

EUROPEAN RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ANALYSIS AND EXPERIMENTATION ON ECOSYSTEMS



Newsletter 7

ISSUE SEVEN

Dear Reader,

Already February 2015 - with so much done and so much to do!

As you know, the AnaEE Preparatory Phase consortium has been working since November 2012 to lay the groundwork for a long-term infrastructure focused on analysis and experimentation on ecosystems.

This infrastructure responds to a gap identified by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) when it placed AnaEE on its roadmap of European research infrastructures in 2010.

AnaEE is currently the only research infrastructure that bridges the gap between food production, biodiversity, sustainability and climate change. In so doing, it provides Europe's scientists with the tools they need to understand how the continent's

ecosystems respond to global changes.

We were proud, therefore, to have much to contribute to the latest ESFRI assessment questionnaire which aimed to judge how far infrastructures had come since they first joined the roadmap.

We now have a much clearer idea as a project consortium of the future legal, governance and funding structure that we will adopt, and have also moved along with work on data, access, pricing and innovation.

At the same time, we continue to aim to listen to the widest range of stakeholders possible. This means being present at all major conferences and meetings on scientific and policy issues.

We will notably be present at the upcoming Climate Smart Agriculture conference in Montpellier (16-18 March, 2015), and will be

jointly organising a parallel session with Prof. Pete Smith of the University of Aberdeen at the July 2015 conference on 'Our Common Future Under Climate Change' in Paris.

AnaEE is also invited to present at a Science Europe workshop in Bonn (18-19 February, 2015) and an upcoming workshop in Frauenchiemsee, Bavaria on 16-17 April 2015, on "Soil – An Essential Resource".

We also signed a cooperation agreement with America's National Ecological Observatory Network recently and are negotiating a similar agreement with the Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network in Australia. We continue to engage with all our stakeholders as we aim to build a strong European infrastructure.

Kind regards,

Abad Chabbi

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ITALY, AnaEE AND SCIENCE: AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CNR'S FRANCESCO LORETO

Francesco Loreto

Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche - CNR



Why is AnaEE such a key research infrastructure for Italy and the CNR?

Our country and CNR in particular has a long experience in managing research infrastructures.

AnaEE offers an unique opportunity to integrate our infrastructures to study terrestrial and aquatic agro-ecosystems with the available European network

This fits coherently with the implementation of the ESFRI roadmap.

This is indeed an ambitious goal.

It requires harmonisation of procedures, standardization of methods among EU member states and funding agencies.

It also needs a complex governance.

CNR is happy to participate in this challenging adventure.

AnaEE aims to further structure the scientific community to better respond to the grand challenges we all face as researchers.

What more needs to be done?

Even if the grand and most urgent challenges are clear (food, energy, health and climate / environment) there are many ways to cope with them.

As scientists, we must fully understand that solutions that may address one of those

challenges may also exacerbate others.

The necessary intensification in agriculture may create additional problems to the environment and possibly to human health.

We must agree that good solutions can only be found in the integration of the objective and by an coherent strategy to address all the challenges in a coordinated and synergic manner.

But one thing is clear.

This problem cannot be addressed simply by reinforcing and improving European research infrastructures.

While improvement of our existing infrastructures is necessary, reaching shared solutions to our global challenges needs more.



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INTERVIEW

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It also needs coordination on shared viewpoints, and a strong scientific focus.

How does AnaEE fit with CNR's key strategic priorities?

What related activities is CNR involved in that respond to the key challenges of food security, climate change and environmental sustainability?

The Italian National Research Council is the largest research organisation in the country.

CNR has a large range of priorities.

As far as the Department for Biology, Agriculture and Food is concerned, we have the ambitious goal to better align Italian research to that of the most advanced countries both in Europe and overseas.

And for this we need human resources and funding, of course.

However, we also need the possibility to access a shared and coordinated infrastructure in Europe.

AnaEE can potentially open infrastructural facilities to trans-national access.

This can ensure for our scientists that they can take advantage of

state of the art instrumentation and experimental systems.

I think this benefit is valuable for other countries and other organisations, too.

We can all do more in science, simply creating better synergies.

And AnaEE may provide such an environment.

CNR directly and indirectly manages many platforms that fit the criteria of AnaEE's ongoing Call for Expression of Interest.

Why, in your view, should these platforms be part of AnaEE?

The choice of the infrastructures that will contribute to the next Expression of Interest Call is the result of a complex interaction with the major stakeholders.

