



D10.7: Summary of the final meeting

Marine Ecosystem Restoration in Changing European Seas MERCES

Grant agreement n. 689518

COORDINATOR: UNIVPM

LEAD BENEFICIARY: 1. UNIVPM

AUTHORS: Cristina Gambi, Emmanuelle Girardin and Roberto Danovaro (UNIVPM)

SUBMISSION DATE: 30/11/2020

DISSEMINATION LEVEL

CO	CO Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	X
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1. Final meeting minutes

The MERCES final meeting took place using the ZOOM platform from the 10th to the 11th November 2020. Overall 120 participants including members of the Consortium, of the project Advisory Board, of the MERCES Business Club attended the meeting. Moreover, the Project Adviser Dr Victoria Beaz-Hidalgo and members of the DG R&I, Dr Nerea Aizpurua and Dr Ivan Conesa Alcolea, of the EASME, Dr Rocio Suarez-Jimenez and Dr Juan-Pablo Pertierra also attended the two-days meeting. The project management team of the H2020 projects MacoBios and FutureMARES were also invited and confirmed their participation. The meeting was structured in such a way that WPs co-leaders made an overview of the results achieved during the 4 years of the project within each WP:

- WP1: European marine habitats, degradation and restoration;
- WP2: Restoration of marine, shallow soft bottoms habitats;
- WP3: Restoration of coastal shallow hard bottoms and mesophotic habitats;
- WP4: Restoration of deep-sea habitats.
- WP5: Effects of restoration on the recovery of ecosystem services;
- WP6: Legal governance and policy;
- WP7: Socio-economic impacts of restoration;
- WP8: Putting Business at the Heart of the Restoration Agenda;
- WP9: Dissemination, communication and public engagement.

The meeting has been an excellent occasion to present take-home messages based on the 4 years' experience of the project to open a fruitful and very good discussions with the members of the Consortium and the external audience of the meeting.

The MERCES coordinator Roberto Danovaro presented an overview of the “numbers” related to the project in terms of participants (161 researchers, 18 PhD students and 46 undergraduate students), deliverables (44), milestones achieved (34), newsletters released (8) and press release. During the project, 25 protocols have been tested to increase restoration efficiency and to identify criteria for the selection of target species and habitats in 25 case studies from the shallow soft and hard bottoms to the deep sea. A special attention has been spent on the most fragile and vulnerable habitats, including seagrass meadows, algal and kelp forests, coralligenous outcrops, cold-water corals, canyons, seamounts and fjords. During the project, different training courses on marine restoration have been organised by the MERCES members in the fieldwork

activities to show the restoration techniques. Twelve students of the IMBRSea International master from different EU countries participated in a summer school in the Apulian region. MERCES collaborated with other EU initiatives included a strict relationship with the other H2020 projects SponGEs and ATLAS that organised a joint exhibition at the World Conference on Marine Biology, Montreal 2018. Moreover, a joint meeting MERCES and AFRIMED (EASME project) and several network with Life SEPOSSO, LifeWatch-ERIC, life Themis Natura, MANTIS, PROTOMEDEA, MEDBLUEISLANDS, MEDCIS, BLUEMED also took place. MERCES has established a strict relationship with the Society for Ecological Restoration International and Europe in particular with key-actors such as James Aronson and Jordi Cortina-Segarra. Furthermore, the MERCES consortium has been very active in the scientific production with more than 100 publications in the four years of the project in several journals among other Nature, Science and Trends in Ecology and Evolution. MERCES spent huge efforts for dissemination in the framework of national and international events including scientific meetings and conferences and events for the general public such as exhibitions, EU researchers' nights, citizen science, radio and TV interviews and documentary. In addition, a special communication has been established with the Business sector with dedicated webinars and newsletters. MERCES has been also featured in several EU initiatives such as Cordis Results Pack, EU report on Nature-based solutions and EU Marine board.

This final overview was the occasion to present the major achievements of the project to the EU Project Advisor Victoria Beaz-Hidalgo, other members of the EU commission and of the Business Club. After the overview, the meeting proceeded with a summary of all WPs by the WPs co-leaders and some presentations of the results achieved by the partners involved in each WP. The first day ended with the contribution of the Advisory Board's members: James Aronson, Roberto Cimino and Paul Snelgrove who provided their impressions on the different topics of the project, from the field work with pilot actions in different marine ecosystems to the implication for business, policy and society.

