



**EMBRC**  
EUROPEAN  
MARINE  
BIOLOGICAL  
RESOURCE  
CENTRE

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## Human Resources Plan

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January 2014

### *Deliverable D8.6*

### The EMBRC preparatory-phase



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## Executive Summary

The purpose of this deliverable is to present a description of the staff needed for the Secretariat of the European Marine Biological Resource Centre, EMBRC – ERIC, to aggregate a set of Human Resources (HR) assumptions, according to the best practices, and to prepare an environment that allows staff engagement, collaboration and brilliance, helping EMBRC- ERIC to reach success.

The report has three major objectives: the EMBRC HR strategic framework, a comprehensive literature review and the listing of best practices.

The document is organized into 6 main sections:

- “About EMBRC” presents a framework of EMBRC.
- “Conditions of employment at EMBRC-ERIC” presents a reminder of the labour conditions to be implemented.
- “Staffing Management” presents recommendations for creating a workforce fit for its work.
- “Career Management” presents recommendations for keeping the EMBRC Secretariat motivated, committed and engaged with EMBRC.
- “Health & Safety” gives emphasis to the need of be aware to the two main health and safety risks for the Secretariat staff.
- “Equal Opportunities” accentuates the determination to promote equal opportunities, value diversity and promote the respect, dignity and fair treatment for all.

These key areas describe the EMBRC HR strategy adding value to EMBRC. For this reason, this plan is essential.

This document was based on the EMBRC reports and a set of other publications of recognized institutions on Human Resources studies, e.g. McKinsey Global Institute, Catalyst, Cornell University School of Industrial and Labour Relations, IBM, RAMIRI, and the Society for Human Resources Management (references therein).

## 1. About EMBRC

The marine ecosystem is the vastest source of organisms in the planet. It is also the most unknown. Its study has implications related to human health, climate, food, energy, environment, fauna and flora sustainability. In 2008 EMBRC was approved as part of the ESFRI roadmap in the area of biological science and biomedical research. It started its preparatory phase in 2011, with eleven marine stations and EMBL as partners, distributed along 9 countries. In the meantime, other countries have shown interest in joining in. The implementation phase commences in February 2014, and in 2016 starts the operational phase as a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC).

Due to its range, EMBRC will be the largest integrated marine biology platform in the world, giving access to the public and private sector as well as academia and ONGs to numerous ecosystems, techniques and research infrastructures. It will be run through state level governance and managed by a Director with input from the EMBRC-ERIC Secretariat.

The Secretariat will be responsible for implementing, managing, developing and accountability of the EMBRC strategy assuring the compliance with all the internal and European policies, norms and regulations.

### 1.1.Mission

According to the Society for Human Resource Management<sup>6</sup> the mission statement “(...) describes the organization reason for existence. It describes what it does and its overall objective (...) it supports the vision and serves to communicate purpose and direction to every stakeholder.”

Suggested mission: EMRC is a strategic distributed research infrastructure that will provide access to a comprehensive range of marine organisms and organisms of the coastal seas of Europe and become a major provider of marine biological research and related services.

### 1.2.Vision

A vision statement should challenge and inspire employees. It should create a mental image of what the organization wishes to achieve. When developing a vision statement the Society for Human Resource Management<sup>9</sup> advises one to answer the following question “If the organization were to achieve all of its strategic goals, what would it look like 10 years from now?”

Suggested vision: EMBRC will be a powerful platform to define and meet the strategic needs of marine biology and ecology at the regional, national and European scales. It will be instrumental in pooling national marine stations and laboratories, human capital and financial resources into a coherent framework providing the necessary infrastructure for joint programming in these areas.

### 1.3.Values

The mere listing of values will not make them part of the EMBRC foundations. These values must be embraced and used every day by the leadership to guide its behaviours and decisions. After some time

they will become principles of the EMBRC culture and recognized by all stakeholders, creating what the Society for Human Resource Management<sup>6</sup> calls a *moral compass*.

EMBRC values consist of (suggestion):

Collaboration	Fairness
Excellence	Sustainability
Innovation	Diversity

### 1.4. Organogram

The EMBRC-ERIC organization chart represents the way people within the Secretariat interact with each other, regarding the chain of command and lines of communication (Figure 1). Owing to the specificity of the organizational structure instead of the traditional hierarchical model, a more representative format of the type of interactions the Secretariat is expected to have was adopted. This format emphasises a flexible structure and the need of a collaborative platform where interaction and engagement are continual. Although EMBRC – ERIC activities are responsibility of the Director, members of staff are encouraged to be in control on their work (reporting to the Director), and to communicate and perform in team.