CNR works closely with the Fondazione Edmund Mach (FEM), which represents Italy in the AnaEE Preparatory Phase.

CNR and FEM share the responsibility to discuss and develop a common strategy in Italy.

The Italian Focal point of AnaEE is a CNR scientist, Franco Miglietta.

Franco recently presented ESFRI priorities to his colleagues and major scientific societies dealing

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NEWS UK

In the UK, the main focus has been on the Call for Expression of Interest. Tremendous work has been done raising awareness and engaging a significant number of funding organisations across the UK, from different sectors and operating under different governments.

The system is complex, hence finalising the response requires several rounds of consultations and meetings.

NEWS Finland

The Finnish response to the Call for Expression of Interest has been massive, with over 30 proposed platforms from all over the country. The National Focal Point's goal will now be to liaise with public bodies to analyse which platforms fit with national priorities and also AnaEE's criteria.

NEWS Estonia

In Estonia, there will be several proposed platforms covering a wide range of ecosystems.

NEWS Czech Republic

The Czech response to the Call will also be strong, with eight platforms planned.

NEWS Norway

In Norway, there will be several platforms.

NEWS Israel

In Israel, AnaEE will have several proposed platforms. The list will be finalised in February.

INTERVIEW

(Cont'd from page 3)

with Agricultural and Forest research in Italy.

The choice of Italian platforms is the result of a serious discussion and of a number of internal expressions of interest.

We believe that AnaEE, and with this European research, will benefit from some of the unique facilities that Italy hosts..

And this is a good reason, I think, to be part of AnaEE.

AnaEE can bring much to Italy, but we believe that Italy can also contribute a great deal to AnaEE and Europe's scientists at large.

What does Italy need that it does not yet have in terms of local and national infrastructures in ecosystem science and climate change?

Italy has reduced its infrastructure investments over the past decade.

In the past, CNR was a key player for the national infrastructure policy in science.

CNR was annually funding numerous infrastructure upgrades and new acquisitions.

There is an urgent need to return to that situation.

We must re-establish a periodic funding source for infrastructure development.

Without this, it will be difficult to give infrastructure the necessary focus for Italy to truly be a leader.

Of course science relies largely on men and women with good ideas and proper skills.

However, we also need up-to-date instrumentation and equipment.

It is only when this combination is suitably achieved that excellent results are warranted.

AnaEE, ICOS and GEO can not operate in vacuum, but must rather cooperate with other infrastructures. How do you see the added value of such cooperation and what should be its focus?

I already mentioned the fact that the solution to the great challenges of our times require integrated approaches.

I think this is a key thing to underline to all of our national stakeholders and funding bodies, not only in Italy, but in Europe at large.

This means that environmental, agricultural, energy and health issues of our times are inextricably linked.

We cannot deal with one single scientific issue or problem in a vacuum.

This is why CNR is so strongly involved in efforts like European research infrastructure clusters.

We definitely understand that there is a serious need to harmonise objectives of the different areas of science and research.

Without this, we will continue to have fragmented approaches that do not respond to the grand challenges.

And the integration between earth and food science is one of the most critical issue of our times, in science.

AnaEE can help respond to that - but it must do it hand in hand with ICOS and other environmental and food infrastructures, both within the new ENVRI^{PLUS} cluster and beyond.

What, in your view, does AnaEE need to do to be a success in the years to come?

The infrastructure will require an excellent governance and an ambitious goal.

But it is critical that the scientists leading the preparatory phase find a way to involve more and more national shareholders.

We must enter into the political agendas of relevant ministries.

