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REPORT ON PROMOTION AND SME POLICY

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1. ABSTRACT

The “Promotion and SME Policy” report states the strategy developed by ESONET Network of Excellence in what concerns the promotion policy with respect to the general public and the SME policy, as a key element of the development of deep sea observatories in all different aspects: observation network, sensors, communications and value added services.

The main elements of Promotion are the website, the Esonews Newsletter, and VISO, the virtual users community. SME policy is mainly addressed through PESOS, Yellow Pages and the Industrial Observatory. The state of the art concerning the development of these elements is discussed in the following sections.

2. PROMOTION OF ESONET

2.1 ESONET website

The ESONET website development is ensured in the Work Package 8 – Management. It has a strong influence on the promotion policy of the project.

The first level of www.esonet-emso.org (alias www.esonet-emso.eu) website was ready at the beginning of the ESONET NoE project in order to ensure a visibility from:

- partners in order to explain the specificity of the NoE and the aims of subsea observatory issues, not only to participating scientists and engineers but also to their administration and management,
- international colleagues who already had brilliant websites,
- regional stakeholders in order to show that their site of interest has been taken into account by the network of excellence.

During the first month of the project and before the submission of EMSO PP to the Infrastructure program of the FP7, the site was updated in order to include EMSO project and an explanation of the link between the two projects. It was including at this stage:

- explanations for core stakeholders such as ESFRI (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures),
- reference documents for the EC evaluators and the national funding agency representatives invited to the first Strategic Committee in September 2007. Links to the former ESONET CA website used also for ESONIM SSA project were implemented in this purpose.

The website was then used for the everyday life of the project: call for workshops, call for Demonstration Missions, news, Esonews promotion, dissemination of documents, surveys,…

In parallel, the various Work Packages have been building up prototype websites (the link to the main web site is decided when a level of maturity is reached):

- WP 1: data management
- WP1 and WP5: underwater observatory site description
- WP2: Forum for GEO and GEOSS
- WP6: Yellow pages
- WP 7 Education and outreach website

The aim of integration and display of this integration for the promotion of the project results required then a complete restructuring of the Esonet Web site. Decisions were taken in Steering Committee and General Assembly (Faro 2008) in this respect.

The site www.esonet-emso.org (alias www.esonet-emso.eu) has been rebuilt in 2008 opening links to all previous projects and to associated projects. It uses the Eziweb tool. Since March 2009, it has replaced the previous site and it is ready to be used as a general portal for all the websites developed by Esonet.

2.2 ESONEWS

One of the products of ESONET was designed as a Newsletter devoted to the dissemination of (i) the importance of scientific issues, (ii) the mastering of the technology and business plan, (iii) the role of political support for underwater observatories, (iv) the partnership with successful implementations in North America and Japan, and (v) complementary role of ESONET in situ observation with satellite, coastal surface and subsurface ocean layer data collection.

In this sense an issue of "ESONET News - Europeans observe the deep sea" was planned to be produced every 3 months. It is prepared in digital form and distributed to a large mailing list prepared by ESONET central office. Each issue, with 8 pages, is also printed to be disseminated among partners and distributed in international meetings.
The first number was devoted to the launching of ESONET NoE initiative. The second number was devoted to the technological aspects of deep sea observatories. The third number to the outcomes of ESONIM project and centered in the financial aspects of regional nodes.

After a redesign of the Newsletter layout, three issues of ESONEWS (Summer, Fall and Winter 2008) gathering contributions from the different partners and SMEs and focused on the main observatory technologies developed in Europe (GEOSTAR, ASSEM and DELOS) were prepared.

Issues of ESONEWS include information on SMEs, focused on their potential contribute to ESONET. The different issues of ESONEWS gathered cooperation from a series of ESONET partners (University of Lisbon, Send GmbH, Ifremer, INGV, CSA, IMI, University of Aberdeen, CNRS IN2P3-Antares, nke, FUGRO-Oceanor, University of Azores).

The next issues will be devoted to the Demonstration Missions.

2.4 Promotion through outreach

Outreach activities organized within WP7 are an important vehicle to promote ESONET particularly in groups not directly concerned by our activities such as students, visitors of Aquaria, teachers and other disciplines such as the media.

