



MARS Network

The European Network of Marine Research Institutes and Stations

MARS-MarBEF-MGE Meeting of Directors

Brussels
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Draft Report



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Introduction

In the morning sessions some of the key organizations involved in European marine research and policy presented their view on the possible future collaboration with and between MARS and its member institutes.

In the afternoon sessions the views of the members on the function of MARS in the future, and its possible role as an umbrella organization for marine Networks of Excellence (NoE's) and other organizations were discussed as indicated below.

A) MARS as an umbrella

Why MARS as an umbrella?

A number of important societal problems, such as climate change and biodiversity loss, require new knowledge to support the proper management and mitigation actions. This applies *a fortiori* to marine research. Moreover, these problems can only be tackled at the European scale.

This is the reason that some major networks in fundamental marine sciences have decided to combine their efforts and to unite within a federative structure. MARS is the suggested umbrella organisation for such a federative structure with organisations including MarBEF, MGE, EMBS and other interested networks as members. Together the synergy and coordination of efforts will be stronger. However, this process will only work if there is sufficient agreement and support from the marine research organizations and the community as a whole.

A.1) The model: a Federation or loose Consortium?

There are different possible vehicles for achieving a Federation and guarantee a lasting integration of the marine scientific community at a European level.

What form could this Federation take?

- *Model 1. Multi-site Institution (e.g. EMBO – European Molecular Biology Organization)*

Pro: The competitive success of EMBO on a global scale shows that the model works.

Con: This model requires concentrated co-location on a few sites and heavy capital funding – this is not viable in a relevant time frame for us.

- *Model 2. Facilitating agency (e.g. ESF - European Science Foundation)*

Pro: Can generate strong integrating effect by acting as a catalyst or a facilitating agency, by identifying topical problems and by funding workshops etc. NoE's as MarBEF and MGE referred to the long-term survival strategy, so ESF could be effectively a valuable model.

Con: We have the expertise ourselves to identify and prioritise the problems and would need to receive funding rather than distribute it. (*see also comments under C.5 3rd paragraph*)

- *Model 3. Loose consortium (e.g. CETAF - Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities)*

Pro: The loose consortium of institutions with similar goals can work very well. CETAF is an excellent example of grouping of Museums, Botanic Gardens and Culture Collections – its success has led to big grants in FP5 and FP6. Integration does not require any re-branding. Consortia can survive medium term despite any gaps in funding, by rotating secretariat-chairmanship annually, so each institute runs the consortium for one to three years in turn (like the MARS-network). Research is funded by collaborative projects written by sub-groups drawn from the pool of active partners.

Con: Model works well with smaller number of partners but might not scale up successfully.

- *Model 4. Virtual Institute*

Pro: Has a name and identity so that partners can join and state on their literature that e.g. the university of X is a founder partner in the European Centre for the Study of Marine Biodiversity and Ecosystem Functioning (EMBEF). This will allow bibliometric performance indicators to pick

up the growing impact of EMBEF after the end of MarBEF. Communication is electronic. Research is funded by collaborative projects written by sub-groups drawn from the pool of active partners. Could this also be the same for MGE - "European Centre for Marine Genomics"?
Con: Just a name means little – we need content and this needs funds.

For MARS as an umbrella the model of a loose consortium would be the best option. However it is not known whether this model will work for larger consortia. It has proven effective for smaller consortia (20 members), but it is possible that up-scaling will cause problems. MarBEF and MGE have expressed their interest in joining the MARS umbrella. In joining with the two NoE's there is a lot of good practice and we can use that and build on it in the federation. Unfortunately EUROCEANS has not accepted the invitation to the meeting and has indicated that they choose for the French model of a GDRI / GDRE (Groupe de Recherche International / European), which model normally lasts for about 4 years – this model however was considered to have a too short lifetime, to be more top-down and expensive, and small institutes fear not to have an impact in the decision process. The NoE's have a commitment to come with lasting integration for the whole marine science community. We should be working in joining the best features of MarBEF and MGE in the development of a strong and lasting network. There are a lot of synergies. First concentrate on the NoE's driven by science and scientists and the rest will come.

