

Prestigious European Marine Biological Stations Share Resources for Advanced Research Capacity in 'ASSEMBLE Plus'

Over 50 participants representing 32 organisations and 14 countries converged in Paris, France, from 19 - 20 October 2017, for the kick-off meeting of the **ASSEMBLE Plus** project. A Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Action, the project represents the second phase of the European Union's FP7 research infrastructure initiative, ASSEMBLE.

Under the leadership of the **European Marine Biological Resource Centre (EMBRC-ERIC; www.embrc.eu)**, **ASSEMBLE Plus** will activate important research resources and provide scientists from academia, industry and policy with a quality-assured programme of access to the marine biology and ecology research infrastructure. This programme includes direct access and virtual access to marine biological stations offering: a wide variety of marine ecosystems; unique marine biological resources; state-of-the-art experimental and analytical facilities with integrated workflows; historical observation data; and, advanced training opportunities. In addition to the above access mechanisms, Joint Research Activities involving all partners will aim to develop innovative research technologies and/or methodologies. Furthermore, a coherent series of Networking Activities will strengthen the culture of cooperation within and beyond the consortium partnership, providing a benchmark for practices of service provision, disseminating interoperable protocols, engaging with novel user communities, and sharing insights into sustainable business strategies.

The sum of the actions envisaged in **ASSEMBLE Plus** will increase the number of users of marine biological stations and shape their business strategy perspective, ultimately improving their long-term sustainability perspectives.

The kick-off meeting allowed the partners to better understand these significant objectives at a micro and macro level, and how they can contribute to each task. Work package leaders hosted working groups to plan for and initiate the project's activities, discuss the access operating systems, and, design the external communications and dissemination strategy. The meeting was a success, with the partnership eager to begin work immediately.

The **ASSEMBLE Plus** website will be coming soon at www.assembleplus.eu. If you would like to know more about the **ASSEMBLE Plus** project or to receive regular updates on its progress, please contact the Project Manager, A. Stécy Jombert [email: alice.jombert@upmc.fr, tel: +33 (0) 1 44 27 71 53]

Notes for Editors

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*Image caption: The **ASSEMBLE Plus** partners at the kick-off meeting at the Université Pierre and Marie Curie, Paris, France from 19 - 20 October 2017.*