There is an Esonet Training and Outreach website under construction (http://mars-srv.oceanlab.iu-bremen.de/) that includes a section for schools with games and on-line quizzes appropriate for secondary school students. There are a number of posters that can be downloaded for use by schools and universities. There is also a gallery of pictures that can
be used by teachers and trainers to promote the activities of ESONET. It also includes a section for university researchers on ESONET poster design and presentation.

The ESONET Training and Outreach website has links from other relevant websites and will be registered with the appropriate portals to increase the traffic to the website.

2.5 VIS01 as a ESONET promoter

The perspective of building up a virtual institute (VIS0) is stimulating the ESONET community. It is also potentially attractive for industrial bodies and public decision makers to propose an organized group of academic researchers able to listen to their monitoring needs and discuss on their topics of interest.

In this respect, the new scientific background and objectives document of ESONET (Deliverable D11) and the content of the VIS0 conference in June 2009 (see deliverable D23-2009 Report on integration between respective teams and working relationship beyond the life of ESONET) have raised interest from stakeholders. Industrial companies are associated with the organization of the conference.

3. SME POLICY

3.1 PESOS2

In order to make contact with potential suppliers of equipment and services to ESONET it was decided that ESONET must be promoted at conferences by making presentations and contacting companies directly. Oceans 07 Aberdeen was attended in June 2007 by CSA who made a presentation entitled “Industry Meets the Challenge of Deep Ocean Scientific Research”. In addition all of the stands in the exhibition hall were visited and introduced to ESONET and the advantages of becoming members of PESOS (Group of Providers of Equipment and Services for Observatory Systems). Twenty five companies expressed an interest and were identified as potential members of PESOS. Subsequently these companies were added to the circulation list for ESONEWs and were invited to submit articles. A list of future conference dates was compiled and the Oceanology Exhibition and Conference OI 08 in March 2008 were identified as the next important conference to attend and promote the PESOS group.

During the preparation phase of ESONET a stable association (PESOS (Group of Providers of Equipment and Services for Observatory Systems) was foreseen as an important step towards a better integration of SME in the future network.

The conclusions of the specific panel of PESOS during the Barcelona meeting were:

• Need to extend PESOS group,

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1 Virtual Institute of scientific users of deep Sea Observatories
2 Group of Providers of Equipment and Services for Observatory Systems
Low level of involvement last September could only grow if industrial opportunities grow and are made available. This will occur as the observatory activity is increased in scale.

During the Barcelona All Region Workshop 1 on the 7th of September 2007, the group of private companies inside ESONET NoE consortium expressed the idea of opening this group to more companies from a broader scope of industrial fields. This is the main objective of the meeting to be held in London during OI’08.

An element from the private sector entered the ESONET Steering Committee. In the first year this commitment was guaranteed by Neville Hazell from Alcatel.

ESONET organized with PESOS representative (SEND successor of Alcatel) a meeting in London during OI08 on March 11th with ESONET industrial partners and other companies interested in Esonet. Several attendants from the network were present. The cooperation with the industry was further discussed in the framework of the MODOO project to find synergies and technical solutions for long-term monitoring of optical properties (turbidity) and conductivity cells. This discussion resulted in the agreement that a state-of-the-art multi-sensor probe (an advanced Generic Sensor Module) could be used for free during the Demo-Missions.

Exchange of information and experience between private companies and ESONET community took place during the meetings in Algarve (General Assembly 2008). Important actions were developed by the private sector (FUGRO) towards major Norwegian universities, institutes, technology companies and Statoil-Hydro to plan and develop underwater observatories to be located in Norwegian waters. All essential technical and non-technical aspects related to development and establishment of underwater observatories, with the oil and gas industry as a reference are being addressed in this process. The costs incurred for this work has been fully absorbed by Fugro OCEANOR. Nke participated in London workshop (March 2008) and in Faro workshop, where it was analyzed the possibility of making common offers among PESOS partners. Guralp presented solutions for cabled seismology monitoring during the Marmara DM meetings; four observatories situated at a short distance from the shore will be deployed under a contract by KOERI (one of the Esonet Turkish partner).

