



Acronym: COLUMBUS

Title: *Monitoring, Managing and Transferring Marine and Maritime*

Knowledge for Sustainable Blue Growth

Grant agreement n° 652690

COLUMBUS 1st Annual Conference Minutes

March 2016



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 652690. This output reflects the views only of the author(s), and the European Union cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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1. Introduction

On Wednesday 2nd March 2016, 57 attendees were welcomed to the 1st COLUMBUS Annual Conference, held in Brussels, Belgium¹. Representing 11 countries and 36 organisations, including all of COLUMBUS' partner organisations and eight of the Expert Advisory Board, the Conference was internally-focussed² and was intended as a reflective, stimulating day of interactive discussions among participants³. The Conference comprised keynote presentations, a Pecha Kucha session and two panel discussions⁴.

Keynote Presentations

The Conference was opened by Ricardo Serrão Santos MEP and Ms Sigi Gruber (Head of the Marine Unit for DG Research & Innovation) who spoke of the importance of Blue Growth and how COLUMBUS might contribute towards its achievement. Following this, four keynote presentations were provided to set the scene.

Georgia Bayliss-Brown (AquaTT) introduced Knowledge Transfer as a concept and methodology, and provided background on the importance of achieving measureable impact from funded research. This presentation was followed by different Knowledge Transfer perspectives provided by three members of the COLUMBUS External Advisory Board:

Beverley Sherbon (Researchfish) presented the Medical Research Council's initiative, which was subsequently developed into Researchfish®, that collects information on research outputs, outcomes and impacts and is being implemented by an increasing number of research councils and funding agencies globally beyond the medical sector;

Iain Shepherd (MARCOM Defence) provided examples of science-industry engagement coming out of "knowledge communities", Southampton Marine and Maritime Institute (SMMI), Marine Robotics Innovation Centre (MARSIC) and the Centre for Defence Enterprise (CDE); and,

Simon Gerrard (SMMI) reflected on his experiences in holding an industrial liaison role and presented important lessons learned whilst working across the science-industry boundary.

Pecha Kucha Session

Eleven initiatives were presented during the Pecha Kucha-style session, where each presenter was given five minutes and a maximum of four slides to publicise their activities, and explain how it was relevant to COLUMBUS. This session covered:

- AtlantOS (<https://www.atlantos-h2020.eu/>)
- The Compendium for Coast and Sea (<http://www.compendiumcoastandsea.be/en>)

¹ Annex 1: Venue and logistics

² In Year 2 and 3 of the project, the COLUMBUS Conference will expand and be open to a much wider stakeholder constituency.

³ Annex 2: Participant list

⁴ Annex 3: Agenda



- DEVOTES (<http://www.devotes-project.eu/>)
- ECMAR (<http://www.ecmar.eu/>)
- EMODnet (<http://www.emodnet.eu/>)
- EOOS (<http://www.eoos-ocean.eu/>)
- Euromarine (<http://www.euromarineconsortium.eu/>)
- JRC (<http://mcc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>)
- EurOcean_KG: Marine Knowledge Gate (<http://www.kg.eurocean.org/>)
- Sea for Society (<http://seaforsociety.eu/np4/home.html>)
- STAGES (<http://www.stagesproject.eu/>)

Panel Discussions

Those EAB members who were available in the afternoon of Wednesday 2 March 2016 sat on one of two panel discussions, covering legacy and impact, and these were chaired by COLUMBUS Work Package Leaders, Rosa Fernandez (WP5 – CETMAR) and Simon Powell (WP6 – MSE) respectively.

The first Panel dealt with the increasingly important question “What is impact?”

The expert panel was comprised of the following members of the COLUMBUS External Advisory Group:

- Jan Reid Hole, Nord University
- Simon Gerrard, Southampton Marine and Maritime Institute
- Beverley Sherbon, Researchfish

The objective of this session was to determine what impact is for different sectors and how COLUMBUS can therefore adapt its Knowledge Transfer activities for each sector. To build this discussion, panellists were posed the question: “What is impact for your sector and can you provide examples of where a research project has had an impact on your sector. Why was it successful? Why have others failed?”

Following the Panel responses, the floor was opened to all participants to respond to answers provided or to offer an opinion on the open question “How can COLUMBUS be effective in achieving impact within each of the stakeholder groups: industry, policy, science and society?”

The second panel considered changes to the Research System to facilitate impact - “Breaking barriers to Knowledge Transfer to achieve COLUMBUS legacy”.

