slide below).

Differences and equalities

SEASERA	JPI Oceans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sea basin <i>Many Commonalities</i> ▪ Timeline short ▪ Comprehensive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Blue growth, pressures, ✓ basic, applied science needs, infrastructure, monitoring ✓ Will all be done by SEAS-ERA? ▪ Mapping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sharing of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pan European, <i>Variable Geometry</i> ▪ Timeline long ▪ JPI covers intersections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Different tools, Calls, Infrastructure, Monitoring ▪ Mapping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Building on SEAS-ERA mapping ✓ 3 legs for mapping; strategies, meetings, open consultation, new methods to identify gaps

The key elements of the relationship between JPI Oceans and ERA-NETs are:

- SEAS-ERA mapping is impressive and very comprehensive, a dialog is needed to identify areas of relevance to JPI Oceans.
- ERA-NETS are excellent mechanisms for implementation of short term calls;
- No formal agreements are in place between JPI Oceans and ERA-NETS;
- To ensure cooperation on relevant areas, constant dialogue will be essential;
- Many SEAS-ERA partners are involved in JPI Oceans through the StAB, CSA-Oceans¹⁵, Management Board and Secretariat;
- For the operational phase, JPI could facilitate common calls across ERA-NETS when relevant to JPI Oceans goals and objectives. For a single topic call identified by JPI Oceans, relevant ERA-NETS can be informed for potential follow-up.

¹⁴ <http://www.jpi-oceans.eu/prognett-jpi-oceans/Documents/1253960389364>

¹⁵ http://www.jpi-oceans.eu/prognett-jpi-oceans/CSA_Oceans/1253979959045

Questions and Answer



Participants enquired about:

- *The added value of SEAS-ERA to JPI Oceans. The SEAS-ERA partners are hopeful that **their short term contribution will be continued by JPI Oceans**:* Kathrine Angell-Hansen replied that JPI Oceans will take note of the SEAS-ERA plans and draw from them in order to feed the development of the JPI Oceans Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA). However, JPI Oceans will only focus on the intersections while the SEAS-ERA plans cover everything. The time frame is also important given JPI Oceans will focus on long term needs. She invited SEAS-ERA to a dialogue to inform where JPI Oceans can best focus its attention.
- *Implementation of the JPI Oceans:* JPI Oceans still needs to develop the tools for implementation of its future actions. This process will be supported by the CSA Oceans. The Management Board has a strong desire for the JPI to focus on tools that are useful for the JPI members.
- *The available funding from industry to run together rather than in parallel and if the scientific community can take this as an opportunity:* Yes, where appropriate JPI Oceans wants to join forces and pool resources with industry. For example, marine space users have an obligation to monitor their environmental impact but also they need to gather data for safety and operational reasons. There are several representatives from industry in the StAB of JPI Oceans.



11. Panel Discussion

A panel composed of **Beatriz Morales-Nin**, **Çolpan Polat-Beken**, **Kostas Nittis**, **Geoffrey O’Sullivan**, **Andris Andrusaitis** (BONUS EEIG), **Jean-François Masset** (IFREMER, France; SEAS-ERA WP4 Infrastructures) was convened on the stage. **Niall McDonough** (Moderator for the panel discussion) proposed that the discussion focus on two perspectives, short- and long-term applications of the SEAS-ERA SRAs.



11.1. Short-term perspective: Use, uptake and impact of SEAS-ERA Regional SRAs

Jacky Woods (NERC/NOC, UK) enquired whether there were plans to develop a pan-European Research Strategy from SEAS-ERA project.

Niall McDonough stated that it is a deliverable in the WP1 to draw together the common perspectives and priorities from the three SRAs. However, it has shown that there are different challenges and priorities in the different regions. A report on commonalities would be prepared but this would not, and should not, constitute a pan-European research strategy.