The number of companies that are now suppliers to existing cabled observatories (such as NEMO and Neptune) is growing as is the awareness of ESONET demonstration projects and ESONET’s future plans. This was apparent at the Ocean Business 2009 Conference in Southampton where more than fifty exhibitors were visited by a member of the ESONET NoE, concentrating on suppliers of modems, ADCPs, backscatter, bioacoustics, camera systems, CTDs, CH4 sensors and current meters. The objective was to find out what new sensor technology was available and how well advanced known sensor suppliers were in developing titanium cased modules rated to greater than 3,000m for deep observatories. The survey concentrated on European companies. Where the technology was not manufactured in Europe Canadian companies were found with the appropriate sensor technology. European agents for US sensor technologies were identified where no European or Canadian supplier existed.

(Some additional news on the SME and industrial companies are detailed in the confidential deliverable D22-2009 of WP5)
A meeting of the PESOS community is under preparation for May 2009 during Oceans09 in Bremen.

3.2 Yellow Pages

The yellow pages are developed in HTML, Javascript and CSS. The database is structured in MySQL,
- Centered on “products” (instruments, components, subsystems);
- Compatible with standardization procedures;
- Modular and possible to integrate.

Yellow pages layout was presented in Nice ESONET meeting, in 2008, and the first prototype was linked to ESONET webpage in March 2009. The database and the specifications were prepared by ESONET partners and the web development was committed to a third-party company.

Examples of the yellow pages interface can be seen below:

The upload of the first level information concerning sensors and components for seafloor observatories is produced from the database prepared by WP1. The update of the information will be based on a “user interface” maintained at Esonet central level.

The Yellow Pages will be a major tool for the exchange of data among partners, other research institutes and industrial companies. In addition to the description of the equipment, its performances and the link to the manufacturer’s website, it is planned to use them to display the level of testing, standardization and the diversity of use. The pages would include a forum-like exchange of experience on long term behavior, good practices, calibration methods, references of use by Esonet community.
It is intended that the Yellow Pages will disseminate the assessment made by the user community on their experience with the use of specific instrument or device, in an informal way, and with focus on the quality and reliability of operation in long term deployment conditions.

Yellow pages will be used for the dissemination of ESONET LABEL. The steps of knowledge on a component and instruments will be displayed such as:

- “Under evaluation by Esonet Demonstration Missions XXX”
- “Tested by ESONET partner XXX according to procedure xxx” with a link to WP2 procedures.
- “Tested by XXX according to procedure xxx” with a link to a non-Esonet structure considered by Esonet to be relevant (such as ACT3 or Venus Canada for instance)
- “Forum of users addressing: well known limitations, point of views on reliability, options mandatory for long term deployment, etc…”

This approach will help research and operational institutes on the development of new observatories or the upgrade of existing ones, and will contribute to the transparency of the seafloor observatory market.

3.3 Industry Observatory

The way to estimate the market of subsea observatories is not clear at the moment. This question was discussed during the General Assembly of ESONET in Faro. It appears that on the SME side, it is difficult to sort out which equipment is purchased for subsea observatories. For the large industrial groups, the segmentation of the market is not defined according to subsea observatory and long term monitoring for the deep sea on one side and cruise related purchases on the other. Surveys conducted at ocean technology conferences are helping to segment the market. The first such survey was conducted at Ocean Business 09 at Southampton.

Members of ESONET or international partners or associated partners to ESONET are the main customers. They are well informed of the projects under preparation, the budgets involved and the contracts. They also may anticipate on the budget limitations in the research field.

It is proposed for the next period to prepare a market observation activity. Commercial observatories such as those operated by Lighthouse R&D Enterprises will be included. It would issue once or twice a year an estimate of the budgets spend in this field and on the tenders under preparation. Global figures will be displayed keeping confidentiality towards the source of information. A comparison between world market and European market will be relevant.

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3 The Alliance for Coastal Technologies (ACT) is a NOAA-funded partnership of research institutions, resource managers, and private sector companies dedicated to fostering the development and adoption of effective and reliable sensors and platforms. www.act-us.info