End of the first day

The second day of the meeting opened with the presentation of the Project Adviser Victoria Beaz-Hidalgo and her colleague Nerea Aizpurua who made general comments on the project and the potential implications of the marine restoration in several EU policy initiatives.

The Project Adviser Victoria Beaz Hidalgo provided a summary of the MERCES achievements for science, policy, business, society and cooperation.

Science:

- ✓ Success of restoration and lessons learnt from field work in different marine habitats
- ✓ One-stop shop on knowledge on marine restoration, including pioneering work on deep sea habitats & innovative restoration techniques on seagrass habitats
- ✓ Restoration scaling-up considerations

Policy:

- ✓ Outstanding scientific and very relevant policy deliverables
 - D6.3 Review on restoration, conservation and recovery of marine ecosystems in the four regional EU seas
 - D3.4 Evaluation of the effectiveness of pilot restoration actions
 - D10.6 Restoration of marine ecosystems: a manual for users
 - 2 policy briefs summarizing key messages from MERCES
 - MERCES webinars
 - story map of the project
- ✓ Contribution to marine EU policies (BD strategy, MSFD, MSP, regional initiatives ...)
- ✓ Contribution to NBS EU research policy, marine angle

Business:

- ✓ Putting Business at the Heart of the Restoration Agenda
- ✓ Socio-economic impacts of marine restoration, incl. cost and benefit analysis, work on monetary valuation

Society:

- ✓ Ocean literacy – eg. SponGES and MERCES teachers' workbook
- ✓ Communicating project results

Cooperation:

- ✓ Cooperation with H2020 ATLAS & SponGES projects - Joint event at World Conference on Marine Biodiversity in Montreal

- ✓ Synergies with EMFF AFRIMED project - joint MERCES-AFRIMED symposium “Implementing marine ecosystems recovery” – World Ecological Restoration Conference – June 2021
- ✓ LIFE projects
- ✓ Starting H2020 marine projects

She also suggested Legacy & looking forward:

- Today’s meeting - disseminating MERCES results for its further use & outputs exploitation
- Science-policy links – feedback to policy at EU level, incl. feeding to key EU policies – MSFD, EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030
- Legacy of MERCES –MERCES website as one-stop shop for marine restoration knowledge, Horizon Results Platform, EMODNET portal on marine data
- Exploiting & harvesting MERCES results: starting point for other coastal/marine restoration projects & initiatives, contribution to the EU biodiversity strategy 2030 implementation, Mission on Oceans, new Marine Knowledge Centre ...

Dr Nerea Aizpurua presented an overview of the EU Green Deal with special attention on the Biodiversity Strategy 2030 supported by over 100 R&I actions for implementation. In particular IA2: biodiversity and natural resources with special focus on Seas, Oceans, and Inland waters.

The meeting continued with the presentation of the remaining WPs, the video documentary of the MERCES-AFRIMED projects.

Roberto Danovaro ended the meeting with the take-home messages:

MERCES for the 2030 Biodiversity strategy

MERCES developed a conceptual framework, baseline knowledge and specific protocols for active restoration coastal shallow soft/hard bottoms (including mesophotic) and deep-sea habitats.

MERCES was successful in demonstrating that restoration is feasible under a number of conditions and that baseline knowledge, synergistic interventions (mitigation and conservation) and stakeholders’ involvement are key determinant for restoration success.

Case studies in the EU seas allowed us to identify specific processes to enhance the effectiveness of restoration actions.

Successful transregional experimental setups combined with last generation genomic methods allowed to explore the adaptive capacity of some of the targeted species face to the ocean warming.

Scaling up restoration actions is challenging but success stories have been documented in shallow coastal habitats, paving the road to future large-scale interventions.

The involvement of specific stakeholders, if well planned and supported by experts, is critical both to increase people awareness about the importance of biodiversity and their involvement in large scale restoration interventions.

