

## European Marine Biological Resource Centre (EMBRC)

### Workshop on the “**Practical steps for facilitating the use of Marine Biological Resources for commercial R&D in the context of the new ABS legal framework**”

Marine Biological Resources (**MBRs**) possess a great potential to promote regional economic development and employment through **blue biotechnology**, and thus to contribute to growth and cohesion. The European Marine Biological Resource Centre (EMBRC) is a European Research Infrastructure dedicated to providing services for fundamental and applied marine biology and ecology research. The EMBRC, through the coordination of some of the world’s most important **Marine Biobanks**, has as one of its main services the collection and provision of MBRs. Biobanks **provide MBRs** contributing to the search of unique marine genes, bioactives and biomaterials with potential for scientific discovery and commercial development. In order to achieve its full Marine Biobanking capacity, the EMBRC, with the support received from the INTERREG Atlantic Area program, has launched the EBB project. This project will set the **standard for common operation of EMBRC marine biobanking facilities** distributed in various European countries, and will implement the necessary mechanisms to comply with recent European and national regulations on access and utilization of genetic resources (**ABS EU Regulation No 511/2014 and the different national laws** for its implementation at the member state’s level). The EBB project will propose practical long-term transnational coordination of **European marine biobanks** facilitating sustainable access to marine biodiversity, its associated data, and extractable products and contributing to **ensure regulatory compliance and legal certainty for industry and academic users** of marine genetic resources.

The **ABS mechanism**, established by the **Convention on Biological Diversity** and its Nagoya Protocol, aims to create incentives for countries providing genetic resources to conserve and protect their biodiversity by ensuring that any benefits generated by the utilization of those genetic resources will be fairly shared back with the providing country. Enforceable for any research activity that requires the utilization of genetic resources, the ABS mechanism raises **concerns about the addition of barriers to biotechnology research and development**. The different EBB project actions related to ABS focus on regulatory compliance and on contributing to minimize regulatory risks for end-users of marine genetic resources. By bringing together end-users (researchers from industry and academia), Culture Collections and ABS Competent National Authorities (CNAs) to work together on **defined use-cases** (proposed by industrial users), the **EMBRC will promote best practices and guidelines** for its marine biobanks and it will contribute to **an effective implementation** of national and European ABS laws while bringing legal certainty to end-users of marine biological resources.

The EMBRC Biobank, with common tools and procedures for the ex-situ maintenance of MBRs, will **facilitate the access to a common registry of marine biospecimens** and increase the diversity and quality of MBRs **made available to user communities**. Its integrated approach is

designed to be able to propose compliant marine genetic resources and solutions to users wishing to explore their biomaterial, thereby promoting sustainable blue biotechnological exploitation of MBRs.

**Objectives of the workshop “Practical steps for facilitating the use of Marine Biological Resources for commercial R&D in the context of the new ABS legal framework” (work package 6 of EBB project)**

The aim of the workshop to take place in Brest on the 16th of May is to connect companies, marine culture collections/biobanks and ABS national contact points. The knowledge of companies on the ABS framework will be analyzed, together with the future needs on Access to marine biological resources. From this workshop flagship use-cases proposed by the companies will be selected and beta-tested for them by the EBB in the light of the ABS framework.

**Culture collections and Biobanks participating in the EBB project:**

ECIMAT Marine Station of the University of Vigo, **Spain** (Galicia);  
CIIMAR, Centro Interdisciplinar de Investigação Marinha e Ambiental, **Portugal** (Norte);  
Plentzia Marine Station, University of the Basque Country, **Spain** (Basque Country);  
University of Algarve, **Portugal**, (Algarve);  
Station Biologique Roscoff (CNRS – Sorbonne Université), **France** (Bretagne);  
Marbank, Havforskningsinstituttet, **Norway** ;  
Marine Biological Association, **UK** (Devon);  
University of Galway, **Ireland**

**Industrial Clusters participating in the EBB project:**

Fórum Oceano-Associação da Economia do Mar **Portugal** (Norte);  
Pole Mer Bretagne Atlantique, **France**, (Bretagne);  
Asoc. Nacional-Centro Técn.-Nacional Conservación Productos Pesca, **Spain**, (Galicia);  
Univ. of Strathclyde-Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre (IBioIC), **UK**, (SW Scotland)