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JERICO-S3 DELIVERABLE

Joint European Research Infrastructure for Coastal Observatories
Science, Services, Sustainability

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Table of Content

Executive Summary **4**

1. Introduction **5**
1.1. Layout of JERICO 5
1.2. Objectives 5

2. Governance of JERICO **6**
2.1. Decision Level 8
2.2. Executive level 8
2.3. Operational level 9
2.4. External advisory bodies 10

3. Organisation of the Research Infrastructure **10**
3.1. Central Management Office 11
3.2. Coastal observatory system of systems 11
3.3. e-JERICO 12

4. JERICO legal entity **12**

5. Conclusions **15**

6. Annexes and References **16**

Executive Summary

The aim of WP9 is to prepare specific recommendations for JERICO, so that it is developed as a coherent, efficient, and above all, sustainable Distributed Research Infrastructure (DRI). This sustainability is to be ensured by a comprehensive user engagement strategy, a sound business plan, a coherent scientific structure and goal, and a clear and efficient governance scheme. The aim of the present deliverable D9.4 "Proposed organisation, structure, & long-term governance" is two-fold, as two separate processes are covered, in addition to a description of JERICO's structure.

The first topic covers the different possibilities envisioned to adopt a legal status for JERICO, in the short and long-term. The issue of the legal status to be adopted is an important process to undertake, because JERICO needs to appear as a single legal entity as soon as possible beyond the end of JERICO-S3, comprising as many partner institutions or countries as possible, in order to best represent the coastal domain in Europe. It is planned for JERICO to temporarily adopt a French 'Association Loi 1901' legal status, which is both relatively easy, cheap and fast to establish. In the future, JERICO may adopt another, presumably European, legal status (*e.g.* ERIC status).

The second topic is concerned with the envisioned governance scheme for JERICO. This is a crucial process because a clear governance scheme is necessary for JERICO to successfully enter the European Strategic Forum for Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) Roadmap 2026. As an ambitious Distributed Research Infrastructure of a pan-European scale, specific organisational challenges are to be tackled to guarantee a sustainable and adaptable Research Infrastructure. In particular, JERICO will need to keep a simple and manageable governance scheme while accommodating numerous countries and partner institutions. An Assembly of Members will hold the decisional power, and a Director General leading a Central Management Office will ensure the good execution of the DRI's daily management and operation. Three advisory bodies are planned: the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) and the JERICO User Committee (JUC, supplemented indirectly by the JERICO User Forum - JUF). These will be instrumental in advising the DRI's decision-makers, so as to steer JERICO towards the optimal direction.

1. Introduction

1.1. Layout of JERICO

The scope of the future JERICO is to improve the benefit of Ocean Observing Systems for science and society, focusing on European coastal areas, which are complex topics at a crossroad between other environments managed by other Research Infrastructures (RIs).

Given the predicted growth of the Blue Economy sector, and the current importance of the coastal environment for both economy and society, developing a better understanding of coastal areas appears to be more and more paramount. To do so, a holistic approach coupling physics, chemistry and biology is needed. Such multidisciplinarity is also required to better upscale data into models, ultimately facilitating the work of decision-making bodies concerned with coasts.

The ambition of JERICO is to foster such multidisciplinarity in Europe, in order to provide the necessary Products and Services (P&S) to stakeholders and users. JERICO aims to be a Distributed Research Infrastructure (DRI), comprising a governance scheme that coordinates the observation activities carried out in sea regions around Europe, by their surrounding littoral countries: it is thus a centralised organisation with distributed operations. The sheer scope of JERICO in terms of number of partners, thematic fields covered, and number of platforms included calls for a seamless and efficient governance scheme. This is especially true considering the upcoming 2025 ESFRI application: JERICO will need to show that it is able to efficiently manage the elements gathered so far under its umbrella, so as to obtain political and subsequent financial commitments from countries.

