



Integrated Arctic Observation System

Research and Innovation Action under EC Horizon2020
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Project coordinator:
Nansen Environmental and Remote Sensing Center, Norway

Deliverable 8.1

Project intranet tool

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Version	DATE	CHANGE RECORDS	LEAD AUTHOR
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Approval	Date:	Sign.
	27.02.2017	Stein Sandven, coordinator

USED PERSON-MONTHS FOR THIS DELIVERABLE					
No	Beneficiary	PM	No	Beneficiary	PM
1	NERSC	1	24	Terradue	
2	UiB		25	GINR	
3	IMR		26	UNEXE	
4	MISU		27	NIVA	
5	AWI		28	CNRS	
6	IOPAN		29	U Helsinki	
7	DTU		30	GFZ	
8	AU		31	ARMINE	
9	GEUS		32	IGPAN	
10	FMI		33	U SLASKI	
11	UNIS		34	BSC	
12	NORDECO		35	DNV GL	
13	SMHI		36	RIHMI-WDC	
14	USFD		37	NIERSC	
15	NUIM		38	WHOI	
16	IFREMER		39	SIO	
17	MPG		40	UAF	
18	EUROGOOS		41	U Laval	
19	EUROCEAN		42	ONC	
20	UPM		43	NMEFC	
21	UB		44	RADI	
22	UHAM		45	KOPRI	
23	NORUT		46	NIPR	
			47	PRIC	

DISSEMINATION LEVEL		
PU	Public, fully open	
CO	Confidential, restricted under conditions set out in Model Grant Agreement	X
CI	Classified, information as referred to in Commission Decision 2001/844/EC	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The intranet tool for the administrative management of the project uses the EMDESK system, which is designed to manage H2020 projects. It contains contractual and consortium documents, templates for the legal, financial and administrative management, and reports to the EC. The web-based intranet is set up with the support of the NERSC IT department.

Coordination of internal communication within the project: The PM-team will ensure optimal internal communication through a dedicated internal website, virtual meetings (e.g. Skype/Webex) and physical meetings. The internal website will be set up for exchange of information and documents among the partners.

EMDESK help page

<http://www.emdesk.com/en/>

Login page

<https://emdesk.eu>

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Overview and brief evaluation of EMDESK.....	2
3. Previous and next actions.....	5

1. Introduction

A project of the size of INTAROS requires an intranet tool for the administrative management, which is designed to manage H2020 projects. The system selected for this task is EMDESK. In addition a dedicated internal website has been set up for exchange of information and documents among the partners.

In selecting the intranet tool the criteria were:

- Easy to learn
- Easy and intuitive to use
- Compatible with the EC Participant Portal
- Flexible
- Easy to navigate
- Easy to switch between high level overview and detailed level
- Accommodate delivery reports and all relevant documents and content
- Sustainable
- Support available

2. Overview and brief evaluation of EMDESK

Here we provide a short evaluation summary following each of the criteria in Section 1.

Easy to learn

EMDESK is easy to learn because it is built up in a intuitive and logical way. Once logged in, the menu titles are intuitive and obvious for a person with some experience in project management. By clicking any of them one is guided further down the hierarchy and the chances to do any harm are very few.

To support the user there are help pages available at emdesk.eu providing a hierarchical help menu besides a search option. The pages are well organized and also provides an introduction to various aspects, organized in a hierarchy so the visitor can easily go to the desired topic or subtopic.

Frequent use of short videos for the most used topics are effective help tools.

