

Welcome to the first edition of *MESH update* - a newsletter to help the MESH Project engage with our project stakeholders and to keep you up to date with progress on the project. Thanks to all of you who have joined our mailing list, however if you have received this newsletter in error then we must apologise; please send an email to [info@searchmesh.net](mailto:info@searchmesh.net) and we will remove you from our distribution list.

As this is the first edition of the newsletter we will introduce the team and remind you of the main project actions. The MESH project consists of twelve partners from five countries.



MESH team aboard the Marine Institute's  
RV Celtic Explorer © MI 2005

- Alterra, The Netherlands
- British Geological Survey (BGS), UK
- Centre for Environment and Fisheries Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), UK
- Department for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), Northern Ireland
- English Nature, UK
- Envision, UK
- Ifremer, France
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), UK (Lead Partner)
- Marine Institute, Ireland
- National Museums and Galleries of Wales (NMGW), UK
- Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO), The Netherlands
- University of Gent (UGENT), Belgium

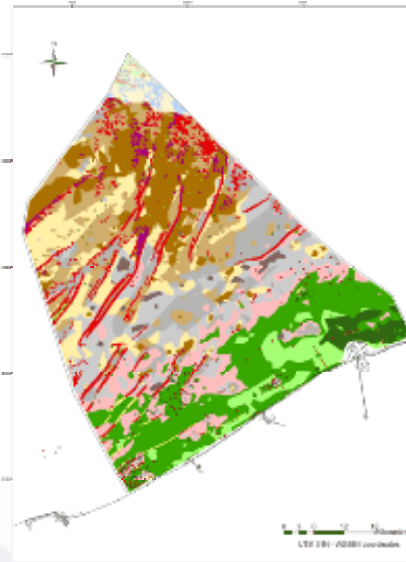
There are six technical actions: [Generating Maps](#), [Setting Standards](#), [Field Studies](#), [Modelling](#), [Using Maps](#) and [Communicating Results](#).

The project receives funding from the INTERREG IIB programme for [NW Europe](#) (NWE), so our project submits detailed activity reports every six months; these reports will form the core of our newsletters. We are currently in phase 4 of the project and so this Newsletter is based on our Phase 3 report; Phases 1 & 2 covered the preparation and project start-up periods.

Phase 3 (November 2004-April 2005 inclusive) was a period where the Partners concentrated on the detailed work programme, and established plans to take maximum advantage of the opportunity to work transnationally with colleagues from organisations in other EU member states. Achieving the aim of generating habitat maps for the MESH study area is only possible with the support of the wider marine mapping community throughout the NWE area, and beyond. Over the six months of phase 3, the MESH Projects key achievements were:

- A first version of our [catalogue of mapping studies](#) throughout the NWE area was published via the MESH website to allow users to search for studies in their area, by type of data or the type of technique used to collect the information.
- Partners shared their knowledge and experience of data management to develop a standard format for the MESH project to exchange its data within the Partnership, and with the wider mapping community.
- We published a [Review of Standards and Protocols](#) for many of the surveying and sampling techniques used in mapping intertidal and subtidal habitats. This review is a significant achievement since it required staff from all Partners to work together to produce the final document. The project hosted an international workshop in Keyworth, UK, attended by 40 delegates from within and outside the project, to contribute to the draft text. This meeting created an excellent opportunity for transnational co-operation and led to many important recommendations for the *Review*, and the work of Action 2 in general.
- Project Partners attended an international meeting of the ICES Working Group on Marine Habitat Mapping (WGMHM) where the *Review* received excellent constructive feedback from the wider marine mapping community of Europe and North America.

- Our work on *Modelling* aims to fill in the gaps between mapping studies with the predicted distribution of seabed habitats modelled from physical environmental data. At a Technical Workshop in November 2004, Partners agreed to apply the marine landscape approach to the whole MESH area that will, if successful, produce a significant product for the MESH project. Applying this approach will require extensive collaboration between MESH partners to transfer knowledge and skills across the project. Such collaboration started in phase 3 between UK and Belgium to allow the University of Gent to produce the first landscape map of Belgian waters.
- Partners pooled their knowledge of relevant stakeholders to build and populate a *Contacts Database* for the project.
- The project achieved some notable successes in terms of publishing articles – for example in the NWE Newsletter and [ICES Newsletter](#), and presenting papers and posters at international conferences. Six Partners (from four countries) attended the ICES WGMHM to promote the project and gain important feedback from the wider international mapping community. Such international co-operation makes a significant contribution to validating the technical actions of the MESH project, and improving transnational collaboration between the project partners.



Modelled seabed habitats, Belgian waters © UGENT 2005

Can you help? We are making good progress towards building our [catalogue](#) of existing seabed habitat surveys, but searching out data is proving very time consuming. If you feel you can contribute any extra information then please email us at [metadata@searchmesh.net](mailto:metadata@searchmesh.net).

Coming soon - the project will launch its prototype version of an Interactive Mapping website in January 2006 showing habitat maps of the seabed of NW Europe.

Interested? If you would like to get in touch or if you have anything you would like to contribute, please send an email to [info@searchmesh.net](mailto:info@searchmesh.net). Most project information is available on the [MESH Website](#). If you have any colleagues who might be interested in receiving future editions of this newsletter then please ask them to visit the website and sign up for [updates](#).

We hope this MESH update has been of interest to you; we'd like feedback if you have any to give.

Best regards,

*The MESH team*  
[info@searchmesh.net](mailto:info@searchmesh.net)



MESH website © MESH 2005

- The [MESH website](#) was launched in autumn 2004, with an extranet for the Partnership to share its information added in spring 2005. This facility aids the co-operation within the Partnership by enabling the 'private' sharing of data and information.

