**Notes from first VALMER Project Management Meeting. Friday 7th September, Rouen.**

**Present:**

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| **Name** | **Location** | **Name** | **Location** |
| Gill Glegg | Plymouth University | Steve Fletcher | Plymouth University |
| Ness Smith | Plymouth University | Aidan Winder | Devon County Council |
| Mike Alborough | Plymouth University/DMF | Nicola Beaumont | Plymouth Marine Laboratory |
| Denis Bailly | University de Bretagne Occidentale | Mahé Charles | Agence des Aires Marines Protegees |
| Remi Mongruel | IFREMER Brest | Ronan Pasco | Syndicat Intercommunal D’Amenagement du Golfe du Morbihan |
| Monique Casse | Syndicat Intercommunal D’Amenagement du Golfe du Morbihan | Juliette? | Syndicat Intercommunal D’Amenagement du Golfe du Morbihan |
| Philippa Hoskin | Cornwall Council | Manuel? | University de Bretagne Occidentale |
| Victoria Bartlett | Plymouth Marine Laboratory | Becky Seeley | Marine Biological Association  |
| Cecile? | Interreg Joint Technical Secretariat | Didn’t get her name | PANACHE |

1. **Feedback from the Work Package (Phase) Groups**

WP 1; Assessing and valuing marine ecosystems – Nicola Beaumont, PML

* A good meeting. Everyone is thinking along the same lines.
* Agreed need to spend more time working on what they are going to do, and how. Need more text/more formal idea before the October meeting.
* UK partners haven’t decided on case study locations yet, but have discussed ideas. SF – in process of selecting sites; not obvious where sites should be yet – issues of scale/governance/data etc.
* Expert meeting to develop a strong framework on 6th-8th November in France. Have discussed the agenda and invite list, which will be sent out soon. DMF officer can offer support for organising this event.

Action: Mike to liaise with Nicola to organise November meeting

* Group thinks the framework will be dynamic and will change as it is applied to the case studies. Important that there is good communication between WP1 Group and WP3 (scenarios) Group. There is also a need for clarity on what each WP will focus on.
* Framework will move towards a more holistic framework, building on what’s already been done. Will incorporate biology/ecology/sociology/policy-makers.
* Important to incorporate management needs, which will feed back into the model.

WP 2; Data – Becky Seeley, MBA

* Talked about the type of data – species distribution, habitat mapping and socio-economic data. Need to think about it now, draw up a ‘wish-list’ and start collating.
* Joint workshop with PANACHE in Brest at the beginning of 2013, to work out data standards/formats etc. Need one data representative from each partner if possible.

WP 3; Scenarios – Aiden Winder, DCC

* A useful meeting; we put together a group to take the WP forward. Happy for anyone to input into this group.
* Need to work out methods to building the scenarios, and work with stakeholders on the case-study sites.
* Emphasis on options (plural) – we need a variety of approaches. Will create additional work, but reduce stakeholder issues.
* Need to get a balanced number of scenarios across the sites.
* Core of work will focus on the three pillars of sustainability (economic/social/environmental) and translating academic concepts into ‘real-world’ situations. Challenge is to get this across to stakeholders.
* Need to work collectively (across WPs) to define the scenarios.
* Concerns about timing to ensure it all fits together; Group would like to bring the work forward from March.
* Need to coordinate with WP 2 (data) at an early stage to ensure they have the right data. Also to discuss how to deal with stakeholder-derived data – what is data, and how should it be used?
* Site trialling could take a long time, so need to start early.
* Need to establish methods for synthesis report to ensure coordination with other WP groups

Action: Ness to consider how we will compile the synthesis report

* Discussed semantics with French partners - vision has a different meaning; closest shared meaning was High Level Objectives (HLOs). Important that there is shared understanding and this needs careful attention.
* Want to create the scenarios first, which will then feed into the HLOs.
* Of the sites already selected, some are a long way into the marine planning process, others less advanced, so feel it may not be possible to develop action plan for all of the sites – may produce guidance.
* Stakeholder events are at the core of this WP – will work with them at each of the pilot sites; will aim for a consistent approach to engagement to ensure compatible outputs (without being too prescriptive – some concern from French partners here)
* The report for policy makers has to be an iterative process, with on-going input into a document as the process progresses. Need to engage with other WP leaders to ensure this happens.

Action: Ness to set up a pro-forma for all WPs to update on methods/lessons-learned on a regular basis

WP 4; Case studies – Steve Fletcher, Plymouth University

* Group didn’t meet – but identified the need to establish a core group which needs to meet in Plymouth in October.
* Need to figure out the role of the ecosystem assessment and how it fits into management decisions. Can build an expert group for this, once study sites have been established.
* Would be good to exchange knowledge with wider academic community – ESP network?

