

Towards a user-friendly guide for marine education and training

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The search for marine educational and training opportunities is rather challenging. Currently, the predominant source of information is the internet, yet this information is scattered across several websites making such inquires highly time-consuming. Additionally, the success of each of these training initiatives strongly depends on the advertising and networking skills developed by each hosting entity individually. In response to this shortfall, the Marine@UGent consortium (including Ghent University and Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ)) is setting up a portal that aims to bring together available marine trainings at a European scale. This portal shall work as a single access point for both training seekers and training providers. Furthermore, it will enable the identification of training shortages in certain fields by connecting training offers with training demands. This initiative is one of the prospect goals of the European Marine Biological Resource Centre (EMBRC), a distributed Research Infrastructure (RI), of which Belgium is an associate partner through the Marine@Ugent Consortium. EMBRC aspires to interconnect the European marine research communities by upgrading and harmonizing their current infrastructures and services.

A first step in the creation of such a training portal service is the setup of a comprehensive database of existing marine training initiatives for each country, ranging from master and doctoral programmes, to expert trainings and specialist courses. At present, a prototype work is being tested. This prototype database includes data from all Flemish higher education institutes (both universities and university colleges). Three initial criteria were used for retrieving a first set of initiatives for this database: the training is marine orientated, the language of instruction is in English, and the programme or the host institution is accredited. In the future the portal shall be able to expand gradually its content with more training initiatives by including more countries and by broadening the scope to relevant transferable skill trainings as well as non-accredited initiatives (for instance, research institutes and industries). The portal aims to (1) become a central advertising point for existing and new trainings, (2) offer practical services to trainees and training organizers (application and registration), (3) advertise training grants, and (4) establish marine dedicated E-learning initiatives.

More information on:

- Prototype of the training portal: www.embrc.ugent.be
- General information about EMBRC: www.embrc.eu