**Figure 1 - EMBRC-ERIC Secretariat Organogram**

## 1.5.Culture

As stated by Marvin Bower former managing director of McKinsey, Culture is: “the way we do things around here” – and it can be described as a system of shared rules (formal or informal) and beliefs that spell out how people are to behave within the organization.

The aim is to create a collaborative and fair environment, where diversity is honoured and excellence is cultivated. The Secretariat has the primordial role in building and spread the - *way to do things around here* - culture.

The Secretariat must gain the respect of the Marine Stations and other stakeholders. This is essential to implement measures and processes. Nevertheless, there must be an ethical and collaborative environment with mutual trust, without a rush to judgement and an open transparency flow of processes, decisions, measures and communication of results. A place where prejudice does not exist and where all involved (users, scientists, officers, students) can truly feel as being part of the EMBRC team. This is essential for EMBRC to achieve its mission.

## 1.6.Ethics

Ethics is a branch of philosophy, concerned with the nature of right and wrong and the rules of conduct or moral principles that guide individual or group behaviour.

An ethical workplace is established through organizational values, culture, and leadership. To promote ethical behaviour, there is the need to be knowledgeable about business ethics—from corporate values and codes of conduct to compliance with labour Law, health and safety, equal opportunities and training.

It is of supreme importance that the impact of EMBRC on individuals, the environment, on animals, and on the several communities with whom it interacts is actively taken into consideration and that EMBRC creates a culture that demands ethical behaviour. It is also essential that these ethical principles are transmitted to all working and in contact with EMBRC.

EMBRC should sign and adopt the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers demonstrating publicly the EMBRC commitment to the professional development of researchers.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Conditions of Employment at EMBRC - ERIC

Staff rules are an important document to establish the conditions and working principles for the EMBRC-ERIC staff. These principles should be laid down by a legal expert team. Owing the specificity and exceptions of the Labour Law, and other regulations such as compulsory collective agreements in the different European countries it is considered necessary to outsource, prior to the implementation phase, the services of a legal expert for the setting of the Employment Conditions such as:

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<sup>1</sup> More detail about these two instruments can be found at the Euraxess page at <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/whatIsAResearcher>.

- types of contracts;
- the length of the contract;
- causes of termination;
- notice periods;
- compensation for termination of contract;
- probation period;
- paid and non-paid leave;
- working hours;
- overtime;
- elements of remuneration;
- vacation days;
- paid and non-paid leaves;
- pension scheme;
- confidentiality agreements;
- intellectual property;
- other employment rights and duties;
- general obligations of staff members.

In addition, taxes and social security cover should also be subject to a legal view, especially for the setting of conditions for employees from other European or non-European countries because of the international agreements.

Most of the conditions of employment should be described in the working contract or refer to regulations provided by the Law that described them. If considered necessary, other specific conditions can also be specified.

### 3. Staff Management

#### 3.1. Roles and responsibilities

A detailed description of the staff allocation is described in Deliverable 8.2 – “Forecast of key HR competences required”. This document presented a requirement of 6 positions for the EMBRC-ERIC Secretariat with the following roles and responsibilities:

*The EMBRC - ERIC **Director** (1 position) will be the EMBRC representative and will be responsible for providing strategic leadership by answering to the Governing Board, raising funds, identifying opportunities, and setting the vision, goals, strategies and plans for the infrastructure. The Director will be responsible for building the EMBRC -ERIC culture and to direct and coordinate operational activities at the senior level with the input of the EMBRC-ERIC staff.*

*The **Financial Manager** (1 position) will work closely with the Executive Director and will be responsible for all EMBRC-ERIC financial activities such as financial planning, analysis, control, accountancy, procurement, reporting and making financial recommendations. The job holder will also be responsible for day-to-day operations (HR and Finance) within the EMBRC-ERIC.*

The **Access Programme Administrator** (1 position) will be responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the access programme, education and training in compliance with the EMBRC –ERIC mission. The job holder will manage the daily coordination of the international access programme including the organization of access calls, compilation and curation of user access data and databases, and contact with applicants or users. The Access Programme Administrator will work closely with the liaison officer in each node and with the Promotion, Communication, Marketing & Outreach Officer (PCMO Officer) in the dissemination of training courses, workshops or education availabilities. The job holder will also be responsible for the set-up, update and management of the EMBRC-ERIC web site/portal for applicants and users.

The **Promotion, Communication, Marketing and Outreach Officer** (1 position) will be responsible for creating and maintaining a favourable public image of EMBRC-ERIC, and for defining and implementing the communication, promotion, marketing and outreach policies. The job holder will also be responsible for the website contents, social media, events and communication, promotion and marketing material.

