

# Moving towards EPOS ERIC: Integration of the legal, governance and financial framework

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EPOS – the European Plate Observing System – is the ESFRI infrastructure serving the need of the solid Earth science community at large. The EPOS mission is to create a single sustainable, and distributed infrastructure that integrates the diverse European Research Infrastructures (RI) for solid Earth science under a common framework. Thematic Core Services (TCS) and Integrated Core Services (Central Hub, ICS-C and Distributed, ICS-D) are key elements, together with NRIs (National Research Infrastructures), in the EPOS architecture.

After having successfully passed the first stage, EPOS is now submitting Step 2 for the implementation of an ERIC legal framework (European Research Infrastructure Consortium). The statutory seat of EPOS will be in Rome, Italy, while the ICS-C will be jointly operated by UK, France and Denmark. The TCS planned so far cover: seismology, near-fault observatories, GNSS data and products, volcano observations, satellite data, geomagnetic observations, anthropogenic hazards, geological information modelling, multiscale laboratories and geo-energy test beds for low carbon energy.

In the ERIC process, EPOS and all its services must achieve sustainability from a legal, governance, financial, and technical point of view, as well as full harmonization with national infrastructure roadmaps.

As EPOS is a distributed infrastructure, the TCSs have to be linked to the future EPOS ERIC from legal and governance perspectives. For this purpose the TCSs are now finalizing their internal governance and relations with the scientific community and the data providers.

The next step is now to draft service contracts between EPOS ERIC and the service providers, as this will be the mechanism regulating the provision of validated services. The first validation round, covering a subset of services, will be completed in the autumn of 2018.

A common EPOS data policy has also been endorsed, based on the general principles of Open Access and paying careful attention to licensing issues, quality control, and intellectual property rights, which shall apply to the data, data products, software and services (DDSS) accessible through EPOS.

EPOS has also an approved business plan relying on cash contributions by the ERIC members as well as in-kind contributions provided at national level. Globally, these contributions will cover the costs for running the EPOS ERIC executive office, the ICS, and the services associated to the TCS. For the latter, a detailed service cost-book is in place, which covers the services linked to the DDSS but also services associated to governance, coordination, outreach, and trans-national access.

In the EPOS multi-disciplinary environment, harmonization and integration are required at different levels and with a variety of different stakeholders; to this purpose, a Service Coordination Board (SCB) and technical Harmonization Groups (HGs) were established to develop the EPOS metadata standards with the EPOS Integrated

Central Services, and to harmonize data and product standards with other projects at European and international level, including e.g. ENVRI+, EUDAT and EarthCube (US).