The federative model with MARS as the umbrella organization can get the economies at scale and the huge scale of the umbrella can create more attention to marine science, help establish a strategy for marine science in Europe and influence EU strategy and policy.

Remarks

- Other related networks, such as Lagunet (Italy), EINet (Greece), EMBS, and ECSA have expressed their interest in joining MARS+ as well. This creates a momentum in building the consortium. However, during the construction phase the main focus should be on the integration of MARS and the two (preferably three) other networks.
- It needs to be stressed that the principle of MARS will remain a bottom-up approach. The individual participating networks will keep their identity, scope, and management structure. MARS will not function as a top down institute telling its members what to do.
- The scope and mission of the new MARS federation still needs to be formulated.
- The discussion about scope and science can start from the individual networks. As attention points for this discussion were mentioned:
 - The principle of MARS should be inclusive, not exclusive. It will be difficult to focus such an approach. This could be solved by perceiving focal points: themes crystallized around questions, and related actions (workshops, science, papers).
 - There may be a tension between focus and being inclusive.
 - The focus and mission should be established in discussion with other initiatives, like ICES (the post Aberdeen plus taskforce is where all the integration can take place at the different levels). This will prevent overlap.
 - The loose consortium should not be too loose; not without engagement. Within this respect a mixed model was proposed. There should be, next to the bottom-up approach, some top-down interest within the consortium to reach a minimum of research for/at marine observatories, for science (hypothesis testing) with external funding (e.g. from the EC). This mixed system enables flexibility to research to react dynamically.
- Next to the scope of MARS it should also be discussed who MARS will be cooperating with, like the ESF Marine Board. The Marine Board can be an interface between MARS, which is bottom-up organized, and the ESF, which is more top-down oriented. MARS should strive for a strong liaison with the Marine Board. Furthermore, the Marine board is leading the Post Aberdeen Task Force and this will facilitate a better integration of science networks.
- Lagunet is also bottom-up organized around a central scientific issue. Lagunet foresees potential for integration with MARS. The fragmentation of research needs to be overcome. Lagunet can take part of the larger environment and can provide links with other networks,

like ENCORA. It might be too ambitious to create a single umbrella, and maybe the creation of several umbrella's, driven by EC directives will be more effective.

- Small institutes are reluctant to enter large top-down organized structures, because it is expected that their voice will not be heard. The bottom-up organized structure will facilitate their integration in a better way. A problem could rise when hundreds of them join (see above for cons of the model "Loose consortium").
- The EMBS and ECSA want to join MARS+ as well. But these networks work with personal memberships instead of institutes and therefore difficulties are foreseen with the MARS membership. This needs attention in the statutes and the membership fee. The legal structure needs to be compatible for the different structures. Furthermore, they are more on the output side of science than on the input side.

Conclusions approved by the consortium

- MARS will develop into an open inclusive bottom-up consortium (association / federation), with some kind of commitment (not too loose).
- The individual participating networks will keep their identity, scope, and management structure. MARS will not function as a top down institute telling its members what to do, nor will it act as a funding organisation.
- The starting point will be the integration of the three networks MARS, MarBEF and MGE to develop a manageable system that can grow. Other related networks will join once the first step has been made.
- The scope and mission of MARS need to be discussed in more detail at a later stage.

B) Role of MARS and associated organizations

The future role of a MARS Federation was discussed on basis of a set of key issues.

B.1) Identifying and promoting research priorities in marine sciences

Science priorities change for many good reasons and flexibility is therefore essential. Any collective institution must periodically re-assess its priorities as members will not participate if it becomes no longer relevant. Reflection on, and transfer of, the policy relevance of scientific issues may be better worked out and steered in the larger platform than by its individual members.

