

# Newsletter



January - February 2015

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## 1. Lobbying for Marine Sciences in the Horizon 2020 Programme

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Last year we sent around a newsflash in which it was indicated that in the new Biodiversa Calls for 2014, there was little or no room for projects in the Marine realm, simply because in the call the words sea, ocean or marine were not mentioned. A position paper was written and sent by the MARS members to their national delegates. We now would like to announce that this action has been successful! In the new Biodiversa call for projects the following is stated:

“Theme #2: Understanding and managing biodiversity dynamics in land-, river- and sea-scapes (habitat connectivity, green and blue infrastructures, and naturing cities) to improve ecosystem functioning and delivery of ecosystem services”.

The MARS members together have managed to get the word “sea” included in the call, now giving the opportunity for joint actions towards proposals in this call by the MARS marine stations.

Now we may aim together for a similar positive action with regard to the coming calls for 2016/17 in the Horizon 2020 programme. In the latest scoping paper and the latest draft version (dated. 09.02.2015) of the Orientations for Work Programme 2016-2017 for Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge “Climate Action, Environment, Resource Efficiency and Raw Materials”(SC5), there is again hardly any mention of the marine realm at all.

The focus is primarily on technical aspects, stakeholders, markets, the use of the environment, and services of nature, rather than on the sustainability of the environment itself. It appears that researchers on climate change and environment should have to become preferably socio-economically oriented, whereas basic biological and ecological knowledge and expertise is neglected. The only reference made to the ocean is in the metaphorical words “oceans of opportunities”. In this new Horizon 2020 call it seems that economy is much more important than ecology.

To counteract this tendency we need further joint actions. In a first action we can focus on the topics suggested for 2016-2017. A suitable topic could be for instance Topic 1 mentioned under Earth Observation “Novel in-situ observation systems (2017)”, if the topic can be widened towards the coastal zone.

Unfortunately, this topic is now only described for the terrestrial and atmospheric domains. We thus need to take similar action as previously done for the Biodiversa call, and to emphasise the importance of the coastal zone and marine stations as tools for proper observation.

Already in Spain, Italy, Sweden and the Netherlands, papers were sent by colleagues to their national H2020 delegates in the Programme Committee aiming to include "transitional and coastal waters" as well as "the requirements of the MSFD through a description of the GES".

Motivations used by our colleagues to promote our case on coastal biological observation do encompass:

- The MSFD is the environmental pillar of Europe's maritime policy designed to create a framework for sustainable use of Europe's marine waters. It provides a legislative framework to sustainably manage human activities at all scales - from local to national to regional seas.
- The marine strategies described in the MSFD, that should be developed by each Member State, must comprise a detailed assessment of the state of the environment, a definition of "good environmental status" (GES) and the establishment of clear environmental targets and monitoring programmes including amongst others the descriptors biodiversity, non-indigenous species, populations of commercial species and food web structure.
- Most human activities on earth concentrate along transitional waters and in the coastal zone. A proper description of GES is of the utmost importance for the well-being of humans living in the coastal zone. To this end, thorough in-situ biological and ecological observation is needed to meet the requirements of the MSFD and a GES that guarantees a healthy environment, and sustainability of its services, in the vicinity of the living area of major part of the world population.
- These descriptors of GES cannot be measured solely by using physico-chemical variables.
- Therefore biological variables, and thereby integrated biological and ecological in-situ observations, are needed.
- The monitoring of these biological variables in our coastal and transitional waters is currently not met by present infrastructures.
- The European Network of Marine Research Institutes and Stations (MARS), consisting of 65 marine institutes, has the competence, data sets, and basic structure to create the infrastructure for integrated marine biological, chemical and hydrographical observation, assessment and research. Using such a network would form an efficient use of tax money to create a marine research infrastructure for both environmental and climate research, able to fulfil the needs of continuous environmental monitoring, thus meeting the requirements of the MSFD.

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## 2. Biodiversa Call for Projects



The next BiodivERsA call, cofunded by the European Commission will cover the two following themes:

- Theme #1: Understanding and managing the biodiversity dynamics of soils and sediments to improve ecosystem functioning and delivery of ecosystem services
- Theme #2: Understanding and managing biodiversity dynamics in land-, river- and sea-scapes (habitat connectivity, green and blue infrastructures, and naturing cities) to improve ecosystem functioning and delivery of ecosystem services

The call is planned to be launched in May 2015, with a closing date in early November 2015.

For more information: <http://www.biodiversa.org/762>

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### 3. Green Week 2015

**NATURE**  
our health, our wealth  
Green Week Europe > May-June 2015



The biggest annual happening on European environment policy is just around the corner! Organised by the European Commission, Green Week 2015 will take place May-June 2015 in Europe and from 3-5 June 2015 in Brussels. The 2015 edition will focus on nature and biodiversity.

If you want to bring visibility to your actions in favour of nature & biodiversity, and bring more visibility to your marine station, you could organise a 'Green Week 2015 satellite event in Europe', and benefit from EU official support and branding.

For more information: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/greenweek/>

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