MERCES contribution to the EU initiatives

MERCES profited to the lessons learned from terrestrial and coastal ecosystems and concluded that most principles and key concepts developed by the Society for Ecological Restoration are applicable to deep-sea ecosystems.

Some deep-sea systems are still pristine, allowing the restoration agenda to be set prior to the onset of human activities.

Substantial gaps in our knowledge of biological and ecological attributes remain, which limit the capacity to make informed predictions on the trajectories of recovery of deep-sea ecosystems. Deep-sea systems are slow to respond and, therefore, ecological restoration timescales may be extremely long; probably exceeding that of multiple human generations.

Deep-sea restoration requires long time scales and, therefore, restoration projects require mechanisms that maintain long-term commitment that exceed typical research projects and business and political cycles (financing, managing, regulating, monitoring and enforcement).

We need long-term research projects and monitoring programs. Only in this way we can reveal the full potential of ecological restoration in deep-sea ecosystems.

The main challenge for deep-sea restoration is to find cost and technically effective methods to scale up the pilot deep sea restoration actions developed in MERCES to match the spatial scales of degradation.

MERCES and the way forward

The European Green Deal and the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 headline objectives place a strong emphasis on the importance of biodiversity for human wellbeing and development.

The contribution of marine ecosystems to societal welfare is often however not properly accounted for as many of the transactions involved are non-market in nature.

MERCES demonstrated the non-market ecosystem service values associated with a range of marine ecosystems and also how these values can be estimated for ecosystem service benefits associated with ecosystem types that are often not that familiar to citizens.

We need “the quantitative measurement of ecosystems and their services and values, and their incorporation into accounting and reporting systems used by business and the public sector”.

MERCES has contributed new knowledge here that can help fill this gap by generating a range of values that can be used in the future in value transfer exercises.

This European Green Deal calls for systemic solutions for restoring biodiversity and ecosystem services, and for delivering tangible benefits for biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The MERCES project demonstrated that restoration can also act as nature-based solutions to reduce the impacts of climate change.

MERCES for integrating Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 also calls on Member States to integrate biodiversity and ecosystems into school, higher education curricula and professional training.

MERCES demonstrates that recognizing the public’s current level of knowledge with regard to marine ecosystems and restoration can assist in the development of educational tools and effective management policy that can help reducing future damages to marine ecosystems.

MERCES results suggest that public support could be increased through campaigns to increase awareness of marine restoration activity, highlighting success stories and expected benefits.

The EU Nature Restoration Plan will involve a proposal for legally binding EU nature restoration targets, and that proposal will be subject to Impact Assessment (IA).

There will be resistance to legally binding targets from some Member States and from vested interests so it's important that the Impact Assessment can demonstrate that the proposals are necessary, proportionate, beneficial .and for that the ability to value both the costs and the benefits would be a great help.

MERCES can contribute to the "new action plan to conserve fisheries resources and protect marine ecosystems" and to the national maritime spatial plans which are due in 2021.

Looking further forward, under the Commission’s proposal for the first European Climate Law *“Member States will also be required to develop and implement adaptation strategies to strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change.”*

The recent EU Parliament resolution on EU Forest Strategy invites the Commission to *“explore options to incentivize and remunerate climate, biodiversity and other ecosystem services*

appropriately” and “stresses the importance of developing and ensuring a market-based bio-economy in the EU”

These resolutions are likely to influence new policy in the maritime space.

What do we need to include Restoration in the 2030 BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY?

Coordinating policies & practice - Increased coordination of national, European and international policy

Provide long-term funding - Restoration is a long-term process that requires sustainable financing to be successful.

Innovative funding and cross-sectoral collaborations are urgently needed

Prioritization and Upscaling - In order to meet ambitious goals and targets, marine ecosystem restoration must be upscaled.

Research and communication - Better understanding and communication of ecosystem service recovery and thresholds is needed.

Tackling the root of the problem - Restoration should be paired with supportive management practices to reduce pressures and habitat damage.

Collaborations for change - increased social awareness and greater collaboration between marine, terrestrial and freshwater restoration efforts.

What is restoration?

Based on our MERCES experience clearer definitions (with measurable targets) and application of concepts are needed.