1.2. Objectives

The purpose of this deliverable is to clarify an optimised governance structure and organisation that shall be set up for the RI, by establishing and consolidating general governance principles. JERICO's ambition and added value lie in the provision of different types of P&S, answering requirements of different kinds of users and stakeholders. JERICO provides access, be it physical, virtual or remote, to a range of different resources. Each category of service is managed by a specific Service Office. These services, focused on the coastal area, represent a major added value for the scientific community and other stakeholders of the coastal ocean, not least private actors of the Blue Economy and public authorities in charge of coastal management.

JERICO will build upon already existing national RIs to capitalise on past investments and in order to build an adapted governance scheme. JERICO will rely on the strong scientific achievements of the 12-year old JERICO community and benefit from their long term experience and expertise. Most of the JERICO partners are directly involved in the operation of their national RI. It would be natural that these partners would indirectly or directly contribute to the operation and further development of JERICO.

In section 1, governance principles for the short-term of JERICO will be detailed, defining entities wielding decision-making power, executive power and operational responsibilities. Long-term adaptations of the governance scheme are also discussed. It is to be outlined that a clear emphasis is put on a simple and adaptable structure, that will be able both to perform its mission (delivering services of high added-value) and to accommodate new

conditions, such as integrating new countries as they join the RI. In a second section, the different components of JERICO as a DRI are presented. In the last section, different models of legal entities that are considered for the long-term sustainability of JERICO as a ESFRI Landmark, are succinctly described.

Because JERICO is arguably large and complex, a cost-effective management structure as well as legally binding commitments from partners will be needed, so that JERICO's activities can be sustainable.

2. Governance of JERICO

JERICO is a DRI aiming to cover most European coastal areas. As a pan-european coastal observatory, it encompasses both many physical facilities, and a virtual facility enabling the discovery, access and use of coastal data and other related resources. By 2024, JERICO already includes more than 600 physical facilities spread in 17 countries, with contributions from more than 40 institutes or agencies: this adequately support the implementation of the JERICO's science case, that benefits from an appropriate representativeness of all coastal regions, around Europe, from the Baltic to the Black sea. Managing such a complex and large system of systems may be challenging.

To ensure JERICO's capacity to operationally provide its P&S, **a formal and fit-for-purpose governance scheme is required, which will allow JERICO to operate smoothly in the years to come, and facilitate the work on maturingJERICO towards a fully operational RI.. A convincing governance model is a prerequisite for entering the ESFRI roadmap (in 2026).**

Governance has been a recurrent topic addressed by the Nation Committee, which is an interim governance body, established in 2020 as part of WP9 action, and encompassing representatives from each partner nation of JERICO. The principles and structural elements presented in this section form the basis of the governance of JERICO. They build upon the experience from JERICO partners accumulated through their involvement in other European RIs, and co-design activities conducted in the Nation Committee.

Good governance often relies on unambiguous relationships between executive and decision-making bodies. This is also the case for a wide-ranging international organisations, such as a DRI. It stands as a necessity to unambiguously separate a structure's governance (which establishes the strategy, commits resources, evaluates results) from its management. In the case of a RI, this is especially important as this distinction is not always practiced in the academic world.

The governance of JERICO shall comprise the following bodies:

- the Assembly of Members (AoM)
- the Executive Committee (ExCo), chaired by a Director General (DG)

Particular attention has been given to a distribution of power and responsibility that fits the value of JERICO, and that is endorsed by all partners. In JERICO-S3, a consensus among the consortium was found, leading to the following principles:

- A democratic RI in which bottom-up approaches contribute greatly to the management and evolution of the RI
- An ExCo that is the nevralgic point of the RI, ensuring that both the recommendations and needs of the organisation are met, and that decisions taken are implemented
- Power should be balanced between the AoM and the ExCo; as a basic principle, the AoM should discuss and decide on strategic and financial matters based on proposal elaborated by the ExCo, on behalf of the RI
- All partners have equal rights to contribute to the ExCo and will be given the opportunity to take part through rotation of the ExCo members, at an appropriate pace. The ExCo will include those persons coordinating organisational elements of the RI (e.g., service offices), who are responsible for the implementation of the JERICO science and business strategy.