- MARS+ should become the voice of marine academic research in the first place. That is the niche that is not yet strong in EU, EC, ESF and other partnerships. MARS should try to influence funding agencies.
- Within this respect it is again important to define the scope; will disciplines like physical oceanography be included as well? The starting point could be marine biodiversity to include the other disciplines as well. The point is whether one organization will be able to encompass all disciplines (more than the NoE's), without losing focus, and without losing the voice of marine biology. As an alternative working groups with the other disciplines could be established, or that MARS+ lobbies also for the other disciplines. Yet it remains important to speak with one voice in order not to lose impact. In this respect it could be decided to focus more on the academic issue than on biology.
 - It was mentioned that the scope should be expanded and that the stations that operate vessels (oceanography) as well as geophysical marine sciences should be included. MARS+ could be opened for all disciplines, but with a focus on marine biological ecosystem driven disciplines.
 - Bringing the disciplines together does not necessarily implicate integration. CIESM has brought together several disciplines, but with no or little interaction. The Post Aberdeen Task Force will handle this issue, by building a forum to integrate the disciplines.
- Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research is strongly supported by the EC

B.2) Creating a critical mass of expertise in marine science

Our pool of expertise and excellence empowers us to collectively address questions of different scales and broadens the range of expertise and available resources. The need for flexibility in scientific priorities implies that membership itself must be flexible – with the capacity for new partners to join and existing partners to leave as science priorities evolve.

- It was decided to change the title into 'B.2) Creating critical mass of expertise in marine sciences, from genes to ecosystems'

B.3) Creating a group ethos and identity

Partners will only participate as long as they perceive that participation will enhance their ability to do science, to address larger questions than they could individually, and to compete more successfully in the global scientific arena. This common sense of purpose has been key to the development of the group ethos and identity of both MGE and MarBEF.

- Accepted as a task for the MARS+ Federation, since ethos and identity are essential.

B.4) Increasing high quality training opportunities

Both MarBEF and MGE have highly successful training programmes and have already collaborated on several joint summer schools. These have clearly demonstrated the value of, and the demand for, for highly quality specialists training workshops

- This issue will be taken care of by groups within the network.
- The title should be rephrased. Early career development and opportunities should be included.

B.5) Symposia

In cooperation with the EMBS and ECSA symposia organisers a European series of symposia on marine sciences will be offered.

Both organisations have indicated their wish to cooperate within MARS as an "Umbrella". The additional value is joint planning of meetings thereby to prevent duplication of efforts and overlap, and it will increase dissemination to a wider audience. Other symposia series, as e.g. BMB might wish to join.

- As the symposia are being organized by EMBS and ECSA, the role of MARS has to be clarified in discussion with the Boards of these organisations.

B.6) Facilitating common strategic funding initiatives and opportunities

Some level of funding support is essential for the MARS Federation; at a minimum it will require the 'glue money' to run a secretariat and finance communication. However, we recognise that partners integrate around the shared science research aims, so some central research funding is critical to long-term success.

- It is accepted that the MARS+ Federation may have a task to promote and facilitate the funding of scientific research. MARS+ itself will not be a/the funding organization. The basic internal funding has to come from its members (see C.4).

B.7) Providing stronger collaboration and shared access to facilities

Partners have excellent and state of the art facilities. Sharing these resources will increase the opportunities for scientists to develop their research – making these available for use by scientific partners is a concrete action for a federation resulting in a stronger collaboration. This all together may yield to the platform a stronger competitiveness at global scale.

- Accepted as a task to be promoted by the MARS+ Federation.

B.8) Communication

A newsletter and website are the basic tools but meetings and thematic workshops will remain essential for maintaining and improving integration.

- We will need a press/PR-officer.
- Communication is an important point of the group ethos. It is important that we speak with one voice. Not only to the EC, but also to the public at large. This is difficult, as we have personal opinions. We need to reach consensus on common issues for the general public as a scientific community.
- IGBP (International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme) aims at providing scientific knowledge to improve the sustainability of the living Earth. IGBP studies the interactions between biological, chemical and physical processes and interactions with human systems and collaborates with other programmes to develop and impart the understanding necessary to respond to global change. IGPB brings together science for syntheses, and voices it to the general public from the viewpoint of science. Such an approach with scientific syntheses could also be part of the communication strategy of MARS+.

B.9) Common approaches to data, and data structure that are fit for purpose.

As a start the MarBEF and MGE databases are common resources and will be an important and tangible asset. Databases from other networks will yield a strong added value. Ensuring long-term security of the databases and access to it are essential tasks. This should also feed into FP7 programmes such as "LifeWatch".