Geoffrey O’Sullivan agreed and stated that the **change in the economic situation** has altered the priorities of the agendas. He emphasized the importance of keeping the research plans relevant to current needs and noted that the Atlantic SRA, for example, is not a final document. For the pan-European Strategy, it can be a very simple short document that highlights the key current priorities that have relevance at basin level and those which have relevance at pan-European level. With the continuous effort of the marine research and science policy community, marine research increased in importance on the EU agenda and this must be reflected in Horizon 2020.

Kathrine Angell-Hansen asked about SEAS-ERA focus on the neighbouring countries, recalling the importance of this in view of the MSFD governance objectives. JPI Oceans believes that sharing of experience on this perspective across the different European sea basins could prove valuable.

Kostas Nittis noted, however, that summarizing regional plans to identify commonalities among regions would represent an important contribution from SEAS-ERA at European level. He stressed that the drafting of the SRAs has generated expectations beyond SEAS-ERA partners. Kostas Nittis also stated that the best way to mobilise EU structural funds, e.g. for MRIs, is to link up regional strategies.

Pier Francesco Moretti (CNR, Italy) suggested changing the SRA implementation approach to a short-term perspective, based on the action timescales.

Andris Andrusaitis commented that from the BONUS experience that to diversify the funding instrument was not supported by the funding member states, and a simple scheme was in the end applied as the implementing instrument, as presented earlier. However, BONUS has acknowledged that a broader and flexible approach to implement a research agenda would have a better result.

Maurice Héral (ANR, France; WP2 Common Programme) suggested revising research priorities on the basis of the ongoing budget cuts in member states.

Niall McDonough added that availability of funding among RFOs to participate in joint calls should not constitute the only means to actively participate in an ERA-Net. Joint calls are just one mechanism to be used by ERA-NETs and other tools and approaches are also important. The ultimate goal of SEAS-ERA is to develop synergies between national investments.

Geoffrey O’Sullivan stressed the **short-term impact** of the project. Besides research priorities, several enabling actions were also identified in the SRAs. These enabling actions could be revised and consolidated in the current constrained economic climate.

Beatriz Morales-Nin summarized that it is relevant to develop a pan-European document.

11.2. Long-term perspective: Future networking and interaction of RFOs beyond the lifetime of SEAS-ERA

Key Focusing Area

Geoffrey O’Sullivan emphasized that the SEAS-ERA project has brought together research **funding agencies** across Europe and has established a **better relationship** among research programme managers. He pointed out that research-funding agencies are government bodies, are dependent on available budget, and can normally only fund short-term projects (e.g. 3-4 years). However, summarizing today’s Forum, he emphasized that attention should be paid to three areas:

1. **Ocean observation and forecasting:** this has been highlighted in all three SEAS-ERA SRAs and should be implemented at regional level. Its importance was also highlighted in the EU Green Paper on Marine Knowledge 2020.
2. **Marine socio-economic database:** the information from socio-economics is necessary to provide financial arguments in supporting research.
3. **Technology foresight and horizon scanning:** A new mechanism is necessary to spot key emerging technologies. He drew attention to the 3rd Marine Board Forum on Blue Technology, which had been held in Brussels in 2012¹⁶.

Training, education and human capacity building

Caron Montgomery (DEFRA, UK) raised the issue of training and the aging of marine scientists. In the UK, they have been challenged with a lack of marine modelers, taxonomists and benthic ecologists etc. With emerging technologies, how can a new generation be provided with the basic skill set?

Çolpan Polat-Beken added that in the Black Sea region, some research topics do lack human capacity and expertise.

Niall McDonough raised the issue of taxonomists which has also been raised within the member organizations of Marine Board. A coordinated training approach for a future

¹⁶ <http://www.marineboard.eu/fora/3rd-marine-board-forum>

generation of taxonomists is important and training should always twin phenotypic approaches with the molecular expertise.

Mark Dickey-Collas (ICES, Denmark) agreed on the importance to explore different mechanisms for lost skills. ICES runs training programmes on areas such as the ecosystem approach to marine resource management. NOAA also provides funding for training the next generation. A joint Conference for early career researchers between ICES and NOAA has provided excellent network and training opportunities for young scientists.