The help starting page is
<http://www.emdesk.com/en/>

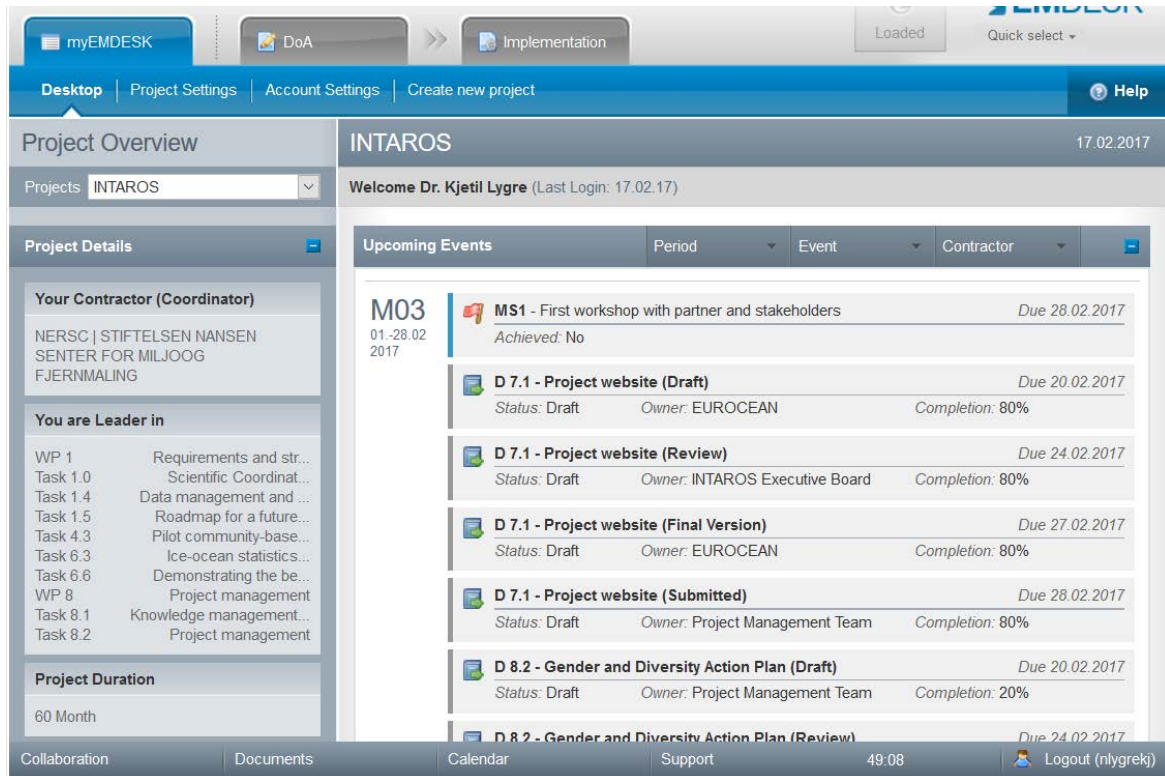
Easy and intuitive to use

As demonstrated by the front panel, EMDESK provides only three sub-menus at the top level. Under each main menu there are maximum 4 sub-menus, again containing typically 3, max 9, items. This small number of total items makes it easy to learn all main items by heart if desired.

There is also a secondary menu at the bottom of the panel.

The *myEMDESK* main menu contains mainly general settings items on information that are rarely changed. The *DoA* contains – literally – the DoA, Description of Action.

Implementation is where all consecutive information is monitored and entered as the project progresses.



The lower menu provides

- *Collaboration*, containing all contact info on internal and external collaborators, including mailing lists and groups;
- *Documents* where all documents generated in EMDESK (e.g. deliverables) can be viewed by all, and other documents can be put there like grant agreement, templates and guidelines.
- *Calendar* displays all information on events relevant to the user logged in, typically assignments generated in EMDESK (controlled by coordinator) and other events like meetings, workshops generated by any user. The calendar information is also displayed in the *Upcoming events* window by default as shown in the example in Fig 1

Compatible with the EC Participant Portal

A minor drawback with EMDESK is that it does not talk directly with the Participant Portal – to our knowledge no system at the market does. However, an excellent feature of EMDESK is that it is tailored for reporting in the portal. All outputs are generated in a format that is aligned to the requirements in the portal, i.e. for financial reports, deliverables reports, periodic and interim reports, publications, dissemination items etc. The information has to be copy-pasted by the user – mainly the project manager – into the portal.

Flexible

The only drawback worth mentioning is that the tailoring approach prohibits flexibility in some aspects. Especially the differentiation of user categories with different rights (reading, editing etc.) is not possible. This requires either the limitation of users per contractor, or thorough

instructions and follow up by the project management and experienced users. The only differentiation is between coordinator and contractor rights, in which the user with coordinator rights has extended options to monitor and edit various information. The most important examples include viewing of budget and resource use information of any contractor and the ability to set and reset control points (in time) for various stages of the delivery cycle of reports and task durations. There is a trade-off between flexibility and other properties as easiness and compatibility.

The Documents and Collaboration menus, though, are fully flexible in that a document hierarchy and group differentiation can be made as fine grained (or not) as the user desires (normally constrained by the coordinator).

Easy to navigate

The maximum of three hierarchical levels and limitation of items per menu eases navigation. In addition, the panels are clean and logically designed with a minimum of redundant information.

