

Work Packages

WP1. Kick-off meeting and first workshop

The objective of this task was the organization of the kick-off meeting and the first workshop. The workshop is dedicated to drawing together not only partners but also external parties such as existing biodiversity initiatives to introduce these initiatives to the PLANKTON*NET concept and resources and to work out a plan for collaboration. This will be necessary to avoid overlap and duplication of work efforts. First discussions of possible data standards for achieving interoperability between PLANKTON*NET nodes and external resources were held (e.g. Dublin Core, Darwin Core).

WP2. Design and implementation of modified PLANKTON*NET sites

The objective is to change the emphasis of the existing PLANKTON*NET sites from pure archival of data (as at present) to data analysis, initially for taxonomic data but with a long-term vision of tools for the analysis of existing numeric data in the partner institutes. This means that the PLANKTON*NET structure, which at present is dedicated mainly to the presentation of image material, with limited means for searching records, e.g. on the basis of geographic origin will have to be modified to accommodate new data types in future.

WP3. Populating the PLANKTON*NET sites

This phase of the project will see the addition of a large volume of quality controlled image material, taxonomic descriptions, geographic information etc to the PLANKTON*NET Network of online databases. Images will be derived from image collections already held by partners (e.g. harmful algae at the University of Lisbon and coccolithophore images from the University of Caen and Natural History Museum, London) and images to be taken from culture collections. Increasingly however, external collaborators will be encouraged to place data within one of the PLANKTON*NET nodes. Taxonomic descriptions will be entered into the biopedia database system which is mapped to the taxonomic names in PLANKTON*NET, so that descriptions are displayed whenever the record for a particular species is retrieved within PLANKTON*NET.

WP4. Set up Roscoff and AWI nodes and design of service provider gateway

Existing individual nodes will be updated to the latest version of the MICRO*SCOPE software, that all PLANKTON*NET nodes are based on. However this is only the first step in PLANKTON*NET development. A large number of additional modules will also be designed as entirely new tools. Individual PLANKTON*NET nodes will then be networked. To be able to harvest information from all nodes, these will be made OAI-PMH compliant (Open Archives initiative - Protocol for Metadata harvesting). A service provider (portal) will be created which can aggregate taxonomic information from all PLANKTON*NET nodes together with existing plankton-related content (Biopedia, publication-type of repositories, etc). Standard mapping services (google-earth based) will be provided.

WP6. Addition of data to networked sites

Addition of all remaining available data to the database in a co-ordinated fashion, including image collections provided by external collaborators. The data will be added to the networked sites using the newly designed PLANKTON*NET tools. This will provide a further test of the workflows in the network and allows a realistic assessment of the time needed for addition of new data sets of given sizes, which is an important factor in making recommendations to stakeholders. Taxonomic

WP7. Production of a technical strategy document

The main objective of the project as a whole is the creation of a resource, that, while technically innovative will be easy and inexpensive to use, but most importantly will exist on a long-term basis. While core technical tasks for completing the PLANKTON*NET project will have been accomplished by month 22, a strategy for maintaining the site in the long-term will have to be finalized. This concerns mainly three factors: 1. Funding, 2. Establishment of a system of quality control and 3. Maintenance of the technical site integrity (continued functioning of existing sites, software updates etc.) The mechanisms for achieving these objectives in the long-term while keeping intact the PLANKTON*NET concept will be laid out in the strategy document. The document will be made available to all interested parties and will serve as a basis for further discussions with existing biodiversity initiatives and the scientific community in general.

WP8. Workshop 2 and final meeting

This will be held at the Station Biologique de Roscoff early in 2008