The **Knowledge Transfer and Innovation Officer** (1 position) will plan, design and implement the knowledge management and innovation strategies. The Knowledge Manager and Innovation Officer will manage the knowledge and intellectual property portfolio. The job holder will also work closely with the knowledge transfer officers and/or EMBRC-ERIC officers at the nodes assisting, identifying, and disseminating good practices across the EMBRC -ERIC.

The **Secretary** (1 position) will welcome people to EMBRC-ERIC conveying a friendly atmosphere from first contact and provide administrative support to the central office. The job holder will perform routine clerical functions such as answering phone calls, drafting correspondence, scheduling appointments, writing meetings minutes, organizing and maintaining paper and electronic files and providing information to callers or visitors.

In addition to the positions described above, the need to create the position of **Legal Officer** (1 position) was also recently demonstrated. This person, working half time or outsourced, will advise and assist the EMBRC-ERIC Director on all legal matters. According to the EMBRC business plan, the job holder will be at the central point of the negotiation of the EMBRC – ERIC and will monitor the negotiation of the EMBRC – ERIC statutes with the interested countries and prepare the application to the European Commission liaising with legal departments of the national operators and the competent ministries. When the operational phase starts the legal officer will provide legal advice to the EMBRC staff and users, ensuring that all services are rendered according to the legal standards.

We expect that these positions will be attractive, considering the tasks, level of autonomy and the possibility to be part of the implementation and beginning of a high level international distributed research infrastructure.

Although not part of the Secretariat and for that matter not included in this report, there is also the need for **Liaison Officers**, to work at the nodes. The Liaison Officer will liaise with the Secretariat and will support the users on site. The job holder will be an important resource of memory and of know-how for the long term of EMBRC, conferring a certain degree of continuum.



### 3.2. Personnel costs

Estimates of Personnel costs were clearly defined and estimated by Work Package 6 and are described in the Business plan. The costs with salaries for the various positions were decided taking into account the ability to pay, the specificity of the jobs, the market conditions, the life cost in the country hosting EMBRC-ERIC, the compensation philosophy, and the worth of the job for EMBRC.

### 3.3. Timescale for setting talent and skills

Table 1 shows the talent hiring agenda for the EMBRC- ERIC. The Director should be nominated at the beginning of the implementation phase and will hire on behalf of the EMBRC – ERIC the Secretary, the Financial Manager, and the Legal Officer (on part time). In 2016, but before the beginning of the operational phase, the secretariat should be completed with the appointment of the remaining members of the Secretariat.

	2014	2015	2016
EMBRC - ERIC Director	Full Time	Full Time	Full Time
Financial Manager	Half time	Half time	Full time
Access Programme Administrator			Full time
Promotion, Communication, Marketing and Outreach Officer			Full time
Legal Officer	Half time	Half time	Half time
Knowledge Transfer and Innovation Officer			Full time
Secretary	Half Time	Half time	Full time
EMBRC-ERIC Officer (Nodes)			Full time

**Table 1 - The EMBRC-ERIC hiring plan.**

### 3.4. Recruitment and Selection

Attracting and selecting the right persons is not a simple task and, thus, a specialist approach at this phase is advised. The Director is appointed by the Governing Board. For the recruitment of the Secretariat one option to consider is to contract an executive search consultancy firm, which under following the job descriptions and guidance of the Director, would make a custom tailored search and advise a final list of persons to be chosen/interviewed.

In preparation for **recruitment phase** (advertising positions and attracting persons of the highest calibre) it should pay attention to:

- Analysis the job description designed for the position;

- Design the job posting in a way that attract the attention of prospective candidates and cultivate their interest;
- Develop the criteria used to select the candidate - well defined selection criteria enable the focus on specific skills, and job outcome expected;
- Request candidates to provide the contacts of two referees;
- Provide enough information to define the desired attributes of candidates;
- Carefully choose the channel(s) of recruitment which might be different according to the position;
- Take the opportunity to promote and market EMBRC-ERIC;
- Comply with the labour laws and procurement guidelines;
- Document the recruitment process through pre – appointment records;
- Ensure that the recruitment process is in accordance with the settings listed in the Equal Opportunities Plan;

All job offers and advertisements should be approved by the Director. The design of the job posting is critical to the recruitment process and to secure a pool of suitably qualified candidates. The advertisement should contain the following items: [title](#); [EMBRC-ERIC overview](#); [place of work](#); [responsibilities](#); [required and preferred qualifications and skills](#), [knowledge](#), [salary and benefits](#); [a mention of equal employment opportunity](#); [application instructions \(with a contact name for queries related with the announcement\) mentioning the posting period](#). Unless there is a legal obligation otherwise, the minimum posting period recommended is 14 days and the maximum is 90 days. In addition to the job posting on the EMBRC-ERIC site and in order to attract the most qualified number of applicants, external advertising such as the Euroaxess portal, scientific and specialized journals, mailing lists, other research institutes and infrastructures are advised.