Geoffrey O’Sullivan recalled the fact that many RFOs are overseen by a science ministry not an education ministry. A science ministry can at best emphasize the importance of training, but not fund training initiatives. It is necessary to train scientists to **be versatile and adaptable** against the realities of market forces.

Andris Andrusaitis commented that this discussion has brought back the question on how diverse the activities of RFOs should be. In BONUS, a limitation has to be put on support to educational programmes, however, traces have remained from the funding activities, such as in research training or summer schools. In terms of human capacity training, a topic with a pan-European dimension would have more added value to be implemented.

JPI Oceans and BONUS

Kathrine Angell-Hansen asked, especially to BONUS, about the interaction between BONUS and European Commission?



Andris Andrusaitis recalled that the requirement of participating in calls in BONUS member states is rather an implication than a written rule, in which the programme calls are

inclusive and all scientists from members of BONUS have an equal right to participate and apply for funding. This decision was made by the BONUS members, not by the Commission. Considering the configuration with JPI Oceans after 2018, he commented that there are 6 BONUS members within the JPI Oceans. He enquired if there is any mechanism to associate with JPI Oceans, not as member state but an established multinational structure.

Kathrine Angell-Hansen encouraged a dialogue between JPI Oceans, BONUS and other ERA-NETs, especially, when some members of JPI Oceans and SEAS-ERA may be interested to pursue an Article 185 for their regions.

Pier Francesco Moretti (CNR, Italy) commented on the top-up funding from the Commission to the BONUS members states’ contributions under the Article 185. He questioned the independency of member states and whether a third consortium from outside the BONUS member states would be eligible to apply for funding.

Andris Andrusaitis replied that one option of BONUS for the future is continuation without top-up which would provide more freedom. He stressed that BONUS should “*Do what we consider is important and be generous to the other countries.*”

Marine research infrastructure

Jean-François Masset informed the audience that an updated review on European MRIs has been developed within the SEAS-ERA project (D4.2.1, to be delivered in March 2013). This report aims to propose recommendations and common management guidelines for MRIs which could be involved in joint research activities. To initiate this approach, two prerequisite actions were performed: (1) an extensive mapping of the MRI facilities in Europe within the framework of FP7 I3 projects, and (2) a workshop on MRIs, held in Nov. 2012, to consolidate the recommendations in the long term.



4 main topics are included in this report:

1. **Open and trans-national access to MRIs:** The idea is to consolidate the process beyond EC support and directly from national institutions. Existing consortia, such as I3 projects or equivalent, could implement a common programme.
2. **Mutual use for both monitoring and research:** The objectives are to identify needs and gaps, to deploy common strategies, to develop new technologies, and to leverage existing projects. The actions should be taken to support MRI operations with a uniform spatial coverage in Europe.
3. **Set up a common procurement strategy and develop a common business model:** For example, on the issue of aging regional vessels, mutual programming and use could facilitate the development of a smaller but more modern fleet of standardized regional vessels.
4. **From coordination to integration of distributed MRIs into networks:** It proposes a light ‘Central Office’ to facilitate the national components to bring the appropriate degree of European coordination to implement or check adopted decisions and programmes. The existing ESFRI and I3 projects will work towards a shared common vision of the governance of such a central office.

Geoffrey O’Sullivan stressed that there are numerous marine research infrastructures in the Atlantic alone. It is important to discuss how to optimize their use. However, although it is agreed to have integrated European approaches, he noted that national vessels are usually considered flagship research infrastructures and it is difficult for Member States to give up national infrastructures for European or international services.

Concluding the Forum, **Niall McDonough** thanked all the panel members, stakeholders and SEAS-ERA partners for their active participation.

