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Report of Project Workshop P1

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SUMMARY

This report presents the minutes of the Kick-off Meeting of BENTHIS that was held between 21-24 January 2013 at IFREMER, Nantes, France.

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INTRODUCTION

The Kick-off meeting of BENTHIS was held at IFREMER in Nantes (France) from 21 – 24 January 2012. The objectives were to (i) offer the opportunity to the participants of BENTHIS to get to know each other, (ii) familiarize with the content of the project, (iii) provide practical details about administrative matters, (iv) discuss details of the workplan, and (v) make appointments on how to organise the work. The meeting was attended by 51 participants, representing 25 partners. Seven partners (5 SME's and 2 Research institutes) were unable to attend. Due to the winter conditions in western Europe, several participants experienced a serious delay in reaching Nantes and the start of the meeting had to be postponed till 3 pm. The coordinator closed the plenary session on Thursday at 1500. Breakout group continued discussions till 1800.

The agenda of the meeting and the list of participants is given in Appendix 1 and 2, respectively. In order to stimulate the interactions among partners, the breakout groups on the Wednesday afternoon met during an excursion in Nantes.

PERSONAL INTRODUCTIONS

The programme of the meeting comprised of a personal introduction by each of the individual participants of the meeting followed by an introduction of the partner research institutes & SME's. The presentations addressed the expertise fields of the institutes and their role in BENTHIS, as well as their motivation to participate and their expectations about the gain from participation.

INFORMATION FROM THE EU

The Scientific officer of the EU (SO: dr Philippe Moguedet) explained a number of issues that partners should be aware of while conducting the project: Description of Work (DOW) is part of the contract between the EU and the partners; partners will only be paid if products are delivered in time and after favourable review by the SO. The SO needs to be informed as soon as possible about any deviation of the contract that may occur. Communication between BENTHIS and the EU is through the coordinator and the Scientific officer. The SO stressed that the reporting should be in accordance to the formats provided by the EU. Further details are given in the slides of his presentation available at the sharepoint <https://teamsites.wur.nl/sites/benthis/default.aspx>

He further explained that the EU has requested to set aside a budget for twinning activities with Australia, New Zealand and Canada. This budget (50 kEuro) is added to the management budget and is available to support BENTHIS partners to participate in for instance workshops organised outside Europe. Allocation of the budget earmarked for twinning activities will be discussed in the Steering Committee. Although no definite plans have been made yet, it has been agreed that Australia is going to organise the first twinning workshop related to fishing impacts on the benthic ecosystem in 2013. Focus of the twinning activities is to enhance scientific interaction between researchers of the different continents and to avoid duplication. A second twinning meeting will be organised in Europe in 2014. An efficient opportunity is to organise the meeting back to back with the ICES Symposium "Effects of fishing on benthic fauna and habitat: Change in ecosystem composition and functioning in response to fishing intensity, gear type and discard" that will be held in Tromsø, Norway. It was agreed that the BENTHIS coordinator will request ICES to support this side event.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Gerda Booij (project manager, IMARES) described the working procedures. Guidelines about administrative matters were given. Special attention was given to clarify the administrative requirements

for cost-statements to partners that have not been participating in EU-projects such as most of the SME's. She emphasised again the importance of meeting the deadlines for the milestones and deliverables. Any delay should be reported as soon as possible to allow the coordinator to inform the scientific officer of the EU.

WORK PACKAGES

The coordinator explained the two leg approach of BENTHIS comprising of (i) generic workpackages to develop knowledge and tools that can be applied to a broad range of fishing gears and benthic ecosystems, and (ii) case studies to develop and test innovative technology and management scenarios. WP-leaders introduced their WPs. Particular focus was given to the linkages with other WPs. Results of ongoing research were presented to illustrate the techniques and approaches to be used in BENTHIS. Case Study Task Leaders presented the details of the case studies. Discussions were mainly focussed on the relationship between work to be carried out in the generic work packages and the work to be carried out in the Case Studies.

WP1 Framework and Synthesis

This WP will prepare for the 2nd project meeting scheduled in month 9 in which decisions will be made on the workplan of the case studies. The focus of the work will be to review the key benthic ecosystem processes and review the different fisheries and the mechanisms by which fishing may affect benthic ecosystems. An inventory of the available data needed to carry out the trawling impact study will be made, starting with the design of a table to collect meta-information on relevant data sets to be provided by BENTHIS partners (action: CEFAS).

WP2 Mapping

It was agreed that the mapping task (WP2) will use habitat maps based on abiotic variables and link these with the map of fishing intensity (trawling frequency per year) of a number of different bottom trawl fisheries to provide a quantitative analysis of the current fishing impact (pressure) in different abiotic habitats. The impact on benthic ecosystems will be inferred from the relation between benthic ecosystems and abiotic habitats. The key deliverable (D2.3) is scheduled in the 1st half of the project (month 26).