After the recruitment phase and with a significant pool of applicants the goal is to have a fair and effective selection process. In the preparation of the **selection phase** (choosing the right person for the job, for the EMBRC –ERIC *momentum*, values, culture and team) the following should be considered:

- Make the selection through an assessment centre because of the high prediction value of current and future job performance that this method achieves;
- Ensure that the selection process is in accordance with the Equal Opportunities Plan;
- The candidates should be evaluated with respect to the selection criteria that were established in the recruitment process to avoid bias;
- Determine and rank the necessity of the skills listed;
- Choose selection and rejection criteria when screening CVs and cover letters;
- When analysing the applicant documents, attention should be paid to the candidate objectives, types of experience, education and knowledge, years and levels of experience, workplace accomplishments and red flags, such as inconsistent information and typos;
- After reviewing the application documents –the applications should be divided into three groups: those who will be interviewed, those who will be held in reserve and those who will be rejected;
- Use the selection criteria to develop interview questions;
- The first interview for prequalified candidates can be made by telephone, Skype or related means;
- The interview should be conducted as a conversation because it is easier to get more information in an informal interaction. However this conversation should be structured in order to cover the information that is needed;

- In the interview both close ended and open ended questions (either hypothetical work related questions or behavioural based questions) should be asked;
- Interview questions should focus on assessing the candidate's level of: technical knowledge, skills, abilities and values. No questions about the personal life should be conducted;
- Whenever interviewing candidates, one is representing EMBRC-ERIC, regardless of the outcome of a job interview and whether the person is selected or not - a good experience elicits a candidate with good feelings, but a bad experience can leave negative feelings towards the organization spread by word of mouth;
- Focus on "person-EMBRC fit" looking for broader skills, the ability to get along with team members and fit in EMBRC culture;
- A final pool of 3 finalists should be interviewed face to face to measure more easily if the person will fit in the EMBRC –ERIC values, culture and team chemistry;
- The reference checking of the candidates should be made after the interview, to set off bias and to ask permission to the candidate;
- Document and save the selection process through pre – appointment records;
- Notify and provide feedback to all non-selected applicants.

## 4. Career Management

### 4.1.Integration

The effort invested in Recruiting and Selecting staff will be lost if the person selected is not retained. The new person should feel welcomed and expected (at least in the very first weeks).

According to Moscato<sup>4</sup> "As much as 4 percent of new employees leave their new jobs after a disastrous first day."

To help new members of the team to settle into the new positions it is important to have an induction period. The induction should start even before the beginning of the contract. After the informal job offer is made, usually by telephone, with the confirmation of the position, it should be followed by a letter of appointment including information on salary and starting date. The contract of employment should also be issued in advance of the job starting date and both documents should be carefully prepared by a legal expert.

In the first day and after knowing the premises and the workspace (which should be fully equipped) there should be set a meeting with the key colleagues and the Director. In this meeting the new comer is introduced and gets an overview of each person role. The first day is usually occupied with reading, searching for information, note-taking, and adjusting to his/her role and responsibilities.

Every new employee should receive a staff handbook - it could be in book format or in online format. This document introduces the new job holder to the EMBRC – ERIC allowing the person to get an outline of the infrastructure, its governance, mission, members, organizational structure, work ethics and the EMBRC view about Equal Opportunities. It should also briefly summarize the obligations, routines and formalities associated with working at EMBRC-ERIC. For example, personal income tax, social security and healthcare rights and processes, the answer to frequently asked questions about EMBRC -ERIC internal processes

(payroll details, procedure for absence from work, work insurance covers, travel procedures, reimbursements, health and safety) as well as useful information about the region hosting the secretariat.

After two to three days the director should meet again with the new staff member and together set the work accomplishments and goals for the first year (which is also important for the performance review). This meeting will allow a person to know exactly what is expected from him/her, as well as the purpose of his/her job for the overall organization mission. The meeting will also help a person to understand and focus on the right objectives and priorities (which sometimes is difficult for a newcomer) and is also a place to adjust expectations and make some questions.

Induction is so important because:

- It gives a broader idea of what the main tasks and their priority are;
- expectations about the role and responsibilities are clarified;
- systems and processes are explained narrowing the time for the employee to start contributing;
- colleagues are introduced;
- it enhances employee morale and loyalty;
- it improves employee engagement and retention;
- it improves employee performance.