- Common database facilities are being dealt with several other initiatives. It is the main priority of LIFEWATCH and it could be decided to leave it to the other initiatives. On the other hand it is still an important issue. Data are extremely valuable and policies could be developed to coordinate a minimum design for databases, promote better use of data, data structures that are fit for purpose, promote database facilities, and long term ensuring of data.
- Libraries (collections) are missing in the data facilities.
- The issue of the databases will be dealt with at the level of the NoE's

B.10) Critical mass for joint representation and acquisition

The case of marine science will be better represented because of the cumulative effect of all its members reaching more quickly the critical mass in policy and public debate thereby resulting for the platform as a whole as well as for the individual members in a better brand awareness as well in better chances for the acquisition of new projects.

- It was agreed that the critical mass of MARS+ is important.

B.11) Stakeholder engagement, outreach and advisory role to policy and public

The Federation will be a source of knowledge that will be consulted by policy makers, by science journalists, by students as well as by school children, their teachers and the public at large.

- This issue should be combined with B.8) Communication.
- The text should reflect a pro-active approach.
- We have to link to industry; blue technology should be included.
- This relates to the issue of scoping. It should be decided whether MARS+ wants, and is able, to become a lobby organism for this.
- MARS+ should provide information instead of the advisory role (but on the other hand advise = providing information)
- We should have an advisory role for science policies, and environmental policies. Who shall we advise? We should not duplicate the work of other initiatives, like ICES (scoping), but be complementary (having different perspectives).

B.12) What shape should the new organization have to fit the new missions (e.g. establish committees for conferences (EMBS, ECSA), workshops, training, PR and lobbying?)

Beside an Executive Board some Committees could be established.

Yet, as EMBS and ECSA, most organisations joined in the MARS Federation will have their own committees and, although supporting MARS as an umbrella organisation, they wish to keep their own character and committees. We may want to build further on this.

Yet, too many committees may result in a diffuse and uncontrollable mechanism.

- Only a light secretariat is needed that can consult where appropriate the experts within the Member Organisations on these issues as workshops, training, PR.
- Within the Executive Board a balanced representation of the Member Organisations should be included.

General remarks on the role of MARS and associated organizations

- There is a drift in the different roles of MARS from science to outreach. In order to correct the situation and to have more emphasis on the science (academic focus), the roles B10 and B11 should be rephrased as subsets of critical mass in function of expertise.
- The umbrella should be doing advisory work at targeted high level: science policy (doing today's science and not yesterday's).
- Through the Marine Board etc. individuals can take part in the other aspects of outreach.

C) Legal and administrative issues

C.1) Membership (= ibid A.2: A platform for what kind of organizations)

Perhaps the most important part of the concept of a MARS Federation is that membership is open, flexible and not exclusive. It is our wish and indeed proposal that this should form a platform for all marine related NoE's as a simple yet proven way to ensure durability and integration.

Depending on the overlying structure of the federation, members can be found at different levels:

- institutional: departments, institutions, networks.

- disciplinary: genetic research (e.g. MGE), ecological (e.g. MarBEF), geochemistry (e.g. EurOceans)

- functionality: university department, field station (observatory), research institute

Should we establish evaluation criteria for what kind of organisations can become member (not only marine stations, but also marine institutes and university groups)?

How can other organizations (e.g. pharmacological SME's) join?

- It was accepted that the membership will be open, flexible and not exclusive
- Some organizations showing interest in the integration with MARS have individual members and (and not membership at the institutional level). The legal framework of MARS should be adapted to allow different kinds of membership.
- MARS+ needs to have some criteria for membership. It will be hard, even impossible, to establish objective criteria for participation. The criteria should be broad for MARS and more focused for the NoE's. There will be different levels of criteria of subsidiary organizations. The criteria will again depend on the scope. A cooptation process would be an alternative? Nobody can join the network without consent.

C.2) Statutes and Legal implications

Each organisation within the Federation may adopt slightly different (own) statutes or agreements. Nonetheless we should aim for a simple consensus that allows the organisations to attain durable integration within the umbrella organization.