WP 6; Project Management – Steve Fletcher and Gill Glegg, Plymouth University

* Ness Smith will oversee the contractual obligations of the project, working closely with Assistant Project Manager who will focus on finance.
* Project Management Committee meeting (PMC) will take place every six months, with a member from each of the partners. Ness will probably chair in future
* A Project Advisory Committee (PAC) will be established to review approach/outputs and to give feedback. Scheduled to meet five times over course of project. Ed Maltby already invited to be the chair.
* Need to identify suitable members, when they should meet and how to present the project to them.
* Looking at a mixture of scientists/practitioners/policy-makers. Expenses will be paid, but not a fee.
* Group agreed this ‘peer-review’ system was important, and that members should be impartial.
* Suggestions included natural and social scientists, chair of the syndicate, MMO/Defra, Local Nature Partnerships, someone from French MPA Agency.

Action: Ness to look into governance of PAC, Terms of Reference and potential members.

1. **Communications for next three months – presentation by Mike Alborough**
* Mike showed a rough layout for the website and leaflet, which the group were generally happy with. External contractors will be used to carry out this work.
* Mike will distribute (probably) three logos to project partners for discussion.
* Website will probably have a joint entry point with the PANACHE site. The two projects will have separate websites and logos but may share a common theme.
* Website, logo and project leaflet to be ready by Christmas.
* Language needs to be clear and non-technical so it can reach a wide audience.
* Discussed file sharing amongst project partners – at its simplest using Dropbox. Decided it would be good to have file sharing embedded in the project website and several project management platforms were discussed including Basecamp and Projector. Need for good management of file sharing to ensure the correct version is always used.
* Mike gathered contact information from all present, and asked everyone to send him details of other people who would be working on VALMER within partners’ organisations. He will distribute this list asap.

Action: Mike to meet with expert contacts at MBA/PML to discuss websites and file sharing.

Action: Mike to compile and distribute contact list to partners.

Action: Ness to send Mike a copy of the C-SCOPE Communication Strategy.

* Group to feedback any comments on first communication strategy to Mike asap.
1. Translation – Denis Bailly
* Denis led a discussion on spoken translation
* Stressed the need ensure that everyone can follow discussions.
* Agreed that English is the most likely language to be used in smaller meetings
* Acknowledged that professional translators are often not good at translating technical language
* Could we use in-house translation for smaller meetings, and use professionals for larger meetings? Also a suggestion to purchase translation sets; one for each country.
* Suggestion to use French PhD students from various Plymouth partners, who could sit amongst participants, rather than ‘remote’ translators.
* Group agreed on translation strategy; use professionals for larger events, but aim to use PhD students for informal translation at meetings.
1. **Launch Meeting**
* Launch will take place 17th-19th October in Plymouth
* Need to include the PMC meeting, Work Package meetings and social time
* Agreed it would be best to have a plenary PMC session, followed by individual Work Package meetings, then reconvene for final plenary session.
* Individual WPs need a session on scenarios (proposals from each case study site), a data session which is open to all, and a finance session.
* Suggestion that we run a video conference session for individuals from French partners who can’t make it to Plymouth. Led to question about contingency arrangements if the ferry can’t sail; cancel, or video conference? Would need to arrange video in advance if so.
* Agreed to monitor project carbon footprint. PANACHE also would do this. PML already have a tool in place on their travel web-pages, and we might be able to use this.

Action: Project Management team to organise launch event and explore contingency measures.

Action: Ness and Mike to talk to Victoria about PML Carbon Footprint tracker

1. **Interreg Project Management Requirements**

Cecile, the JTS correspondent for VALMER, was available for questions during the PMC:

* Cecile is going to check if it is ok to claim for travel and accommodation costs for external people attending an expert workshop.
* Is it fine to claim travel expenses before the official start date of the project, the first claim is for all preparation costs. The end of preparation phase is officially the 31st August 2012, and the project start is 1st September 2012. Start date to claim from is not important, as long as it is a legitimate preparation expense.
* We need to put the first claim together in time for mid-November submission. Claims will be roughly every six months – a schedule has already been agreed with the JTS as part of the submission.

Action: Project management team to establish milestone dates for first claim and Ness to circulate

* Timesheets must be completed for all staff not working 100% on the VALMER project. Presage has timesheet system built in, but if an organisations’ own system for recording time is robust and approved by the JTS, staff will not have to fill in two sets of timesheets.
* French colleagues fed back that their system was approved by the JTS for a previous project, and perhaps we could all use this system. The JTS prefer number of days (not hours) worked on each WP.

Action: Ness to confirm JTS preferences for timesheets and inform partners

Gill, Steve and Ness also met Cecile separately:

* Almost everything has to be sent to the JTS in paper format, in addition to entry in PRESAGE.
* Everything must be signed by the appropriate person (accountant, project manager etc.)
* Send copies of everything including press releases, leaflets, agendas etc. Include links on PRESAGE if the output is internet-based.

Urgent Action: Project management team to check if the FLC for Plymouth is approved by Interreg. Send details to JTS via Cecile.

* All work for the VALMER project must be finished by the end of March. The last claim and closure will be the end of June – will need to make all payments, including to FLC in advance of this last claim date. Project Manager could work until April/May to complete closure documents.
* Can claim for accommodation/expenses paid to volunteers/interns, but not for intern salary costs.
* Always invite JTS to PMC meetings – they will try to attend at least once a year.