Figure 1 is sketching the different governance bodies of the RI, their roles, and their relationships, as well as peripheral bodies supporting the governance and management of the RI.

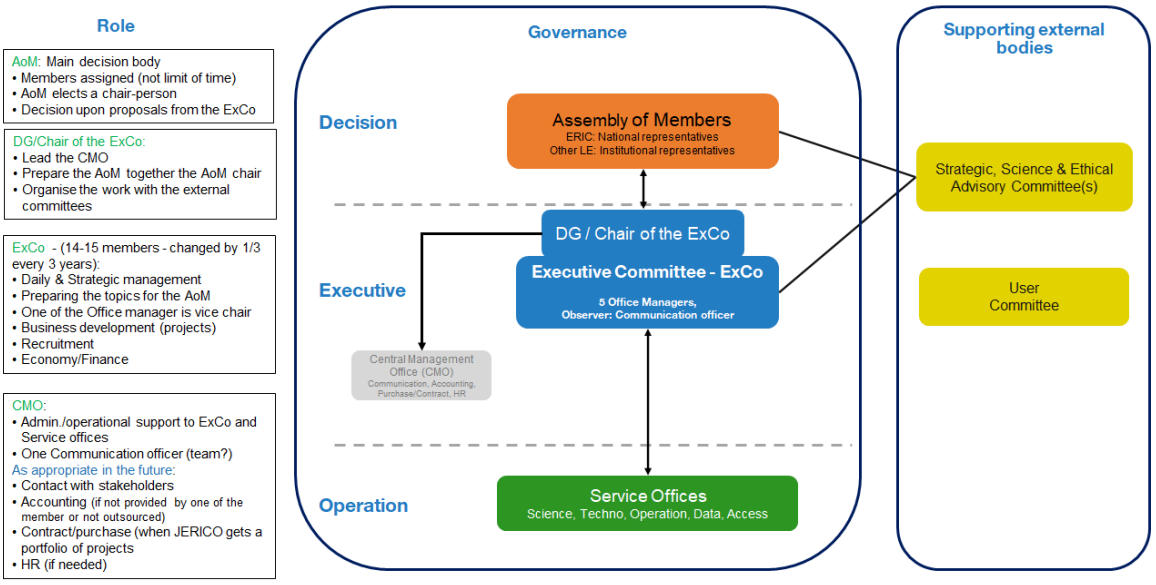

Figure 1: Governance of JERICO, including Decision (in red), Executive (in blue) and Operation (in green) levels. Peripheral bodies supporting the governance and management external advising bodies (in yellow), and CMO (grey).

Advisory committees will be consulted on strategic matters of importance for the sustainability, impact and evolution of the RI. In JERICO, two advisory bodies have already been shaped: a Scientific, Technical and Ethical Advisory Committee, and a JERICO User Committee. In addition, the JERICO User Forum, which could be seen as an indirect

advisory body, shall be created in the future. They are described in more detail in section 2.4.

2.1. Decision Level

Definition, composition, voting rights

The **Assembly of Members (AoM)** shall constitute the decision-making body of the future RI. Member representatives will discuss all major policy directions, formation and dissolution of subsidiary bodies, approve annual accounts and provide recommendations to the ExCo. Examples of matters to be addressed by the AoM are:

- amendment of the statutes, including internal rules
- approval of the annual budget and accounts
- approval of the annual activity report and of the annual work plan
- election of the chairperson and the vice-chairperson of the AoM
- appointment of the DG (chairman of the ExCo and head of the CMO)
- inclusion of new members and exclusion of members
- appointment of individuals to external advisory bodies (JUC & STAC)
- creation, modification or dismissal of external advisory bodies
- approval of SLAs and of MoUs/MoCs between the RI's components, or between the RI and other RIs

The chairperson will establish the agenda of each meeting, together with the DG and following recommendations from the ExCo, oversee the discussions, organise votes and announce decisions taken..