Present model: MARS = Foundation according Dutch law

Future model: We could remain a foundation, or follow an art. 171 procedure for the MARS Federation. We will consult lawyers on this topic.

First comments on the statutes as received in the NoE MarBEF

- The MARS model for the Federation is suitable but should be modified to allow large non-departmental government bodies such as NERC, and non-coastal labs to take part.
 - The legal frame work must be loosened and open for most of the European participants.
 - The presidential league should be much slimmer and more effective.
 - The fee must be tailored around the marine science related colleagues in an institution and not for the whole institute.
- Some large organizations, like NOC-NERC, CSIC, and CNRS indeed cannot sign up to any legal entity. There will be made a construction in such a way that institutes do not have to sign up to the legal entity and being able to participate to the NoE. For this MARS+ will adopt a layered structure. The NoE's can function as they are, bounded to the CA and without the necessity of signing to the umbrella MARS.
 - The Dutch Law is pragmatic and because of this suitable for the legal framework of the Federation. At present the MARS statutes are based on this system.
 - Art 171 seems to be an appropriate vehicle for MARS in future.

C.3) What are the bottlenecks in participation?

- Legal restrictions are felt by some organisations because of potential liability problems in statutes whereby their underlying institutes and department are not allowed to undersign any legally binding document (CSIC, CNRS, some universities ...). For these organisations a membership to one of the constituting networks working without binding legal statutes as MGE might be a solution.

- Financial restrictions whereby some organisations do not have sufficient cash-flow to pay the fees (e.g. some east European countries). Reduced fees for some categories of membership might present a solution.

- Some institutes are not allowed to pay subscription fees higher than 300 €. A solution has to be found for these specific institutes.
- If MARS+ will have an advisory role, then people will join the consortium to have an influence on the advise. In some networks advices comes from consensus from the whole community. There should be developed a system to deal with this issue.

C.4) Budget/finances of the Federation - annual fee models

Some level of funding support is essential for the Federation; at a minimum it will require the 'glue money' to run a secretariat and to finance communication. However, we recognise that partners integrate around the shared science research and training aims, so some central research funding is critical to long-term success.

Channeling part of the membership-fee from the intermediate organisation, as e.g. MarBEF, to the umbrella organisation (e.g. 20 % of memberships goes to umbrella) might be a mechanism to provide a budget to the functioning of the Federation. In this way also the problem of organisations that can not be bound to a legal structure, as CNRS etc., can be solved.

The major activities that will need support are (seeding money for) 1) training, 2) workshops, 3) outreach, incl. newsletter, 4) website and databases, 5) secretariat.

The annual fee can be differentiated according to :

- 1) the size of the institute, e.g.
 - a. large = (more than 50 fte involved in marine sciences
 - b. intermediate = 20 to 50 fte involved in marine sciences

- c. less than 20 fte involved in marine sciences)
 2) the number of memberships for constituting organisations.

An example of a calculation of the balance on costs and income is given in the table below.

Costs	MARS	2 Networks
Support 6 Training courses	0	24,000
Organisation 4 Workshops	0	18,000
General Assembly combined with ECSA or EMBS	0	0
Meeting of the Executive Boards	10,000	8,000
Website maintenance, databases	5,000	10,000
Newsletter, editing, layout	8,000	8,000
Secretariat (0.2 fte executive, 0.2 fte secretary)	30,000	10,000
Costs total	53,000	78,000
Income (under assumption of)		
25 large institutes member of 2 organisations	20000	40000
25 intermediate institutes of 2 organisations	14000	28000
25 intermediate institutes of 1 organisation	12250	14000
25 small institutes only MARS member	6000	0
Costs total	52,250	82,000

Membership in €	Large	Intermediate	Small
MARS only	600	420	240
MARS + 1 NoE or other	1500	1050	600
MARS + 2 NoE or other	2400	1680	960

MARS contribution increases slightly with participation in more networks (e.g. for large institutes being only MARS member the fee is 600 €, being MARS and 1 network member the fee is 1500 € of which 700 € for MARS and 800 € for the network activities).

By joining the General Assembly, and Executive meetings with one of the Symposium Series as EMBS or ECSA, the costs of organizing meetings might be lower.