Some definition issues: degraded, unfavorable, assumed not-good, poor, impacted etc) indicate a mismatch between various EU directives assessments

Where is the risk? Human activities and pressures affect all our ecosystems but mapping of these and habitats is currently not fit for purpose for the restoration agenda

Open questions and gaps: *the distribution and extension of the damaged habitats of interest remains one of the main gaps*

What else?

Time scales to restoration vary widely between ecosystems from months/years (kelp, sponges, some seagrasses), to decades (some seagrasses and corals), to multi-decades or centuries (deep-sea corals).

- Restoration solutions are being developed with innovation, revisiting terrestrial & tropical analogues, AND **involving the industry**.
- **Up-scaling will need a combination of technological innovations, science-industry solutions and citizen science/volunteering support**.

Capitalizing the MERCES experience

We need to further implement and enforce ecological restoration in EU policies, including the Regional Sea Conventions;

Engage the private sector to implement successful actions in marine ecosystems;

Consider the marine restoration as a blue-growth opportunity;

Share and capitalize existing knowledge with the contribution of stakeholders and citizens;

Capitalize opportunities within the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and UN Decade on Ocean Science to improve knowledge gaps and collaborations between ecosystem, including opportunities to place greater emphasis on the benefits that marine and coastal ecosystems deliver (biodiversity, climate, society and economy)

Final considerations

What is the potential for restoration? Restoration potential differs between habitats due to differing ecology and biology of the species.

What increases the chances of restoration success?

- Protect and maintain structural complexity and diversity (ecosystem engineers)
- Identify the best intervention methodologies / protocols
- Understand the potential for the impact of climate change and regime shifts.
- Where the restoration activity is of greater relevance for a successful outcome (climate refugia?)

Restoration must be considered and 'counted' in the EU nature conservation directives and poor status and high risk should trigger restoration actions under the new EU DBS 2030

Meeting photo



End of the meeting

2. Conference programme



Marine Ecosystem Restoration in Changing European Seas

MERCES Final Meeting, 10-11 November 2020



MERCES

Coordinator: Prof Roberto Danovaro
UNIVPM – Polytechnic University of Marche, Italy

H2020 project: 01.06.2016 - 30.11.2020

Grant Agreement: 689518

Budget: 6,651,118.20€



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Marine Ecosystem Restoration in Changing European Seas

Final Meeting, 10 November 2020

9:45 - 10:00	<u>Participants connection</u>
10:00 - 10:30	<u>Roberto Danovaro: Welcome and General Introduction to the MERCES final meeting</u>
10:30 - 15:30	<u>Success of restoration and lessons learnt from field work - Summary & recommendations</u>
10:30 - 11:30	<u>European marine habitats, degradation and restoration</u> Nadia Papadopoulou (HCMR) - Anthony Grehan (NUIG) <u>Discussion & Final Remarks</u>
11:30 - 12:30	<u>Restoration of marine, shallow soft bottoms habitats</u> Christoffer Boström (ÅAU) - Johan van de Koppel (NIOZ) <u>Discussion & Final Remarks</u>
12:30 - 13:30	<u>Restoration of coastal shallow hard bottoms and mesophotic habitats</u> Joaquim Garrabou (CSIC) - Simonetta Fraschetti (CoNISMa) <u>Discussion & Final Remarks</u>
13:30 - 14:30	Lunch break
14:30 - 15:30	<u>Restoration of deep-sea habitats</u> Telmo Morato (IMAR-Uaz) - Andrew K. Sweetman (HWU) <u>Discussion & Final Remarks</u>
15:30 - 16:30	<u>Overall opinion of the Advisory board</u> James Aronson, Roberto Cimino, Paul Snelgrove, Cindy Van Dover
16:30 - 17:15	<u>General Assembly (restricted to the Consortium)</u>

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Marine Ecosystem Restoration in Changing European Seas