The expert panel was comprised of the following members of the COLUMBUS External Advisory Group:

- Ángel Borja, AZTI Tecnalia
- Virginie Hart, UNEP
- Jan-Stefan Fritz, KDM
- Iain Shepherd MBE, MARCOM Defence



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The objective of this session was to determine how the research funding system should evolve to generate more impact. To build this discussion, panellists were posed the question: “What does and does not work in the research system (i.e. what do you see the key barriers are) with regard to creating impact and added-value from research?”

Again, following the Panel responses, the floor was opened to all participants to respond to answers provided or to offer an opinion on the open question “How can the research funding system, evolve to ensure it generates its intended impacts; and what can COLUMBUS do to influence this?”

2. Key Points

Lively and enthusiastic discussions followed both the Keynote presentations in the morning of the Annual Conference as well as during the afternoon participatory panel sessions. Key points and learnings from the day have been grouped together to simplify and structure the overall themes discussed, as follows:

Achieving Impact

- Economic growth should be viewed in complement with sustainable and mediatory management of our Seas and Ocean.
- Sharing research data opens more doors than it does not.
- COLUMBUS has a noble aim to preserve and recover the health of our oceans.
- Impact can only be maximised if knowledge is transferred.
- How can marine economy models work when not all knowledge is available?
- Impact can only be assured if innovations are fostered and scientific excellence is progressed through the right channels, and not left to sit “in drawers”.
- We have a huge responsibility to ensure that society reaps the benefit of marine research, following significant investment of public funds.
- Tacit Knowledge is equally as important as it influences change, but it is difficult to quantify and transfer.
- Funded research consortia often believe that publications and workshops are the main results from their work – but is it? We need to think deeper – consider what is within the publications and link it to impact factors.
- Communicating results so that they can be immediately understood by a non-scientist is becoming increasingly important.
- There needs to be a feedback loop, where funding agencies benefit from providing evidence of impact and investment; but also where researchers are recognised for their efforts, beyond the number of scientific publications etc. to their name.
- We need to consider how to quantify the proportionate impact of a Knowledge Output that is the result of numerous funding awards and project efforts.
- Impact should be considered early on in funded projects/proposals, in many cases SMES are involved later in the process.



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- We also need to beware of prioritising research with a minimum Technical Readiness Level (TRL) – otherwise in a few years the basic research for the next wave of technologies won't have taken place.
- It is important to note that research, policy and industry are working on different timelines which can subsequently affect when impact can occur.
- Funding agencies could consider improved systems to coordinate the outputs of funded projects, including data platforms and existing initiatives, to ensure that investment is efficient.

Knowledge Transfer Processes

- Collaboration and communication is key to quality collection of knowledge.
- Recognising why transfer activities fail is as important as knowing why they work.
- Knowledge Transfer processes should be user-friendly and interoperable (link up with other data collection and impact measuring initiatives).
- Early-career scientists need to become familiar with the landscape in which their research sits, and the potential impact of their work. For example, those PhD students who have been asked to use Researchfish are beginning to understand the value of impact and their work.
- The Research Community need to realise that they cannot assume that knowledge is taken up if it is not disseminated correctly.
- The Research Community need to understand the differences between terminology, such as end users and beneficiaries, to perform successful Knowledge Transfer. Furthermore, stakeholders and researchers need to work together to use the same language, and understand each other's cultures.
- Networks and participatory groups are successful but they cost time and money. Society needs to be engaged with on a peer to peer level - using an intelligent voice.
- The Research Community need to be more interdisciplinary, across the sciences, and determine what their vision is for the ocean, to be able to work together to reach it.
- Building a Knowledge Transfer community can increase the likelihood of serendipity, providing a platform where business and science can discuss and share ideas, and develop collaborations together.
- SMEs and businesses do not often approach scientists, and perhaps this relationship should be promoted.
- We could consider that gaps in knowledge or stakeholder mapping may exist because they have no value rather than that they have been accidentally omitted.
- Benefits of engagement and contribution by the research community must be clear.

Overcoming Challenges

- A methodology for impact assessment and on-going data collection should be in place.



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- Sharing terminology between sectors is essential - key scientific challenges (e.g. climate and environment or trade and transport) might need to be framed as business topics, such as safety, risk and regulation, or vessel design and performance.
- Strategic partnerships can be initiated from an early stage of a researcher’s career, as trust develops over time.
- Researchers without a hunger for commercialisation - or a wide range of other transfer activities - will need assistance, or the help of a broker, to reach full potential for science that has a possible application.
- In some cases, a project cannot progress further due to lack of funding opportunities – are the funding programmes looking at the longevity of funded projects and identifying where there should be more funding put in place?
- People’s ambition and capacity to engage should be taken into account when interacting with them.