- The budget is indicative but seems fair and proportional.
- The system needs to be expanded to facilitate a.o. the establishment of membership fees of individuals, and SMEs.
- It needs to be decided on the nature of the fte's: What kind of functions will be considered for the establishment of the fee: scientists and/or technicians, also on soft money?
- Contributions in kind cannot be accepted.
- It needs to be explained to the membership what will be the added return for paying for both the NoE and the MARS Umbrella.
- The evolution of the present membership of the NoE's to the new membership of the MARS+ situation needs to be discussed. Will institutes be able to change their membership from e.g. MarBEF to MARS+ only? This will have consequences for the budget.
- How will the membership of EMBS and ECSA fit in this scheme? EMBS can use MARS as a boost for the audience. On the other hand will EMBS be a good PR tool for MARS. With regard to ECSA, being an Association, the principle could be that institutes could be members and Associations/Societies could be affiliated to MARS+. This will be considered in setting up the project and discussed with the ECSA Board.

C.5) Secretariat

The secretariat of MARS has been housed during the last years at CEME Yerseke. A continuation of that secretariat is possible.

A second option might be to become an NGO under UNESCO, whereby the agenda is then made by the constituting partners.

A third solution might be to house the secretariat at a funding organisation, as ESF Marine Board. (see also comments under A.1 model 2)

MARS operates as a successful academic/scientific NGO, however it needs to be established on a more formal footing. One interesting possibility is UNESCO: MARS has legal existence as NGO since several years and developed successful international cooperation with the Science Sector of UNESCO (e.g. MAB and IOC). Therefore, MARS is fully eligible to start establishing official operational relations with UNESCO. Furthermore, this international (UN) recognition will give MARS full opportunity to promote dynamic partnerships with other prestigious scientific NGOs, already in official operational relations with UNESCO, in particular: ICSU, SCOPE, SCOR, SCAR, DIVERSITAS, IGBP etc.). Furthermore, UNESCO's affiliation will not affect present and future scope and status of MARS made by its constituting partners, nor decision on its secretariat location. Request for establishment of operation relations should be sent to UNESCO in a reasonable time.

The Marine Board is a strategic agency, and not a funding agency. Co-locating the secretariat at the Marine Board's offices in Ostend would ensure complementarity and exchange. For MARS to co-locate at Ostend could be a good opportunity.

Because of the positive experience until now, it was decided to leave the secretariat at the NIOO. An advantage of this, is that the Federation could be founded as a foundation on basis of Dutch law.

The mobility of the management structure of MARS+ (rotating Presidency and Executive Board) needs to be considered while setting up the project. At the executive level there will be advantages of keeping the secretariat at the same place because a foundation under Dutch law is at this moment a pragmatic solution.

Conclusions, agreed upon by the participants:

- The principle of the fees will remain as proposed, with some slight modifications.
- The secretariat will stay at NIOO.

D) The next step for the federation of MARS

D.0) Should we modify the name?

Since MARS is already well known and became a trademark we should retain the name, at least the acronym MARS.

To include the wider concept and audience of MARS there might be the feeling to change the description of MARS (from European Network of Marine Research Institutes and Stations) into European Federation of Marine Research Institutes and Stations.

Similarly for the networks the tendency might be to stick to the same names and/or acronyms, or to change NoE into Consortium, e.g. MarBEF, the "Network of Excellence on Marine Biodiversity and Ecosystem Functioning", could become the "Consortium for Marine Biodiversity and Ecosystem Functioning"

It will be sufficient to include in the statutes the phrase that the MARS network acts also as a federation for other networks.

- MARS is a good acronym, and it was accepted unanimously to keep the name.
- It needs to be announced that its function will/has changed.

D.1) Consensus on a common strategy and joint action

- It was agreed to carry on with the current strategy.

D.2) Setting the agenda for the near future

- **The following steps are agreed:**
 1. Consultation with MARS members about the proposed changes
 2. Establish a framework before EC funding for the NoE's has ceased (January 2009)
 3. Try to find glue money for the extension of the NoE's. For this the COST actions might be suitable.
 4. Define a strategic plan (business plan, Implementation plan) on how MARS is going to broaden its scope and widen its community (task MARS executive)
 5. There has to be a second round of discussion on the details of the statutes. This discussion will be postponed until December when the article 171 is going to be out. Then it will be possible to decide on going further with the MARS Federative Model or the article 171.