Final Meeting, 11 November 2020

9:15 - 9:25	<u>Participants connection</u>
9:25-9:30	Roberto Danovaro: Welcome
9:30-10:00	A word on MERCES results and legacy & relevant EU policy developments by <u>Victoria Beaz Hidalgo</u>, MERCES Project Adviser, EASME & <u>Nerea Aizpurua</u>, Policy Officer, DG R&I
10:00-13:00	Ecosystem services, policy-making and society - Summary and recommendations
10:00 - 11:00	Effects of restoration on the recovery of ecosystem services Hazel Thornton (WCMC) - Trine <u>Bekkby</u> (NIVA) Discussion & Final Remarks
11:00 - 12:00	Legal <u>governance</u> and policy Jan P.M. van <u>Tatenhove</u> (AAU) - Ronan Long (MLOPRS) <u>Discussion & Final Remarks</u>
12:00 - 13:00	Socio-economic impacts of restoration - Summary and recommendations Wenting Chen (NIVA) - Stephen Hynes (NUIG) Discussion & Final Remarks
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch break
14:00-16:00	Business and Public engagement - Summary and recommendations
14:00 - 15:00	Putting Business at the Heart of the Restoration Agenda David <u>Billett</u> (DSES) - Eva Ramirez-Llodra (NIVA) <u>Discussion & Final Remarks</u>
15:00 - 16:00	<u>Dissemination, communication and public engagement</u> Martina Milanese (GAIA) - Silvia Bianchelli (ECOREACH) <u>Discussion & Final Remarks</u>
16:00-16:30	<u>Take home messages-wrap up</u>

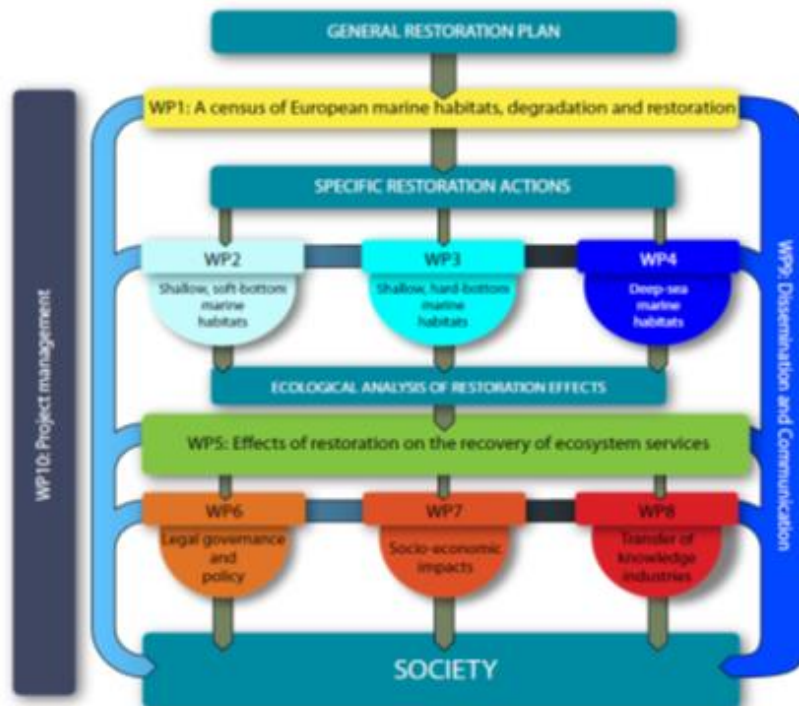
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Marine Ecosystem Restoration in Changing European Seas



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WP co-leaders:

- WP1:** Nadia Papadopoulou (HCMR) & Anthony Grehan (NUIG)
- WP2:** Christoffer Boström (ÅAU) & Johan van de Koppel (NIOZ)
- WP3:** Joaquim Garrabou (CSIC) & Simonetta Fraschetti (CoNISMa)
- WP4:** Telmo Morato, Marina Carreiro Silva (IMAR-UAz) & Andrew K. Sweetman (HWU)
- WP5:** Hazel Thornton, Chris McOwen (UNEP-WCMC) & Trine Bekkby (NIVA)
- WP6:** Jan P.M. van Tatenhove (AAU) & Ronan Long (MLOPRS)
- WP7:** Stephen Hynes (NUIG) & Wenting Chen (NIVA)
- WP8:** David Billett (DSES) & Eva Ramirez-Llodra (NIVA)
- WP9:** Silvia Bianchelli (Ecoreach Srl) & Martina Milanese (Studio Associato GAIA)
- WP10:** Roberto Danovaro, Cristina Gambi, Emmanuelle Girardin (UNIVPM)