2.2. Executive level

The **Executive Committee (ExCo)** shall be responsible for the daily operation and management of the RI, the strategic orientations to be validated by the AoM, and the implementation of all decisions taken by the AoM. It will have the power to establish or discontinue any particular Office, with the approval of the AoM. It will, with the support of the DG, prepare the agenda of the AoM meetings. It will be composed of a dozen persons, appointed by the AoM, heading the operational bodies of the RI (e.g., Service Managers (SMs) heading Service Offices, and possibly heads of Regional offices (RGs). The AoM will recruit SMs, and appoint members of the first ExCo. Later on, the ExCo itself will make proposals for its renewal to be endorsed by the AoM.

The mandate duration given to ExCo members wil balance between the need for continuity in operation and the willingness to give all partners the possibility to engage in the ExCo, through time. As a preliminary model, a position of 2-3 years renewable once, is seen as appropriate but needs to be consolidated. The need for relative stability within the ExCo, in order to make long-term actions possible and sustainable may lead to renewal of members by part (for example one third at a time) so as to allow experience and steering to be passed on. It is under consideration that RGs may be rotated more often than SMs, since establishing, developing and delivering services requires more time and stability. Both roles will be taken-up by partners initially, but it is not excluded to hire external applicants as SMs

in the future. The ExCo is chaired by the Director General, and a vice-chair is appointed as well by the AoM.

The Director General (DG) shall be appointed by the AoM for a mandate of 3 years, renewable at least once. He or she will be the chair of the ExCo, and will be responsible for the good management of the DRI's operations. The DG will prepare the agenda and logistics of the AoM meetings, and will be in charge of recruitments of the CMO.

Under the chairing of the DG, the Exco, with support of the CMO, will be in charge of preparing the following documents, for further approval by the AoM:

- Strategy and implementation plan
- Annual program and provisional budget
- Statement of accounts of the past year
- CMO activity report

2.3. Operational level

The operational aspects of JERICO will be managed by Service Offices, each responsible for overseeing one or more Thematic Expert Centres (TEC). These Centres will offer various Services, and the Service Offices will have the authority to establish or dissolve an Expert Centre with the approval of the ExCo. Modalities for accessing a service or a TEC by users will depend on the nature of Service requested (e.g., physical access, virtual access to products, expert consultation), and will be detailed during the preparatory phase of the RI. Staffing for each TEC will be provided through in-kind contributions from partner institutions.

. As of the writing of this document, five Service Offices are foreseen.