In the case studies, more detailed analysis with habitat units defined in ecological terms including both abiotic as well as biotic parameters will be carried out based on the results of the ecological analysis in WP3 and WP4, and the detailed studies carried out in the Case Studies. These results will be used to update the assessment of current impact of fishing on benthic ecosystems as a final product of BENTHIS. The estimation of trawling frequencies will be hampered by the lack of information on the dimensions of the fishing gear in the official statistics. This will particularly apply to otter trawl gears. In the upcoming month, a protocol for data collection from the fishing industry will be developed. It was recognised that this activity could integrate a number of parameters required for the economic assessment and for the modelling of physical impact from fishing gears. WP5-leader and WP4.1 task leader will provide input.

WP3 Benthic ecosystem

The focus of the work in the 1st year will be to provide input to WP1 on the review of benthic ecosystem and to develop the trait based approach to ecosystem structure and function.

During the Kick-off a breakout group of WP3 and WP4 met to discuss the details of the workplan.

In relation to specific WP3 tasks the following plan for the next 12 - 14 months was noted.

Task	Description	Who	Deadline	Purpose
1	Identify and organise regional macro & mega fauna , habitat and biogeochemical sample datasets. Including info on available coupled bio-geochemical models.	All	May 2013	Should be done before workshop W1 Note: needs to be closely coordinated with WP 4 activities , especially in relation to year 2 modelling under Task 4.3
2	Identify and organise regional demersal fish stomach contents datasets.	All	May 2013	Should be done before internal workshop (W1)
3	Identify and organise regional benthic macro & mega fauna traits/function literature.	All	May 2013	Should be done to feed into WP1 (P2) and to support internal workshop (W1)
4	Establish pan European set of benthic macro & mega fauna traits and corresponding modalities (natural and fishing disturbance).	Cefas	June 2013	For discussion and agreement at internal workshop (W1)
5	Hold WP3 Internal Workshop (W1)	Cefas/All	June 2013 back to back with P2	To agree pan European table of benthic traits and organise analytical phase of work & deliver 3.1.
6	Assign traits to fish stomach data	Cefas/All	December 2013	To facilitate integration of habitat function and fish diet data for mapping.

7	Produce table of traits, functions and associated habitat types (natural and fishing disturbance)	Cefas	February 2014	Should be done before internal workshop W5 and Project Workshop W2
8	Hold W3 Internal Workshop W5	Cefas/All	March 2014, back to back with W2	To agree table of traits, functions and associated habitat types (natural and fishing disturbance). Deliver 3.2.
9	Organise WP2, WP3, WP4 project workshop W2 -	Cefas/All	March 2014 Lowestoft	To assign seabed traits and functions to habitat types for mapping purposes. Deliver 3.3
10	Production of traits and stomach content databases	Cefas	March 2014	To facilitate year 2 data analyses and model development.

WP4 Fishing impact

The focus of the work in the 1st year will be to provide input to WP1 on the review of fisheries impact required for the 2nd project meeting in month 9. During the Kick-off a breakout group of WP3 and WP4 met to discuss the details of the workplan. The task leaders and participants discussed the details on task 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5 and 4.6, and discussed some of the times. Developing the trait based approach in collaboration with WP3 is a priority. These discussion also clarified how the outputs from participants from different disciplines and institutes will lead to deliverables.

WP5 Economy.

The (socio-) economist met during the Kick-off and discussed the workplan of WP5. It was noted that in order to develop a workplan that is appropriate for each of the case studies, a meeting with the economist of the Mediterranean and Black Sea Case Study, not present at the Kick-off meeting, will be required. A preliminary workplan for the development of the framework to evaluate economic performances of innovative gears and/or management measures was agreed (task 5.1 due month 24 and led by IFREMER). The minimum data requirements to apply the comparative static analysis in case studies will be communicated to economists in the case studies in February 2013 so as to be known for the first regional stakeholder meeting. The work in task 5.3 was also discussed and the first step of the development of the investment model will start by the review of literature on investment behaviour based on an existing review and expanded to innovative technologies and real option theory . The workplan will be developed further and discussed by correspondence and at the 2nd project meeting.

WP6 Management

The WP-leader was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. A brief summary of the overall objectives and approach was presented by the coordinator. The main activities during the 1st year are focussed on the evaluation of possible management measures required as input for the 2nd project meeting (month 9).

WP7 Case Studies

Antonello Sala (Partner 14, CNR) presented the Generic fishing/seabed habitat impact assessment model developed for the assessment of the vulnerability of benthic communities and ecosystems to the adverse impact of fisheries in the identified 5 different regions of the European seas.