D.3) Conclusions

- The participants unanimously (no abstentions) support the MARS initiative to become an umbrella organization to facilitate the long lasting support and integration of the NoE's MarBEF and MGE in first instance, and other organizations, like EMBS, ECSA, LaguNet shortly after.
- Membership will be open, flexible and non-exclusive. MARS will function in a bottom-up approach, and as a loose consortium (federation) with some kind of commitment (mixed model).
- MARS will not act as a funding organization.
- Each network will maintain its own management and identity.
- Legislation will be based on the MARS statutes (Dutch Law) or Article 171 (EU law).
- The scope and statutes of MARS will be discussed in more detail.

In the closing remarks the participants were thanked by the President of MARS, Mike Thorndyke, for their open and constructive discussions. MARS is an open grouping. What does coordination mean - maybe we have to call the prime role of MARS+ the representation of its participating organisations. In all these actions we have to take into account the role of the younger generation of scientists and the importance of the smaller institutions.

Appendix 1.a. Programme

- 11:00-11:20: Introduction by the President of MARS - Mike Thorndyke
11:20-11:30: A view on the future of NoE's - MarBEF - Carlo Heip
11:30-11:40: MGE, an International Research Network - Bernard Kloareg
11:40-11:50: Integration of marine research in Europe - EC DG Research – Pierre Mathy
11:50-12:00: Marine Board perspectives in the changing European marine and maritime landscape - ESF Marine Board - Jan Mees
- 12:00-13:00: Lunch
- 13:15-13:30: Introduction to the afternoon programme - Herman Hummel
- 13:30-14:15: MARS as an umbrella – chair Geoff Boxshall
- i) The model: a Federation or loose Consortium? (see appendix 6)
 - ii) A platform for what kind of organizations
- 14:15-15:00: Role of MARS and associated organizations – chair Carlo Heip
Facilitate Durable Integration by:
- i) Identifying and promoting research priorities in marine sciences
 - ii) Creating critical mass of expertise in marine science
 - iii) Creating a group ethos and identity
 - iv) Increasing high quality training opportunities
 - v) Symposia
 - vi) Facilitating common strategic funding initiatives and opportunities
 - vii) Providing stronger collaboration and shared access to facilities
 - viii) Communication
 - ix) Common database facilities
 - x) Critical mass for joint representation and acquisition
 - xi) Stakeholder engagement, outreach and advisory role to policy and public
- 15:00-15:30: Coffee and tea break
- 15:30-16:30: Legal and administrative issues – chair Geoff Boxshall
- i) Membership
 - ii) Statutes (example in appendix 7) and Legal implications. This is an example only based upon discussions within MarBEF and should be seen as a framework upon which each NoE can base its membership. Other NoE's may adopt slightly different agreements. Nonetheless we should aim for a simple consensus that allows the NoE's to attain durable integration within the MARS organization.
 - iii) What are the bottlenecks in participation
 - iv) Annual fee models
 - v) Secretariat
- 16:30-17:00: The next step for the federation of MARS – chair Mike Thorndyke:
- i) Consensus on a common strategy and joint action
 - ii) Setting the agenda for the near future
 - iii) Conclusions
- 17:00-18:00: Reception

Annex 2. List of Participants

Director or Representative	Organisation
Marco Abbiati	Univ Bologna
Katarina Abrahamsson	Univ Gothenburg
Helena Adão	Univ. Évora
Christos Arvanitidis	HCMR
Jacob Asjes	IMARES
Mel Austen	PML
Victor Axiak	DoB-UoM
Beatriz Balino	MBS, Univ Bergen
Hartmut Barth	EC DG Research, Directorate I
Nando Boero	CONISMA, Lecce
Geoff Boxshall	NHM, London
Fred Buchholz	MARS EC
Pierpaolo Campostrini	Lagunet
Alberto Castelli	Univ. Pisa
Roberto Di Lauro	SZN
Jean-Pierre Feral	COM
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