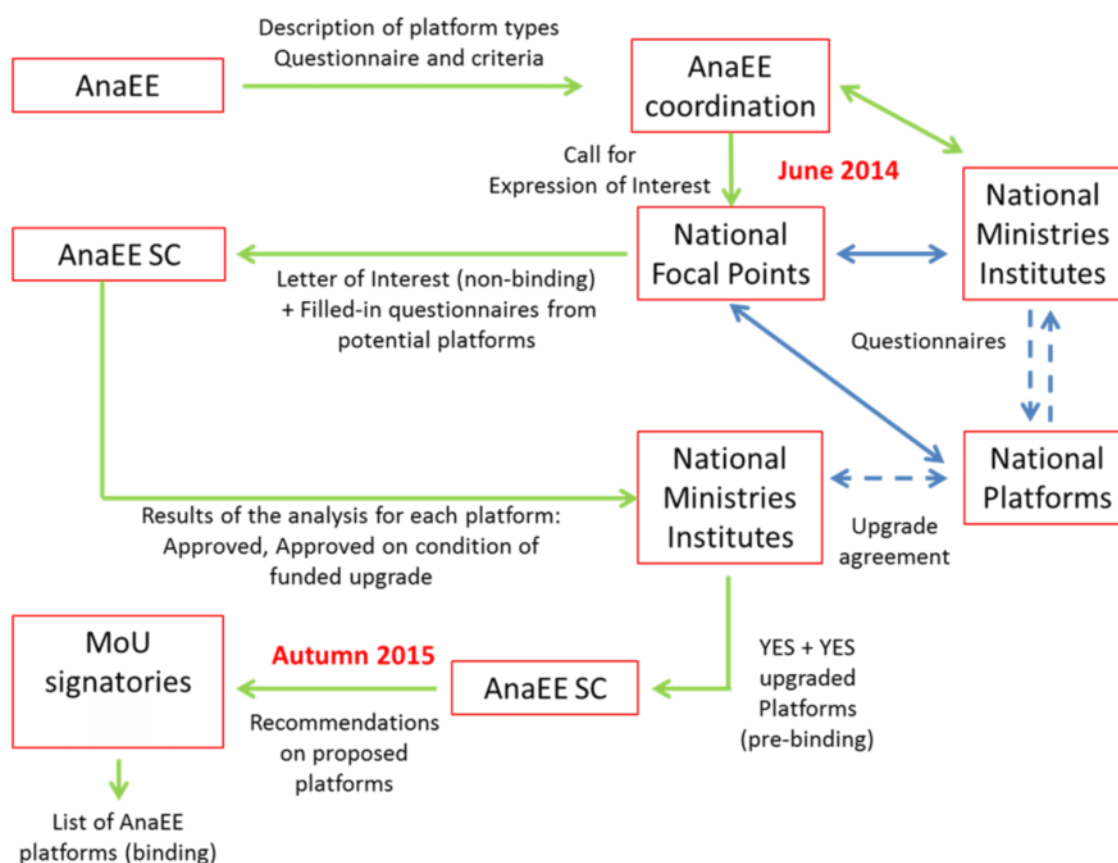
Each country is still very different, in its organisational principles, of course. Such diversity should not be ignored in the preparatory phase of AnaEE.

It is important that politicians of the different countries start talking together to bring up AnaEE in their political agenda.

AnaEE should not only be a priority for scientists in Europe - we also need strong and unified political and understanding and support at the highest level to make this infrastructure a true success!

AnaEE CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST: ANALYSIS AND CONSULTATION PHASE

STEPS TOWARDS THE INTEGRATION OF NATIONAL PLATFORMS INTO AnaEE



AnaEE can only succeed if its distributed platforms are both of the highest quality and covering the widest possible range of ecosystem types, pressures and needs of the scientific community.

Since mid-2014, platform owners and managers have had a chance to liaise with National Focal Points in 12 countries and submit proposals for their sites and platforms to join AnaEE (names and contact details of Focal Points on the AnaEE website).

This has been based on a set of adapted questionnaires and criteria that marry inclusiveness and the need for high quality.

We have now reached the end of the submission phase.

National Focal Points will have until the end of February to draw up a list of agreed-upon platforms following input from all relevant policy and funding bodies.

AnaEE's Steering Committee will then analyse all of these platforms

and produce a list of recommendations for consultation with national ministries and funding agencies.

This will lead to a finalised list of AnaEE platforms for relevant countries in the autumn of 2015. However, we are still open to growing AnaEE beyond our current countries involved.

If you own or manage a platform that you think is a good fit for AnaEE, please contact us as soon as possible.

COMMENT FROM AnaEE: 2015



2015 has now well and truly begun - and we are now moving into the home stretch when it comes to AnaEE's Pre-paratory Phase.

The end of April 2016 will see our PP project come to a close. Between now and then, we have much work to do - but we happily have much to build on.

AnaEE must have a strong and well-defined governance, funding models and a scientific and administrative architecture that will allow it to move through the construction phase and into implementation by 2018.

On the governance front, we have made substantial progress in 2014.

We are all now in agreement that AnaEE will form a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) in the future, and have clearly defined the functions of the Hub and Service Centres.

The hosting of the Hub and Centres will be decided upon by a transparent and inclusive procedure to be outlined later in the year.

This has been accompanied by work on funding models. We released our draft funding plan last year, and this is now feeding into work on a business case and subsequently a business plan.

