ASSEMBLE-Plus: promoting access to the EMBRC marine stations and laboratories

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ASSEMBLE Plus is a project to stimulate European fundamental and applied research excellence in marine biology and ecology, thereby improving our knowledge and technology-base for the European bioeconomy, policy shaping and education. The project brings together 32 marine stations and institutes with modern research infrastructures and track-records of unique service provision, from 14 European and two associated countries, under the leadership of the European Marine Biological Resource Centre (EMBRC). For the Belgian node of EMBRC, VLIZ is a partner to the project, with Ghent University as a linked third party.

The sum of the actions envisaged in ASSEMBLE Plus, including Access, Networking and Research will ultimately increase the number of users of marine biological stations and shape novel strategic development perspectives of the partners, to be based on effective integration and efficient complementarities, resulting in a key contribution to their long-term sustainability.

One of the actions to complete this goal is to offer free-of-charge transnational access (TA) to research infrastructures towards the research community. Over the lifetime of the project, 7 calls will be launched to provide access to a total of 32 marine stations in 16 countries. The stations provide access to a high diversity of marine environments; from the high Arctic and Antarctic to the tropics and the mid-Atlantic ridge. Within mainland Europe, access is provided to the Mediterranean, the Atlantic and the Baltic Sea. Habitats comprise estuaries, mega-tidal seas, cold-water coral reefs, brackish seas and sea ice communities, near-shore deep sea, and volcanic seeps.

The TA-providing stations have modern research laboratories and a wide array of specialized research facilities to support internal and external users. Several of these also have technological backup of nearby university institutions. Facilities include sampling and field access, biochemical and biological analysis, maintenance and culture of organisms, microscopy, molecular biology and bioinformatics. Biological resources encompass culture collections and bio-specimen banks.

More information about the project and the specific timing for these transnational access calls can be found at http://www.assembleplus.eu/

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