COLUMBUS Evolution

- It is important that COLUMBUS remains interdisciplinary and that we can “see” over and across the individual marine and maritime sectors within the Competence Nodes to innovatively determine where knowledge can be applied.
- We need to develop case studies that we can publicise to illustrate the successes of the COLUMBUS methodology, both to funding agencies and researchers.
- It was stated that value chains are rarely linear, and therefore there are concerns that COLUMBUS might be trying to systematise the Knowledge Transfer process when it depends on trust and timing, as well as needs. In response, others stated that the methodology is simply aligning the ingredients for success, e.g. end user engagement, research results that are ready to be transformed, coherence of funding and policy mechanisms, accessibility and networking.

COLUMBUS recognises the Annual Conference as a forum for contextual Knowledge Transfer Brainstorming and Discussions – there is a need to rationalise our approach and philosophy so as it evolves the project should be able to clearly articulate its approach. All of the discussion points, ideas and statements will be taken on board by the COLUMBUS partners.

3. Action Points

- Work Packages Leaders of WP2 Support and WP6 Knowledge Transfer to discuss impact measurement with Beverley Sherbon (Researchfish).
- All presentations will be made public through the COLUMBUS website (www.columbusproject.eu).
- Collect feedback on the 1st Annual Conference and ask for ideas for next year.
- All consortium to share ideas and case studies with Knowledge Fellows.



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Annex 1: Venue and Logistics

Meeting Venue

The 1st COLUMBUS Annual Conference was held on Wednesday 2nd March 2016 from 10am until 4.30pm, with registration opening at 9.30am, at the Radisson Blu Royal Hotel, Wolvengracht 47, 1000 Brussel, Belgium.

Logistics

The dates for the meeting were determined using a Doodle poll to ensure that all COLUMBUS partners could be represented. The meeting venue and project social activities were organised by AquaTT who also provided a logistics document in advance of the meeting providing accommodation options, venue information and maps, as well as travel and tourist information.

Annex 2: Participant List

Pale Blue – COLUMBUS Partners

Dark Blue – COLUMBUS EAB members

Green – External Participants

	Name	Organisation	Signature
1.	Sofia Alexiou	NOC - NERC	sofia.alexiou@noc.ac.uk
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Annex 3: Agenda

1st COLUMBUS Annual Conference - Realising the Impact of Marine and Maritime Research through

Session 2: Learning from Each Other (Pecha Kucha) (12:15 – 13:10)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AtlantOS Engagement and Communication
<i>Jan-Stefan Fritz, KDM</i> ▪ Compendium for Coast & Sea
<i>Hans Pirlet, VLIZ</i> ▪ DEVOTES
<i>Ángel Borja, AZTI Tecnalia</i> ▪ European Council for Maritime Applied R&D
<i>Alina Standnitskaia, ECMAR</i> ▪ EMODnet
<i>Jan-Bart Calewaert, Seascope Consultants</i> ▪ EOOS
<i>Dina Eparkina, EuroGOOS</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Euromarine
<i>Catherine Boyen, CNRS</i> ▪ JRC and Marine Competence Centre
<i>Nicolas Hoepffer, JRC</i> ▪ Marine Knowledge Gate
<i>Cristina Costa, EurOcean</i> ▪ Sea for Society
<i>Manuel Cira, Nausicaá</i> ▪ STAGES
<i>Marisa Fernandez, CETMAR</i> |
|---|--|

13:10 – 14:00 *Lunch*

Session 3: PANEL DISCUSSION 1 - What is Impact? (14:00 – 15:00)

Question to the panel:

“What is impact for your sector and can you provide examples of where a research project has had an impact on your sector. Why was it successful? Why have others failed?”

Group discussion:

“How can COLUMBUS be effective in achieving impact within each of the stakeholder groups?”

15:00 – 15:15 *Coffee & Networking*

Session 4: PANEL DISCUSSION 2 - How to Break Barriers to Knowledge Transfer to Achieve COLUMBUS Legacy? (15:15-16:15)

Question to the panel:

“What does and does not work in the research system, i.e. what do you see the key barriers are, with regard to creating impact and added-value from research?”

Group discussion:

“How can the research funding system evolve to ensure it generates its intended impacts; and what can COLUMBUS do to influence this?”

16:15 **Closing Remarks**

16:30 **Close of Meeting**

19:30 **Social Dinner: *Scheltema, Rue des Dominicains 7***