## 4.2. Performance and Potential Assessment

People who work in a scientific organization, at any level, do not just want to like their work, they want to be passionate about it...

After the excitement and effort to initiate the operational phase, it is important to keep the staff motivated and eager to perform. Transforming the EMBRC-ERIC in a great place to work, with adequate resources in order to help staff complete successfully work projects, and where work life balance is encouraged is essential. Performance is primordially the result of motivation, skills, knowledge and environment.

Performance appraisal is an assessment of how well an employee performs the job relative to a set of standards or expectations, sharing that information with them and searching for ways to improve their performance further. Thus, performance management is of paramount importance but it does not have to be a bureaucratic, head hake process.

For EMBRC-ERIC it is proposed a scheme inspired in the University of Saint Andrews – Q6 Staff Development a system linking directly appraisal with training and development.

Brief methodology description:

The performance review of the EMBRC-ERIC staff work should be conducted once per year. After the hiring process, the employee is informed about the performance review methodology and a date for the meeting is arranged. One week prior to the review meeting, the member of the staff delivers the performance review form completed to the Director. Quality of work, initiative, general attitude and quantity of output are examples of what should be assessed, the form should also have a self-appraisal part.

The Director has one week to read the form and to prepare for the meeting, assembling other relevant information, e.g. sent by the Marine Stations or by the Users (quality reports). During the meeting, the

responses to the form are discussed, feedback is provided and future actions are agreed. It is expected that the meeting should last approximately 1 hour. With a time frame of 2 days, after the meeting, the staff member reviewed, delivers a written document that resumes the meeting and describes the actions that were agreed, including any requirement of training, development, any change in the tasks performed processes, and when those actions should happen. After validation by the Director, this document should be kept in the employee file record, and actions taken in accordance.

This performance meeting will allow:

- mutual goal setting between the Director and the staff;
- the staff member to fine tune their performance through a candid feedback;
- to have clear expectations on what is required of them;
- to motivate and reward employees;
- the increase of work satisfaction;
- to express appreciation for staff member contribution;
- the achievement of objectives;
- the assessment of the quality of service;
- the recognition of achievements;
- innovation or change to more effective process by sharing insights based on the work experience;
- to identify training and development needs;
- to assess career development aspirations;
- to identify succession needs;
- understanding individual strengths and needs;
- an alignment of effort to accomplish EMBRC – ERIC mission.

Considering the type of questions being discussed during review and in the event of other people being mentioned, or being an interested party, a team meeting may be scheduled as soon as possible to share and discuss the suggestions with all the persons involved.

The performance-review system should be aligned with the overall EMBRC-ERIC mission and be clearly communicated and explained to all people involved.

### **4.3.Promotion, Recognition and Rewards:**

Usually employees want to work in an organization that provides opportunities for career advancement, within the organization, and promotion (through an increase in pay). Economic rewards have an important role and are usually seen as being proportionate to the performance and importance (potential/value/retention) a person has in the organization. However, due to the scope of EMBRC, and to the specificity of the work within the Secretariat it is not predictable that in a near future a potential for bonuses pay or salary rises beyond inflation will be available. Despite this, recognition must be demonstrated and a complete motivational environment created, otherwise, frustration may overcome among staff. Talent would not be capitalized and turnover would follow.

Below are listed several non-economic/pay measures, which can be used to demonstrate performance recognition, and at the same time, to increase the overall wellbeing of the staff members:

- Intellectual growth opportunities (training, skill enhancement, increased knowledge and experience exposure, either work or non-work related);
- Flexible work arrangements (telework, flexitime, compressed workweek) – provide job satisfaction and enhance work – life balance. If there is a need for core hours they could be fixed (being mandatory for the staff to be at office within these times) Catalyst<sup>2</sup> examined the effects of a positive work/life balance and found a strong correlation with the intent to stay in an organization;<sup>1</sup>;
- Give time and free days off;
- Payment of membership gym – provides job satisfaction and contributes for the staff health;
- Give free fruit, water, tea, coffee;
- Reward effort as well as success – sometimes a great idea does not work but there was a considerable effort invested; by rewarding the staff member there is also an incentive to keep on trying;
- Use social gestures in the workplace as praise and thanks – public recognition is important to the meaningfulness of the work and improves the morale, the commitment and the loyalty towards a superior.

It is important to understand what kinds of rewards are valued by the staff members. Different persons (with different characteristics - age, gender, religion, cultural background, number of children, and seniority in EMBRC) have different drives and value different things. EMBRC wants to provide rewards that employees do appreciate and the best way to do this is to ask them. Otherwise it will not motivate them to stay with the organization or continue to perform well.