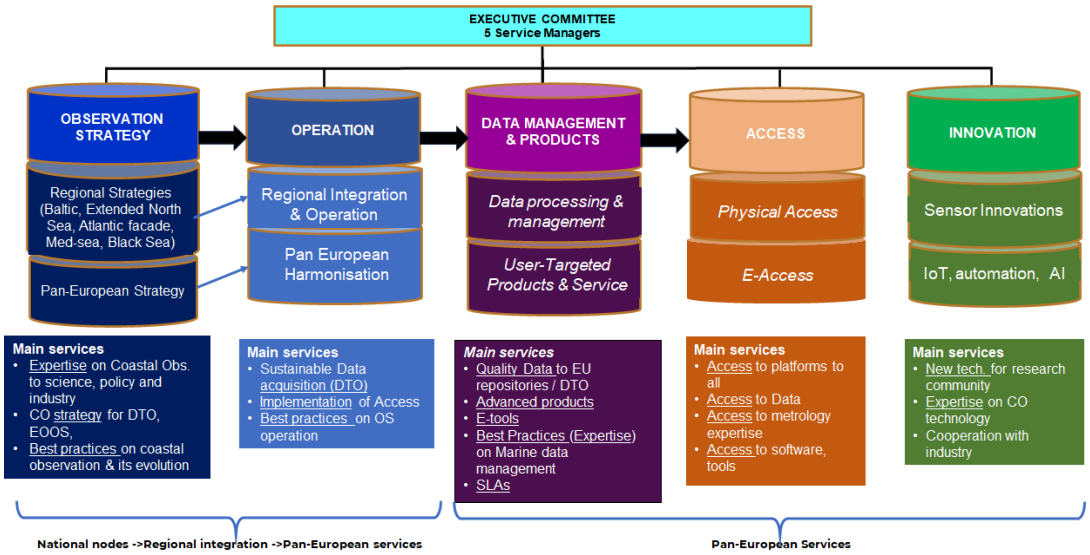

Figure 2: Organisation of the Executive part of JERICO. The ExCo is to be composed of one member from each Service Office, and of one Regional Coordinator.

TECs will bring together relevant expert partners in all fields relevant for the delivery of the service and products. TECs will focus on the expertise related to JERICO e-Services,

prioritising (1) JERICO scientific topics, (2) the needs of our main users and stakeholders, including the public and academic communities involved in Coastal Protection, Fundamental and Applied Research, and Ocean Forecasting, and (3) regional specificities.

2.4. External advisory bodies

The current **Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)**, established as part of JERICO-S3, is an international consulting body comprising of international experts and key stakeholders of JERICO (i.e., the University of Washington (iOOS), IMOS, MERCATOR Ocean International, EMBRC, EMSO, EUROARGO, ONC, and Patrick Farcy, the father of JERICO. It is intended to keep on working with the same STAC for the time being. In the future, the STAC will be appointed by the AoM and will provide independent, external expert advice on strategic, scientific, technical matters to the ExCO, and the AoM, as appropriate. The STAC is expected to provide guidance to enhance collaboration with other "sister" RI and to maximise the scientific and societal impact of JERICO P&S.

The **JERICO User Committee (JUC)** was established to provide targeted advice on user needs and requirements for Products & Services (P&S) (See deliverable 9.2 for details on the User Strategy). In the future, this committee is expected to deal with user satisfaction metrics, and provide feedback on the delivered P&S; it shall inform the ExCo on matters important to the medium- and long-term sustainability and impact of the RI.

In JERICO-S3, it was decided to focus the JUC on data management. It was composed of 4 members, representing EMODNet (Dick M. A. Schaap), EOSC-Blue Cloud (Patricia M. Cabrera, Julia Vera Prieto) and Copernicus-INSTAC (Dominique Obaton). The JUC will be expanded to be representative of all key users of JERICO (e.g., science, environmental managers, industry) Terms of Reference (ToR) were produced by Ifremer as part of WP9..

The **JERICO User Forum (JUF)** - a dedicated online forum -, will provide an official framework for users to give feedback and ask questions, maintaining direct communication between the user base and the JERICO offices. Although managing web-based fora can be challenging and they are often used primarily as helpdesks, they are essential for collecting genuine feedback. The JUF will be integrated with the virtual P&S offered by JERICO-CORE. This envisioned Virtual Research Environment (VRE) is a key component of the implementation of the User Strategy, providing numerous services through a resource catalogue. Consequently, the Access Policy of JERICO-CORE is crucial. It was initially drafted in JERICO-DS D3.1 and will be updated based on feedback from the JUF. Given that the Copernicus Marine Service is a major stakeholder in JERICO, it is represented in the initial set-up of the JUF to help define coastal in-situ requirements.

Additional ad-hoc committees, temporary or permanent, may be formed in the future as needed. These ad-hoc committees will review specific topics as they arise so that ad.hoc analysis and information can be brought before the AoM for optimal decision-making.

3. Organisation of the Research Infrastructure

JERICO will be based on the model of a DRI. The different elements that constitute it are called components, and these components can be located in all countries part of the DRI. The relationships between each component and the DRI shall be regulated by a Service Level Agreement (SLA), as components will maintain their legal and administrative independence (e.g.: the Metrology Lab).