Ensuring all parties are clear both on benefits and on costs of joining AnaEE is essential if we are to grow beyond the countries currently involved. We aim, therefore, to move forward with work on this front in 2015.

Alongside this, we are now entering the second stage of our Call for Expression of Interest for AnaEE Platforms.

Now that Platform Owners and Platform Managers in all currently involved countries have had several months to respond to the Call via their National Focal Points, we are now moving towards the analysis phase.

This means that National Focal Points will consult with their national and local funding bodies and administrations to finalise a list of platforms in each country by the end of February 2015.

The AnaEE Steering Committee will then analyse these platform proposals in terms of scientific merit but also financial sustainability and a wide range of other criteria.

We hope, therefore, to have a first list of platforms agreed upon both at a national level and by AnaEE's European consortium by the end of autumn 2015.

With this in mind, and as we begin to plan out not only a permanent governance and funding structure but also a temporary one for 2016-2018 (our construction phase), we still have much to do.

Add to this vital work on data and access policies, pricing, intellectual property, innovation, technology transfer and foresight, and education and training, and it is clear that we need the input from all of our stakeholders as soon as possible.

We will soon be announcing the date and programme of our 2015 AnaEE Stakeholder Meeting. We hope to see you all there so we can continue building this European infrastructure together.

NEWS *Italy*

The construction of an Italian node via the ongoing Call for Expression of Interest is coming along smoothly.

Coordinated by Italian National Focal Point Franco Miglietta (CNR), it is clear that there will be sites from north to south, covering a wide range of ecosystems and pressures.

NEWS *France*

AnaEE continues to work towards building a national node in France.

France's National Node will be based on the existing AnaEE France national project, but we hope to go beyond that and include additional sites.

The list of proposed sites will number over 30, of which over 20 *in natura*, from INRA, CNRS, CIRAD and several other research bodies, as well as universities.

NEWS *Belgium*

In Flanders, several platforms will be proposed by the universities of Antwerp and Hasselt. In Wallonia, depending on funding decisions, there will be one or more platforms also proposed.

NEWS *Denmark*

In Denmark, there are 12 proposed platforms from three universities (Copenhagen, Aarhus and DTU). 3 of these are *in vitro*, and the rest are *in natura*.

RECENT NEWS AND UPCOMING DEVELOPMENTS

ANAEE COORDINATOR TO PRESENT ON "SOIL – AN ESSENTIAL RESOURCE", IN FRAUENCHIEMSEE, BAVARIA, 16-17 APR 2015

The International Expert Group on Earth System Preservation (IESP) has invited AnaEE Coordinator Abad Chabbi to speak on "Soil – An Essential Resource" at an upcoming workshop in Frauenchiemsee, Bavaria on 16-17 April 2015. The workshop is organised with the Bavarian Ministry for Environment. Dr. Chabbi will be covering infrastructures in particular, focusing on AnaEE experimentation and the link to soil security.

CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE, MONTPELLIER, 16-18 MAR 2015

AnaEE will be present at the Science Conference on Climate-Smart Agriculture, hosted in Montpellier on March 16-18 2015. This conference will bring together a very wide range of scientists and policymakers.

SCIENCE EUROPE WORKSHOP, BONN, 18-19 FEB 2015

AnaEE Coordinator Abad Chabbi has been invited by the German Research Foundation (DFG) to give a presentation at the Science Europe Workshop on "Research Infrastructures at the academia-industry interface: the role of European networks". The workshop will bring together funders, managers and operators of facilities to investigate the following questions: Can research infrastructures at the interface between academia and industry be used more efficiently and effectively? What are the barriers? What can be improved? And how can the networking of these research infrastructures help?

WORKSHOP ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND AGRICULTURE, BRUSSELS, 10-11 FEB 2015

AnaEE Coordinator Abad Chabbi was present at the Workshop on Climate Change and Agriculture, organised by the European Commission's DG Agriculture and Rural Development, held at Management Centre Europe, where he participated in a high-level expert group alongside other international officials and scientists.

PRESENTATION ON ANAEE, CERGY-PONTOISE, 11 FEB 2015

AnaEE Communication/Lobbying Officer Evan O'Connell met with students from the European Projects Master's Programme at the University of Cergy-Pontoise, near Paris. He gave a class on AnaEE and European research infrastructure projects as well as guidance on future careers in European projects.

FOR MORE
INFORMATION
ON ANAEE

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This newsletter was drafted by Evan O'Connell and Abad Chabbi (INRA) with input from the entire AnaEE consortium.

External input was provided by Francesco Loreto of Italy's Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR).

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