The regional approach will allow to closely collaborate with the fishing industry SMEs and other stakeholders to develop and assess the possibilities for mitigating the adverse impact of the current fisheries on the benthic ecosystem by technological and management innovations.

In each region, the following specific fisheries have been selected:

1. Baltic Sea (Nephrops trawl, Otter trawls for cod, Blue mussel dredge);
2. North Sea (Beam trawl, Shrimp trawl);
3. Western waters (Nephrops trawl, Scallop trawl, Otter trawl);
4. Mediterranean Sea (Otter trawl);
5. Black Sea (Bottom trawl (for target species; whiting-red mullet-turbot) and beam trawl-“*algarna*” (for target species rapa whelk).

This selection encompasses the major types of heavy bottom impacting fishing gears that will allow us to draw conclusions beyond the specifics of the case study.

The objectives which will be studied in the 5 regional European Seas are:

- To assess the current trawling impact;
- To make an inventory of the options for mitigation;
- To collaborate with the fishing industry SMEs to study the biological and economic impact of alternative fishing gears;
- To collaborate with the fishing industry SMEs and other stakeholders to explore innovative management scenario's to mitigate effects of fishing on the benthic ecosystem and quantify the ecological and economic consequences on the fishery and related industries.

Afterwards, each CS Task responsible presented the CS details and the workplan scheduled. The discussion clarified both the outputs and the deliverables expected.

WP8 Coordination and stakeholder involvement

Olavur Gregerson (Syntesa, SME01) presented the plan how to organise and structure the Regional Stakeholder Events (RSE). By following a structured approach, it will be possible to learn from the experience and obtain insights in the potential factors that may affect the uptake of technical or management innovations to reduce the impact of fisheries on the benthic ecosystem. The series of three RSEs planned for the 5-year study period of BENTHIS in the 5 different regions, provide an excellent opportunity to give insight in how differences between regions may affect the stakeholder involvement and the possibilities to mitigate trawling impacts.

It was agreed that the RSE's will be focussed on a particular sub-set of problems in a region because of the language barrier that hamper the efficient discussions among stakeholders. Stakeholders will be invited representing shipowners (fishers), technology providers, environmental NGO's, RAC's, researcher & development. The RSE's will be chaired by the Case Study Task leader. Syntesa will be on site and facilitate each session by instructing the Case Study task leader on the day prior to the RSE, and will debrief immediately after the RSE.

A list of potential stakeholders will be compiled by the Case Study Task leaders before 7 Feb 2013, as well as a list of questions / problems to be discussed at the RSE. Suggestions for input can be send to the Case Study leaders with a copy to Olavur Gregersen olavur@syntesa.fo and Adriaan.Rijnsdorp@wur.nl

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

A BENTHIS Sharepoint site has been set up which will provide as the main vehicle for internal communication. Each person contributing to the project and employed at one of the BENTHIS-partners can send a request to get access to Oscar.bos@wur.nl

The sharepoint site will offer access to the documents related to the contract (Grant Agreement, DOW, Consortium Agreement), provide updated information on forthcoming activities and meetings, provide information on milestones and deliverables, and provide a repository of products and minutes of project meetings. For each WP, a folder is available to share documents to facilitate the collaboration.

DISSEMINATION

BENTHIS website www.benthis.eu went online in December 2012 but has not yet the full set of functionalities required. Wageningen-UR will maintain the site and is currently restructuring the project websites. It is expected that the site with extended functionalities will be launched in the first weeks of February. Partners are invited to send material such as photos or videos to the coordinator.

A linked-in group <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/BENTHIS-4792096> has been made which is open to BENTHIS-participants as well as interested people not participating in the project. The linked-in group can be used to inform people about publications or news-items.

Facebook is used quite intensively by fishermen and it is suggested to include this in the dissemination strategy.

It was noted that Press releases from BENTHIS could affect other partners in the consortium. This highlight the need for some form of control over the news-items launched from the project. The coordinator will develop a proposal on the dissemination strategy to be discussed by correspondence before the next project meeting. In the meantime, partners are asked to send their press releases to the coordinator to check for possible implications and for archiving on the website.

APPENDIX 1. AGENDA OF THE KICK-OFF MEETING



Agenda for the BENTHIS Kick-off meeting Nantes, 21-24 January 2013

Venue: IFREMER, Nantes (room 5)

Address: rue de l'île d'Yeu 44311 Nantes

Local organiser: dr Pascal Laffargue (tel: +33(0)240374212, +33 (0)2.40.37.41.66 or +33 (0)6.71.22.34.41)

Sharepoint: <https://teamsites.wur.nl/sites/benthis/default.aspx>

Time	Topic	Who
Monday 21 January		
1400	Welcome and introduction	Rijnsdorp
1430	Introduction individual participants	All participants
1510	Scientific officer: information from the EU	Moguedet
1600	coffee break	
1630	Introduction partners	all partners
1800	Closing of day 1	
Tuesday 22 January		
900	Project management and administration	Booij
1030	Coffee break	
1100	Information from the EU	Moguedet
1145	Twinning and collaboration Australia, New Zealand and Canada	Moguedet
1245	Lunch break	
1400	Introduction individual work packages: WP1	Rijnsdorp
1430	WP2	Eigaard
1500	WP3	Kenny
1530	WP4	Hidding
1600	coffee break	
1630	WP5	Hamon
1700	WP6	Piet
1730	WP7	Sala
1800	Closing of day 2	

Wednesday 23 January

900	Baltic Case Study	Nielsen
930	North Sea Case Study	Polet
1000	Western waters Case Study	Laffargue
1030	Coffee break	
1100	Mediterranean Case Study	Sala
1130	Black Sea Case Study	Zengin
1200	WP8	Gregerson
1245	Lunch break	
1400	Breakout in groups to discuss workplan year 1	
1800	Closing of day 3	

Thursday 24 January

900	Workplans for tasks scheduled for year 1	
1030	Coffee break	
1100	Workplans for tasks scheduled for year 1	
1245	Lunch break	
1400	Internal communication	Rijnsdorp
1600	Coffee break	
1630	Dissemination	WP-leaders
1800	Closing of meeting	

APPENDIX 2. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS KICK OFF MEETING



Name	Institute	Country	Partner number	
Moguedet	Philiipe	EU	Belgium	EU
Booij	Gerda	DLO-IMARES	Netherlands	1
Rijnsdorp	Adriaan	DLO-IMARES	Netherlands	1
van Kooten	Tobias	DLO-IMARES	Netherlands	1
de Vos	Birgit	DLO-LEI	Netherlands	1
Hamon	Katell	DLO-LEI	Netherlands	1
Depestele	Jochen	ILVO	Belgium	2
Polet	Hans	ILVO	Belgium	2
Vanelslander	Bart	ILVO	Belgium	2
Bolam	Stefan	CEFAS	UK-England	3
Kenny	Andy	CEFAS	UK-England	3
Parker	Ruth	CEFAS	UK-England	3
Hiddink	Jan	Bangor University	UK-Wales	4
Kaiser	Mike	Bangor University	UK-Wales	4
Ivanovic	Ana	University Aberdeen	UK-Scotland	5
O'Neill	Barry	MarLab	UK-Scotland	6
Frotté	Lou	IFREMER	France	7
Guyader	Olivier	IFREMER	France	7
Brind'Amour	Anik	IFREMER	France	7
Cayocca	Florence	IFREMER	France	7
Dubois	Stanislas	IFREMER	France	7
FIFAS	Spyros	IFREMER	France	7
Laffargue	Pascal	IFREMER	France	7
Macher	Claire	IFREMER	France	7
Mahevas	Stephanie	IFREMER	France	7
Priour	Daniel	IFREMER	France	7
Rochet	Marie-Joëlle	IFREMER	France	7
Dinesen	Grete E.	DTU-Aqua	Denmark	9
Bastardie	Francois	DTU-Aqua	Denmark	9
Eigaard	Ole	DTU-Aqua	Denmark	9
Nielsen	Rasmus	DTU-Aqua	Denmark	9
Jensen	Frank	University Copenhagen	Denmark	11
Nilsson	Hans	Institute of marine Research (SLU)	Sweden	12
Breen	Mike	IMR	Norway	13
Buhl- Mortensen	Lene	IMR	Norway	13

Sala	Antonello	CNR	Italy	14
Papadopoulou	Nadia	HCMR	Greece	15
Smith	Chris	HCMR	Greece	15
Zengin	Mustafa	CFRI	Turkey	16
Gregersen	Olavur	Syntesa (SME01)	Faroer	17
Magnusson	Marine	Marine Monitoring (SME06)	Sweden	22
Rosenberg	Rutger	Marine Monitoring (SME06)	Sweden	22
Dekker	Anton	SME07	Netherlands	23
Nagel	Corrie	SME08	Netherlands	24
Tréguier	Laurent	SME09	France	25
Didelot	Yann	SME10	France	26
Paci	Nazzareno	SME12	Italy	27
Mori	Carlo	SME14	Italy	29
Malkoç	Kemal	SME15	Turkey	30
Sadıklar	Mustafa	SME16	Turkey	31
Gumus	Aysun	OMU	Turkey	33