#### 4.4. Training and Development

EMBRC believes that only a highly skilled and truly engaged team can excel. One way to achieve this kind of performance is by offering **Training** (the acquisition or recycling of new skills and knowledge relevant to the job) and encouraging **Development** (the growth of an individual wider education, and abilities). For this purpose specific funding should be provided.

Training and Development advantages:

- boost employee performance and effectiveness;
- enhance EMBRC-ERIC culture;
- increase employee morale and retention;
- provide an opportunity to build networks (community of learning);
- Law or other labour regulation compliance.

The training process has several phases usually denominated as training cycle (Figure 2). The first step in the analysis of needs is to know what direction the organization wants to take, and the second to collect information to determine what the existing needs are and what kind of training or development is required to meet those needs. Following partner Marine Station's best practices, an informal training assessment should be conducted during the staff performance meeting. Information about training needs can also be gathered through feedback from users or from EMBRC –ERIC quality service reports.

Having identified what areas should be addressed and who needs training, and following the elaboration of an individual training plan and the choice of the training channel (e.g., workshops, online courses, seminars, conferences, discussion boards/forums, shared online learning spaces, webinars, video conferencing, live chat communication, Q&A, just to name a few), attention should be paid to secure funding and other resources. Training programmes can then be developed and scheduled. After the training it is important to assess the results in order to improve posterior training. Finally there should be a validation, and the output should be measured in categories such as improved user's service, productivity gains, increased employee morale, retention and increase in the number of the EMBRC users.

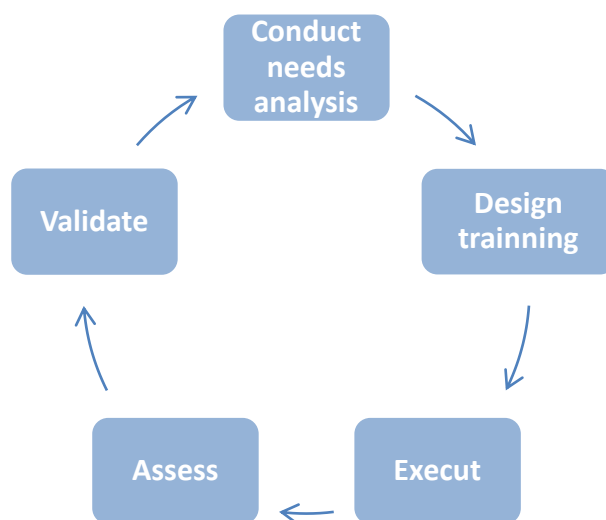


Figure 2 -EMBRC Training cycle.

A [Team Development](#) and [Training](#) programme is suggested focusing on [EMBRC](#) and [Health and Safety](#) which should be repeated annually as necessary.

#### Team Development:

Owing to the fact that EMBRC is distributed along different sites in Europe it is very important to promote the EMBRC identity and culture, building a single team. Although one way to achieve this is by promoting frequent face to face meetings (which has also the advantage of allowing the informal exchange of experiences, promote motivation and the suggestion of practices that could be implemented by all) it is also suggested a volunteer EMBRC – ERIC engagement development programme.

Very briefly the volunteer programme would be organized and promoted by the Secretariat but open to every EMBRC staff. The idea is to engage on a partnership with a NGO to promote e.g., health, habitability, or environmental education (these are mere examples). This intensive experience would allow highly skilled persons from the secretariat and marine stations to work pro bono, side by side in a different context where all parts would benefit:

- The NGO could use the experience of an expert team improving the life of people on the ground.
- Many people value opportunities to have an effect on other people and change lives in a positive way. An immense gain would be expected both personally (emotional maturity, a feeling of usefulness and making a difference in the real world, having a long-lasting experience) and

professionally with the acquisition or recycling of new abilities and behaviours (linguistic, stress management, collaboration, organization, time management).

- EMBRC would work on social responsibility, and have a more motivated and united workforce.

#### EMBRC:

It is emphasised the importance of integration of new employees and induction training should be implemented. It is suggest a shared online learning space, or other passive e-learning tools, such as pre-recorded videos or audio files. The advantage of these channels is being accessible not only to the secretariat but also to the EMBRC liaison officers and others dispersed geographically. In addition, and more specifically, workplace norms, and other important information about working in the Secretariat, can be passed on to the new member.

#### Health and Safety:

Work related stress is of great concern often resulting from increased demands, shortness of deadlines and the 24/7 availability. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work<sup>2</sup> provides several tools regarding information on this issue. One of the sources is the project "Mental Health in the World of Work" (psyGA - Psychische Gesundheit in der Arbeitswelt)<sup>5</sup> which is promoted by the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and provides organisations with an eLearning tool about [stress management](#) and [work related stress](#). The tool can be accessed at <http://psyga.info/elearningtool/>

In addition to the above areas, training and development should be scheduled according to the staff and EMBRC-ERIC needs (e.g., [gender awareness](#), [language skills](#), [fundraising](#), [communication skills](#)).

### 4.5.Succession and Termination

The motive to terminate a contract of employment must be in accordance with the law or other labour regulations. It is necessary to check the legality of the notice period, the necessity of any compensation (indemnity allowance) and the need to sign any legal document.

It is expected that separation from EMBRC-ERIC may occur by:

- Resignation
- Mutual Agreement
- Dismissal
- Retirement
- End of a fix term contract

Whenever and whatever the cause of separation from EMBRC-ERIC is an exit survey should always be conducted. This survey will gather information about the achievement of expectations and the motives that led to the ending of the contract. The feedback from the survey will allow the setting up of improvements as necessary.

We expect that the positions described in this plan will be regarded as attractive. It is not every day a person has a chance to be from the beginning part of a team constructing and operating an international



distributed research infrastructure. However for the same appealing reason, persons applying to EMBRC positions described might not desire life jobs and so succession planning should be taken into account.

Succession Planning allows a proactive strategic solution retaining corporate knowledge instead of a reactive replacement planning. Succession planning includes a focus on development and prepares individuals for future opportunities within the EMBRC – ERIC.

## Health and Safety

EMBRC- ERIC is committed to foster a health and safe workplace for its staff. The following benefits are gained by establishing a healthy-oriented culture:

- direct cost savings;
- reduce sickness absence;
- stronger branding, an improved corporate image;
- improve productivity because errors and preseeteism are reduced.

In many organizations action towards health and safety issues is driven by a desire to reduce absenteeism or direct pressure from employees, however EMBRC understands that identifying the risks and preventing the consequences is better than reacting to them once they occurred.

Due to the nature of the work conducted at EMBRC – ERIC Secretariat we identify 2 main risks: musculoskeletal disorders and work related stress.

### 4.6.Musculoskeletal disorders

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are one of the most common work- related diseases affecting millions of European workers with immense financial costs for employers.

Working many hours, sitting in front of a computer, often times in stress and in awkward postures is not the healthiest position for a human being. People with myalgia, tendonitis or carpal tunnel syndrome become more frequent, with uncomfortable symptoms like pain, numbness and tingling.

To prevent the emerging of MSDs, workplace risk factors should be identified. It is suggested the implementation of practical measures such as the provision of ergonomically correct and comfortable work stations, adapting the work to the person, prevent work related stress and provide information to prevent MSDs.

### 4.7.Work related Stress

Psychosocial risks, such as work related stress, are often undervalued. However, and according to the *European Risk Observatory Report - OSH in figures: stress at work — facts and figures<sup>2</sup>*:

- *in 2002, the annual economic cost of work-related stress in the EU-15 was estimated at 20 billion Euros;*

- *in 2005, stress was the second most reported work-related health problem, affecting 22% of workers from EU 27.*
- *studies suggest that between 50% and 60% of all lost working days are related to stress;*

Due to its importance, workplace stress management is the theme of the forthcoming 2014-2015 campaign of the European Agency for Health and Safety. Stress is defined as *the perception by people that there is an imbalance between the demands made of them and the resources they have available to cope with those demands*<sup>3</sup>.

The main causes of stress are workload and the organizational management style. Symptoms of work related stress may occur at the organization level (absenteeism, preselection, turnover, errors, and reduced productivity) and at the individual level (irritability, sleep problems, burnout, difficulty in concentrating, remembering, musculoskeletal disorders, weakened immunity, hypertension and gastrointestinal problems).

The following measures can help preventing work-related stress:

- providing clear job descriptions;
- allowing enough time for workers to perform their tasks;
- allowing workers to take part in decisions that affect them;
- match workloads to the capabilities and resources of each worker;
- designing tasks to be stimulating;
- defining work roles and responsibilities clearly;
- providing opportunities for social interaction;
- avoiding ambiguity in matters of job security and career development;
- rewarding workers for good performance;
- flexible working options;
- enabling workers to make complaints and have them taken seriously;
- giving workers control over their work;
- stress management training;
- promoting work life balance.

Besides the legal and moral imperative, in preventing work related stress and musculoskeletal disorders, EMBRC understands that these risks affect not only the health of individuals, but also the health of the organization.