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Marine Ecosystem Restoration in Changing European Seas

List of deliverables:

WP1 European marine habitats, degradation and restoration

- D1.1 State of the knowledge on European marine habitat mapping and degraded habitats (Lead: NIVA)
- D1.2 Current marine pressures and mechanisms driving changes in marine habitats (Lead: NUIG)
- D1.3 State of the knowledge on marine habitat restoration and literature review on the economic cost and benefits of marine and coastal ecosystem service restoration (Lead: HCMR)

WP2 Restoration of marine, shallow soft bottoms habitats

- D2.1 Manual of restoration measures in soft bottoms based on surveys and experiments (Lead: ÅAU)
- D2.2 Restoration results in the case study sites (Lead: UTARTU)
- D2.3 Mathematical model of the interactions between seagrass and other engineering species (Lead: NIOZ)

WP3 Restoration of coastal shallow hard bottoms and mesophotic habitats

- D3.1 State of knowledge on key eco-evolutionary processes and factors driving the resilience of the shallow hard bottoms and mesophotic habitats (Lead: CoNISMa)
- D3.2 Criteria and protocols for the restoration of shallow hard bottoms and mesophotic habitats (Lead: CoNISMa)
- D3.3 Exploring tools to enhance the effectiveness of restoration actions under a changing ocean scenario (Lead: CSIC)
- D3.4 Evaluation of the effectiveness of pilot restoration actions (Lead: CSIC)

WP4 Restoration of deep-sea habitats

- D4.1 Review on the principles of deep-sea restoration and on the ecological benefits of passive and active restoration (Lead: HCMR)
- D4.2 Effectiveness of passive restoration in fjord ecosystems, hydrothermal vents and in cold-water corals (Lead: HWU)
- D4.3 Development and effectiveness of tools and techniques for active restoration in the deep-sea (Lead: UB)

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Marine Ecosystem Restoration in Changing European Seas

WP5 Effects of restoration on the recovery of ecosystem services

D5.1 Maps (in GIS format) showing case study sites and variation in the recovery potential of different ecosystem services; and information on changes in ecosystem services provision following habitat restoration (as metadata). Link: <https://arcg.is/0aXGq9> (Lead: WCMC)

D5.2 Visual representation (e.g. infographic) of relationships between habitat characteristics, pressures, restoration methods, ecosystem change, and recovery potential (Lead: NIVA)

D5.3 Policy briefing summarizing the key transferable findings from Tasks 5.1-3 (Lead: WCMC)

WP6 Legal governance and policy

D6.1 Review of existing international governance structures, regarding the conservation, restoration and recovery of marine ecosystems (Lead: AAU)

D6.2 Review of current EU and international legal frameworks (Lead: MLOPRS)

D6.3 Review on restoration, conservation and recovery of marine ecosystems in the four regional EU seas (Lead: WU)

D6.4 Policy brief providing input and options for the development of legitimate governance arrangements and effective regimes regulating the conservation, restoration and recovering of marine ecosystems (Lead: WU)

WP7 Socio-economic impacts of restoration

D7.1 Social acceptance of restoration activities (Lead: HCMR)

D7.2 Popularized mainstream or industry article on social benefits of marine restoration activities (Lead: NUIG)

D7.3 Use of Choice Experiment to estimate number of ecosystem service values from restoration project (Lead: NUIG)

D7.4 Popularized mainstream or industry article on social costs of marine restoration activities and cost-effective analysis of restoration measures by case study (Lead: WU)

D7.5 Report, including a policy relevance section, on full social-benefit analysis for the selected case studies (lead: NIVA)

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WP8 Putting Business at the heart of restoration agenda

D8.1 Report on consolidated lists by country and by business sector of the European Marine Restoration Business Clubs (Lead: DSES)

D8.2 Annual publication of business-focused e-newsletters and final report synthesising the MERCES business-focused e-newsletters as industry brief (Lead: UTARTU)

D8.3 Recording and long-term archiving of 5 industry webinars and final report on the webinars outcomes (Lead: NIVA)

D8.4 Final report summarizing industry and authorities engagement in MERCES through the Business Club and Industry Portal and highlighting any tangible outcomes (e.g. new methods and new projects) created from these interactions (Lead: DSES)

MERCES Business Club: <http://www.merces-project.eu/?q=content/welcome-merces-business-club-5>

MERCES webinars:

Getting Better Value from Our Coasts, link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5r0vO2ww5pA>

Private finance in marine ecosystem restoration, link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmF5cRbQvdc>

Building a Business Case for Marine Ecosystem Restoration, link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Opl9-U6i1Xw&t=25s>

Ecosystem Restoration in Deep Waters, link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WakLhV9dgd8>

Moving to Industrial-Scale Coral Habitat Restoration, link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWlcZFrNoqY>

All webinars have been submitted to the SER (Society for Ecological Restoration) webinars collection.

WP9 Dissemination, communication and public engagement

Newsletters

http://www.merces-project.eu/sites/default/files/MERCES_newsletter_6M.pdf

http://www.merces-project.eu/sites/default/files/MERCES_newsletter_03_LQ.pdf

http://www.merces-project.eu/sites/default/files/MERCES_newsletter_05_LQ.pdf

WP10 Project management

D10.6: Restoration of marine ecosystems: a manual for users (Lead: UNIVPM)

MERCES brochure: <http://www.merces-project.eu/?q=system/files/Brochure-eng.pdf>

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Marine Ecosystem Restoration in Changing European Seas

MERCES Products:

- 44 Deliverables
- 6 newsletters
- 1 Business Club Business & 5 business focused newsletters
- 5 Webinars business - oriented
- > 80 publication in ISI journals

MERCES AT A GLANCE

TITLE: Marine Ecosystem Restoration in Changing European Seas (MERCES)
CALL: Growing a low carbon, resource efficient economy with a sustainable supply of raw materials (H2020-SC-7-2015)
TOPIC: More effective ecosystem restoration in the EU
INSTRUMENT: Research and Innovation Action
DURATION: 54 Months (01/06/2016 – 30/11/2020)
CONSORTIUM: 28 partners from 16 countries plus two linked third party
COORDINATOR: Polytechnic University of Marche, Italy
PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM: Roberto Danovaro, Cristina Gambi & Emmanuelle Girardin

PARTNERS:



MERCES

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This project has received funding from the EU's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme under Grant Agreement No 689518. This output reflects only the author's view and the European Union cannot be held responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

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3. General Assembly



Marine Ecosystem Restoration in Changing European Seas MERCES

Grant agreement n. 689518

General Assembly Meeting

11 November 2020

Time: 16:30-17:15

Participants:

Project Management Office: Cristina Gambi, Emmanuelle Girardin & Roberto Danovaro
All members of the Consortium

Agenda

- Deliverables due in months 54;
- The list of papers and the accessibility of the data;
- Ongoing amendment;
- The technical and financial reports for the last reporting period;
- Final review of the project next December 2020.

Welcome

Cristina Gambi welcomed all members of the consortium. The agenda of the meeting was presented and approved by the General Assembly.

Deliverables due in month 54

Cristina Gambi reported the list of the deliverables due to M54 to remind the close deadline and to ask if there were any problems.

The list of the deliverables is reported below:

WP6

D6.4 Policy brief providing input and options for the development of legitimate governance arrangements and effective regimes regulating the conservation, restoration and recovering of marine ecosystems (WU and AAU-IFM) (M54)

WP9

D9.6 Four year report on networking, public engagement and communication activities including collation of products and e-MERCES tools (GAIA) (M54)

WP10

D10.7 Summary of the final meeting (UNIVPM) (M54)

Cristina Gambi reminded all the members of the MERCES consortium that **MERCES** is participating to the **Pilot Open Access Research Data**.

Datasets can be uploaded in the ECAS Participant Portal as link from "Open AIRE" or manually filling the following information:

- Dataset D.O.I: please add (e.g. supplementary online information / dataset shows a DOI in most of the journals)
- Repository Link: (eg. MENDELEY or others)
- Non-Repository Link: (e.g. institutional)
- Title: (dataset or article)
- Is dataset accessible? There is the option YES or NO
- Is dataset reusable? There is the option YES or NO
- DOI Linked publication: please add

It is also important collecting all papers published within the project in order to provide the final list of the papers by the end of the project.

Emmanuelle Girardin provided an update on the ongoing project AMENDMENT Reference No AMD-689518-77

Partner n.23 MLPORS and Partner n.21 GAIA changed method of calculation of personnel costs, from actual costs to costs as Unit costs in line with SME owners without a salary.

As a consequence:

Change of the maximum grant amount (decrease): the maximum grant amount set out in Article 5.1 is changed to: "EUR 6 651 117.80 (six million six hundred and fifty one thousand one hundred and seventeen EURO and eighty eurocents)".

Change of the estimated eligible costs: the estimated eligible costs of the action set out in Article 5.2 are changed to: "EUR 6 651 117.80" (instead of EUR 6 651 118.20)

Last step: waiting for the EU signature (Coordinator's Legal Representative signed 30/10/2020)

Technical and financial reports for the last reporting period

Last Reporting Period (M31-54) of the MERCES project covers the last 24 months of the project from 1 December 2018 to 30 November 2020.

- A periodic report on the scientific/technical achievements for the last 24 months
- A final financial report on the costs incurred during the project duration:
 - individual financial statement (Annex 4, ex-form C)
 - explanation of the use of resources

Pay attention that for this final report, a Certificate on the financial statement is requested if the beneficiary requests a total contribution of EUR 325 000 or more, as reimbursement of actual costs and unit costs calculated on the basis of its usual cost accounting practices (see Article 5.2 and Article 6.2, Point A).

Next deadlines:

WP co-leaders scientific reports of the last 24 months: **30 November 2020** by email to merces@univpm.it

Final financial reports on the costs incurred during the project duration:

- individual financial statement (Annex 4, ex-form C)
- explanation of the use of resources
- Certificate on the financial statement

Deadline: 30 December 2020 via the Participant Portal.

The scientific progress report will be revised by two external reviewers, the same of the first reviewing process: Alan Deidun and Vangelis Papathanassiou on December 17th, 2020.

End of the meeting.

MERCES Project Management Office (PMO)

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MERCES Work packages and co-leaders

WP1: European marine habitats, degradation and restoration

Nadia Papadopoulou (Hellenic Centre for Marine Research) & *Anthony Grehan* (National University of Ireland, Galway)

WP2: Restoration of marine, shallow soft bottoms habitats

Christoffer Boström (Åbo Akademi University) & *Johan van de Koppel* (Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research)

WP3: Restoration of coastal shallow hard bottoms and mesophotic habitats

Joaquim Garrabou (Agencia Estatal Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas) & *Simonetta Fraschetti* (CoNISMa)

WP4: Restoration of deep-sea habitats

Telmo Morato (Instituto do Mar Centro da Universidade dos Açores) & *Andrew K. Sweetman* (Heriot-Watt University)

WP5: Effects of restoration on the recovery of ecosystem services

Chris McOwen (World Conservation Monitoring Centre) & *Trine Bekkby* (Norsk Institutt for Vannforskning)

WP6: Legal governance and policy

Jan P.M. van Tatenhove (Aalborg University) & *Ronan Long* (Marine Law and Ocean Policy Research Services Limited)

WP7: Socio-economic impacts of restoration

Stephen Hynes (National University of Ireland, Galway) & *Wenting Chen* (Norsk Institutt for Vannforskning)

WP8: Putting Business at the Heart of the Restoration Agenda

David Billett (Deep Seas Environmental Solutions Ltd) & *Eva Ramirez-Llodra* (Norsk Institutt for Vannforskning)

WP9: Dissemination, communication and public engagement

Silvia Bianchelli (Ecoreach Srl) & *Martina Milanese* (Studio Associato GAIA)

WP10: Project management

Roberto Danovaro, *Cristina Gambi* & *Emmanuelle Girardin* (Università Politecnica delle Marche)

Annex 1:
Conference participants and affiliation details

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