Annexes

Annex I – 2nd SEAS-ERA Strategic Forum agenda, final

Annex II – 2nd SEAS-ERA Strategic Forum list of participants, final

Annex III – List of acronyms

Annex I – 2nd SEAS-ERA Strategic Forum agenda, final

	09h15	ARRIVAL AND COFFEE & TEA	
	09h45	BEGINNING OF THE FORUM	
		Welcome	Niall McDonough (Marine Board ESF; SEAS-ERA WP1 Leader) 15'
		SEAS-ERA: Objectives and progress to date	Beatriz Morales-Nin (MINECO, Spain, SEAS-ERA Coordinator) 15'
Regional research plans		Black Sea	Çolpan Polat-Beken (TÜBITAK/ MRC) (SEAS-ERA) 30'
		Mediterranean	Kostas Nittis (GSRT, Greece) (SEAS-ERA) 30'
	11h15	COFFEE & TEA BREAK	30'
		Atlantic	Geoffrey O’Sullivan (MI, Ireland) (SEAS-ERA) 30'
		Baltic Sea	Kaisa Kononen (BONUS EEIG) 30'
		MSFD	Anna Cheilari (EC DG-ENV) 15'
	13h00	LUNCH	60'
Stakeholder views		Horizon 2020	Arnoldas Milukas (EC DG-RTD) 15'
		Basin Strategies	Matthew King (EC DG-MARE) 15'
		JPI-OCEANS	Kathrine Angell-Hansen (JPI-OCEANS) 15'
	15h00	COFFEE & TEA BREAK	30'
		Panel Discussion	Beatriz Morales-Nin, Çolpan Polat-Beken, Kostas Nittis, Geoffrey O’Sullivan, Andris Andrusaitis, Jean-François Masset (IFREMER), and Niall McDonough (facilitator)
	16h45	END OF FORUM	

Annex II – 2nd SEAS-ERA Strategic Forum list of participants, final

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Annex III – List of Acronyms

Article 185 Initiatives

Article 185 TFEU (ex Article 169 TEC) foresees the participation of the EU in the joint implementation of (parts of) research and development national programmes.

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/art185/about-185_en.html

BONUS EEIG

BONUS builds on the ERA-NET and BONUS+ programmes and has engaged over 100 research institutes and universities in nine Baltic Sea countries. The BONUS Secretariat was established as an European Economic Interest Grouping in 2007 to act as the legal management organization of BONUS.

CSA

Coordination and Support Action

A project type in the 7th Framework programme (FP7) for DG RTD. These are actions that cover not the research itself, but the coordination and networking of projects, programmes and policies.

http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/understanding/fp7inbrief/funding-schemes_en.html

DG ENV

Directorate General for the Environment, European Commission

DG MARE

Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission

DG REGIO

Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission

DG RTD

Directorate General for Research & Innovation, European Commission

ERA-NET

European Research Area network Scheme

The objectives of ERA-NET scheme (FP6) was to set up the cooperation and coordination of research activities carried out at national or regional level in the Member States and Associated States

http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/index_en.cfm?p=9_eranet

ERC

European Research Council

<http://erc.europa.eu/>

EurOcean

European Centre for Information on Marine Science and Technology

<http://www.eurocean.org/>

EUSA

European Union Strategic for the Atlantic

http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/sea_basins/atlantic_ocean/index_en.htm

GES

Good Environmental Status

Core objective of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive which aims to achieve good environmental status in all EU marine waters by 2020.