Below is presented a list of European legislation relevant to the identified risks:

- 89/391, which provides a general framework for identifying and preventing risks placing work-related stress firmly within the legal domain of occupational safety and health;
- 89/654, which covers the minimum safety and health standards for workplaces, including seating, lighting, temperature and work stations;
- 90/270, which covers the minimum safety and health requirements for working on computer screens;

- 93/104, which covers the organisation of working time;

## Equal Opportunities

It is the aim that all people relating with EMBRC are treated fairly. A report outlining an Equal Opportunities Plan (EOP) for the future EMBRC – ERIC was delivered, in 2012 (D8.3), with the following objectives:

- EMBRC will be referred as an attractive, diverse and inclusive workplace for all with equal treatment and opportunities;
- All have equal treatment when applying for EMBRC or for EMBRC's on site and remote access;
- EMBRC's decision making bodies will be diverse and gender balanced;
- EMBRC's workforce will be diverse and balanced.

In addition, the following short version statement about Equal Opportunities was suggested:

*EMBRC actively promotes equal opportunities, values diversity and promotes the respect, dignity and fair treatment for all.*

The EMBRC EOP suggests measures to help achieve the earlier mentioned objectives. Among the measures suggested are the fixing of gender quotas, a gender mixed composition of decision making bodies, and the implementation of policies that enables staff members to have a balance between work and personal (life and family) responsibilities.

According to the European Commission She Figures 2012 report<sup>3</sup>: *The most important institutions in the scientific landscape continue to be dominantly led and managed by men (...) and on average in the EU-27, 36 % of members of scientific and management boards are women in 2010, a share that is likely overestimated notably by methodological changes in the calculation of the EU-27 aggregate, as in 2007, women represented just 22 % of board members.*

## Final Considerations

This deliverable describes the HR plan for the EMBRC-ERIC Secretariat which will play a crucial role in EMBRC. This central office will be at the heart of EMBRC, linking the nodes, providing a bridge to the European arena, being responsible for and guiding the implementation, compliance, and growth of the research infrastructure mission in accordance with the Director leadership. This report provides guidelines for:

- Creating a fair, ethical and legally compliant work environment where people feel esteemed;
- Attracting, selecting, developing, rewarding and retaining a diverse and talented group of persons;
- Build a teamwork culture.

The first section outlined the strategic view and organizational structure, with elements that are linked to the scientific mission of the EMBRC-ERIC. In this structure the line of authority is clearly indicated and encourages a timely and transparent communication throughout EMBRC. The need to build the EMBRC

identity is considered of key importance because of the geographic dispersion (different nodes across different European countries with different persons and cultures) and because it helps to build an edge and strongly motivated workforce.

The second section emphasized consistency in the rules governing staff.

The third section focused on presenting the talent to be acquired in order to accomplish the EMBRC mission. We expect that the implementation and beginning of an international research infrastructure will be seen as exciting and appealing for highly skilled junior and mid officers.

In the fourth section key aspects to make EMBRC an enthusiastic place to work were presented, with recommendations regarding engagement, development, management and rewarding of the EMBRC staff to perform their best. There should be a close attention to recognition as well as fostering a work life balance. Because science happens socially and in collaboration with others, by helping to build and maintain working relationships and partnerships, one is securing the achievement of EMBRC the objectives.

The fifth section emphasized the need to prevent and manage health and safety in the EMBRC-ERIC Secretariat. Measures to reduce the two main threats in the office, work related stress and musculoskeletal disorders, were indicated. The EMBRC –ERIC Secretariat should aim at creating and maintaining a supportive and healthy work environment.

The sixth section mentioned briefly the EMBRC concern with the Equal Opportunities issues in general and the gender issue more specifically, which were object of a specific deliverable.

This plan should be regularly reviewed and reassessed.

## References

<sup>1</sup>Catalyst (2012). *Catalyst Quick Take: Work-Life: Prevalence, Utilization, and Benefits*. New York: Catalyst.

<sup>2</sup>European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (2009). *European Risk Observatory Report - OSH in figures: stress at work — facts and figures*. Luxembourg: Office for official Publications of the European Communities.

<sup>3</sup>European Commission (2013). *She figures 2012 - Gender in Research and innovation*. Luxembourg: Office for official Publications of the European Communities.

<sup>4</sup>Moscato, D. (2005). *Using technology to get employees on board*. HR Magazine 22, 107-109.

<sup>5</sup>Psychische Gesundheit in der Arbeitswelt (2013). <http://psyga.info/> (accessed January 2014)

<sup>6</sup>Society for Human Resource Management (2013) "Mission & Vision Statements: What is the difference between mission, vision and values statements?" <http://www.shrm.org/Pages/default.aspx> (accessed January 2014).