As of the writing of this document, the envisioned components of JERICO are:

- Assembly of Members: the main decision-making body, populated with one representatives of each member organisation, with voting rights
- an Executive Committee in charge of the daily management and strategic evolution of the RI
- a Central Management Office (CMO, led by the Director General), in charge of administrative tasks
- 4 - 5 Service Offices, in charge of delivering the JERICO services to users
- Thematic Expert Centres organising the contribution from partners by expert areas and answering to the operation of the RI
- 2 external Advisory Bodies (the Scientific, Technical & Ethical committee and the JERICO User Committee)

Others may be added in the future as deemed necessary by the JERICO community.

3.1. Central Management Office

The Central Management Office (CMO) administers the DRI, and organises meetings in relation to those functions. It will be a central point of communication with users and stakeholders, and will ensure the international influence of the DRI, in particular by coordinating networking activities. The CMO will also be responsible for quality assurance and risk management of the DRI's activities, and will exert control over the Access Office managing the user access system.

Initially, the CMO will comprise the Director General (DG) and possibly a communication officer. The staff will evolve over time following needs and available resources, and may include for example an administrative officer, a financial manager, a liaison officer, and a more substantial communication team.

It is to be emphasised that the CMO is not part of the formal governance of the DRI.

3.2. Coastal observatory system of systems

As of the writing of this document, the coastal observation mesh organised under JERICO-S3 relies on the differentiation of observation sites into two categories: Integrated Regional Sites (IRSs) and Pilot Super Sites (PSSs).

IRSs are comprehensive coastal observatories, with the capacity to accurately measure the variability and complexity of coastal dynamics at the regional scale. Such sites provide holistic insights into physical, chemical, and biological parameters. They are involved in

transnational networking activities, including mapping and developing the organisation, integration, observational strategies, and regional data handling (including accessibility).

PSSs are deemed for innovative research efforts, focusing on the most regionally relevant key societal needs and key scientific gaps. These sites appear to have a good maturity level for innovative methodologies, technologies, and modelling approaches. As such, PSSs facilitate thorough investigations of coastal processes.

The physical infrastructure as well as the personnel operating it will remain part of each JERICO contributor, and P&S concerned by the output of these components will be regulated by a SLA.

3.3. e-JERICO

The JERICO community identified the need to create an e-infrastructure, formerly known as e-JERICO, that would support JERICO activities. Two phases laid the foundation and the concepts for its full-scale technical development During the first phase, the JERICO Coastal Ocean Resource Environment Pilot (JERICO-CORE pilot), was designed to respond to the necessity of creating a common digital framework that includes a Virtual Research Environment (VRE) and Thematic Services (TS). During the second period, the Design Phase was the responsibility of the JERICO-DS project supporting the Design Study towards a structured operational European DRI included in the 2026 ESFRI Roadmap. In JERICO-DS, WP3 studied the key aspects for the design, implementation, and operation of e-JERICO in the long term, based on the lessons learned from JERICO-CORE pilot. In this regard, key organisational and governance aspects have been introduced and developed in 3 deliverables of JERICO-DS WP3, which are summarised below:

- D3.1 ("Outlined JERICO virtual resources Access and Security policies"): both policies include a proposal regarding who is responsible for actions to meet the requirements of the policy. The latter has to be taken into account for the organisation and governance of JERICO.

- D3.3 ("Preliminary Operation Plan for e-JERICO Service Delivery"): it presents a comprehensive guide explaining how ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) best practices do seamlessly integrate and coordinate the operation of the future e-JERICO. Furthermore, the plan outlines processes such as service portfolio and service catalogue management, information security management, knowledge management, release and deployment management, monitoring and event management, incident and problem management, user request fulfilment, and access management. All these aspects have to be represented in the future organisation and governance of JERICO, regarding the e-needs.