Easy to switch between high level overview and detailed level

Due to the low complexity, the highest level of the menu is always visible at the top of the screen, making it simple to jump back from a lowest level position. And vice versa, if the user is uncertain where to find the items looked for, even searching by random will soon lead to the desired location: The chance of getting lost or exhausted is practically non-existent.

Accommodate delivery reports and all relevant documents and content

As the system is tailored for upload in the Participant Portal, it handles all the relevant items (delivery reports, publications etc.). For work documents and exchange of various background material (existing publications, presentations, drafts, notes, ...) one may use the Documents area. However, here one is dependent on establishing routines and will be limited by the user access issues mentioned under 'Flexibility'. In INTAROS we have decided to use the internal web-page and WP-internal web- or ftp sites for such purposes.

Sustainable

EMDESK has been at the market for several years and is used by several tens of large EU projects. This is an indication that it will continue to be a leading provider of project administrative tools. Interaction with the support staff indicates that they are open to suggestions by users. EMDESK also do customized developments for charge.

INTAROS with 40+ partners seems to be easy to handle by the system. One can foresee that when approaching 100 in another project and beyond (that is not very likely) the lists and look-up tables of contractors will become unmanageable at some point, and some redesign by grouping of partners may become necessary.

Support available

The experience so far, both during the trial period and the first 3 months of operation, is that the response seldom exceeds one day and the replies are clear and in a compassionate manner.

Response time and technical properties

It is a fully web-based application, with its pros and cons as for any such design. For most tasks the response time is practically instantaneous. In cases where long texts / a lot of information is sent or are entered, or when typically the background structure is updated (e.g. new links are made) the response time can be noticeable, from several seconds to minute. This is very rare and is of no significant hindrance for the user. It can be dependent on the local net connection.

Cost

Compared to the nearest competitor the purchase cost was significantly lower. The operational costs will be in the measure of overhead time used. This is very difficult to estimate in advance and depends on many parameters also independent of EMDESK design.

Other

Worth noting is that EMDESK also provides a (free of cost) feature that helps putting together new H2020 proposals. It is recommended that the consortium utilizes this option if opting for a follow-up project succeeding INTAROS.

It is easily accessed from the main menu myEMDESK: *Create new project*, or for new users from the help page <http://www.emdesk.com/en/>

3. Previous and next actions

During the two months prior to INTAROS start-up the coordinator NERSC was collecting information on several candidates for an intranet and in contact with a subset of these. The information found on the net, mainly introductory / tutorial videos, was scanned through. For the most attractive ones trial users were initiated to have full hands on possibilities. Interviews with users of various systems were also conducted.

Quite soon EMDESK was singled out as the most attractive one nearly all criteria from both administrative and scientific users point of view. Several detailed inquiries by email to the provider including some Skype sessions involving NERSC scientific, administrative, financial- and IT personnel were undertaken.

The next step was a preliminary in-house process to settle and get acquainted with the routines for reporting in EMDESK.

In December 2016 during a meeting with the Workpackage leaders users were initiated and an hour long hands-on type of session was held to introduce the system as a first iteration to the wp-leaders of the utilities for administering the WPs. By recommendation for the coordination team it was decided the WP-leaders also should have coordinator rights in EMDESK in order to have the full overview of the resource use of any partner, among other things. They were urged to use it with care, as now they may overwrite any items of any partner.

At the kick-off meeting in January 2017 two identical sessions on EMDESK for a contractor user were held by the project manager, the head of finance and the financial controller. Here the main features were briefly repeated, with emphasis on the reporting of person months due in May 2017. At the meeting also regulations and obligations regarding financial reporting was reviewed.

Further webinars for various user groups will be announced and held by the management staff, stipulated as:

April 2017	Reporting of Resources.	For financial/ administrative personnel
Sept 2017	Reporting of deliverables, publications etc	For scientific / admin.
Oct 2017	Interim reporting	For financial / admin. Personnel
Febr 2018	Repeat reporting on deliverables etc. (Many due deliverables in M18)	For scientific / admin.
April 2018	Periodic report	For all personnel categories

The project management staff is available any time to reply to inquiries on the reporting and EMDESK.

Further information on its features and guidelines can be found at <http://www.emdesk.com/en/>

and in INTAROS EMDESK under the document menu.

----- END of DOCUMENT-----



INTAROS

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Project partners:

