

## Minutes of meeting executive board at ICSU Headquarter, Paris 27 March 1999

Present: Anastasios Eleftheriou (Vice-President), Jean-Pierre Féral (Secretary - Treasurer), Björn Ganning (Atlantic), Michael D. Guiry (Atlantic), Carlo H.R. Heip (President), Pierre Lasserre (MAB/Diversitas), Jack B.L. Matthews (Editor, Newsletter)

Excused: Giorgio Bernardi (Mediterranean), represented by Donato Marino, Carlos Duarte (Mediterranean), Michael Whitfield (Vice-President)

The agenda was in 10 points:

### 1.Report on activities and financial report

<b>1994</b>		Creation of MARS
Paris FR		
<b>Mars 1996</b>	CEC/MAST- EERO-	Workshop on biodiversity. An inventory of marine biodiversity research projects in the EU/EEA member states
Plymouth UK	MARS	
<b>September 1996</b> Middelburg NL	MARS- NAML	Meeting. Basis for links between European and US marine station networks>
<b>October 1996</b>	MARS	Concerted Action MARSNET is proposed to the MAST programme of the EU.
<b>September 1997</b> Sorrento IT	MARS- NAML- DIVERSITAS	Marine DIVERSITAS planning group. Creation of IMBiN: International Marine Biodiversity Network
<b>December 1997</b> Yerseke NL	ESF/EmaPS- MARS	EmaPS initiative on marine biodiversity. European action plan on marine biodiversity
<b>February 1998</b>	TMR-CNRS- MARS	Training Course on Marine Biodiversity, Banyuls-sur-Mer
<b>May 1998</b> Lisbon PT	EU-MAST	European Federation of national scientific organisations is presented.  Discussion Meeting on Infrastructure for Biodiversity Research
<b>September 1998</b> Wilhelmshaven DE	MARS- EMBS	Round Table on Biodiversity Research in Europe

CEC: Commission of the European Communities  
EERO: European Environmental Research Organisation  
EMBS = European Marine Biology Symposium  
EmaPS: European Marine and Polar Science Secretariat  
ESF: European Science Foundation  
MAST: Marine Science and Technology programme  
NAML: The National Association of Marine Laboratories (USA)  
CNRS: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (France)  
TMR = Training and Mobility for Researchers

### >Financial report

MARS is a non profit legal foundation incorporated in the Netherlands. It was decided that the constitution and by-laws will be distributed among the members of the executive.

Herman Hummel (Yerseke) was co-opted as the executive secretary. He will send a balanced list of incomes and expenditures (in English), within 2 or 3 weeks. After that, he will send all the bank movements on a regular time basis to J.-P. Féral.

The present financial position is as following. There are two bank accounts, one in Dutch Gulden (4791.71 Guldens), the other in Euros (19622.08 Euros).

As the treasurer, J.-P. Féral will rapidly receive an authorisation to sign.

## **2. Roles and objectives of MARS**

-5th RTD Framework Program 1999-2002 (FP5)

It is recommended to respond to the first call for proposals . Among other things, the Yerseke meeting next April will prepare the establishment of a list of flagship sites in Europe for the next 10-15 years. It will also prepare proposals for the 5th RTD FP.

J.-P. Féral will scan the 5th RTD and see what can be profitable for MARS. The information will be transmitted to the MARS members.

The present situation is:

Decision No 182/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 December 1998 concerning the fifth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (1998 to 2002)

<http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/src/ec-en.htm>  
<http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/src/ec-en-st.htm>

For the marine realm ...

Theme 1 QUALITY OF LIFE AND MANAGEMENT OF LIVING RESOURCES (LIFE QUALITY)

<http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/src/t-1.htm>

Key actions

<http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/src/ec-en4.htm#key-t-1>

- (i) Food, nutrition and health
- (v) Sustainable agriculture, fisheries and forestry, including integrated development of rural areas

Theme 4 ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (EESD)

<http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/src/t-4.htm>

Key actions

<http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/src/ec-en7.htm#key-t-4>

- (i) Sustainable management and quality of water
- (ii) Global change, climate and biodiversity
- (iii) Sustainable marine ecosystems

National contact points

<http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/src/ncps.htm>

### **Marsnet**

This proposal for a virtual marine laboratory and the choices for a long term monitoring will be made again.

### **-Teaching activity (continuation of the TMR practical training course on biodiversity)**

As already done by [NAML](#), all the "open" teaching activities in the Marine Stations should be on the WWW site of MARS. All the members should send their annual schedules. The web site will continue to be maintained by the Netherlands Institute of Ecology.

One joined European TMR / CNRS continuing education practical training course have been organised in Banyuls-sur-mer by J.-P. Féral in March 1998 : Concepts and methods for studying Marine Biodiversity, from gene to ecosystem. A report is on the WWW site of the Laboratoire Arago (<http://www.obs-banyuls.fr/web/departs/feral/biolpop/TMR98 .htm>). Another one will soon be published by TMR : (<http://www.cordis.lu/tmr/src/talking.htm#reports>).

Two European courses are proposed for organisation by MARS in the coming years:

- \*Molecular Ecology (person in charge D. Marino, Naples)
- \*Ecological modelling (person in charge: C. Heip, Yerseke)

P. Lasserre informed that it is now possible to invite people from countries on the "pre-accession" list. He underlined the political importance of facilitating communication with the Eastern and the Mediterranean countries.

## **Others**

There is a need of a list-server for MARS. J.-P. Féral will follow that point.

There is a need to publish the MARS newsletter on a regular time basis (twice a year). J. Matthews asked for contributions by the middle of the month. A deadline was decided on Tuesday, 16 March. The next newsletter will be published in Spring 1999.

## **3. Co-optation of Members of the Executive Committee**

The following individuals are co-opted:

Jack Matthews, Oban, Scotland: responsible for publications

Herman Hummel, executive secretary, Netherlands Institute of Ecology

Richard Warwick, Plymouth Marine Laboratory

Mark Costello, Dublin, Ireland A German scientist to be approached

## **4. Contribution of the marine laboratories (present contribution is 500 Euros)**

The present two categories Full member and Associated member are maintained. The annual contribution for 1999 will still be 500 Euros for full members. Associated members from countries with currency restrictions can be exempted from the contribution. No fees are due for 1998, for laboratories which have paid 1996 and 1997. Some government laboratories (as in the UK) are not allowed to pay membership contributions and should be charged expenses.

A clear and complete listing of the member laboratories and of status as to their payment will be made by H. Hummel

## **5. Opening of the network (full members, associated members)**

Membership will be updated and new laboratories will be approached for new membership by J.-P. Féral.

## **6. Co-operation with US, Japanese and other networks: how to interlink?**

A request has been formulated by Diversitas to MARS to take the initiative of interlinking with similar networks in the world. A good contact with NAML has already been established (see point 1). J. Matthews already represented MARS at two NAML's meeting in 1995.

The co-operation with NAML should be reinforced. Networks from Japan and Australia should also invited to join. The MARS General Meeting in 2000 should be used for the purpose.

## **7. The EU/EMaPS Biodiversity workshop in Yerseke**

C. Heip summarizes the workshop to be held in Yerseke on 22-24 April 1999, which is on invitation only. The main goal of the workshop is to prepare the grounds for a network of flagship sites that should serve as the backbone for European marine biodiversity research for the next 10-15 years. This network, with a connection to the International Biodiversity Observation Year IBOY in 2001, should be inaugurated at the MARS general meeting.

MARS will invite and pay for a US scientist to attend the workshop. The position paper (pdf version) : A European Science Plan on Marine Biodiversity is available on the WWW at : <http://www.esf.org/emaps/publications.htm>

## **8. Possibility of grants for short training stays in the marine labs**

Depending on available finances, a few training fellowships (ab. 1000 EURO each) especially for young scientists from MARS member laboratories to learn techniques in another MARS lab, will become available as from 1999. The conditions for obtaining these grants will be published on the web page.

## **9. General meeting of MARS in Paris or Venice (UNESCO)**

The general meeting of MARS will be hosted by UNESCO, in Paris or Venice in March or April 2000. The total number of participants will be 60 to 70. US and Asian representatives will be invited. Plenaries on issues of biodiversity will be invited.

The executive committee members are asked to think on the content of the meeting and send their ideas as soon as possible. The executive committee will be the organising committee.

## **10. Participation in IBOY (International Biodiversity Observation Year)**

IBOY is an initiative of the Diversitas programme (see Diversitas web site)

J.-P. Féral summarised his proposal to IBOY: Biological diversity in the sea, a set of sustainable indicators: a first step for a long-term monitoring programme

The objective of this proposal is to identify a set of indicators for marine biodiversity. The project falls in the topics and scientific goals of IBOY. It fulfills a public relation function, i.e. to draw attention of the general public to the biodiversity issue. This PR function should be developed by involving schools and the media. The expected products of the project are sets of sustainable indicators of marine biodiversity. Beyond 2001 it should be the basis for a long term monitoring network

Leader(s) : MARS / INBiM

Other Participants : Marine stations, fishery labs, littoral universities, high schools

Organism, habitat or system focus : Coastal area / structuring species such as coralline algae (Maerl) and marine phanerogames (seagrasses), easily collected species such as intertidal algae, snails, crabs etc.

Countries or regions involved : Europe (or targeted areas such as Mediterranean and Baltic) and possible connection with NAML (IMBiN), with a special search for biodiversity hot spots.

The steps in the programme could be:

- Inventorying the state of the art of knowledge on sustainable indicators in the different chosen regions and the existing competencies (in particular taxonomic), means of sampling, needs and proposition of a list of biotopes and possible indicators, according to pre-set criteria
  - A regional meeting which will make the summary of the results of the workshops and will propose the applicable standardised methods
  - Synthesis and proposals
- To establish a homogeneous classification of the marine biotopes in each region
  - To quickly determine the sites and the indicators according to the results of the conference
  - To determine the standards of sampling, standardised production of data, availability of the data for the public
  - To establish a cartography of the selected sites and reserves (GIS)
- General meeting, depending of the scale of the monitored area (Europe, World wide Ocean...)

Idem as above regional meeting

- Synthesis and proposal

Idem as above synthesis

- Publication of the results for IBOY
- Planning of a general monitoring

The executive committee decided to initiate a feasibility study to inventory what laboratories are willing to participate and which approach should be used in order to a result within one year and a half.

## 11. Publications

Jack Matthews discussed the outline of the newsletter. It will be published twice a year. The possibility to publish a MARS folder will be investigated.

Banyuls-sur-mer,  
March 1999,3rd

Jean-Pierre Féral  
Secretary of the executive committee