- D3.5 ("Outlined e-JERICO Strategic Plan"): this document aligns with the broader strategy of JERICO, mirroring the aspirations and objectives of key national and international stakeholders. It springs from an in-depth analysis of requirements, technical solutions, governance models, and operational methodologies conducted in JERICO-DS WP3. This strategic plan encompasses economic analyses, risk evaluations, scheduling, resource allocation, and strategies for engaging stakeholders, all aimed at steering e-JERICO towards a successful implementation and operational life.

e-JERICO will be a key aspect of the DRI, as it will be conceived as a discovery platform for other resources available in the European research landscape. As such, this central element of JERICO will play a pivotal role to federate coastal research capacities and outputs at the European level, by facilitating interactions with other RIs.

4. JERICO legal entity

Commitments to JERICO, political or financial, are paramount for its successful ESFRI application, and a legal status is a strong incentive for such commitments. **In essence, adopting a legal model would allow JERICO to contribute, as a ESFRI landmark, to the European structuration of marine observations and the development of the European DTOs. Besides it will alow to apply as a single entity - representing the coastal research area - to future funding opportunities, initiatives and processes in the European Research landscape**, further increasing its standing and weight.

As a practical and strategic step towards sustainability (not least financial), JERICO may consider establishing a legal status in the short-term, which may evolve into another legal form later on, as appropriate. Hereby are described the legal models potentially to be adopted by JERICO, and it's most likely legal structure.

In order for JERICO to be able to intervene as a single entity in other EU initiatives and EU projects, it is necessary to take-up a legal form, also to formally ratify the governance scheme to be taken by the time of the 2025 ESFRI application (covered in the next chapter). Several legal models were considered by WP9 members for JERICO. They are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 - Legal models considered for JERICO.

Type of Legislation	Legal Model	Examples in the RI landscape	Comments
European	European Economic Interest Group (EEIG)	NA	Unlimited and joint liability prevent public bodies from joining.
	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)	NA	Unlimited and joint liability prevent public bodies from joining.
	European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC)	EMBRC-ERIC EMSO, Euro-Argo ICOS	Tailored legal form for European RIs, but need progress on current national commitments.
National	Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif (AISBL, Belgian non-profit organisation)	IAGOS-AISBL EuroFleet	Popular model for those RI that decide not to go for an ERIC, or which are lacking political support by nations.
	Association Loi 1901 (French non-profit organisation)	CO2GeoNet	An easy to implement model, providing flexibility, but with possibly less beneficial fiscal conditions tahnan ERIC or an AISBL.
	Private company with limited liability	ESS in its first stages	

International or National	International Organisation	CERN	Takes up several years to agree on and establish the statutes

As it stands in the European RI landscape, most marine landmarks took up the ERIC (European Research Infrastructure Consortium) legal form, which was created in 2009 specifically to facilitate the operations of strategic European RIs. The ERIC legal model, besides its recognition at the European level, provides tax exemptions on excise duty and procurements and allows for limited economic activities related to its main task, thus helps to secure economic sustainability. Because countries (rather than institutes or agencies) are members of the consortium, their national commitments are supposed to be more firm and long-lasting, further securing sustainability. This was underlined already in JERICO-NEXT deliverable D1.3, where an analysis of economic sustainability of the different legal models concluded that the ERIC legal form may be the most sustainable in the long-term.

However, because JERICO's value (science case) significantly lies in its representativeness (spatial coverage) of all European coastal regions and its coastal operative capacities of observations, it is of utmost importance for all current partners (40 partners representing all European coastal regions) under a single entity and governance scheme. Such a constraint puts a lot of pressure on the possible adoption of an ERIC model, as the common legal ground would then need to be found among 17 (soon 22) countries represented in JERICO. Even if the ultimate objective of the JERICO community is to become an ERIC in the future, it is recognised that it may/will take time to mature. The ESFRI preparatory and implementation phases are expected to give JERICO the necessary time to mature towards this goal.

Other European legal forms (such as EEIG or EGTC, see Table 1) were investigated. These legal models are unsuited to a RI, as members then have unlimited joint and several liability for any debts owed to third parties: this is unacceptable to most public bodies, be it States or semi-public organisations. Moreover, these legal models are tailored to favour the economic development of its members and not quite for non-profit activities, such as the ones majoritarily carried out by an RI.