See **MSFD**

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/marine/ges.htm>

HCB

Human Capacity Building

I3

Integrated Infrastructure Initiative EC funding scheme within the

‘Capacities’ sub-programme of FP7

<http://cordis.europa.eu/infrastructures/i3.htm>

ICZM
Integrated Coastal Zone Management

JPI
Joint Programme Initiative
The overall aim of the Joint Programming process is to pool national research efforts in order to make better use of Europe’s precious public R&D resources and to tackle common European challenges more effectively in a few key areas.
One of the initiatives, **JPI Oceans** is on Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans.
http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/joint-programming-initiatives_en.html
<http://www.jpi-oceans.eu>

KICs
Knowledge & Innovation Communities
The KIC is the independent but operational part of the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT).
<http://eit.europa.eu/kics/>

MRI
Marine Research Infrastructure

MSFD
Marine Strategy Framework Directive
Environmental pillar of the EU integrated maritime policy.
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/eu-coast-and-marine-policy/marine-strategy-framework-directive/index_en.htm

PERSEUS
Policy-Oriented Marine Environmental Research in the Southern European Seas
<http://www.perseus-net.eu>

RFO
Research Funding Organization

RPO
Research Performing Organization

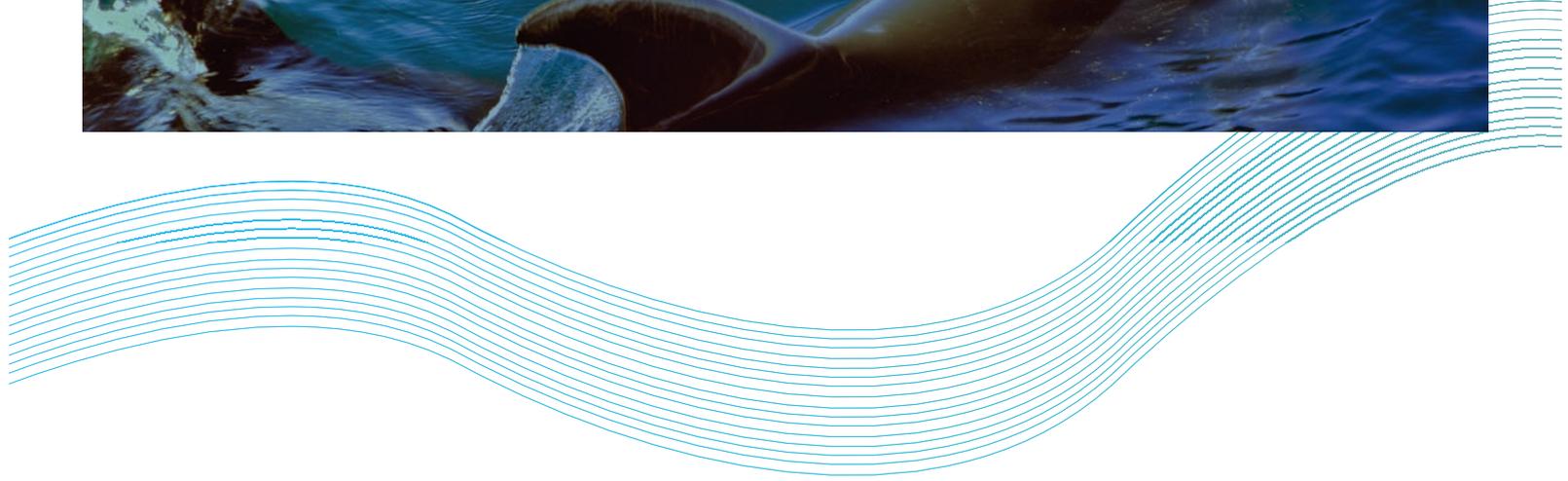
SMEs
Small and Medium Enterprises

SRA
Strategic Research Agenda

SRIA
Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda of JPI Oceans
http://www.jpi-oceans.eu/prognett-jpi-oceans/Policy_strategy/1253971286454

StAB
Strategic Advisory Board of JPI Oceans
http://www.jpi-oceans.eu/prognett-jpi-oceans/Strategic_Advisory_Board/1253980838312

STAGES
STAGES is a coordination and support action and aims to improve the scientific knowledge base to support the implementation of the MSFD.
<http://www.stagesproject.eu/>



Towards integrated European marine
research strategy and programmes

Seas era 
EUFP7ERA-NET 

<http://www.seas-era.eu>

Project Beneficiaries



Project Third Parties