It is not unheard of for a RI to adopt a national legal model, in the form of a private company or of a non-profit organisation. Minimal requirements are small and the establishment process can be very quick. In the case of a private company, liability can be limited, and may enable public organisations to join as members.

Non-profit organisations in the form of an association appear more suited to RIs. In fact, several ESFRI landmarks do have such legal statuses as of the writing of this document, the most common being the AISBL (Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif) legal model, under Belgium law. The AISBL could suit JERICO's immediate needs, but would need to have JERICO's headquarters moved to Belgium, whereas Ifremer stands as the lead beneficiary and France presumably as the host of the statutory seat. The French legislative equivalent, the 'Association Loi 1901', is a possible legal model for JERICO in the short-term for the foundation of a single entity possessing a legal personality. Such a model has been used for establishing the European Network of Excellence on Geological storage of CO2 - CO2GeoNet. This scientific association was established in 2008 , following an EU FP6-Center of excellence project, by the French research institute - BRGM, which has a similar legal status to IFREMER. CO2GeoNet gathers today 27 European research

institutes, representing 21 European countries, and more than 300 researchers - therefore a structure of a size equivalent to JERICO.

Whatever the type of legal entity to be implemented, JERICO has started to develop a generic model of Statutes for such a non-for-profit organisation, which will be carefully defined, for the case of a large DRI such as JERICO, due to the sheer number of members that could impact decision-making procedures. Statutes from other RIs are used as building stones in pursuing this endeavour. This internationalisation will impact how JERICO can be legally structured.

5.Conclusions

JERICO is a comprehensive initiative designed to enhance European capabilities in coastal observation and research. As a Distributed Research Infrastructure (DRI), JERICO integrates numerous physical facilities across European coastal regions with a unified virtual infrastructure, e-JERICO. This setup allows JERICO to provide a wide range of services and facilitate access to coastal data and resources, fostering collaboration among stakeholders and promoting innovative research efforts. Moving forward, JERICO faces challenges in managing a diverse network of facilities and stakeholders while ensuring effective governance and operational coherence. Addressing these challenges requires continuous engagement with stakeholders, leveraging technological advancements, and enhancing data accessibility and interoperability.

The governance structure of JERICO is now better drafted so that JERICO is able to handle challenges and to ensure effective operation and decision-making. The governance structure shall be refined further up to and beyond the 2026 ESFRI Roadmap application, during the Preparatory Phase. At the highest level, the Assembly of Members (AoM) comprises national delegates from member states, overseeing major policy directions, budget approvals, and strategic decisions. The Director General (DG), appointed by the Assembly of Members (AoM), oversees the day-to-day operations of JERICO, supported by the Central Management Office (CMO), which handles administrative and financial matters. The Executive Committee (ExCo) manages the operational aspects and service offices of JERICO, ensuring the efficient delivery of services and the maintenance of facilities. Service Offices oversee Expert Centres responsible for technical and thematic services, enhancing the DRI's capabilities in coastal monitoring and research.

External advisory bodies play a crucial role in JERICO's governance and operation. The JERICO User Committee (JUC) and the JERICO User Forum (JUF) facilitate user engagement, feedback, and the definition of Products & Services (P&S), an essential part of the future DRI. The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) provides independent advice on scientific, technical, legal, and economic matters, enhancing collaboration and maximising the impact of JERICO within the European and international research community.

JERICO is rapidly moving towards adopting a legal status that best supports its long-term sustainability and effectiveness as a DRI. While considering various legal models in the short and longer term (including the ERIC legal form), JERICO aims to enhance its operational and economic sustainability. By integrating various means of coastal

observations under a unified governance and legal framework, JERICO is well-positioned to address future challenges in coastal observation and contribute to world-wide efforts in marine research and environmental sustainability.

6.Annexes and References

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